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Folklore, Vol. 103, No. 1 (1992), 3-26.

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Rough Music Reconsidered

E. P. THOMPSON

Adapted from the Katharine Briggs Memorial Lecture, 8 November 1988

IN 1988 I had the honour to be invited to deliver the Katharine Briggs Memorial Lecture to the Folklore Society. It was with some trepidation that I selected a theme to which Katharine Briggs made her own contribution and which has long interested members of this Society, from whose work I have learned a good deal. The present paper corresponds largely, though not entirely, to the lecture given on that occasion (a tape of which is in the Society's Library); it is an abbreviated version of the chapter on 'Rough Music' in my recent book *Customs in Common* (Merlin Press, 1991).

* * *

'Rough music' is the term which has been generally used in England since the end of the seventeenth century to denote a rude cacophony, with or without more elaborate ritual, which usually directed mockery or hostility against individuals who offended against certain community norms.¹

It appears to correspond, on the whole, to *charivari* in France, to the Italian *scampanate*, and to several German customs—*haberfeld-treiben*, *thierjagen* and *katzenmusik*.² There is, indeed, a family of ritual forms here, which is European-wide, and of great antiquity, but the degree of kinship within this family is open to enquiry.³

In international scholarship *charivari* has won acceptance as the term descriptive of the whole genus. In 1972 I followed this example by entitling a study published in France '“Rough Music”: Le Charivari anglais'.⁴ The difficulty of this assimilation soon became apparent. For the very term 'charivari' arouses inapposite expectations and constructs the subject according to a French problematic, with its strong emphasis upon charivari as occasioned by second marriages, and also upon the role of unmarried youths.

'Rough music' is also a generic term, and even within the British islands, the ritual forms were so various that it is possible to view them as distinct species. Yet beneath all the elaborations of ritual certain basic human properties can be found: raucous, ear-shattering noise, unpyiting laughter, and the mimicking of obscenities. It was supported, in Thomas Hardy's description, by 'the din of cleavers, tongs, tambourines, kits, crouds, humstrums, serpents, ram's horns, and other historical kinds of music'.⁵ But if such 'historical' instruments were not to hand, the rolling of stones in a tin kettle—or any improvisation of draw-tins and shovels—would do. In a Lincolnshire dialect glossary (1877) the definition runs: 'Clashing of pots and pans. Sometimes played when any very unpopular person is leaving the village or being sent to prison.'⁶

It is not *just* the noise, however, although satiric noise (whether light or savage) is always present. The noise formed part of a ritualised expression of hostility, even if in the (perhaps debased?) forms recorded in late nineteenth-century examples the ritual was attenuated to a few scraps of doggerel or to the repetition of the 'music' on successive nights. In other cases the ritual could be elaborate, and might include the riding of the victim (or a proxy) upon a pole or a donkey; masking and dancing; elaborate recitatives; rough mime

or street drama upon a cart or platform; the miming of a ritual hunt; or (frequently) the parading and burning of effigies; or, indeed, various combinations of all of these.

In Britain the rituals extended across the spectrum from the good-humoured chaffing of the newly-wed to satire of the greatest brutality—from the Cornish ‘shallals’⁷ to the Devon ‘stag-hunt’ (where the victim was symbolically slaughtered in the person of a proxy in animal disguise),⁸ and the Wiltshire ‘wooset-hunting’ (involving a procession bearing a sinister horse skull).⁹

Most of the forms fall into four groups, although these may overlap and borrow features from each other. These groups are: a) the *ceffyl pren* (Welsh for ‘wooden horse’) associated with ‘Rebecca riots’ in several parts of Wales; b) ‘riding the stang’, widely distributed in the Scottish Lowlands and northern England; c) ‘skimmington’ or ‘skimmety’ riding, entrenched still, in the West Country, but surviving elsewhere in the South; and d) plain rough music, unaccompanied by any riding, although very often accompanied by the burning of the victims in effigy, found almost everywhere, and commonly in the Midlands and the South. Indeed, it is not clear whether unadorned rough music is a distinct form, or is simply the vestigial ritual still surviving into the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries after the elaborations of older ritual had fallen away. Thus in Cambridgeshire in the first decade of this century, the banging of tins and shaking of kettles is all of the ritual that is left.¹⁰

We will return to the *ceffyl pren*. The forms of plain rough music will become sufficiently evident when we describe particular occasions. ‘Riding the stang’ and the ‘skimmington’ require some formal description.

In ‘riding the stang’ either the offender, or a proxy (sometimes a near neighbour, sometimes a youth) representing him, was carried on a long pole, or stang, attended by a rough band, or a ‘swarm of children, huzzaing and throwing all manner of filth’.¹¹ If the victim was ridden in person, the procession might end by tipping him into a duck-pond or watery ditch.¹² Sometimes a ladder or a donkey might be substituted for the ‘stang’; more often an effigy in a cart.¹³ If the riding was by proxy, a traditional recitative or ‘nominy’ was shouted at different parts of the town or village.¹⁴ The procedure was repeated, sometimes in several parishes, sometimes on three nights. If an effigy was carried, it was shot at, buried, or most commonly burned.

The rhyme or ‘nominy’ allowed for improvisations to be added, to suit the victim and the occasion.¹⁵ The name of the offender might be shouted, although in some regions it was concealed to avoid an action for defamation,¹⁶ or lightly disguised in a pun. When a husband called Lamb was beaten by his wife, he was ridden by proxy with a ‘nominy’ whose third line ran ‘But it is for the awde Yowe that threshest poor Lamb’.¹⁷

The essentials of the ‘nominy’ seem to have been as indelibly memorised as children’s rhymes, and collectors have found elderly informants to be word-perfect in them. The words preserved in printed folklore collections may perhaps be a little bowdlerised, either by collectors or by their informants. An American collector, fifty years ago, preserved a version of the last two lines which is more credible (and also rhymes better) than the Hedon version preserved by that excellent collector, Mrs. Gutch:

If the gun should happen to miss
We’ll scald him to death with a barrel o’ red-hot piss.¹⁸

Some folklore accounts of the ‘stang’ seem much like ‘skimmingtons’, such as this one from Northenden in Cheshire. In about 1790 Alice Evans, the wife of a weaver, and

a powerful athletic woman, 'chastised her own lord and master for some act of intemperance and neglect of work²—

This conduct (of hers) the neighbouring lords of creation were determined to punish, fearing their own spouses might assume the same authority. They therefore mounted one of their body, dressed in female apparel, on the back of an old donkey, the man holding a spinning wheel on his lap, and his back towards the donkey's head. Two men led the animal through the neighbourhood, followed by scores of boys and idle men, tinkling kettles and frying pans, roaring with cows' horns, and making a most hideous hullabaloo, stopping every now and then while the exhibitioner on the donkey made the following proclamation:

Ran a dan, ran a dan, ran a dan,
Mrs Alice Evans has beat her good man;
It was neither with sword, spear, pistol, or knife
But with a pair of tongs she vowed to take his life . . .¹⁹

The 'skimmington', as it survived into the nineteenth century in the West Country, was distinguished by two features: the elaboration of the ritual, and the frequency with which the victims satirised remained (as had been the case two or three centuries earlier)²⁰ the women at odds with the values of a patriarchal society: the scold, the husband-beater, the shrew. Wiltshire Quarter Sessions records of 1618 give us an idea of the possible elaboration:

About noon came again from Calne to Quemerford another drummer . . . and with him three or four hundred men, some like soldiers armed with pieces and other weapons, and a man riding upon a horse, having a white night cap upon his head, two shoeing horns hanging by his ears, a counterfeit beard upon his chin made of a deer's tail, a smock upon the top of his garments, and he rode upon a red horse with a pair of pots under him, and in them some quantity of brewing grains . . .

Coming to the victims' house (Thomas Mills, a cutler, and his wife, Agnes), the gunners shot off their pieces, 'pipes and horns were sounded, together with lowbells and other smaller bells . . . and rams' horns and bucks' horns . . .'. The doors and windows of the house were stoned, Agnes was dragged out of her chamber, thrown in the mud, beaten and threatened with being carried off to Calne to the cucking-stool.²¹

Two centuries and more after this, 'skimmingtons' were still being recorded in the West Country, if not on the same scale, yet requiring elaborate preparation. In Uphill (Somerset) in 1888, a waggon bearing two effigies was drawn through the streets at dusk, with 'music' and a bodyguard, and the effigies were burned to the accompaniment of the 'Dead March'.²²

The ritual had many variants and allowed for much improvisation, invention and dressing-up. Where the victim satirised was a masterful woman or a husband-beater, two proxy performers might be seated in a cart or face-to-face on a donkey, beating each other furiously with culinary weapons, or back-to-back, with the man holding the beast's tail.²³ Where the reputed infidelity of the wife was the occasion, a petticoat or shift would be carried in the procession, along with horns, brewing grains and other symbols of cuckoldry.²⁴ On one occasion, recorded in Dorset as late as 1884, three characters were satirised, one male, two female; both the females rode on donkey-back, while one of them 'was represented as having an extraordinarily long tongue, which was tied back to the neck, whilst in one hand she held some note-paper, and in the other pen and holder'.²⁵

So much for the forms. More could be said. And more has been said. Unfortunately, those nineteenth-century folklorists to whom we are indebted for many of the best accounts of these rituals were interested, in the main, in the forms themselves; and, if they went further, it was most often to speculate upon their origin and relationship, to classify the forms according to a sort of human botany. Admirably-observed accounts of the form may include only the most casual, throwaway, allusion to the occasion for the event: the status of the victims, their supposed offence, the consequence of the rough music.

Nevertheless, before proceeding, let us see what evidence is offered to us from the forms themselves.

1) The forms are dramatic: they are a kind of 'street theatre'. As such, they are immediately adapted to the function of publicising scandal. Moreover, the dramatic forms are usually processional. Perhaps one should say, indeed, that they are *anti*-processional, in the sense that horsemen, drummers, banners, lantern-carriers, effigies in carts, etc., mock, in a kind of conscious antiphony, the ceremonial of the processionals of state, of law, of civic ceremonial, of the guild and of the church.

But they do not *only* mock. The relationship between the satirical forms of rough music and the dignified forms of the host society is by no means simple. In one sense the processional may seek to assert the legitimacy of authority. And in certain cases this reminder may be remarkably direct. For the forms of rough music and of charivari are part of the expressive symbolic vocabulary of a certain kind of society—a vocabulary available to all and in which many different sentences may be pronounced. It is a discourse which (while often coincident with literacy) derives its resources from oral transmission, within a society which regulates many of its occasions—of authority and moral conduct—through such theatrical forms as the solemn procession, the pageant, the public exhibition of justice or of charity, public punishment, the display of emblems and favours, etc.²⁶

The formal continuities are sometimes startling. The naked parade or 'carting' of lewd women or of prostitutes was a punishment which had once been imposed by ecclesiastical and civil authorities. Riding backwards with the face to the horse's tail was a punishment inflicted for perjury, corruption, etc., by courts in London and by the Star Chamber in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.²⁷ And riding upon a pole or a 'wooden horse' was a recognised military punishment, and was inflicted upon soldiers whose behaviour (assaults, petty thefts) endangered relations with the civil populace. Thus in 1686 a court martial sentenced an offending soldier accused of the theft of two silver cups 'to ride the wooden horse the next market day in the public market place . . . for the space of two hours with a paper on his breast signifying his offence.'²⁸ The punishment humiliated the offender in front of the populace, and hence it supposedly repaired the damage done to military-civil relations.

The punishment could still be inflicted under Army regulations until the early nineteenth century. In 1845, at Yeovil, the same punishment had become an informal institution, it being reported that—

The almost obsolete punishment of 'riding the stang', or wooden horse, was revived in this town last Thursday by a number of builders who, suspecting that one of their number had made free with his comrades' dinners, pinioned him and paraded him through the streets upon a piece of wood with the words 'the thif' chalked on his back. The Lynchers had contrived to refine the cruelty of the punishment by sharpening to a point the rafter on which the unfortunate fellow rode, and by jaggng it in several places. He was taken home to Bradford Abbas in a cart on Friday, being so much injured as to be unable to walk.²⁹

I do not know whether the formal (legal) and the informal (customary) infliction of such punishments coincided in late medieval and early modern times or whether popular, self-regulating forms (which were often initiated independently of any persons in authority, and which were sometimes conducted in such a way as to ridicule them) took over to new uses forms which the authorities were ceasing to employ. The answer may be 'both'. Until the early nineteenth century, publicity was of the essence of punishment. It was intended, for lesser offences, to humiliate the offender before her or his neighbours, and in more serious offences to serve as example. The symbolism of public execution irradiated popular culture in the eighteenth century and contributed much to the vocabulary of rough music.³⁰ The elaborate effigies of the offenders which were carted or ridden through the community always ended up with a hanging or a burning—which recalled the burning of heretics. In extreme cases a mock funeral service was conducted over the effigy before a 'burial'. One would be mistaken to see this as only a grotesque jest. To burn, bury or read the funeral service over someone still living was a terrible community judgement, in which the victim was made into an outcast, one considered to be already dead.³¹ It was the ultimate in excommunication.

Effigy burning does not belong only with rough music. It can often be found in Britain and in North America detached from other forms of rough music and of course it has been and remains central to Guy Fawkes Day.³² November 5th was a day when effigy burning and rough music ran into each other, and local or public scores were often paid off.³³ And effigies were appropriated to every kind of political and religious demonstration. They were simply one (effective and enduring) component of the available symbolic vocabulary, which could be employed in combination with other components (noise, lampoons, obscenities), or could be detached from these altogether. Innumerable examples—political, industrial, private grievances—can be found in any locality.

This has taken us a little out of our way. But the consideration of even such a commonplace part of the symbolic vocabulary as the effigy enforces the point that the symbolism owes much to authority's pomp of awe and justice, and that rough music may be ambivalent and move between the mockery of authority and its endorsement, the appeal to tradition and the threat of rebellion.

2) The forms are pliant. Indeed, they have great flexibility. Even in the same region similar forms can be used to express a good-humoured jest or to invoke inexorable community antagonism. 'Skimmingtons' of great elaboration were sometimes mounted as community jokes—for example, in Exeter in 1817 a riding with horsemen, a band, twenty-four donkeys, and much paraphernalia was laid on to ridicule the second marriage of a local saddler who had made himself obnoxious as a braggart and ostentatious patriot during the French Wars.³⁴ In Barnsley in 1844 the marriage of two local characters thought for some reason to be comic was 'published' by an elaborate procession of power-loom weavers. Two led, one dressed in a skin, the other with a flag 'Haste to the Wedding'; next a cart drawn by a mule with a fiddler astride it, and with whistles and tin cans played by the cart's occupants.³⁵ Jests of this kind might easily turn sour. When a butcher on the Isle of Wight, at Newport, married 'an elderly maiden lady of good fortune' (1782) his fellow butchers attended to celebrate the event with marrowbones and cleavers. The bridegroom lost his temper and ordered them to go away:

They had been expecting to be treated instead of being threatened with prison as a riotous mob. They returned, each with a pair of rams' horns fixed on their heads, and a drummer which they had hired . . . beating the cuckold's march. Outraged, the bridegroom fired at them, killing one and wounding two.³⁶

The more one examines the diversity of the evidence, the more difficult it is to define exactly what a rough music was. Sometimes we have nothing more than a boozy, jocular row outside the cottage on a couple's first wedding-night—although rarely without a satirical accent—by the unmarried young men of the community.³⁷ Some forms were also employed as games on festivals or as initiations into trades.³⁸ In the North-East in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when a pitman married he was made to 'ride the stang', and was carried on a pole by his fellow pitmen to a pub where he was expected to treat his mates to drinks:

They myed me ride the stang, as suin
As aw show'd fyce at wark agyen.³⁹

This was a good-humoured custom whose only function was as a ransom for drink. But in the same region in the same period 'riding the stang' was a severe, and on occasion mutilating, punishment inflicted by pitmen and seamen upon blacklegs during a strike or upon informers or crimps.⁴⁰

3) Even when rough music was expressive of the most absolute community hostility, and its intention was to ostracise or drive out an offender, the ritual element may be seen as channelling and controlling this hostility. There seems to have been a progressive distancing from direct physical violence, although the evidence is inconclusive. Dr. Martin Ingram shows us seventeenth-century next-door-neighbours serving as proxies for the ridings, just as proxies are frequently found in the nineteenth century. But just as Agnes Mills of Quemerford was physically assaulted and thrown in the mud in 1618, so examples of such assaults—or of 'stang ridings' ending in the midden or the duck-pond—can be found two hundred years later.⁴¹ And the 'stang', as we have seen, could be employed as a mutilating instrument. In Galloway wife-beaters were ridden to a 'nomy',

Ocht yt's richt'll no be wrang,
Lick the wife an ride the stang.

At the words 'wife' and 'stang' they liftit it as heich as they could, an then loot it suddenly fa' again; and he cam doon wi' a thud every time on some o' the ens o' the brenches yt had been left sticking oot for his benefit, an the scraichs o' him wus fearfu.
The stang wus through atween his legs, ye ken.⁴²

The argument that rough music rituals were a form of *displacement* of violence—its acting out, not upon the person of the victim, but in symbolic form—has some truth. It is my impression that in nineteenth-century England the proxy and the effigy usually stood in for the offender. Rough music did not only give expression to a conflict within a community, it also regulated that conflict within forms which established limits and imposed restraints.

4) What is announced—when the stag collapses with his pierced bladder of blood on the doorstep, when the effigies are burned before the cottage, when the rough band parades night after night while the victim listens within—is the total publicity of disgrace. It is true that the forms of rough music are sometimes ritualised to the point of anonymity or impersonality: occasionally the performers are masked or disguised; more often they come at night. But this does not mitigate in any way the disgrace; indeed, it announces disgrace, not as a contingent quarrel with neighbours, but as judgement of the community. What had before been gossip or hostile glances becomes common, overt, stripped of the disguises which, however flimsy and artificial, are part of the currency of everyday intercourse.

Perhaps we are sheltered from each other more by artifice than we realise. Two parties to a social pretence, even when each knows perfectly well that the other is pretending, are none the less enabled by that artifice to co-exist. Even hypocrisy is a kind of mist which blurs the hard radiance of mutual hostility. But rough music is a public naming of what has been named before only in private. After that, there is no more mist. The victim must go out into the community the next morning, knowing that in the eyes of every neighbour and of every child he or she is seen as a person disgraced.

It is therefore not surprising that rough music, except in its lightest forms, attached to the victim a lasting stigma. Observers often noted this. The intention of rough music, especially when it was repeated night after night, was, exactly, to 'drum out' the victim(s) from the neighbourhood. 'A Skimmington riding makes many laugh,' an observer noted, 'but the parties for whom they ride never lose the ridicule and disgrace which it attaches.'⁴³ 'As a rule,' noted another observer of 'riding the stang', 'the guilty parties could not afterwards endure the odium thus cast upon them, but made a moonlight flit, i.e. left the neighbourhood clandestinely'.⁴⁴ Of rough music at Woking (Surrey) it was noted that it 'carried with it local ostracism':

In more than one case the culprit was refused regular employment, and it was not unusual for shopkeepers and others to decline their business.⁴⁵

On occasion, rough music could lead on to death, through humiliation (as Hardy suggests in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*) or from suicide.⁴⁶

Not all, and perhaps not the majority, of cases suffered from rough music as brutal as this; common nineteenth-century targets, the quarrelsome couple or the wife-beater, were usually treated somewhat more lightly. For some offences, once the offenders had paid the penalty of being humiliated they might be held to have expiated their offence and subsequently be left alone. But some kinds of sexual offenders were not forgiven; and for these one must suggest that they were subjected to a hostility of magical dimensions, a ritual hunt. The community defined the boundaries of permitted behaviour by expelling the hunted from its protection.

One is thinking here of the village or small town community or the compact urban neighbourhood. For not only individuals or families but also communities have reputations to maintain. There are villages or streets which acquire the reputation of being 'rough'.⁴⁷ Neighbours within a community may be rebuked for their behaviour—'They'll think we're all savages.' Such a community may meet any enquiry from outsiders with extreme reticence, protecting its 'own'. Even intolerable behaviour is tolerated, or kept hidden from outside view,⁴⁸—until and unless the offence is so grave that it is signalled by rough music, which signifies that the offenders are extruded and their neighbours (and perhaps even their kin) don't 'own' them any more.

5) There is a suggestion in some accounts that rough music was performed in the execution of some actual deliberative judgement, however shadowy, in the local community. 'The *Vehm-Gericht* is self-constituted, sits in the tavern, and passes its sentence without summons and hearing of the accused'—thus an observer on the Devon stag-hunt.⁴⁹ At a Staffordshire village 'a committee is formed to examine into the case. Then the village poet is employed to give a history of the occurrence in verse'.⁵⁰ In parts of South Wales there was a 'Coolstrin' court, which sometimes summoned offenders before it, and whose chairman was crowned with the collar-bone of a horse. At Woking (Surrey), where rough music appears to have been institutionalised in unusual strength, there was known to

be a village 'court' that was 'put into shape at an alehouse . . . but when, who by, and how, was kept a profound secret'.⁵¹ Thomas Hardy suggests such a court in the 'Peter's Finger' inn, where 'ex-poachers and ex-gamekeepers, whom squires had persecuted without a cause, sat elbowing each other'.⁵² In less formal senses, the support of the community was assumed: the women loaned their kitchen utensils, the men clubbed together their pennies for beer for the band.⁵³

Even where no 'court' of judgement existed, the essential attribute of rough music appears to be that it only works *if* it works: that is, if (first) the victim is sufficiently 'of' the community to be vulnerable to disgrace, to *suffer* from it: and (second) if the music does indeed express the consensus of the community—or at least of a sufficiently large and dominant part of the community (supported, as was nearly always the case, by the boys who found in a riding a superb occasion for legitimised excitement and aggression, directed against adults) to cow or to silence those others who—while perhaps disapproving of the ritual—shared in some degree the same disapproval of its victim.

When we pass from describing the formal features of rough music to inquiring into its contexts and its functions, we must turn back to nineteenth-century folklorists and observers, who themselves may have been paternalists, observing the 'popular antiquities' of an alien culture across a wide social distance.

Their comments on rough music were often reticent and contradictory. Thus, of the Devon stag-hunt, one observer tells us that it could be held 'only when *two married* people were known to be guilty'. In another part of Devon it 'did not apply to married people' but to youths 'guilty of grave moral offence'; in yet another the victim was 'a male pervert'. A further witness gives us yet another definition:

The stag hunt takes place either on the wedding-night of a man who has married a girl of light character, or when a wife is suspected of having played her husband false.⁵⁴

A similar conflict of evidence arises with the 'skimmington' and 'riding the stang'. Some observers assumed that the 'skimmington' had one target only: 'to put to shame households where the mistress had got the whip-hand of the master'; others emphasise adultery as the occasion; yet others discriminate between two variant forms—the 'skimmington' and 'skimmerton'—applied to different purposes.⁵⁵

The most helpful definitions are, perhaps, those which are least exact and which suggest a fluidity of function. Thus Roberts identified several occasions for 'riding the skimmerton': 1) when a man and his wife quarrel, and he gives up to her; 2) when a woman is unfaithful to her husband, and he submits patiently, without resenting her conduct; 3) any grossly licentious conduct on the part of married persons.⁵⁶ With 'riding the stang', where there is a similar conflict of evidence, Brockett's observation is useful: the ritual was—

inflicted upon fornicators, adulterers, severe husbands, and such persons as follow their occupations during particular festivals or holidays, or at prohibited times, when there is a stand or combination among workmen.⁵⁷

Another account is equally flexible: the ritual 'set forth the public reprobation of certain disgraceful actions, e.g. sins against the seventh commandment, cruelty to women, especially the beating of wives by their husbands, unfaithfulness of workmen to their fellows when on strike, and dishonest tricks in trade'.⁵⁸

It is useful, if arbitrary, to divide these occasions into two groups, which may be described as 'domestic' and 'public', and to examine each separately. We will examine the 'public' group later. Of the 'domestic' group, from many occasions, we may attempt a preliminary subdivision of the offences which occasioned rough music.

1) Specific offences against a patriarchal notion of marital roles. These include wives who beat or assault their husbands; the virago, or scold, or the 'masterful' or nagging wife and the submissive husband; notorious quarrelsomeness in a married couple; and the complaisant cuckold or *mari complaisant*. In all these cases, although the woman may have occasioned the offence, both parties were satirised in the public disgrace, since the husband had failed to establish his patriarchal authority.

2) Rough music—although sometimes of a somewhat lighter character—might be enacted against the remarriage of widows or widowers; and against marriages held by the community to be in some sense ill-assorted, grotesque, founded upon avarice, displaying a great disparity in ages, or even sizes, or in which at least one party to the marriage had a lively premarital sexual reputation.

3) A number of sexual offences could occasion rough music. Unfortunately contemporary definition of the offence is usually evasive and lacking in specificity. Most often, the occasion appears to have been adultery between two married persons. A noted seducer of young women (especially if himself married) could be victimised. On occasion homosexuality or other 'nameless' behaviour, regarded as perversion, was the object. A broken marriage or the sale of a wife could (but usually did not) bring rough music as a sequel.

4) Wife-beating or other ill-treatment of the wife by the husband; and cruelty to children.

Much attention has been given by French scholars to the occasions for charivari in that country, and it seems that for several centuries its main purpose (though by no means the only one) was to attack the remarriage of a widow or widower.⁵⁹ Such second marriages may also have occasioned rough music in England, if accompanied by other circumstances, such as a disparity of ages or the imputed avarice of a young bride for a wealthy old widower. But examples are few. Rough music—and especially the 'skimmington'—was directed until the nineteenth century against those who had offended against male-dominative norms and imperatives (group 1). A 'skimmington'—

Is but a riding, used of course
When the grey mare's the better horse;
When o'er the breeches greedy women
Fight, to extend their vast dominion.⁶⁰

Still in the eighteenth century and, in some regions, in the nineteenth, the 'patriarchal'⁶¹ humiliation of unruly women remains a predominant theme; or of those families in which (as the phrase is) 'the grey mare is the better horse'.⁶² When Henri Misson met in the London streets a woman carrying a straw effigy crowned with a fine pair of horns, 'preceded by a Drum, and follow'd by a Mob, making a most grating Noise with Tongs, Grid-irons, Frying-pans, &c.', he was told that 'a Woman had given her Husband a beating for accusing her of making him a Cuckold, and that upon such Occasions some kind Neighbour of the *poor innocent injur'd Creature* [la pauvre Calomniée] generally perform'd this Ceremony'.⁶³ This was, presumably, London's attenuated 'skimmington', and the mockery was being directed quite as much against the husband

as the wife. But as late as 1838 Mrs. Gaskell (a reliable observer) was writing to Mary Howitt of 'Riding Stang' as 'a custom all over Cheshire', and in its older male-dominative form:

When any woman, a wife more particularly, has been scolding, beating or otherwise abusing the other sex, and is publicly known, she is made to ride stang. A crowd of people assemble towards evening after work hours, with an old, shabby, broken down horse. They hunt out the delinquent . . . and mount her on their Rozinante . . . astride with her face to the tail. So they parade her through the nearest village or town; drowning her scolding and clamour with the noise of frying pans &c, just as you would scare a swarm of bees. And though I have known this done in many instances, I never knew the woman seek any redress, or the avengers proceed to any more disorderly conduct after they had once made the guilty one 'ride stang'.⁶⁴

Many examples could be given of rough music occasioned by offences in groups 2) and 3). Satire upon ill-assorted marriages is recorded. The marriage of a man in his seventies to a girl of eighteen occasioned at Charing Cross in London in 1737 'a grand Hudibrastic Skymmington, composed of the chairmen and others of that class'.⁶⁵ Rough music is still from time to time recorded in the nineteenth century against scolds as well as against husband-beaters.⁶⁶ And against adulterers, seducers of young women, and other kinds of (usually nameless) sexual offenders, it continues.⁶⁷ Ironical rough musics welcome back runaway couples or married partners who have split up and come back together, and wife sales, when they affront neighbourhood opinion in some particular way, can ensue in effigy burning and ran-tanning.⁶⁸ There is, however, one significant shift in occasions in the early years of the nineteenth century: the rapid rise to predominance of offenders in group 4), the wife-beaters. If a similar rise took place in other parts of Europe, it has not yet been recorded.

So large was this shift that the majority of contributors to *Notes and Queries* from the 1850s, and of commentators and editors of regional folklore collections and dialect glossaries in the same years, assume that the inhibition of wife-beating is the primary function of rough music. There is ample evidence to assure us that this was not an invention of folklorists; and some of their accounts suggest accurate observation.

Newspaper reports or legal documents enable one to look a little more closely into such incidents. At a substantial rough musicking at Waddesdon (Buckinghamshire) in 1878, when more than two hundred men, women, and children serenaded one Joseph Fowler on at least two occasions, Fowler explained (in court) that 'the cause of the row was that he had an illegitimate child, and he did not think it was well used, and in consequence gave his wife three stripes'.⁶⁹ One should note that this suggests not just an event (wife-beating), but an event with a *history*, well-known to the community. The victim (Fowler) appears to be a man who was held to have misused his wife in more than one way, and over a period; although she had accepted his illegitimate child into the home, he continued to abuse her.

In a Berkshire case of 1839 we have rather more detail. The immediate history of the event is as follows. The victim, William Goble, was a small farmer, occupying a cottage and a few acres; he was a tenant of Mr. John Walter, but his farm lay in the midst of the estate of a neighbouring landowner, Mr. Simmonds. On Saturday August 17th he and his wife had a quarrel which 'ended in blows'. On Monday, the 19th, Mrs. Goble was 'very unwell', and a surgeon was called in from Wokingham. That evening there was the first occasion of rough music, with sixteen or eighteen men and boys with flags, horns, etc., parading before his house. The music was repeated, by larger numbers, on

no fewer than eight occasions. On the sixth occasion Mr. Walter's son (that is, the landlord's son), his gardener, and several other servants, came to Goble's aid, and there was a scuffle between the parties, which resulted in legal action.

In most respects this appears as characteristic rough musicking. The adults most frequently involved included eight labourers, two carpenters, one sawyer, one blacksmith, one shoemaker, one bricklayer, as well as the groom, coachman, gamekeeper and miller to Mr. Simmonds. The unusual element in the case is the involvement in the affair of the households of two rival landowners' estates; and in subsequent litigation it appeared plausible that Mr. Simmonds was aiding and encouraging the rough music (protracted over an unusual number of days) in the hope of driving Goble (whose lands intruded inconveniently into his estate) out of his tenancy. And beneath the rivalry of the two gentlemen we find a further layer of rivalry again, between the households and the young men attached to the Walter estate (Bearwood) and the Simmonds estate (Aborfield). During the course of the affair the Bearwood gardener (who was among the party which came to Goble's aid) received an anonymous letter, accusing the Bearwood men of being 'licktrenchers', and comparing the Bearwood butler to 'a tom tit upon a round of Beef'. The letter concluded: 'If I was your wife you should not have a bit of Sugar in your tea I would put a turd in to see if that would sweeten it . . .'⁷⁰

An unsatisfactory case; but if one knew more of any case, it might well prove to be equally unsatisfactory. It emphasises that context is generally thicker and more complex than is disclosed by any superficial view. Wife-beating is a simple explanation: but in any community both wife and husband, and their marital history, are known to the neighbours; and even the most 'domestic' of incidents takes place within the context of other tensions and allegiances. Thus in this case we appear to have a marital episode provoking the traditional response among some, and serving as a pretext for others. The victim is, in a sense, an 'alien' on a boundary: his lands lie within another estate. And his offence touches off a rivalry between two neighbouring gentry, and also between the households and youth of two adjacent rural communities.

The diversity of the forms and occasions for rough music should discourage any attempt to propose one single function as *the* function for the 'skimmington' or 'stang'. These forms were, as I have suggested, part of the symbolic vocabulary of the time, capable of being expressed in sentences with different meanings. But it was not just *any* vocabulary, for each symbol was evocative of meaning in its own right: the man sitting mutely with a distaff in his hands, being belaboured by a man in woman's clothes; the symbolism of effigies and gallows; the metaphors of the hunt. If we are right to resist a structuralist analysis in which the mythic constituents from which charivari may have been derived assume ascendancy over the social process and replace it by formal logic, so also we must guard against disintegrating the mythic properties into a plastic empiricism of one case after another, defined only by their manifest functions. Between myth, on one hand, and function, on the other, there is—Carlo Ginzburg has reminded us—the intermediacy of rehearsed and transmitted *rites*.⁷¹ Those who enact these rites may have long forgotten their mythic origins. Yet the rites themselves powerfully evoke mythic meanings, even if only fragmentarily and half-consciously understood. Rough music is a vocabulary which brushes the carnival at one extreme and the gallows at the other; which is about crossing forbidden frontiers or mixing alien categories; which traffics in transvestism and inversion; whose flaring bonfires may recall heretics or even hell whose horned master brings to mind the cuckold who is mocked. Still, in the early years of this century, a boy (whom

I later knew as a vigorous man) witnessed a rough music in industrial Yorkshire, and said it was 'like devil's madjic'.

But this vocabulary was not re-enacted involuntarily by village yokels as if they were somnambulists in the possession of a 'folk memory'. If we are always to discard the meanings given to an event by the participants themselves, and search instead for an ulterior meaning more in conformity to the structure of myth, then this is to diminish the rationality and stature of the actors and underestimate the self-awareness of illiterate people. They may not have read *Mythologiques*, but they had their own notions as to what they were turning out about.

The shift to wife-beaters as prime targets for rough music in Britain in the nineteenth century could be an index of profound changes in gender relations. It suggests, with the corresponding dying-away of 'skimmingtons', some decomposition of the older 'patriarchal' framework. And while such rough musics were generally led by men or youths,⁷² with children (often of both sexes) as followers, there are a few pieces of evidence to suggest that women were on occasion leading the actions or turning them to their own account.⁷³

In Glamorgan in the early nineteenth century there is an account of the women in one community refusing to support a rough music procession aimed at a couple where the wife had beaten her husband. They remained indoors and 'mocked at [the men] through the windows', while some 'collected to scoff' at the house of the victims and 'poured out a din of hoots and yells' to drown the rough music band.⁷⁴ One wonders if other communities witnessed a similar turning of the tide? In one (half-remembered?) Lincolnshire variant on the 'stang nominy', the women are incited to deal with the husband-beater in their own way:

Ran, tan, tan!
 The sign of the old tin kettle, and the old tin pan.

 Old Abram Higback has been paying his good woman;
 But he neither paid her for what or for why,
 But he up with his fist, and blacked her eye.

 Now all ye old women, and old women kind,
 Get together, and be in a mind;
 Collar him, and take him to the shit-house,
 And shove him over head.

 Now if that does not mend his manners,
 The skin of his arse must go to the tanners;
 And if that does not mend his manners,
 Take him and hing him on a nail in Hell.

 And if the nail happens to crack,
 Down with your flaps, and at him piss.⁷⁵

So it is possible that the rough musicking of wife-beaters indicates some 'reform' of popular manners or amelioration of the lot of wives. But I cannot share the confidence of Edward Shorter, who, citing my own earlier article, argued that the evidence confirms 'the early modernization of domestic relationships in England':

As egalitarian relationships between husband and wife diffused, the community began to perceive as intolerable such vestiges of earlier patriarchal authority as the right to slam one's wife about; and so it moved to rebuke wife-beaters.⁷⁶

I do not know firm evidence that 'egalitarian relationships' between husband and wife were becoming diffused in England by 1850. Some historians have noted a decline in the respect afforded to women during the industrial revolution. I repeat my earlier warning: the increase in rough music against wife-beaters could with equal reason be read as an index to the increasing brutality with which some wives were being treated, or as to their loss of other 'traditional' defences in this situation. It is not even clear that 'patriarchal authority' in the older tradition included approval for husbands who 'slammed their wives about', for, in an older masculine code of honour and shame, women could be sheltered from male violence by the notion that such assaults were 'unmanly'. In most traditional societies, the defence of the maltreated wife is the responsibility of her male kin, and in the first place of her brothers. This defence might be supplemented by the intervention of the priest. In England, between 1800 and 1850, various factors could have operated to bring about a new kind of crisis. Geographic mobility could have removed more wives from the protection of their kin. The English clergy had no confessional and rather little pastoral role—they were not frequent visitors to labourers' homes. The law afforded little protection to the wife treated with brutality. Is it possible that there were more frequent instances of the inhibitions upon male marital violence—inhibitions which in the older community would have been upheld by neighbourhood opinion or kin—breaking down? In such circumstances the community may have turned the old forms of rough music to new account.

In any case, rough music was not automatic and was not always visited upon an offence. We do not have a 'pre-industrial society' in which 'community norms imposed themselves with steely force', as if acting out an inherited cultural programming, until 'modernization' brought enlightenment.⁷⁷ Not all wife-beaters were ran-tanned or burned in effigy.

It is the same when sexual offenders are the target. Because certain adulterers were rough musicked, it cannot be assumed that we are observing a community of pagan puritans, for whom marital fidelity was an imperative. To be sure, the rituals emphasise that the working people did not live in casual, unstructured promiscuity. Even where the marriage rites of the church were ignored, or where there was a large tolerance of premarital intercourse, the society maintained distinct norms of sexual behaviour.

These norms, however, should not be set up as absolutes. Where adultery was the evident target, it is possible that the community was incensed to this degree, not so much by the fact, as by the 'flagrancy' with which it was committed and which might threaten the institution of marriage itself, as when a married person eloped with another married partner,⁷⁸ or when two couples (or two partners) attempted to change spouses and to remain living within the same small community, or a *ménage-à-trois*.⁷⁹

The decisive factor may be whether offenders are already unpopular for other reasons. I was told by an informant in Somerset of a man who had been rough musicked because he had been detected in keeping a very young woman (whom he had met at a fair) as his secret mistress. But this did not demonstrate that all such liaisons, in this industrial village, called forth rough music. For this offender was unpopular for other reasons: he lived in an isolated cottage, and was a professing Methodist and teetotaler, who earned his living by delivering cider to public houses. He was held to be an outsider and a censorious hypocrite. No doubt the rough music was planned in the local pub, whose customers enjoyed publicising their teetotal opponent's scandal.⁸⁰

Hence the compilation of occasions for rough music is not enough. We need, even more, a detailed inner history of even a few particular incidents, and the recovery of their contexts. That is why David Rollison's remarkable study of a 'groaning' in the

Gloucestershire village of Westonbirt in 1716 is such an important addition to our understanding.⁸¹ This 'groaning' was a piece of street theatre, to which all and sundry were invited, savagely mocking a substantial farmer and bailiff accused of sodomy; it employed elements in rough music's vocabulary—transvestism, blasphemy, obscenity and drama. But it does not prove that all homosexuals were visited with rough music. In Rollison's recovery of the episode he is aided by an unusually rich archive of letters passing between the village and its absentee (but vigilant) landowner, who felt himself to be scandalised, and good order and established religion to be mocked in the insult to his bailiff. The episode arose out of a history, and the supposed offender was decisively unpopular for other reasons. The 'groaning' enlarges in meaning and is enriched in complexity when placed in this context, and at the same time it floods this context with its eccentric and eerie light. It is an exemplary study, which may be set beside the 'skimmington' in Hardy's *Mayor of Casterbridge*—which also acquired its meaning in a context and from a history.

Plastic in 'domestic' contexts, the forms could be adapted also to 'public' occasions. Rough music was applied to a score of purposes. Petty theft from one's neighbours appears to have been one occasion. In 1691 in a Warwickshire village two offenders were musicked by the smith (dressed as an old woman) and a farmer (wearing buck's horns) at the head of a hundred others who 'tumultuously and riotously led a dance forwards and backwards across the town . . . for the space of three hours', shouting in chorus outside the victims' house: 'Pay for the timber, you rogue, you cuckoldy dog, you stole', and 'pay for the clocking [chickens] and ducks, you whore'.⁸² But it could, equally, be used in a different direction altogether, 'to mark disapproval of a magisterial decision',⁸³ or of an officious or severe prosecution. The prosecutor of a boy (who had been stealing eggs) at Iver (Buckinghamshire) in 1878 brought rough music down upon his own head: his effigy was burned to the accompaniment of shouts of 'quack, quack'.⁸⁴ More serious and sustained was an outbreak at Ampthill (Bedfordshire) in 1817, following upon the conviction and execution of a local man for rape. As many as two hundred people assembled on successive nights before the house of the prosecutrix, exhibiting obscene effigies of herself and of her father and mother, stoning the house, and 'hallooing and charging the family with having hung the man'. The trouble was ended only when four of the actors were imprisoned.⁸⁵

Rough music was also employed against unpopular officials. In 1797 a tallow chandler, a yeoman and five labourers were indicted for their part in an affair at Belchamp St. Paul's (Essex); they had mounted the effigy of a resident excise officer on an ass, paraded it before his house, fired guns at it, and burned the effigy at a stake on the green—on three occasions.⁸⁶ Instances can be found of rough music employed against the police;⁸⁷ against informers;⁸⁸ against body snatchers;⁸⁹ against crimps; against unpopular preachers⁹⁰ and Mormons,⁹¹ against the unfair dismissal of a servant, eviction from a tied cottage, and against gamekeepers. In a well-reported case at Chilton (Buckinghamshire) in 1878 a crowd of some twenty or thirty men and boys rough musicked (for the third time) Mr. Augustus Campbell of Chilton House, his gamekeeper, and his coachman. It is clear that the villagers believed that the gamekeeper, on Campbell's orders, was shooting or poisoning their dogs if they strayed onto the estate, but the landowner and his servants may have been unpopular for other reasons too, since he was an in-comer from Berkshire.⁹²

Rough music was commonly adapted to industrial conflict. The 'cool-staffing' (or cowl-staffing) of blacklegs by West Country weavers was a riding of them to a duck pond

on a pole,⁹⁵ just as the ‘stang’ was used in the same way by pitmen and seamen in the North-East. The usage was especially widespread in the West, the heartland of the ‘skimmington’, and the ritual vocabulary was also employed in actions against workhouses and turnpikes.⁹⁴ In London a wheelbarrow could take the place of a ‘stang’: it was used in this way in 1696 against a journeyman hatter working beneath the rates.⁹⁵ Southwark hat-dyers, in 1770—

took one of their brother journeymen into custody, whom they charged with working over hours without any more pay, and for taking under price. They obliged him to mount an ass, and ride through all the parts of the Borough where hatters were employed . . . a label was carried on a pole before him, denoting his offence, and a number of boys attended with shovels, playing the rough music. At all shops they came to in their way of business, they obliged the men to strike, in order to have their wages raised.⁹⁶

Rough music on various occasions was being employed in London—notably Kentish London—until the end of the nineteenth century. It was employed in Woolwich in 1870 with great ceremony against a waterman convicted of carrying more faul than he was licensed to carry; in this case, his effigy was paraded by fellow watermen accompanied by a rough band, placed in a barge, set to float on the Thames, fired at, and ultimately burned.⁹⁷

One might cite many other examples. These were commonplace in industrial conflict, at least until the early nineteenth century, and the ‘ran-tanning’ of blacklegs continues into the twentieth century. But there appears to have been only one occasion in Britain when ritual forms were deeply involved with activity of mass dimensions. These occur in the early nineteenth century in Wales, and are associated with the *ceffyl pren*.

In the 1820s and 1830s in parts of South Wales the *ceffyl pren* was increasingly brought into use against ‘public’ offenders—in agrarian grievances, against prosecutors in cases of petty theft, against unpopular municipal officials, etc. The translation of the ritual from the private to the public domain was viewed by the authorities with anxiety:

The right which is thus arrogated of judging . . . another man’s domestic conduct, is certainly characteristic of a rude state of society; when the same measures are applied to . . . thwarting the operation of the laws of the land, they become of much more serious import. The principle is perfectly Irish, and . . . contains the germ of resistance to legal orders.⁹⁸

This last observation was borne out by the use of the *ceffyl pren* in the ‘Rebecca riots’ against the turnpike tolls in South Wales in the 1840s. The ‘Scotch Cattle’ disturbances in the mining areas of the early 1820s (mainly in Monmouthshire) had already evinced ritualistic elements: men, with blackened faces, dressed as women; animal-guising with horns, skins, and masks; the blowing of horns, lowing, rattling of chains, and firing of guns outside the homes of blacklegs or informers.⁹⁹

In the 1830s and into the 1840s the practices of the *ceffyl pren* extended through Carmarthenshire, until the ‘laws of the land’ gave way to the law of ‘Rebecca’, the mythical leader (as well as the *nom-de-plume*) of the agrarian rebels.¹⁰⁰ At the height of the disturbances, ‘Rebecca’ extended her authority simultaneously over the private and public realms. Her followers delivered children to the doors of their putative fathers, threatened young men who refused to marry the girls they had ‘betrayed’, warned husbands to stop beating their wives, and forcibly reconciled the astonished vicar of Bangor Teify to his separated wife, while at the same time pursuing the campaign against turnpikes, articulating agrarian grievances, and intimidating informers against her rule.

In the end 'Rebecca' ceded her temporal authority, but undoubtedly her spiritual dictatorship survived for much longer, and in ways which only a Welsh-speaking historian will be able to disclose. There is a report as late as 1898 from Llanbister in Radnorshire, describing the descent of a 'Rebecca' gang, with blackened faces, upon the (separate) houses of a man and woman who had made some 'breach of the laws of morality'. Both in a nearly naked state (it was January) were forced to walk backwards and forwards in a stream for twenty minutes, and then to run up and down the fields while they were beaten with straps and sticks. They were then taken back to the man's house, where 'Rebecca' sat in judgement. They were condemned to undergo further flogging, and to march up and down the fields hand in hand. Their hair was cut off, and they were threatened with tar and feathers (which was not in the end used).¹⁰¹ The incident reminds us that the rituals of rough music and charivari, transposed across the Atlantic, contributed not only to the good-humoured 'shivaree' but may also have given something to lynch law and the Ku Klux Klan. And it suggests, finally, that we might look again at certain manifestations of popular retribution in the twentieth century, to see whether similar ritual elements might not be present also in these: to the public humiliation after the liberation of European countries of women who had kept company with members of the occupying forces during World War II, or to the rites of public humiliation practised during the Cultural Revolution in China.

'Public' rough music presents few analytical problems. In its industrial forms it is clear enough what offences blacklegs had committed and whose popular 'law' was being enforced. As more becomes known about the popular dimension of eighteenth-century politics in London and the cities, so elements in the vocabulary of rough music—mocking, obscenities and the emblems of cuckoldry—turn out to be everywhere. They are employed by Tories, Whigs, the followers of Wilkes, and the ungoverned 'mob' alike. It would be foolish even to begin to cite examples, since such symbols were the medium of discourse, and sometimes of negotiation, between the plebs and the patricians. Crowd actions were sometimes little other than the manipulation of these symbols, in the endeavour to demystify authority or to ridicule political opponents.¹⁰²

One doubts whether it is useful to debate whether rough music belonged to a plebeian, as contrasted with a consensual, tradition. Certainly, until late in the eighteenth century the vocabulary was well enough understood among all social classes. Domestic rough music was socially conservative, in the sense that it defended custom and male-dominative tradition, and Ingram has argued that the élite saw little threat in it and were casual in their attempts to put the practices down. On the other hand, rough music was always potentially subversive, with its rites of inversion, its blasphemies and obscenities, and, as Rollison has shown in his study of the 'groaning' at Westonbirt, it could rapidly acquire a polemical social meaning. In the eighteenth century, as the distance widened between the culture of the patricians and that of the plebs, so rough music became more distinctively a plebeian form. It thrived, as a means of self-regulation, above all in certain kinds of 'peasant' and of proto-industrial community.¹⁰³ Yet rough music cannot be claimed as a 'working-class' tradition, for the forms were imperfectly integrated into the early organised labour movement. Luddism depended for its success upon the swift movements of small groups of men in silence; the oaths and ceremonies of illegal trade unions grew out of a different group of rituals. And thereafter it appears to be true that the more sophisticated, organised, and politically-conscious the movement, the less indebtedness it shows to traditional forms of folk violence: The Chartists of Monmouthshire put behind them the forms of the 'Scotch Cattle'.¹⁰⁴

The burning of effigies, accompanied by tumult or processional, might appear to offer an exception to this generalisation. This continued in vigorous use into the present century (it is by no means extinct today), and it was often employed by the 'radicals'. It was employed (among many examples) by the English 'Jacobin' reformers of the 1790s; against the magistrates and yeomanry after 'Peterloo' in 1819; during the agitations for the Reform Bill of 1832; and against unpopular landowners or farmers during the labourers' agitation of the 1870s in the Eastern Counties.

But effigy burning is not a noted method of the Chartists, nor of reform and trade union agitations generally. This may have been because reformers sensed, in the very forms, a disposition to favour the traditional—or even atavistic—mood of the people. For it was a form which was used, very consciously, by traditionalists against reformers or out-groups. After Guy Fawkes, the most burned-in-effigy man in British history was without any doubt Tom Paine. When the rites of rough music survive after 1815 they appear to have an increasingly socially conservative character.

So much is easy to set down: and it may mean less than it seems to mean, for it is by no means easy to identify the kind of nineteenth-century community in which rough music survived longest. While the elaborated forms of the ritual were clearly a folklorist's delight, while such forms as 'wooset-hunting' and the stag-hunt were recorded in isolated West Country villages with names like Ogburne St. George, Whitechurch Canonorum and Okeford Fitzpaine, and can be seen as animated ethnological vestiges, exotic blow-flies in rural amber, at the same time good old-fashioned rough music continued vigorously in an urban and industrial context. We have noted it in Kentish London; it was vigorous in mid nineteenth-century Huddersfield or Pudsey in the West Yorkshire industrial belt;¹⁰⁵ and in Gorton, near Manchester, when a married surgeon who had eloped with a patient's wife was the object, Gorton cotton mills were closed for half a day in order that eight hundred factory hands could take part.¹⁰⁶ There is, even in such cases, a sense that rough music belonged in some way to the 'older', 'rougher' parts of the town; but it is difficult to detect exactly what such descriptions imply, unless the tautology that places where rough music persisted must be rough.

I would hazard that there may be a relation between the continuity of rough music and the continuity of local dialect. (The *ceffyl pren* persisted most vigorously in Welsh-speaking regions, such as Carmarthen.) The rites belong in an orally-transmitted culture, and the strength of dialect signals also the tenacity of a traditional consciousness, upheld (perhaps) in some villages by closely-knitted kinship. Both dialect and customs can reproduce themselves together, and can long persist into mature industrial society. But at a certain point those engines of cultural acceleration, literacy and schooling, combine with increasing in-migration and general mobility, to 'saturate' the old culture, to disperse it as a living practice, to break down the old sensibility, leaving nothing but antiquarian survivals.

What then may survive, in pockets in urban districts and, more often, in the remote countryside, are certain old traditions maintained sometimes by particular occupational groups who are at odds with the politer modern norms and who are seen by their neighbours as 'rough' or 'ruffians' (i.e. 'rough 'uns'). In the North Yorkshire village of Kirkby Malzeard 'stang riding' still was being practised at the end of the last century, with a variant of the old 'nominy'. It always originated in the pub. 'Everything originated in the pub in them days. They'd all be leaders', recalled an informant in 1971. The initiators were a small group of men: building workers, a blacksmith, itinerant labourers who worked at various jobs, working on estates, at fair grounds, hedging and dyking in the winter;

'they were rough types', poachers, heavy drinkers—if they thought they could get a glass of beer they'd bray owt'. But they were also the people who kept alive the 'Plough Stots' and the complex Sword Dance of Kirkby Malzeard, and who performed it for money or drink at fairs and at flower shows:

These sort used to go sword dancing—but they always used to spend the money on beer, and sleep out in the woods . . . But the Stang was different. They did that because working class people are more faithful to their wives than are t'nobs. And anyone as beats 'is wife up or a child is a bad 'un. They really had to feel very, very strongly about this carry-on. Then it was a big disgrace, it brought it out in the open. They didn't do it just for a lark.

The last time the 'stang' was ridden in Kirkby Malzeard was because a labourer had been beating his wife:

He'd a houseful of kids—ten or a dozen children. It had got out that he'd been braying his wife—coming home from the pub, she'd be there with a houseful of kids, and then he'd start in and bashed her about.

They got a big effigy which they fastened on a hand-cart, 'and these big brawling chaps they went to the house and bumped on the door'. As they went down the village street they rang a big bell and reeled off 'the ditty'. 'They used to make such a din and commotion people would pay anything to get them away.'¹⁰⁷

This sounds folksy and even reassuring. But rough music could also be an excuse for a drunken orgy or for blackmail. It could legitimise the aggression of youths, and (if one may whisper it) youths are not always, in every historical context, protagonists of rationality or of change. I make the point strongly, arguing in a sense with part of myself, for I find much that attracts me in rough music. It is a property of a society in which justice is not wholly delegated or bureaucratised, but is enacted by and within the community. Where it is enacted upon an evident malefactor—some officious public figure or a brutal wife-beater—one is tempted to lament the passing of the rites. But the victims were not all of this order. They might equally be some lonely sexual non-conformist, some Sue Bridehead and Jude Fawley living together out of holy wedlock. And the psychic terrorism which could be brought to bear upon them was truly terrifying: the flaring and lifelike effigies, with their ancient associations with heretic-burning and the maiming of images—the magical or daemonic suggestiveness of masking and of animal-guising—the flaunting of obscenities—the driving out of evil spirits with noise.

Rough music belongs to a mode of life in which some part of the law belongs still to the community and is theirs to enforce. To this one may assent. It indicates modes of social self-control and the disciplining of certain kinds of violence and antisocial offence (insults to women, child abuse, wife-beating) which in today's cities may be breaking down. But, when we consider the societies which have been under our examination, one must add a rider. Because law belongs to people, and is not alienated, or delegated, it is not thereby made necessarily more 'nice' and tolerant, more cosy and folksy. It is only as nice and as tolerant as the prejudices and norms of the folk allow. Some forms of rough music disappeared from history in shadowy complicity with bigotry, jingoism and worse. In Sussex rough music was visited upon 'pro-Boers', including William Morris's close friend, Georgie Burne-Jones. In Bavaria the last manifestations of *haberfeldtreiben* were linked to mafia-like blackmail, anti-semitism and, in the final stage, to ascendant Nazism.¹⁰⁸ For some of its victims, the coming of a distanced (if alienated) Law and a bureaucratised police must have been felt as a liberation from the tyranny of one's 'own'.

NOTES

1. OED offers an early use of 'rough music' in 1708, but it is noted as 'the harmony of tinging kettles and frying pans' in R. Cotgrove, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (1611). Regional terms such as 'skimmington', 'lowbelling', 'hussiting' and 'riding the stang' were probably more generally used, for which see Joseph Wright, *The English Dialect Dictionary*, 6 vols. (1896-1905).
2. For French sources see the bibliography in Jacques le Goff and Jean Claude Schmitt (eds.), *Le Charivari* (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 1981), pp. 435-42. This is cited hereafter as *Le Charivari*. For Italy, A. del Vecchio, *Le Secondo Nozze* (Firenze, 1885), esp. pp. 290-301. For Germany, E. Hoffmann-Krayer and H. Bachtold-Staubli, *Handwörterbuch des Deutschen Aberglaubens* (Berlin, 1931-2), entries under 'Katzenmusik', 'Haberfeldtreiben', 'Thierjagen', etc.; George Phillips, *Ueber den Ursprung der Katzenmusiken* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1849), and the contributions of Ian Farr and Ernst Hinrichs in *Le Charivari*.
3. See Violet Alford, 'Rough Music or Charivari', *Folklore*, lxx (1959), p. 507; H. Usener, 'Italische Volksjustiz', *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, lxi (1901), and the section of contributions in *Le Charivari* on ancient and medieval Europe.
4. *Annales E.S.C.* (1972). Some passages from that article reappear in the present one.
5. See Thomas Hardy's admirably-observed novel, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1884). A Leicestershire dialect dictionary adds: 'Pokers and tongs, marrow-bones and cleavers, warming-pans and tin kettles, cherry-clacks and whistles, constables' rattles, and bladders with peas in them, cow's horns and tea-trays' as well as 'yells and hisses': A. B. and S. Evans, *Leicestershire Words, Phrases and Proverbs* (1881).
6. E. Peacock, *A Glossary of Words used in . . . Manley and Corringham, Lincs.* (English Dialect Society, 1887), p. 208.
7. See M. A. Courtney, 'Cornish Folk-Lore', *Folk-Lore Journal V* (1887), 216-17; A. L. Rowse, *A Cornish Childhood* (1942), pp. 8-9.
8. Sabine Baring-Gould, *The Red Spider* (1887), ii, pp. 78, 109; Theo Brown, 'The "Stag-Hunt" in Devon', *Folklore*, xliii (1952), pp. 104-9. Cf. Carlo Ginzburg on 'Charivari, associations juveniles, chasse sauvage' in *Le Charivari*, pp. 131-40.
9. F. A. Carrington, 'Of Certain Wiltshire Customs', *Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine*, i (1854), pp. 88-9. Until recently a frightening and diabolic horned mask used in such rituals survived in Dorset; see H. S. L. Dewar, 'The Dorset Ooser' (Dorchester, 1968).
10. Enid Porter, *Cambridgeshire Customs and Folklore* (1969), pp. 9-10.
11. T. Brockett, *A Glossary of North Country Words in Use* (Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1829).
12. S. O. Addy, *A Glossary of Words Used in the Neighbourhood of Sheffield* (1888), pp. 185-6; Thomas Wright, *The Archaeological Album* (1845), pp. 54-6.
13. W. E. A. Axon, *Cheshire Gleanings* (Manchester, 1884), pp. 300-1; Mrs. Gutch, *County Folk-Lore: East Riding of Yorkshire* (1912), pp. 130-3.
14. Mrs. Gutch, *op. cit.* Other examples of such recitatives or 'nomyns' are in A. Easther and T. Lees, *A Glossary of the Dialect of Almondbury and Huddersfield* (1883), pp. 128-9; R. Blakeborough, *Character, Folklore and Custom of the North Riding of Yorkshire* (1898), p. 89; George Ratcliffe, *Sixty Years of It* (London and Hull, n.d. c. 1935), p. 2; G. Oliver, *Y, Byrde of Gryme* (Grimsby, 1866), pp. 207-8; Thomas Miller, *Our Old Town* (1857), p. 198; Axon, *op. cit.*, p. 301; E. Cooper, *Muker: the Story of a Yorkshire Parish* (Clapham, 1948), p. 84; *Yorkshire Notes and Queries*, ed. C. F. Forshaw (Bradford, i, 1905), p. 209; *N & Q*, 9th series, i (11 June 1898), p. 479; *Folk-Lore Journal*, i (1883), pp. 394-6.
15. The 'nomy' (traditional doggerel accompanying the riding) is not the same as lampoons or rhymes made for the occasion, which Martin Ingram treats together with rough music in 'Riding, Rough Music and Mocking Rhymes in Early Modern England', in Barry Reay (ed.), *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (1985).
16. Edwin Grey, *Cottage Life in a Hertfordshire Village* (St. Albans, n.d.), pp. 160-2.
17. James Hardy (ed.), *The Denham Tracts* (1895), ii, p. 5.
18. James M. Carpenter was collecting in the late 1920s and early 1930s. My thanks to Roy Palmer and to Malcolm Taylor (librarian) for copies of records at Cecil Sharp House; the originals are in the Library of Congress.

19. Axon, *op. cit.*, pp. 330-1, citing Charles Hulbert, *History and Description of the County of Salop* (1828).

20. See especially Martin Ingram, 'Ridings, Rough Music and the "Reform of Popular Culture" in Early Modern England', *Past and Present*, 105 (1984), and David Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion* (Oxford, 1985), *passim*.

21. See Ingram, 'Ridings', p. 82, whose transcription corrects that in *Folklore*, xli (1930), pp. 287-90.

22. *Somerset County Herald*, 24 Aug. 1946; also 23 and 30 Aug. 1952. My thanks to John Fletcher for directing me to this and other sources.

23. G. Roberts, *The History and Antiquities of Lyme Regis and Charmouth* (1834), pp. 256-61.

24. See e.g. *N & Q*, 4th series, xi (1873), p. 455, referring to an occasion in Bermondsey (London) 'about thirty years ago'.

25. J. S. Udal, *Dorsetshire Folklore* (Hertford, 1922), pp. 195-6, citing the *Bridport News*, Nov. 1884.

26. See C. Phythian-Adams, 'Ceremony and the Citizen: the Communal Year at Coventry, 1500-1700', in Peter Clark and Paul Slack (eds.), *Crisis and Order in English Towns, 1500-1700* (1972).

27. See Ingram, 'Riding, Rough Music and Mocking Rhymes'.

28. PRO, WO 30/17, pp. 68-9.

29. *Sherborne, Dorchester and Taunton Journal* (1845) reported in *Somerset County Herald*, 23 Aug. 1952.

30. See Douglas Hay, Peter Linebaugh and E. P. Thompson, *Albion's Fatal Tree* (1975). Compare Natalie Z. Davis, 'The Rites of Violence', *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 1975).

31. Among examples of burial: *Leicester Herald*, 17 Apr. 1833 (an unpopular employer is rough musicked by framework knitters, his effigy is carried around on a gallows, executed by gunfire, placed in a grave, and then burned); *Hampshire and Berkshire Gazette*, 4 Feb. 1882 (a man who has jilted a woman whom he has been courting for several years—his effigy is carried through the village, the funeral knell is tolled, the effigy is hanged, cut down, shot at and burned); *Gloucester Standard*, 8 Oct. 1892 (the 'Dead March' is played during the rough musicking of 'scabs' in a boot and shoemakers dispute).

32. Alfred Young, 'Pope's Day, Tar and Feathers and Cornet Joyce, Jun' (forthcoming), discusses both American and English sources; C. S. Burne, 'Guy Fawkes Day', *Folk-Lore*, xxiii, 4 (1912).

33. Rough music often flourished on November 5th, when it was the custom to make effigies of 'any evil doer, bad liver, or unpopular person' in the village and burn these before their homes (example, an unmarried couple): *Trans. Devon Assoc.*, lxvi (1934). See the excellent essay '“Please to Remember the Fifth of November”': Conflict, Solidarity and Public Order in Southern England, 1815-1900', in Robert E. Storch, *Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth-Century England* (1982), esp. pp. 82-4. John Fletcher, a famous wizard in Pilton, has collected many examples of Guy Fawkes rough musickings in nineteenth-century Somerset: Glastonbury, Wells and Bridgewater being especially ebullient.

34. *Exeter Flying Post*, 2 Oct. 1817; U. Radford, 'The Loyal Saddler of Exeter', *Trans. Devon Assoc.*, lxv (1933), pp. 227-35.

35. *Halifax Guardian*, 20 Jan. 1844. Thanks to Dorothy Thompson.

36. *Hampshire Chronicle*, 11 Feb. 1782. Thanks to John Rule.

37. The late Mr. G. Ewart Evans kindly loaned to me a tape of an account given to him by Mrs. Flack of Depden Green, near Bury St. Edmunds in 1964, who described such 'music' as very common until 1920 at weddings. People of 'all sorts' gathered, and were asked in for drinks. She recalled only one occasion where it was used against supposed offenders. In London and elsewhere butchers' men made up bands, with marrowbones beating on cleavers (ground to the production of notes like a peal of bells), and attended wedding parties until paid off with money or beer: R. Chambers, *The Book of Days* (1878), i, p. 360.

38. See Ingram, 'Riding, Rough Music and Mocking Rhymes', pp. 94-6. 'Wooset' or 'hooset' hunting seems to be a cousin to Christmas and animal-guising customs, such as the hooden horse in East Kent and souling in Cheshire; see P. Maylam, *The Hooden Horse, an East Kent Christmas Custom* (Canterbury, 1909), ch. 4; Violet Alford, *The Hobby Horse and other Animal Masks* (1978).

39. Thomas Wilson, *The Pitman's Pay, and Other Poems* (Gateshead, 1843), pp. 56-63.
40. *Newcastle Chronicle*, 7 and 21 May 1785, 4 Nov. 1792; *Sunderland Herald*, 12 Feb. 1851; W. Henderson, *Notes on the Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties of England and the Borders* (1879), p. 30. In February 1783 at the close of the first American war sailors got shore leave and revenged themselves upon informers who had betrayed them to the press-gang by 'stanging' them through the streets; the women 'bedaubed them plentifully with rotten eggs, soap suds, mud, &c.' One was treated so severely on the 'stang' that he subsequently died: 'The Press Gang in the Northern Counties', *Monthly Chronicle of North Country Lore and Legend*, v. 47 (1891).
41. This was especially the case with blacklegs, and also with sexual offenders if taken *flagrante delicto*: W. Woodman, 'Old Customs of Morpeth', *History of the Berwickshire Naturalists Club*, xiv (1894), p. 127. There are infrequent cases of running a victim out of town in nineteenth-century England (e.g. R. L. Tongue, *Somerset Folklore* (1965), p. 181 for a 'wicked' old woman run out on a hurdle with tin cans tied round it accompanied by a rough band—a practice more common in the New World).
42. R. de B. Trotter, *Galloway Gossip* (Dumfries, 1901), p. 442. My thanks to Roy Palmer.
43. Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 260.
44. *N & Q*, 5th series, v (1876).
45. A. C. Bickley, 'Some Notes on a Custom at Woking Surrey', *Home Counties Magazine*, iv (1902), p. 28.
46. For suicide resulting from rough music, see *Caledonian Mercury*, 29 Mar. 1736 (occasion: wife-beating); *Northampton Herald*, 16 Apr. 1853—attempted suicide of married labourer who had fathered the child of an unmarried young woman.
47. See M. K. Ashby, *Joseph Ashby of Tysoe* (1974), pp. 150-1.
48. Folklore collectors often found this reticence quite impenetrable, especially on sexual matters. They were not only outsiders geographically but also (being genteel or middle class) socially. I have been asked by informants not to mention names or details of persons rough musicked fifty or more years ago, because children or grandchildren still live in the village. Other enquirers have told me of the same resistance.
49. Baring-Gould, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 78.
50. *N & Q*, 1st series, ix, 17 June (1854), p. 578.
51. Bickley, *op. cit.* The same author, in a novel, *Midst Surrey Hills: a Rural Stay* (1890), devotes a chapter to a reconstruction of such a tavern 'court'. For a consultation at the smithy, see Hardy (ed.), *The Denham Tracts*, ii, p. 4. For the 'Coolstrin' court in South Wales, see W. Sikes, *British Goblins: Welsh Folklore &c* (1880) and John Gillis, *For Better, For Worse* (Oxford, 1985), p. 133.
52. See Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, ch. 36.
53. See e.g. *N & Q*, 2nd series, x (1860), p. 477. An elderly informant, Mr. Gustavus Pettit of Leamington Spa, who witnessed a rough music when he was a child in the last years of the last century, told me that he overheard adult labourers planning the affair in a communal wash-house attached to a group of cottages: see also *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 10 Sept. 1970.
54. Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-7; Baring-Gould, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 78; Baring-Gould, *A Book of Folklore* (1913), pp. 251-2.
55. *N & Q*, 4th series, iii, 26 June (1868), p. 608; *ibid.*, 4th series, xi, 15 March (1873), p. 225; *ibid.*, 4th series, iii, 5 June (1869), p. 529; Tongue, *op. cit.*, p. 181.
56. Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp. 256-7.
57. Brocket, *op. cit.*, entry for 'Riding the Stang'.
58. W. Henderson, *Notes of the Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties of England and the Borders* (1879), p. 29.
59. For a survey of the French and other Continental evidence see my *Customs in Common*, pp. 493-8.
60. From the fullest literary account of a 'skimmington riding', in Samuel Butler, *Hudibras*, Second Part, Canto II, ed. J. Wilders (Oxford, 1967), pp. 142-9. The Second Part of this poem was first published in 1663-7.
61. I have placed this word in inverted commas because its use can involve us in difficulties; as applied by feminist theorists, it is so indiscriminating that it blurs important differences in degree and even in quality of male domination. See *Customs in Common*, pp. 499-505.

62. Robert W. Malcolmson, *Life and Labour in England, 1700-1780* (1981), p. 105.
63. Henri Misson de Valbourg, *Memoirs et Observations Feites par un Voyageur en Angleterre* (Paris, 1698), p. 70, and H. Misson, *Memoirs and Observations in his Travels over England* (1719), p. 129.
64. A. V. Chappel and Arthur Pollard (eds.), *The Letters of Mrs. Gaskell* (Manchester, 1966), pp. 29-31. My thanks to David Englander.
65. *Read's Weekly Journal*, 16 Apr. 1737.
66. *N & Q*, 4th series, iv (1869), p. 105 (Somerset, 1826); *ibid.*, 5th series, v (1876), p. 253 (Lancashire, late eighteenth century?); *ibid.*, 2nd series, x (1860), p. 363.
67. Conjugal infidelity—both parties tied back to back on a donkey, W. H. K. Wright (ed.), *The Western Antiquary* (Plymouth, 1882), p. 31; against a coal-dealer with 'loose notions on the privileges of married life' at Market Rasen, Lincolnshire, 1872, *Stamford Mercury*, 19 Jan. 1872; against an ostler who had proved unfaithful to his newly-wedded bride at Northallerton (Yorkshire) in 1887, *York Herald*, 1 Mar. 1887; against a young man who had jilted his mistress in a Hampshire village in 1882, *Hants and Berks. Gazette*, 4 Feb. 1882; and many others.
68. S. P. Menefee, *Wives for Sale* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 117, 126-7, 183; *Northern Standard*, 4 Nov. 1882; *Bury Times*, 12 Nov. 1870; Katharine M. Briggs, *The Folklore of the Cotswolds* (1974), pp. 116-7.
69. *Bucks Herald*, 27 July 1878. It was a tenaciously held popular belief that the husband had the right to chastise his wife with three blows, and no more, and with a stick no thicker than his own thumb.
70. Miscellaneous documents in Berks. CRO, D/EWI, L.3. My thanks to John Fine who directed me to them.
71. See Carlo Ginzburg, 'Charvari, associations juveniles, chasse sauvage', in *Le Charivari*. In my article in *Annales E.S.C.* I took issue with the formalist structuralism of Lévi-Strauss's interpretation of charivari in *Le Cru et le Cuit*. Ginzburg criticises me in turn for formless empiricism and obsession with manifest functions, and seeks to show common ground between our positions in the forms and functions of rites. I can accept his correction.
72. The evidence as to who took part is inconclusive, and varied according to the offence. While men would carry a 'stang' or 'ride skimmington', women often turned out to hoot and bang pans. When cases came to the courts, those indicted were nearly always male: thus a case at Burton (Oxfordshire) in 1803, where 15 labourers were indicted and 5 imprisoned: Oxfordshire CRO, QSM 1/7; in a Warwickshire case, 1811, those indicted were two wheelwrights, one husbandman, one farmer, one labourer, one shoemaker, and one tallow chandler: Warwick. CRO, QS 32/3, bundle 3.
73. Women sometimes led rough musics in the eighteenth century: in 1747 at Billingshurst a husband who was ill-treating and starving his wife was rung out of his house by women, who put him in a blanket and ducked him in the pond (cited in *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 28 Oct. 1848). An Islington tradesman in 1748 whipped his wife with rods 'till the Blood ran down her Heels': she 'had a Warrant against him, and carrying him to a Justice of the Peace, he was . . . sent to Prison, to which Place he was conducted through the Pelting, and Hissing, and Blows of two Thirds of the Women of the Town': *Northampton Mercury*, 11 July 1748. In parts of the Scottish Lowlands it was reported that women 'rode the stang' on wife-beaters, seizing the offender with their own hands: R. Forsyth, *The Beauties of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1806), iii, p. 157.
74. Charles Redwood, *The Vale of Glamorgan* (1839), p. 289-95, cited in Gillis, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 133-4. But 'patriarchal' rough music long continued in parts of mid and North Wales: see Julius Rodenberg, *An Autumn in Wales* (1856), translated and ed. by William Linnard (Cowbridge, 1985).
75. From Sturton by Stowe, in the James M. Carpenter collection in Cecil Sharp House.
76. Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York, 1975), p. 235.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 218.
78. *N & Q*, 6th series, vi (1882); *ibid.*, 5th series, v (1876).
79. At Gorton, Manchester, 'riding the stang' was administered when 'it was discovered that a painter was living harmoniously with two women in one house', *N & Q*, 5th series, v (1876).

80. Information of the late Bob Hiscox of Pilton, Somerset, given to me in 1975 and referring to events *circa* 1910.

81. David Rollison, 'Property, Ideology and Popular Culture in a Gloucestershire Village, 1660-1740', *Past and Present*, 93 (1981), reprinted in Slack (ed.), *op. cit.* For another well-documented (but enigmatic) case, see Jean R. Kent, 'Folk Justice and Royal Justice in early 17th-century England: a "Charivari" in the Midlands', *Midland History*, viii (1983).

82. *Warwickshire Quarter-Sessions Proceedings*, ed. H. C. Johnson and N. J. Williams (Warwick, 1964), pp. xiii-xiv.

83. J. H. Bloom, *Folklore, Old Customs and Superstitions in Shakespeare Land* (1930), p. 53.

84. *Bucks Herald*, 13 July 1878. A Warwickshire woman was rough musicked for prosecuting her own son for taking 6s. 9d. from her purse: *Leamington Chronicle*, 16 July 1870. My thanks to Chris Ryan.

85. Bedfordshire CRO, QSR 23, 1817, pp. 230-1.

86. PRO, KB 11.59.

87. See e.g. W. E. Haigh, *A New Glossary of the Dialect of the Huddersfield District* (Oxford, 1928), p. 118; John Bland, *Bygone Days in Market Harborough* (Market Harborough, 1924), pp. 102-3.

88. A. Boyer, *Political State of Great Britain*, LIII, 1737, p. 116.

89. See, for example, Ruth Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute* (1987), p. 138.

90. Against a 'cobler' preaching at Towcester, 1767, Northants. CRO, Quarter Sessions Grand File, 1767. Early Methodist history provides many examples of the rough musicking of preachers and noted members: information from John Walsh. The rector of Fillingham was ran-tanned and his effigy was 'ridden the stang' before being burned: *Stamford Mercury*, 23 May 1884.

91. In Soham (Cambridgeshire) on April Fool's Day, 1853, there were mock Mormon weddings outside the homes of local believers, in which seven 'brides' on donkeys were married to a single 'husband': *Millennial Star*, xv (1853), p. 269. My thanks to J. F. C. Harrison.

92. *Bucks Herald*, 19 Oct. 1878.

93. W. E. Minchinton, 'The Beginnings of Trade Unionism in the Gloucestershire Woollen Industry', *Trans. Bristol & Gloucs. Arch. Soc.* (1951), pp. 134-5; Adrian Randall, 'Labour and the Industrial Revolution in the West of England Woollen Industry' (Univ. of Birmingham Ph.D. thesis, 1979), esp. pp. 300-1, 541; F. J. Snell, *The Chronicles of Twyford* (Tiverton, 1893), pp. 186-7, 191-2, 232-2. For Banbury shag-weavers, see John Money, *Experience and Identity, Birmingham and the West Midlands, 1760-1800* (Manchester, 1977), pp. 240-1; Robert Spillman, 25/26 August, 1793 in PRO, HO 42/26.

94. In May 1725 over a hundred men and women (broadweavers?) assembled in Stroud to pull down the workhouse, carried an overseer around the parish on a stick, and threatened to put one of 'the gentlemen' on the stick if they met him: PRO, Assi 5.44 (i). For a turnpike episode also in Stroud, see SP 36.32.

95. S. and B. Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism* (1920), p. 28. A case was reported in 1743 of an unapprenticed hatter being 'stanged' with such violence in Southwark that he died: *Sherborne Mercury*, 18 Oct. 1743.

96. *Annual Register* (1770), p. 74.

97. *Greenwich & Deptford Chronicle*, 12 Mar. 1870. My thanks to Geoffrey Crossick.

98. *First Report of the Constabulary Commissioners* (1839), pp. 83-4; PRO 52.35 and 73.4 (memorandum of Sir E. Head); J. C. Davies, *Folklore of West and Mid-Wales* (Aberystwyth, 1911), p. 85.

99. See D. V. J. Jones, 'Popular Disturbances in Wales, 1792-1832' (Univ. of Wales, Aberystwyth, Ph.D. thesis, 1965), esp. pp. 217, 195ff.

100. See D. Williams, *The Rebecca Riots* (Cardiff, 1955). Professor Williams writes (p. 56): 'it can . . . be said with complete certainty that the Rebecca Riots were an extension of the practice of the *ceffyl pren*'; See also D. J. V. Jones, *Rebecca's Children* (Oxford, 1989), esp. ch. 6.

101. *Hull and North Lincs. Times*, 15 Jan. 1898.

102. See Nicholas Rogers, 'Popular Protest in Early Hanoverian London', in Slack (ed.), *op. cit.*, Peter Burke, 'Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century London', in Reay (ed.), *op. cit.*; John Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (Cambridge, 1976), *passim*.

103. Gerald M. Sider argues convincingly that groups which maintained the self-regulation of their working economy also upheld certain rituals: 'Christmas Mummings in Outport Newfoundland', *Past and Present*, 71 (1976).

104. On the decline of folk violence, see Dorothy Thompson, *The Early Chartists* (1971), pp. 16-17, and 'Chartism as a Historical Subject', *Bull. Soc. Lab. Hist.*, 20 (1970), p. 12.

105. See e.g. Easther and Lees, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-9; J. Lawson, *Letters to the Young on Progress in Pudsey* (Stanningley, 1887), p. 66.

106. *N & Q*, 5th series, v (1876), p. 253.

107. Accounts collected by the late Kathleen Bumstead in 1971.

108. See *Le Charivari*, pp. 294, 306.