

THE BAMPION MORRIS - ANOTHER LOOK

The first part was written in 1964 partly to see if there were differences between various collectors but primarily to have a first stab at seeing how the MSS material fitted together. It was very much a scissors & paste affair, even the "Dommett" comments are mostly based on letters & conversations; I couldn't resist quoting "fluid amalgam" & "light daffodil" even if I dare not mention the source. The important aspect of the Bampton tradition is the impression it gives - this stays with one for ever - and only the fiddling detail is ever recorded for posterity. Comments on style are negligible & no one has attempted to capture the character - I have done my best with film in 1964 & 1965.

To show the need for a continuing dossier on traditions the following are the notes I have accumulated since that paper was written.

WHITSUN 1964

Jenny Lind danced this year as a double sidestep dance at the Sunday practice but as a single sidestep on the Monday.

In the 1st 2 bars of figures & sidesteps the dancing of 1 2 3 h/ 1 2 3 /, the last 3 steps heavily accented, was called "the old style".

Sonny Townsend - formerly noisy fool of Arnold's team - a good example of another recurring Bampton style. Crouching stance with head thrown back. In foot-up & other figures used cross-over sidestep, without turn of body, consistently. Path for sidestep in jigs was forward to left at 45°, turn left 180°, then turn right 225° to face front: travel about 5'.

Baccapipes - Arnold & Francis quite different structure of dance. Francis has it ABB ad lib with 4 long lead notes between that aren't part of the tune. Step - toe touched on 2nd beat, perhaps slightly in front of hop to give slight suggestion of a 123 step. Track of dancer when over the pipes is to go across the diagonal to dancer's left, then back over a stem to the dancer's right.

INTERVIEW DON CASSELS 21.7.64 re Schofield's teaching.

Schofield taught Bampton neither like the EFDSS way nor Bampton. In particular the "show" was taught as "down & up & out" with body well bent. He had a theory that it was a general rule for hands to be "down" on the beat & "up" for preparatory.

FLOWERS OF EDINBURGH - K. Constable from B. Wells.
Play A B alternately

1. Foot up twice
2. Kneel & caper, sidestep right, sidestep left
3. Spring capers
4. Kneel, caper & sidesteps
5. Straddle capers
6. Kneel, caper, sidestep & caper out.

BAMPION Tuesday 18.5.65 - Francis teaching Cyril.

Single sidestep - should be lrlhl/rhrhl/rlrhr/lhlrhr/ but Francis usually did rlrhr/lrlhl/rlrhr/lhlrhr// as he liked to start on the right foot rather than the left which was correct. He called bar 2 "a bit of the old step".

Called once-to-self - "Jump-in" done /ft.-.R hr//.
Taught the preparatory hop or "bounce" before figures, sidesteps etc, but did not say anything about backsteps as such. Said "one jump" at ends of figures ie. step, spring, step, hop.
Said 4 plain capers in chorus of Maid of the Mill.

BAMPION WHITSUN 1965

Baccapipes - General progression clockwise ie backwards. Heel then Toe. Order - Foot-up heel, Heel across, Foot-up toe, Toe across. Step then touch heel or toe on the hop - with toe exaggerated pointing end of shoe touches. Francis was different - he went anticlockwise, but agreed heel before toe. Francis said stand to right of pipes.
Foot-up = dance up past right side of pipes, turn round to right & dance back. Then ditto by second dancer.
Cross-pipes = foot-up (4 bars) up right side of pipes, turn ½ left to face pipes & change music to B part for cross the pipes. (8b)
NB - 4 long notes inserted to get next man in and 1st man out. etc.

Bampton 20.

Great Bampton Flood - early morning Whitsun 1934.

The Shergolds were living down the Buckland road, then young boys, they were carried up to the Square with their garlands. The water was nearly up to the Aston turn. The Woodleys were living down opposite the Elephant & there was 6" of water in the house. Their father went down the stairs into it! It was up to the Elephant's step. Couldn't run thro arches fast enough. Morris team carried for photo only - the photographer wanted them to "make a bit of a splash" - "must have thought one born every day in the country"

Ted Dixey - Arthur's only son (Arthur still alive) - was in Morris & danced opposite Arnold Woodley - was stone deaf & had had a hearing aid only once in the Morris. Gave it up in 1949 - some sort of dispute. He learnt by watching - couldn't hear tunes or what people in the set told him. He got on Arnold's nerves - Arnold always wished he would be put somewhere else in set.

Arnold said they were taught to start with left foot. When he taught he arranged in order to avoid collisions that the bottoms should "pivot" round & follow the middles. Jinky & his uncle Joe Buckingham always insisted that no backsteps in Old Tom & no 1/2 capers in Lumps.

MAYOR'S DAY 1965 - stayed with Arnold.

His brother Frank was a dancer but John was not. Arnold was taught by his uncle Joe Buckingham so that he knew all the jigs before he knew the set dances. Jinky only "corrected" - did not teach from scratch. (Uncle Joe was one who played the melodion - tunes simpler than Wells - but knew some tunes from Ducklington)

Arnold each year started from his list of tunes & played for 1 hour every night for 6 weeks before taking the boys out. Francis poached boys, and could do it easily as the men were obviously getting more money & were therefore more attractive. Old Tom - Jinky & his uncle always correcting him as no backsteps in the dance only 1/2 capers.

Baccapipes - always danced it with Reg Whitlock.

Start 2 men standing opposite side of pipes to fiddler.

1. Foot-up with heels. Dance in an arc around left side of pipes, turn round to right (towards pipes) and dance back to place.

2. In with Heels - a few steps then in when on correct foot.

3. Foot-up with toes. Dance in an arc to the right of pipes, turn right, away from pipes & back to place.

4. In with toes.

ANCIENT MEN'S TOUR 1965 in Somerset.

Discussions reminded me to write out that Francis told me once that Jinky started to teach him & his brother a jig for two men each with two sticks. He could not remember the tune, but would recognise it if he heard it again. It had a foot-up, a bit where you clashed with your own sticks & a bit where you clashed with the others.

BAMPTON AT APPLETON FETE 10.7.65

Hand movements:-

Figures - "up" on 1st beat of each half only - in half-gip occ. on 1st beat of bar 2. Rest of time as in heys, a swagger with alternate or contrary arm movements. When backing, as in half-hands, often an inward swirl - direction of counter twists, with arms fairly well extended - particularly noticeable with Roy Shergold.

Half-hey - show at start - the hand at centre of the turn is the

"outside" hand - this is the only deliberate movement in the figure.

Sidestep dances - Nutting Girl - Francis does /up - - /up up - - //

Girl I Left - /low circle, low circle/up - up -// by everybody.

Open capers - Francis, Roy, Peter, no hand movements.

Jigs - Francis when dancing with Roy goes to left first in sidestep but when dancing alone goes to right. When dancing side by side Roy did the orthodox thing but Francis normally does

r l r hr/l r l hl/r l r hr/ l r l r/ l r l hl/ etc.

css to l.....css to r.....

NB. no hop in bar 4 to get Francis onto proper foot for open sidesteps.

- Baccapipes:- according to Francis for 2 men
- AA + 4 notes - Foot-up for No.1 & back
- AA + 4 notes - Foot-up for No.2 & back
- ABB + 4 notes - Half Foot-up & over pipes for No.1
- ABB + 4 notes - Half Foot-up & over pipes for No.2

This is one round of the dance.

- 1st round - use toes & progress round pipes clockwise
- 2nd round - use toes & progress round pipes anticlock.
- 3rd round - use heels, clock
- 4th round - use heels, anticlock.

End with Foot-up both together I think but must check.

RING SCRAPBOOKS- seen at Oxford Ring Meeting

- Pictures of boys team in Bampton 1957, Men's side at Longworth Hall 1927
- Wells doing Fool's Jig - well off ground & arms very high at side.
- Bampton 1938 - passing broom with head in hand & other end on ground.
- Picture of Bonny Green Garters - hats in right hand.

EFDS NEWS No.18. Oct.1928 p.113

"Bampton May 28th 1928" by K.B.C.(the following are notes I made.)

2 teams - the old lot - imported fiddler - teen side - Wells.

Old Lot - No.3 now leader - came in after WW I - did Brighton Camp, Jogging to the Fair. Dances ended with sidestep & 1/2 hey instead of rounds. Shep Hey - double foot-up each time for each couple & short corner movement. Half-rounds generally flatten themselves out into a straight line before the halfway is reached. Defy anybody to tell what rules govern the hey - middles generally dance in opposite directions. Diversity of footing esp in half gip is truly mathematical. Arms - vertical "arms bend" to "arms 1/2 way up stretch" done jerkily without any apparent regard either to the figure or the rhythm. Shows - quiet vertical curve - not the EFDS flaunting horizontal sweep.

No.3 - leader - flourish of free foot in hop clears away any lingering doubts surrounding the practicability of Bucknell double capers.

No.2 - leans backwards from the hips at an incredible angle - uses 4/2 step throughout except in sidestep.

Sidestep - all execute with much more precision & vigour than ordinary step.

Young Lot - only one or two habitually use 4.3 step. Did Quaker & Tebley Jig.

Wells' Bampton side at Albert Hall at end of 1929.

DAILY CHRONICLE 26.9.12 Interview with Wells.

"Weald-by-Bampton-in-the-Bush"

Uncle Harry(72) knickname "Auld Sarah" danced for 57 years & still squire - learnt in the old rigorous days when the neophyte had to hang to a beam to stretch his knees. Billy learnt from his uncle Charley now dead, who was blind - Billy had same illness.

Wells said "the music is most of it too quick & the old graceful movements are slurred to keep pace with it. You see very little of the old back-stepping now which was as pretty a thing as you could wish" Wells' list of dances included "The Island Mary's Dell"

TIMES 25.5.26 - photo of Clarke playing for Bampton

BAMPTON WHITSUN 1966 - Sunday Practice.

Maid of the Mill - 4 plain capers

Rose Tree - start corners with left foot forward (only Francis with r) All except Roy turned to right in half-through corners.

Constant Billy - 4 capers done in circle in "show em in" position. Half-hands - Roy has odd twist of knees at end of bar 2.

Double sidestep - Roy was odd doing /l.r.l.r./l.bl.r.l/r.l.r.l etc Hands - at start of figures only & a show (up at 45 deg) at start of hey.

Princess Royal - backstep - free foot swung behind & across behind. In cross step Peter has both hands up.

MONDAY - team - Roy & Francis Shergold, Frank Purslow, Cyril Smith Peter Allum, Jim Buckingham Bill & Frankie Daniels, Oliver "Jasper" Walsh (Irish family) Terry Rouse (brother of weightlifter). Mascot - Chris Collet; Cake - Bob Allison; Music - Reg Hall; Fool - Sonny Townsend.

Bampton 22.

Fool's comments - "Well how did I do that?"
"Just another little one...."

Fool had a nice line in vulgar gestures.

HANDS - at beginning of bars 1,2,5,6 in foot-up. Only in Foot-up did all go up 2 times - in other figures usually only at start of bars 1,5. Frankie Daniels usually both times. In Hey all do a show (up at 45°) usually the outside hand before the turn - but for the middles this could be either - usually outside hand when facing down (really this is inside hand on the turn) Sometimes, Frankie usually, a 2nd show in bar 2.

In single & double ss there was no real distinction in hands now - hands at best /circle, circle/up - up - / circles below waist. Circles after a while often became a push forward & back in horizontal plane In GILBIE because so fast, often one of each only.

FEET - Francis double step throughout. Roy - turn of knees at end of bar 2 in half-hands. Roy in double sidestep - led left foot both times so l r l r/l hl r - /l r l r/l hl r hr/ In both single & double ss Roy tended to eliminate the hop at the end of bar 2, but not end of bar 4 Shergolds in jigs, Foot-up & Sidestep - pronounced forward movement of shin to shake bells & then pronounced tap down Townsend - in set dances used a sidestep 123 rather than the usual step throughout & did 2 shows in heys. In jigs did closed short side steps with foot straight forward.

DANCES - Wobley Through = Shave Donkey - ie 4 bar chorus Wobley Twizzle = middles "twizzle" up & out before going down ie No. 3 anticl, No. 4 clockwise. Through dances - all start sidesteps with left foot - pass right shoulders in through.

MAYOR'S DAY 1966

Bampton danced "Knuckle Down" to tune "Just as the Tide was Flowing" More the Hammond than the Sharp tune - not done on WhitMonday but at practice & on tour when Purslow played.

Bodleian Library Manning Mss Nov. 5th Bampton

Gunpowder plot shall never be forgot
A stick or a stake for King George's sake
Pray Dame give me a faggot
If you dont give one I'll take two
The better for me & the worse for you.

WELLS SCRAPBOOKS

Wells article - Weekly Budget 11.6.10

Matinee performance at Globe Theatre 11.5.12. Next day in "Morning Post"

"...The only performers who held themselves a little aloof & indeed seemed comparatively woebegone in their antics were the "side" of morris dancers from Bampton-in-the-Bush. They were the "genuine article" however & with their attendant fiddler, sword bearer & fool had a stirring quaintness all their own...."

Photos - Daily Mirror 25.5.20	The Car 29.5.18
Daily News 1.10.21	Home & Country Aug 1922
Daily Graphic 23.5.23	Daily Graphic 2.6.25
Times 25.5.26	Daily Telegraph 22.5.34
Daily Telegraph 1.5.37	Country Life 30.5.36

(incl Jinky dancing & playing FofE)

WELLS NEWS No. 19 JAN. 1929

..It was from William Wells that C. Sharp noted the Bampton tunes & dances in the summer of 1909. This was largely accomplished in a house standing in the market square of Stow on the Wold which became the meeting place for the occasion, but the historic event passed almost unnoticed at the time except by the inmates of the house, upon whom it made a lasting impression. Unsuspicious bystanders, whatever their age, were apt to become unexpected collaborators on these occasions & by the sweat of their bewildered brows would quickly learn to appreciate the morris tradition...."

On Wells & Bampton at Albert Hall, Jan 3rd 1930

"...although Bampton is the only authentic example of continuous morris, the local performers were of historical, rather than of technical interest..."

BARDWELL PAPERS - folder entitled "Bampton Morris". Contents:-

EPDSS Journal article on Wells 1956 - errors indicated

Peck's booklet with handwritten comments including,

"Bampton show variation on beat on which they begin open & half capers also whether open capers take 3 or 4 beats. i.e.

/A h / l t / or A lh / tog."

"Benfield & Wells did not always modulate the keys of tunes."

Some photographs.

Tunes from Peck - Whitsun 1936 - Banbury Bill Quaker, Old Tom, Jockey to the Fair, Johnny So Long at the Fair.

ED&S Sept 1961 - Old Tom & Jockey

ED&S - Rose Tree

Notations of Rose Tree Old Tom & Flowers of Edinburgh jig.

BAMPTON - Practice 29.5.67

This year practiced weekly since Xmas & 3 times a week before Albert Hall show then weekly till Whitsun. All this practice - in total more than previous 10 years all together - made men think about the dances. Some things have been standardised. Francis now starts on left foot. Heys - up first time, down second - this rule now used in all 1/2 hey dances.

Young Daniels - like his brother uses 123hop in all movements other than foot-up.

In sidestep dances 1st bit must start left & 2nd bit right "otherwise if dance so that start each half on same foot, the lines go out at the turn."

Jigs - Bobby Wells - crosses feet & arm over in short sidesteps.

Step and Fetch Her - a revival - tune like Shave the Donkey.

Figure - cross over with 4 half capers, turning round to right to face in partners place on 3rd one - cross back with 4 sidesteps, turning left to face front on 4th one. Whole Hey.

BAMPTON - Longworth 5.7.67

I missed the Bank Holiday through being in Australia - first miss since I first went in 1955.

Hands up at end of dance. "Show" to start hey.

Turn a beat slower in foot-up. Hopsteps for backsteps in jigs from younger men.

SHARP FIELD NOTEBOOKS

Wells Aug 1909

Bobbing Around - "As I kissed Jock & Jock kissed me,
As we went bobbing around."

Lumps of P P. - order - Foot-up, Jig, Whole capers, Jig, Half capers, Jig, Foot up (this differs from Morris Books!)

"If you want to be took in, go to they Methodysts. Church Folk beaun't much behind."

"Fool so funny often put out fiddler & dancers, reduced them once to standstill".

Weald inclosure act 1813, Bampton in 1821.

BAMPTON - North Leach Fete 29.7.67

Bampton HQ for many year was the Lamb - at Jubilee about 3 years only. The BUSH of Bampton-in-the was a large tree where the Town Hall is now.

The Horse Fair was the 24th Aug & the Fun Fair was & still is 25-27th. Shergolds & others remember last Horse Fairs - herds of horses driven in from many mile away - remembered herds of Welsh mountain horses. Early 19th cent maps show that Bampton was centre for large area

Bampton 24
Once to self:- 2 capers
Foot-up:- up up hunch
1 hl r hr / 1 hl r hr / 1 - r hr / 1 - r (hr)/etc
turn

Half Hands:- up up
1 hl r hr / 1 hl r hr / 1 hl r hr / 1 - r (hr)//
forward in line back to right

NB.get into line in 1 bar - only slight tendency to turn feet out on backstep - in fact hardly a special step at all, spring at end to right side. Some do two quick ups at start of bar 2.
2nd up missing in whole gip & rounds.

Rounds:-turn at 1st beat bar 3 & rest on spot facing back.
All-up:-left foot up in air, both hands up above head & close together.
Hey:-up 1st time, down 2nd - show on 1st beat - inside of turn.
GLORISHEARS - stamp r, stamp left/x x x -/stamp left, stamp right/xxx
this is opposite to what I have always seen them do before.
STEP & FETCH HER - Cross over 4 half capers, turn right, cross back 4 sidesteps starting left forward first, turn left.
CORNER DANCES - half through - turn to right back to place. In sidestep vigour on first beat. In through - 4 sidesteps crossing to opposite turn (which way?) to face corner & open sidestep to left & right then 4 capers facing partner.

SIDESTEP DANCES - Old Tom - dble ss.
For each lunge hands do low circle - one in single ss, two in double ss.
In the up variously (1) up.....(2) upup - -/ (3) upup - -/ this often just a waggle on first two beats. "up" is quite high.
The flick in "up" = hands raised with knuckles towards each other, wrists bent & flipped up & out (lower arm sort of uncurls) this for sidesteps only.

All the above as done by the younger dancers as consequence of all this practice.

Sonny Townsend has presented old (100 year old!) cake tin to the Eagle. It matches Sharp's description & measurements exactly but it is not the same sword. Carter bought tin in 1894 for 4/6d & replaced it with a new copy - this looks like the copy. Present sword has a circular guard. Sonny says it comes from his father & grandfather - yet in 1914 it was held by Radbone. Arnold Woodley says it was the old tin that was used by Flux & the "old uns".

NEWSPAPER CUTTING undated but c.1916

Charles Tanner (a drainer by occupation) famous dancer & singer - now bedridden due to ankle trouble through morris dancing. Born 1846 - taught by his father. Was No.1 for many years (40 years). Has been the recipient of many compliments on his fine dancing, especially in respect of his backsteps.

10 Tanners gone to fight, in the war (WW I)

NOTES - Nov.1961 - I had lost these.

Arnold taught boys to all do a turn & then follow tops as easier form of hey. Sam Bennett used to play for boys esp when at Stratford. Always tended to speed up & end up too fast. Sam wanted Bampton to have his best hobby horse & it was left to Townsend to collect it - but there was some delay before Sonny could get a lorry over there & by then the family had given it to the local school. Sam's photos of 1926 showed that he had brought the hobby over that year.
Arnold suggested getting Bertie Clarke & made all the arrangements - Bertie would either cycle over or be brought by Sonny! "Mr. Clarke" could not play Lumps - esp. not as a jig - & had trouble with the repeats in Nutting Girl.

Lumps & Jockey are double sidestep jigs.

Constant Billy used to be a through dance.

Forestry Keeper's Jig - Francis only heard this twice - good tune.
Webley - done both ways for Wells.

MUSIC STUDENT - Aug.1919 "Dance Tunes" by R.V-Williams.

William Wells adapts his music to the idiosyncracies of the dancer.