

THE ORANGEMEN OF ULSTER

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Charters, Samuel
Orangemen of Ulster, The



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THE ORANGEMEN OF ULSTER

recorded in the north of Ireland by SAMUEL B. CHARTERS

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SIDE I

**Drummers' Preparation and the
lamberg Drums**

**PORTADOWN — Sam Allen, voice
Drummers of County Antrim**

**CROMIE'S BUCK • David Harper, voice
Drummers of County Down**

KING BILLY AT THE BOYNE

— Sam Allen, voice

**An Orange Procession — Beggar DRUM
Fife, snare drum, two lambeg drums**

SIDE II

**The Drum — Ballymagarrett — The Late
Brother David Kirk — Gone But Not
Forgotten**

THE BUCK AROUND THE WORLD

— David Harper, voice

GRUMLIN HOTEL — Ernie Curran, voice

**An Orange Procession — EASTER SATURDAY
Fife, snare drums, two lambeg drums**

GLOVER HILL — Joe Downs, voice

THE SASH MY FATHER WORE — A pub group

THE ORANGEMEN OF ULSTER

Recorded in County Down, Ulster, by.

Samuel B. Charters

Technical assistant, A. R. Danberg.

A most grateful acknowledgement is made to Mr. and Mrs. James McCully of Banbridge, County Down, for their generous assistance and hospitality in the course of this study.

AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The music of the Orangemen of Ulster is an expression of the violence and emotion that has marked the history of Northern Ireland. These men are part of a minority Protestant group that has been maintained in Catholic Ireland by the military force of England, and the centuries of bloodshed have left deep scars on both groups. Ulster today is partitioned from the Irish Free State and has an independent government within the British commonwealth, but the partition has only been in existence since 1921. The Irish Rebellion of 1916 - 1921, which resulted in the Irish Free State, was regarded by many of the men of the Irish Republican Army as only partially successful because the six counties of Ulster remained under British Rule. There was a Civil War in the Free State itself, from 1921 to 1923, which attempted to force a decision over Ulster, and there has been sporadic violence by I. R. A. terrorists almost continuously since that time. The posts of the Ulster Constabulary near the partition line are surrounded by barbed wire and in some areas protected by heavy sandbag walls. There is even uncertainty and indecision within Ulster itself. Two of the six counties, Londonderry and Fermanagh, have a Catholic majority, and the Protestant majority is very slight in the other four counties. This has tended to leave the more militant Orange groups with an insecurity that has made it difficult for them to forget old differences. This is the background for their music and song.

THE ORANGEMEN OF ULSTER

Samuel B. Charters

Even without the heads or the rims the drum looked very large. The shell was in the corner of the attic landing, pushed back against the wall. The owner of the drum, a pleasant, friendly man named Jim McCully, took the plastic cover off the shell and stood it upright.

"She'll run three feet, one inch across the head, thirty inches across the shell."

The drum looked even larger standing up. I asked him if it was exceptionally large. He shook his head.

"Some of the big ones go three feet, two. It's the skins that keep the size down, you know. We use goat skin, and you can't get a skin much bigger than that."



photo by S. B. Charters
Unionist Party Building, Belfast.

He reached into a corner and pulled out one of the drum heads.

"You can see how thin a head is. That's from a female goat. The skin from a male goat is too heavy; we can't get the tone from him."

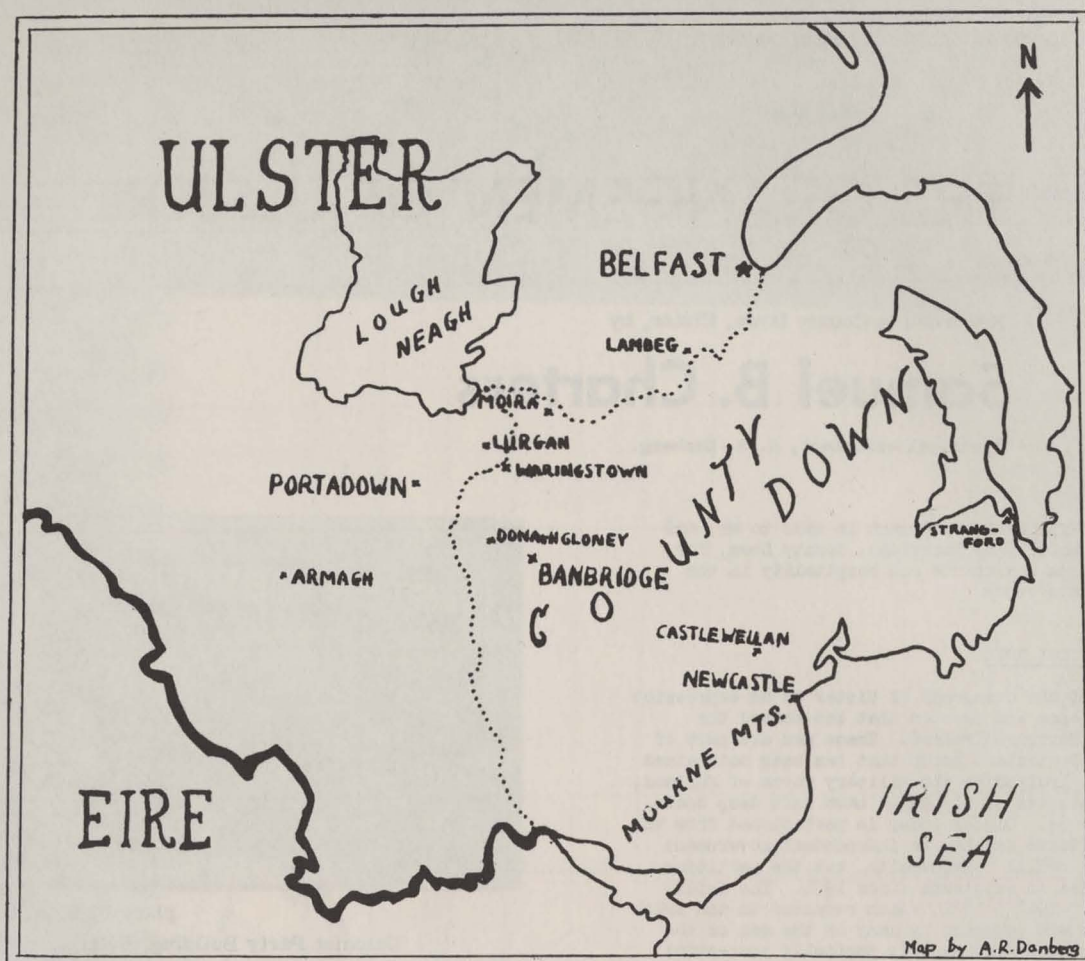
I looked at the shell in the dim light. Two iron loops had been fastened side by side in the wood, a few inches apart. A belt was pulled through them and slung around the player's neck when the drum was being used. Beginning at the loops was a large painted decoration covering nearly half of the shell. When the drum was being played the decoration bellied out towards anyone standing in front of it. A lion was in the center of the design, staring fiercely out of the painted background, its mane bristling with defiance. Orange and blue bunting had been painted around the scene, and under the curve of the shell was the motto, "Semper Paratus" - "Always Ready." The painting had beautifully unsophisticated style and spontaneity. Jim lifted the shell a few inches off the floor, testing its weight.

"This is a new drum, you see. She's too heavy still to give a good tone. I'll leave her up here to dry a little."

The women, my wife and Jim's young wife Elsie, were downstairs getting tea. Elsie came to the foot of the stairs and called to us to come down. Jim began spreading the cover back over the gaudy shell. I asked him how long he'd have to leave the drum up in the attic.

"I'll leave her for three years; then she'll be ready to play."

There was a fire in the grate in the back sitting room. It was a gray, blustery autumn afternoon. The women sat across the table from us watching the McCully's daughter playing with a small, excited terrier. Jim nodded toward Elsie.



"She doesn't like the drums, you know."

Elsie frowned half seriously.

"I can't stand them at all. They're nothing but a lot of noise. If you grow up with them as Jim did then you can hear something, but they just hurt my ears."

Jim laughed indulgently.

"I first heard the drums when I was seven years old and I've been following them ever since. I could listen to the drums all day. I've got one now. . ."

He started to finish the sentence; then he stopped and turned to look at his daughter. The drum in the attic was a "lambeg" drum, an instrument made by local craftsmen in the larger towns of Ulster. There was considerable confusion over the name, but nearly everyone agreed that the drum had no connection with the small village of Lambeg, south of Belfast. The drums seemed to have been brought into Ulster with the Protestant army of William of Orange, when he defeated the Irish supporters of James II at the Boyne in 1690. Most of the drummers thought that they had come in with Dutch mercenaries attached to the army.

Jim remarked,

"The main difference between the old style drum and the drum we have today is in the way the shell is turned. The old ones were in short pieces, turned around hoops fastened inside, and they were only two feet, six inches across the head. The new ones, you see, are all turned in one piece, or two pieces side by side. Hewitt, in Moira, turned the first big shell about 1870. The cane sticks came in about the same time. The man who made the sticks Tom Kerry, was from Broomhedge, a place not too far from Moira. I think maybe he and Hewitt developed the lambeg together."

Jim was a short, light haired man, who had a successful electrical contracting business in a small town called Banbridge, about thirty miles south of Belfast in County Down. As he sat talking I could see the enthusiasm in his face. He was sitting on the edge of his chair, gesturing as he talked. His wife watched him fondly. I had come down to talk with him because he was making the arrangements for a drumming contest that was to be held in Banbridge over the next weekend. Within a few moments we had become friends. The lambeg drums were part of his life, and he was pleased to find an outsider who was interested in them. They are very much a local instrument, limited to four of the six counties of Ulster - Down, Antrim, Tyrone, and part of Derry. I knew that they were used in the Orange processions of the 12th of July and that they were played only by Protestants, but Jim didn't feel that the drums had any religious significance.

"People seeing us play might say, 'Those are Protestant drums,' but all we're thinking about are the drums and the sound we can get out of them."

I tried to describe the size of the drum to my wife. Jim explained,

"Some fellows get in arguments over the best size of the drum. I never get into it myself. Some say 3 feet, some say 3 feet two inches. That's what they say has the best sound. I don't say anything myself, but the best sound is in a shell three feet and a quarter inches."

Banbridge is in hilly farm country thirty miles south of Belfast. The small fields are enclosed in ragged hedges, and the hills are dark with clumps of wet trees and brush. Cattle graze in most of the fields, and late in the afternoon boys from town drive them through the streets, the cows plodding awkwardly along, the boys riding behind them on bicycles, flicking at them with a freshly cut stick. The town itself

is on the main Belfast-Dublin road, and most of the small shops are on either side of the road. The road rises over a steep hill, and the crest of the hill has become the town's center. The hill was considered too steep for stagecoaches and a cut had been made into the crest; so that the main motor road is below the shops in a double lane below the shop streets on either side of it. The hill in the town's center makes it easy for people to give directions. Everything is either at the top of the hill, or part way up the hill, or just down at the other side.

Most of the skirmishing between the Ulster Constabulary and the dissident groups of I.R.A. men who have been raiding across the Border have taken place south of Banbridge, closer to the Eire line. The constabulary station at Castlewellan, sixteen miles from Banbridge, is still surrounded with barbed wire, and stations further south are protected with walls of sandbags. At Banbridge, except for the pistols that were worn by the Constabulary and the signs outside the station offering rewards for information about I.R.A. activities, "... all sources to be held in strictest confidence," there was little sign of trouble. In a windswept square at the foot of the hill there was a stone statue of the town's most important hero, a Captain Crozier, who had died on the Franklin Arctic expedition of 1849. Looking up at him from the four corners of the statue's elaborate base were earnest stone polar bears. Around the corner from the statue was the town's museum and public library. The museum seemed to be devoted to dark, dust covered cases holding a haphazard collection of stones and jars of pickled snakes. A stuffed crocodile was on top of one of the cases. A set of eighteenth century prints depicting the various stages of linen manufacture were hung in heavy frames in a darkened corner. A leather saddle of very unusual design completed the collection. Most people in Banbridge usually called it the "cowboy" saddle, but it was certainly different from any kind of saddle used in North America. The library upstairs was devoted to large locked glass cases filled with eighteenth century books and three or four tilted tables covered with newspapers and travel service magazines.

As the week passed, Jim watched the weather with more and more anxiety.

"It has to be dry, you know. We can't get the drums up real good unless the day's dry. This is the second time we're trying to have the competition, and there won't be another chance after this. It rained the first time. We've got three cups and money prizes as well."

The lambegs are different from other large drums in the quality of their tone. The thin heads are pulled tighter and tighter until the tone is bright and hard. Jim had already begun tightening up his drum at the beginning of the week, and every night he went out to the Orange Hall, where he kept his instrument, and tightened the head. There are no mechanical screws on the drums. The heads are held on with a wooden rim and linen ropes. At first Jim simply held the drum up by the ropes and let the drum's weight tighten the skin, but as it grew closer to the contest he took first one, then two, other men with him to help with the tightening. I was surprised, still thinking that the contest had something to do with the skill of the drummer.

Jim shook his head.

"A bad drummer can make a good drum sound off its tone, and a good drummer can make a drum sound a little better, but it's the tone of the drum that decides it."

I touched one of the heads, listening to its sharp, full sound. He tapped it lightly with one of the sticks, a length of flexible rattan cane with a handle on one end.

"She's not up yet. If we get a dry day she'll be singing. It's the tone we're looking for -- tone, weight, jingle, and ring. And the volume, too. She's got to have the volume." He began pulling on the ropes. "Some people see two drummers standing against each other and they think it's just noise, but you're real-

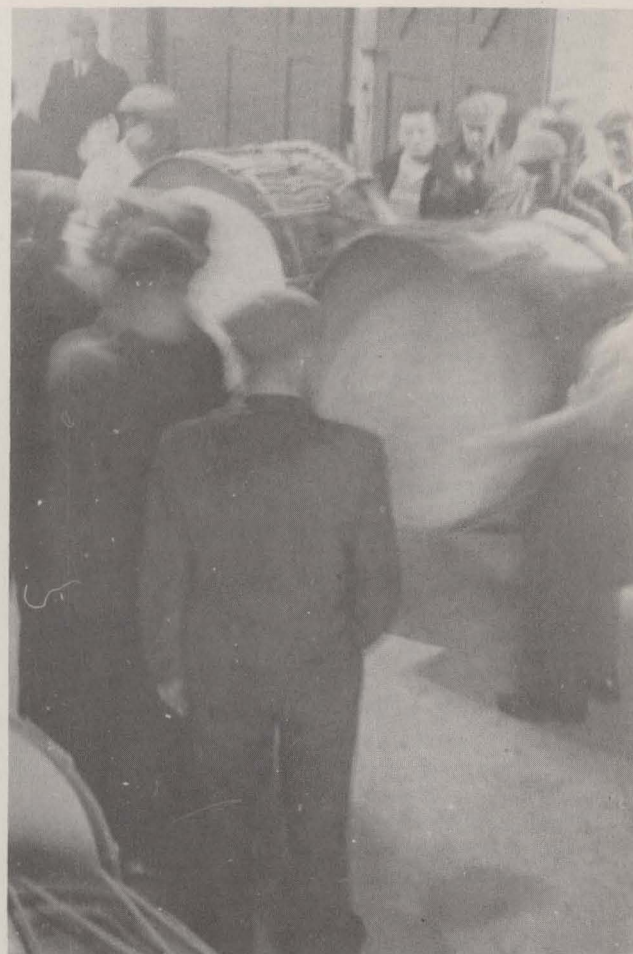


photo by S. B. Charters

The Lambeg Drums

ly trying to make your drum overcome his. If you can feel the vibrations from his shell coming over you, then you're in trouble. It's when you can feel your drum overcoming his that you know you're all right. For the awards, it's different. For the awards we have judges and the man takes his drum around in a circle so the judges can hear both heads. That gives you trouble sometimes, getting the tone of the heads to match. That's when you use this." He held up a small wooden mallet. "You touch it around the rim. If you go just a little hard she'll burst on you. Many's the time it's happened to me. If I had a shilling for every head I've broken that way, I'd be a rich man."

On Friday I stopped by the bank across the street from the small hotel that was to be used as the meeting place for the drummers. The bank manager, noticing my accent, chatted for a moment as I was leaving. When he asked what I was doing in Banbridge, I told him that my wife and I had come into town to hear the drum contest. He took a step back, his face turning a little paler.

"There's to be a contest here, you say?"

I nodded.

"At the Imperial Hotel there, across the street?"

I nodded again.

He stared out the window, nervously drumming the counter. "I live upstairs, you see. I just don't know what we can do. It's the noise. My wife and I will have to go to her sister's. You're sure it's tomorrow night?"

As I left the bank he was still anxiously staring across the street.

On Friday night there was singing in Bell's bar, a public house up on the other side of the hill from the Imperial Hotel. It was a small place, with the upstairs divided into two small rooms, and a smaller room behind the public bar downstairs. The foreman of a nearby linen mill, Sam Allen, from Donaghcloney, sang a number of Orange ballads, standing in the center of a small group in the back room, his coat open, his strong voice rising above the murmur of talk in the front of the bar. Other singers joined him, a painting contractor from Newcastle named David Harper, younger men, the whole group joining in. When they had finished singing I went outside, the sound of their voices still ringing in my ears.

Jim was getting into his car not far from the shop he kept to store his electrical supplies. We stood talking for a moment and he suddenly gestured for me to follow him. We went inside his shop and he turned on the light. In the back of the shop, behind some cable, I could see a drum. It was unpainted, a dark shape in the shadows, the shell crisscrossed with the tightening ropes. Jim lifted it out into the center of the shop, lowering it onto a piece of sacking. He looked over at me, nodding secretively.

"I was keeping this one in here. She's a Hearn shell. That's what would be a Stradivarius as far as a drum goes. Hearn was over in Armagh eighty years ago. Every shell he made was turned out of a single piece of timber and if she wasn't a good drum he destroyed her. This was probably turned in 1880, but she's still got the tone."

The wood had darkened with age, but it was in perfect condition. Jim pointed to a little tag near the iron loops.

"You see what I did. I didn't know she was a Hearn when I bought her. I'd have paid much more for her if I'd known that. You can tell by the air holes."

He touched the two air holes on either side of the shell. "These are modern air holes, the way we do it today. Hearn just put one in the center, and somebody had covered it up. I put a finish on her, you see, and I put this over the hole in the center."

In the center of the shell was a small label, "Wm. Johnston and Sons, Drum Manufacturers." Jim laughed. "This way nobody can tell what she is until they hear her sing out."

As we went toward the street we both stopped, trying to look up into the night sky. Jim shrugged. "There's no telling what sort of a day we'll have."

The wind was high on Saturday morning, with a pall of gray clouds blowing across the hilltops. It was still a dry day, but toward the east, over the Irish Sea, there seemed to be a storm building up. Discouraged, my wife and I began walking away from the town on one of the side roads. The chestnut trees were beginning to turn, and a litter of golden leaves was swirling along the sidewalk in front of us. Stone walls lined the edges of the fields on either side of the road, and the cattle still grazing turned to watch impassively as we passed. It was difficult not to think of the weather, and we walked slowly with heads lowered. A car stopped ahead of us and waited for us to get even with it; then a window was rolled down and someone called our names. It was the foreman of the linen mill, Sam Allen. After sitting talking for a few moments he insisted that we come to the mill and we spent an hour with him, walking through the empty mill. Much of the building was a maze of looms, most of them engaged in weaving materials for American orders. We noticed on one machine a pattern woven into a length of cloth reading "Minneapolis Athletic Club." At the ends of the room were great circular fountain washstands and fastened to the walls were pictures of the Royal family and well known soccer players. We finally came back to Banbridge, had a last drink together at Bell's pub, and Sam went on to Donaghcloney.

About three o'clock we saw Jim standing on a street corner, staring up into the gray clouds. He motioned toward a group of gulls circling in the wind over the town.

"The birds are keeping high. Maybe the day will clear."

We asked him about the new drum.

"I think she's ready, but we have to have a little drier day."

He finally decided to go test his drums again, and hurried back to his car. People were in from the farms to shop, and their cars and trucks lined the street. The rows of shops were full of customers. Across a narrow street from the Imperial Hotel, where the contest was to be held, the fruiterer had already turned on the lights inside. The old fashioned show windows and the brown and yellow outside the building stood out at the end of a row of shops that sloped downhill from the top of the town. The hotel, a two story brick building, had opened the front doors of its public bar, and there was a steady stream of customers, going in and out.

There was a light sprinkle of rain; dampening the streets. As we stood outside the hotel staring into it, the first drum arrived. It was wrapped in canvas and tied to the top of a small, shabby car. Three men got out of the car and began to pull the drum off the top, putting it down on the narrow street between the fruiterer and the hotel. Two of them were wearing dark, heavy tweed jackets and cloth caps, but the third, who seemed to be directing the handling of the drum, was in shirt sleeves. He was a thin, light haired man, his face and arms reddened by wind and weather. He seemed to be a farmer, and neither his clothes nor the car seemed to show any signs that his farming was prosperous.



photo by A. R. Danberg

A drum arriving for the competition.

As they got the ropes off the drum the weather momentarily lightened and he looked around him; then slung his belt through the iron loops in the drum shell, put the belt around his neck and straightened up, the heavy drum hanging awkwardly in front of him. We could read the name on the swelling curve of the shell, "The Rising Sons of William." He reached toward the car and one of the men hurried to bring him his sticks. He began walking toward the hotel, the sticks hitting the drum with a deafening crash. The other men walked behind him, smiling with satisfaction.

I could understand some of his pride as he stood beside the hotel playing his drum. A lambeeg is an expensive instrument. A new one costs the equivalent of \$250, without the heads or any kind of decoration. Each head costs \$15, and they break often. Some of the drums are owned by Orange lodges for processions, but most of them are owned by men like this. For a man from poor farm country something as expensive as a lambeeg is an object to be regarded with fierce pride. The other men had come with him to help with the final tightening. A man like Jim McCully, with three drums, two of them to be ready for the competition, held a special position in this drum world. He had his own men for tightening, and he even had a drummer to play his drums for him. Seeing the expression on the face of the man still playing in the street, I could understand Jim's intense devotion to the music of the drums.



"The Challenger of Ulster" photo by A. R. Danberg



Johnstone's Drum Shop, Belfast. Charters



Sandy Row, the heart of Protestant Belfast. Danberg



photo by A. R. Danberg
A drummer arriving for the competition.



photo by A. R. Danberg

William Hewitt's Drum Shop, Belfast.

Within a few minutes other drums began arriving. The rain was falling again and the drums were hurried off their racks on the backs or against the trunks of the cars and carried to a large empty shed in back of the hotel. Most of the men went back inside, and there was soon a noisy crowd standing against the bar. Jim had said there was a bitter argument that had been splitting the followers of the drums into angry groups for years. There are two important drum makers in Belfast, the Johnston's and the Hewitt's, both of them with small shops on Sandy Row. The followers of these two makers were angrily antagonistic toward each other. Usually there were fist fights before a contest was over. Jim used Johnston drums, and the man who had first arrived was using a Johnston drum, but I noticed that a group from Hewitt's shop was sitting alone in a back room. Their drum, "The Challenger of Ulster," was set against the wall.

It was growing darker and the rain had become heavier. Jim finally came into the bar with his group of followers. He shook his head.

"I don't think this is going to lift. We have to be outside for the competition and a rain like this would ruin the heads."

I asked him what would happen.

"There'll be a night's drumming, but no competition."

Jim's drummer was a good looking younger man named Jackie Hearn. He and Jim sat at one of the tables talking. Jackie was trying to buy an older drum from Jim. He couldn't get something as good as a competition drum, but he wanted something to carry in the Orange processions. They were leaning over the table, their voices low. Jackie laughed at something Jim said, throwing his head back. There was a rising din in the bar. The television had been turned on and the latest soccer scores were being printed on a teletype machine on the screen. Voices rose in pleased surprise or disappointment. Most of the men were dressed in rough work clothes, a few like Jim, in lighter shirts, or in elaborate tweed jackets and ties. The last of the scores was read from the screen and the television was turned off and the voices along the bar began to talk of the drums again.

While Jim was still sitting talking, there was a muffled roar from outside the building. I left him there, and my wife and I began walking along the street toward the shed. It was a narrow street, with a fish shop and a printing works behind the fruiterers. Behind the printing works was a coal merchant, with his drawn blinds advertising "Artificial Manure, Lime, and Potato Merchant." There was a betting office just across the street from the shed, "Branch Office - Hugh O'Hare. Head Office, Newry, Established 1904." The building was shabby and run down, looking more like an old garage than a betting office. The shed itself was a long brick building, with two bulbs dangling from wires to light it. The hotel did occasional funeral services and the shed was used for their vehicles and spare coffins. The vehicles had been moved, but there were still two or three coffin lids lying behind some dusty tables against the wall. Over a dozen drums were already inside, their bright paintings gleaming in the glaring light. The noise in the shed was overwhelming. Two drummers were standing facing each other, their drums almost touching, their arms flailing as they played. To support the weight of the drums their bodies were slumped forward, their shoulders pulled back. Their legs were bent at the knee. Both of them were already perspiring, their eyes on each other's face over the tops of the swaying drums. A crowd of men, all of them in wet, dark clothes, pushed against them, giving them just enough room to move the sticks. It was impossible to hear anything except the drums. Another pair of drummers slung their drums around their necks, stood facing each other, then began playing with deafening power. Some of the crowd began drifting over to listen to them.

The rhythm the men were playing was almost unvarying, a pattern of two beats in one hand against a single beat in the other, called "double time." The crowd was listening to the drums, to their tone, and to the

ring. Men walked from drum to drum, leaning closer to listen, then moving thoughtfully to the next. Unable to stand the pain in our ears, we went outside and crossed the street. Neither of us could hear anything. We stood on a doorstep trying to say something to each other until the woman of the house opened the door to see if we wanted her. Despite the din, after a few moments we found ourselves drawn again toward the sound of the drums. We found a nearly empty corner in the shed and stood at the back of the crowd. Four men were working to tighten up a drum called "Ballymagarrett - The Late Brother David Kirk - Gone But Not Forgotten." A portrait of the late Brother Kirk covered the front of the shell. Two of the men were standing up, leaning on the drum, and the other two were sitting in front of it, pulling the ropes in an intricate series of movements. They were wearing heavy gloves and all four of them were breathing heavily from the exertion. The owner of the drum, a short, nervous looking man with red hair, carefully tapped the rims with a mallet; then he motioned toward one of the men who had been tightening the heads. He immediately took off his coat and pushed up the sleeves of his sweater. He was a young man, slim and pale, with dark hair falling down over his forehead. He looked almost too sensitive to touch the instrument. The drum was slung over his neck, the owner handed him a pair of sticks, and there was a sudden roar that rose even above the thunderous din of the other four drums in the shed. The red-haired man listened for a moment; then motioned for him to stop. He immediately let the sticks drop. They worked with the drum for nearly fifteen minutes, touching first one side, then the other, with the mallet, trying to match the tone of the heads. Finally the red-haired man nodded and they carefully lifted the drum up onto one of the tables out of the way.

The drumming went on. Men stood crowded against each other, listening to the sound of the lambegs, trying to hear the vibrations from each shell. The drummers seemed to be tireless, playing without pause. I finally went to find Jim. He and his small group had the Hearn shell in a storeroom back of the pub and they were sitting on boxes straining to bring it up still a little tighter. When they finished Jim leaned over it, trying to catch his breath. I asked him what was happening in the shed.

"They're just loosening up the heads, now. It's later that you'll hear the real drumming."

I still didn't understand why they had to continue playing if they were only testing one drum against another.

"Some men will hear that their drum is not doing well, you know, and they'll play harder to keep from losing, but if it goes on for a time then they can't keep it up and the drums will have to be playing just even. Some of those men are hard, though. Farm laborers and the like. They can drum like that for hours."

We stood in the small room, surrounded with boxes of empty beer bottles, listening to the noise in the shed. I could make out the sound of drums being played in short bursts of heavier beats alternating with groups of lighter beats. Jim nodded.

"That's County Antrim."

The rain steadily grew worse and by eight thirty, the competition had been abandoned. There were eight drums playing in the shed, the crowds getting larger and larger as the evening passed. Everyone was drinking heavily and there were sudden angry disputes over some of the drums. About nine o'clock an older man who played the fife arrived from the nearby village of Warings-town. Like most of the Ulster fifiers he was of Flemish descent. A number of French Huguenots had followed William's army into Ireland, and the Flemish and English and Scottish Protestant groups had united into the Orange Societies. Jim went to find a man who had promised to play the small snare drum, or "rattlies," as the snare drum is usually called in Ulster. He wanted to have some of the

music of the processions as they used to be when he was a boy. He had mentioned the fifers when I first talked with him.

"That's almost a thing of the past now, that kind of music."

The man with the snare drum was finally located in the bar and joined the fifer in the shed. Jim and Jackie tried to get some quiet for the procession music and Jim began trying to get two men to play lambegs in the old procession style. While he was talking with some of the drummers, there was a sudden noise of shouting and drumming in the crowd. One of the men had been drinking heavily and he was unwilling to stop drumming. He seemed to have lost complete control of himself, trying to shake his arms loose while men caught at him. Three men finally threw themselves on him and held him until the fifer, the rattles player, and the two lambeg men had played their old fashioned procession music. Most of the men seemed stirred by the music and there was a burst of applause when they finished. The fifer, a shy man named Joe Orr, put his fife away self-consciously and stepped back out of sight into the crowd.

With the procession over, the mood of the night seemed to change. The drumming seemed to become more intense. There were nine drums being played in the shed, the men pressing around them. Against the wall I could see Jim and one of his followers slinging the Hearn drum over Jackie's neck. They had tried the drum out earlier in the evening, but now it was up to tightness. Jackie began playing with a steady, rushing beat. Another drum pushed up against him and the drummers were soon surrounded by the crowd. Jim stood in the background, trying to listen to the drum. He motioned to me to come outside and we stood for a moment in the rainy, darkened alley. He shouted in my ear.

"The heads aren't right for her yet, but you can hear the ring she's got."

As we pushed our way back into the shed we could hear the Hearn shell singing over the din of the other drums. One of the men who was to have judged the contest stood listening to the drums; then he straightened, pointing to the Hearn drum and nodding. Jackie was drumming with his face expressionless, his arms moving tirelessly. The crowd began to tighten around him. They stood listening until the other drummer finally broke and moved his drum away. Jackie pushed his way through the crowd, still playing, until he found himself facing another drum. Jim was still standing back in the crowd, hardly watching the drums now. He seemed to be trying to give himself completely to hearing the sound of the drums around him.

The drum pressed against the Hearn was the large Hewitt drum. Jackie and the drummer stared at each other over the shells, each of them trying to play with renewed strength. The better of two drums is always easier to play; since it already has an advantage, but a strong drummer can sometimes force the contest to go for hours, despite his disadvantage. The Hewitt man was determined to stay with Jackie and the veins in his arms stood out with the straining. The moments passed and the sound seemed to take on a new ferocity. Their eyes never left each other's face. A fight broke out in the crowd beyond them. Someone had tried to deaden the tone of a drum by dropping his cap on it. A man who was supporting the drum immediately hit him and there was a crowd milling around them, trying to separate them. They were drunk, their caps falling off their heads, their arms moving awkwardly in their wet coats. Neither Jackie nor the Hewitt drummer even looked away to see what had happened. Jackie's body was bent with the tension, the weight of the drum pressing against his legs. His face was a tight grimace, glistening with sweat in the lights. The Hewitt drummer's beat seemed to fall off a little, and the

sound of the Hearn shell was sounding clearer and clearer over the din. Jackie's shoulders were hunched forward, his whole body strained against the swaying drum. There was a rising note from his drum and with a sudden gesture the Hewitt man stepped back and lowered his drum to the floor. Men behind Jackie reached forward with handkerchiefs to wipe the sweat off his face and neck. He stood with his head back, his eyes closed as hands reached out to him. Robert Johnston, the Belfast drum maker, gently wiped off his forehead. The Hewitt men were around their drum, tapping at the rim with a mallet. The drummer looked over at Jackie; then back at the drum. Jackie looked around and suddenly caught Jim's eye. They stood for a moment, smiling; then Jackie slowly lowered the drum to the floor.

SIDE ONE, Band 1. Drummers' Preparations and the Lambeg Drums 1'05"

Recorded at Banbridge, County Down, Ulster, October 1, 1960.

The drummers are standing in the shed with their drums, one man making a final adjustment by tapping the drum gently with a mallet. Two drummers begin playing, their first strokes in a characteristic irregular pattern which soon settles down to the sustained drumming which will go on for the next several hours.

SIDE ONE, Band 2. PORTADOWN 4'05"

Sam Allen, voice. Recorded by Banbridge, County Down, Ulster, September 30, 1960.

Sam Allen is an enthusiastic Orangeman and singer in his early fifties who is the foreman of a large linen mill in a neighboring village of Donaghcloney. The song, PORTADOWN, is a well known ballad sung widely in the Orange community. He sang it in the back room of Bell's pub, on the main street of Banbridge, to an attentive and appreciative audience. The Orange Order itself was established in Ulster in the 1790's, as a counterbalance to the Catholic Fenian Organizations, and this ballad has been sung by generations of Orangemen. As Mr. Allen's laughter at the end of his performance indicates the song is as much a souvenir of the early days of the Orange movement as it is a serious assertion of personal emotion. PORTADOWN is a strong, vivid ballad, and it is its vitality that has kept it popular.

SIDE ONE, Band 3. Drummers of County Antrim 30"

Details as for first example.

In the foreground can be heard the distinctive flurries of heavy strokes alternating with lighter strokes which distinguish the drummers of the neighboring county of Antrim.

SIDE ONE, Band 4. CROMIE'S BUCK 2'55"

David Harper, voice. Recorded at Banbridge, County Down, Ulster, October 1, 1960.

Among the popular Orange songs are a number which contains imaginative symbolism and considerable humor. CROMIE'S BUCK, with its elaborate story of the buck, standing for the Orangemen, meeting two young Irish Girls, which seem to stand for the Fenian groups, is one of the most interesting of these. The singer, David Harper, is a painting contractor in the small town of Newcastle, at the foot of the Mourne Mountains on the east coast of Ulster. He has been interested in Orange songs and in older Irish songs for many years and he has collected many songs from friends and neighbors.

He remembers learning CROMIE'S BUCK from a farmer who lived between Newcastle and the village of Castlewellan. "Cromie" is, of course, short for Oliver Cromwell, who wreaked havoc with Irish Catholicism during his short rule as head of the English Commonwealth. Mr. Harper was singing for the Saturday night crowd in an upstairs room of Bell's pub.

SIDE ONE, Band 5. Drummers of County Down. 35"

Details as for first example.

In the foreground are two drummers from County Down, playing with the steady, unvarying beat which is characteristic of the County.

SIDE ONE, Band 6. KING BILLY AT THE BOYNE 4'10"

Sam Allen, voice. Details as for earlier example.

This is another of the historical Orange ballads which are still sung at Orange gatherings. King Billy is William, Prince of Orange, who defeated the Old Pretender, James II, at the Boyne River in 1690. It was this defeat which left the Protestant groups free to develop their society in the north of Ireland. William returned to England as King William following his victory. The 12th of July celebrations held by Orangemen everywhere in the world commemorate this battle.

SIDE ONE, Band 7. An Orange Procession - BEGGAR MAN 2'55"

Joseph Orr, fife; William Quail, "rattlies" or snare drum; Alec Turkington and Tony Anderson, lambeg drums. Recorded at Banbridge, County Down, Ulster, October 1, 1960.

The most colorful part of the July 12 celebrations in Ulster are the large Orange processions of all the local lodges through the main streets of nearly every city. The Belfast procession lasts for most of the day, as the lodges pass through the streets with their elaborately painted banners and bands of music. As many of the Orangemen are of Scottish background the Highland pipe band has become popular for the processions in recent years, and in Belfast there have been more and more conventional brass bands used. The older style of procession music centered around the fife, the "rattlies" as the old British Army marching drum is called, and the lambeg drums. This older music represented a fusion of the two main groups who are the heart of the Ulster Orange movement. The drummers were usually of Scottish background, and the fifers were usually of Flemish Huguenot background. The Flemish Protestant groups were centered the mills in Waringstown and Lurgan. The fifer on this recording, Joseph Orr, is from Waringstown. The music seems to have many of the characteristics of the older French marching traditions; although military marching music of the 18th Century became almost uniform throughout Europe. The alternation of instrumental sounds, in this music first the fife and snare drum; then the sound of the lambegs, is still to be heard in much village music in France, even though the instruments themselves are different.

SIDE TWO, Band 1. The drum "Ballymagarrett - The Late Brother David Kirk - Gone But Not Forgotten" 40"

As for first examples.

Most lambeg drums are elaborately painted with slogans and portraits of important figures in Orange history or popular local figures. This

drum was particularly loud and its tone rang out over the noise of four other drums in the shed. A man named Fred Bridgett of Belfast does most of the drum and banner painting in Ulster.

SIDE TWO, Band 2. THE BUCK AROUND THE WORLD 1'40"

Details as for first example by Mr. Harper.

During much of the 19th Century the Orange movement was closely associated with the Masonic Orders, and there are a number of songs whose meaning is bound up with Masonic ritual. Mr. Harper had learned the song from a neighbor and neither he or the man from whom he learned it could explain its meaning.

SIDE TWO, Band 3. CRULIN HOTEL 1'55"

Ernie Curran, voice, recorded at Banbridge, County Down, Ulster, October 1, 1960.

In any Orange gathering there will be songs sung of every kind, including humorous songs like this one. The "hotel" which Mr. Curran sings about is, of course, the Belfast city jail. Often the singer will leave the last words for the rest of the people in the pub to finish and Mr. Curran ends his song this way. As always this is greeted with considerable laughter.

SIDE TWO, Band 4. An Orange Procession - EASTER SATURDAY 4'20"

Details as for previous example.

SIDE TWO, Band 5. GLOVER HILL 3'30"

Joe Downs, voice. Recorded at Banbridge, County Down, Ulster, October 1, 1960.

The season for the lambeg drums lasts from the Monday after Easter to about the first of October. The drums are put away for the winter, and many of the men turn to hunting for their weekend recreation. The hunting is done with beagles, and the men and dogs straggle across the barren fields hunting for rabbits. As in England, there is a long tradition of local hunting ballads. GLOVER HILL is not far from Banbridge and the song is a local favorite. The localities mentioned are not far from Glover Hill and the dogs named are all known to the people in the audience. The ballad's most original touch is the rabbit's escape.

SIDE TWO, Band 6. THE SASH MY FATHER WORE 3'50"

A pub group, led by Joe Ulm. Recorded at Bell's pub, Banbridge, County Down, Ulster, October 1, 1960.

This is probably the best loved of the Orange songs and is usually sung toward the end of the evening, when everyone is feeling sentimental. This pub group, sitting in an upstairs room in an old fashioned pub, is typical of the Saturday night crowd in pubs everywhere in Ulster.