

A NOTE ON THE CHESTER PAGEANT ROUTE

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Although, as a medieval dramatist, one knows that one is somehow different and given to behaviour that might be considered abnormal, the awareness of that fact is usually suppressed until some chance remark from a non-medievalist brings it home. This occurred to me after the Records of Early English Drama launch at Chester for the *Cheshire Including Chester* volume. I was attending with my mother and husband, both non-medievalists but staunch supporters of medieval drama, medievalists, REED, and all associated idiosyncrasies. One of the events of the day was a walk around the pageant route of Chester, led by David Mills and Larry Clopper. As they have differing opinions on the exact route, we were in effect simultaneously covering two slightly different routes, in the pouring rain, with stops at every station for explanation and polite debate. A few days afterwards, my mother asked, without any ironic intention, whether I had walked around Chester when Peter Meredith's festschrift was published. I was puzzled until I discovered that she had assumed that walking around a pageant route was simply part of the ceremony of launching any book on medieval drama. Which is indicative of something, although I'm not sure if it is the enduring nature of the medieval love of civic ceremonial (clearly my mother felt that there ought to be some ceremony to the event) or just that medieval dramatists are a bit weird.

As far as I can tell, the debate over the pageant route remains unresolved, with David and Larry sticking to their opinions, and everyone else sticking to their umbrellas. Having walked through part of the route many times (I discover) on my way to the Record Office, I'm slightly more inclined to favour David's argument that they would want to push the waggon up as few hills as possible. Especially if it rained. But what with the traffic noise and trying to keep dryish, I missed some of the commentary, and don't have a clear final sense of a single route. The maps provided returned to their essential mush fairly quickly in the rain, so I can't work from those. But in spite of all this, and inspired by the idea that as the third editor of the volume I ought to have *some* opinion on such