

SECTION 10: BACKGROUND AND NOTATIONS  
FROM INDIVIDUAL TOWNS AND VILLAGES

THE ABINGDON MORRIS.

*Abingdon*

Set:-most of dances can & have been done by 4 & some of them by 8.

- Step:-1) invariable rule is to start each movement with left foot.  
2) feet lifted up & down, not kicked forward or back.  
3) step is 1 hop 3 4. Hop done 6 to 9" in front of the other steps to produce a forward & back rock of the body.  
4) JTTF is different.

Break:-never in the middle of foot-up.

- 1) NWWG, GILBM, JTTF have none.
- 2) CB, CHPB, MM, SD, SL have feet together after hop in last bar of movements ie. /r.hr.ft.-.//
- 3) PR has a movement rather like that at Campden.  
ie. .... /r.hr.l.r./l.hl.ft.-./j. ft.-.//

Handks:-Arms comfortably extended. Swing up from just behind body to about shoulder level & back in each bar. JTTF is different. Occasionally the movement is more from the elbow & the handk goes back over the shoulder.  
Nothing particular at the break - arms end down at sides on "ft".

Figures:-regularly recurring figures are Foot-up, Dance-in-position or Back-to-back & all-in. These movements vary from dance to dance.

Once-to-self.

There is NO jump or other movement at end of Once-to-self.

Foot-up = "Face Horns & Face Partner".

- 1) 8 bars up, 8 bars face partner - SD, GILBM, NWWG, PR.
- 2) 8 bars up, 10 bars face - JTTF
- 3) 8 bars up but no face partner - CHPB.
- 4) 4 bars up, 4 bars face partner - CB, MM.
- 5) 4 bars moving up 6 to 8ft, then face partner in this new position for 4 bars. Also done in reverse as Foot-down.

Back-to-back = "Cross Over".

- 1) 8 bars over & 8 bars back - PR.
- 2) 4 bars over & 8 bars back - CHPB
- 3) 4 bars over & 4 bars back - CB, SL.

Always done one way only, passing right shoulder in crossing & left shoulder on return.

All-in = "Corners".

- 1) Set opens out into a big circle, all facing the middle. Then all gradually dance toard centre ending with a caper & hands in air, in a bunch with a yell. Usually 8 bars but JTTF is 18 bars.
- 2) CHPB & PR - all face centre & "run in" & dance back twice (similar to distinctive figure of CHPB) then run-in 3rd time & step in small bunch. 12 bars in all.  
ie. /l.r.l.r./l.hl.r.l./r.hr.l.r./l.--hl.--//
- 3) SD is different.

Dances:-

**PROCESSIONAL**

Team & characters (Mayor, Horns, Fool, Deputy-Mayor etc) form up tidily & process to the tune Girl I Left Behind Me. There is no dance.

**CONSTANT BILLY - as practiced.**

Foot-up(4), (Sidestep up, Cast down, Back-to-back, sidestep down, Cast up, Back-to-back) 2 or 3 times, then All-in(1).

Sidestep up - long open sidestep towards top of set, both hands circling, leading hand higher, then long sidestep down.

Sidestep down - as above but sidestep away from horns first.

Cast Down - All face up, 1 & 2 cast out & away from each other & followed by their columns go to the bottom of set so that

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Cast Up - All face down, 1 & 2 cast out etc.





Abingdon Dances 3.

l.up r.up  
l.r.l.tg./r.l.r.tg./b.b.b.-./b.b.b.-./b.b.b.-./j.Ω ft.--//  
to l. to r. clapping

At each tg (=feet together without a jump) & after the claps in bars 9 & 10 the raised hand is flicked up & out. In sidesteps some men like to wave raised hands a little.

Once-to-self - men stand facing up & sing

"Old Mother Harvey, Old George Hunt, Went to Nuneham in a punt,  
Lost the pole & down they sunk, & they never got to Nuneham."  
to a tune rather like Old Mother Oxford.

SALLY LUKER - the "travelling" dance.

Foot-up(5), (Back-to-back(3), Foot-down, Back-to-back, Foot-up)  
2 to 4 times then All-in(1).

During Back-to-back, singing,  
"Sally Luker, Sally Luker, Sally Luker, my pretty gal,  
Dont you tease her, try to please her,  
For she is a pretty little gal".

last two lines alternatively,

"First you kiss her, then you leave her,  
Sally Luker is my little gal!"

SQUIRE'S (or MAYOR'S) DANCE.

Was called Greensleeves till some busybody pointed out that the tune wasn't.

Foot-up(1), (Run-in in 3's, Face-partners) 4 to 6 times then a special form of All-in.

Run-in in 3's - 1, 2 & 4, 3, 5 & 6 run together in 3's. Middle men to the right. Movement in action exactly as CHPB. Run in with 4 running steps, toss up hands & retire to place with 2 double steps & break(2). Repeat again starting with right foot. 8 bars in all.

All-in - ends turn to face each other up & down the set. Middles go to the right & turn to left to be between the ends also facing up & down the set. The two lines of 3 then slowly approach each other ending on a caper, 1 facing 5, 4 to 3, 2 to 6, hands in air, right feet almost touching in air.

JOCKEY TO THE FAIR - played very fast indeed.

Foot-up(2), (1st corners, 2nd corners, Rounds, Jump-in) 2 to 4 times then All-in(1) NB. no middles crossing.

Step:-start with weight mostly on left foot & right foot about a foot's length in front. In this position hop on both feet.

This is bar 1. Change to left foot in front & hop again. Bar 2.

Arms:-on right foot forward swing arms up so that forearm is vertical & lying along upper arm hands lying over shoulder. On left foot forward, swing smartly down.

There is a hypnotic effect after movement has been going for a while.

Corners - "back to back" - corners cross to opposite place passing right shoulders. Retire backwards to place passing left shoulders. At one time men put feet together, hands up high & made a slight bow having crossed & when back home. 18 bars in all.

Rounds - all face anticlockwise. Go round anticlock 8 bars as far as possible; turn outwards (to right) without missing a step on first step of bar 9 & return to place, taking 10 bars. If home too soon step in place.

Jump-in - on 1st beat of bar 1 all jump towards partner, without actually treading on him, retire slowly to place in next few bars & step out rest of 18 bars in place.

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actually treading on him, retire slowly to place in next few  
bars & step out rest of 18 bars in place.

JIGS - only Broomstick Jig, often done over the Mayor's sword.  
Traditionally done by fool, who was usually a step dancer, at  
start of show. Tune - Pop Goes the Weasel. Other set jigs, if they  
ever existed, were only a faint memory in 1937.

Abingdon Dances 4.

Historic Material.

There is much that is tantalisingly close to "normal" Cotswold morris & there is a temptation to rationalise the vagarities. However many of the oddities are seen in Campden, Eynsham, Wheatley & the Worc. morrises. Hasty & inadequately informed judgements on the tradition should be avoided. A point to note in using MSS material is that tunes & dances are often shuffled around. For Examples:-

1) Sharp MSS F.D.IV p.118. 21.9.22.

CHPB is now danced as GILBM

2) Neal Esperance Book Vol 1.

Sally Luker is now Jockey TTF. NB the description of step for the corner movement, when danced, is very close to current JTTF step.

Step from descriptions:-

Polka step, stamping vigourously all the while, with a semi-circular movement out & in of the free leg on the hop, with perhaps some kicking of the foot backward. The dancer moves from side to side with each step. To the right when beginning with the right etc.

Comments on dances:-

CONSTANT BILLY.

Included handclapping b.-.b.-./b.-. <sup>r+1</sup>l+r.-./ done twice.

CURLY HEADED FLOUGHBOY

A 1/2 hey replaced last of the three "run-ins".

JOCKEY TO THE FAIR

Hand movements may once have included circles as well as up & downs - possible original of Sharp's movement?

PRINCESS ROYAL

The dance collected by Sharp & Neal independently in 1910 but not the dance collected & published in 1922, was as done today except for the last 6 bars of the sidestep movement which were

b. b. wave r. -./b. b. wave r. -./ 1/2 hey //  
or b. or b. clapping.

Odd steps have been noted.

1) A caper similar to Bucknell double caper.

2) A 1/2 caper like that at Bledington 1.Ω r.l./

Jockey to the Fair ABAB....

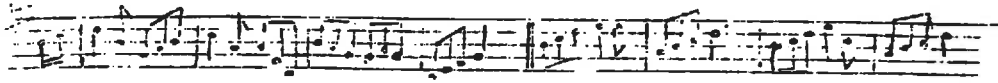
♩ = 120

Squire's Dance A then ABAB..... d = 96

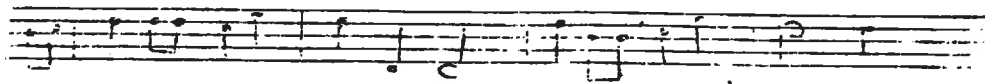
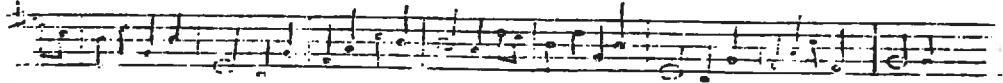


Allegretto

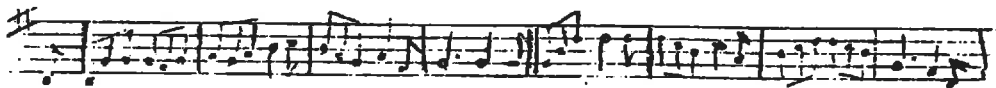
Constant Billy AABA



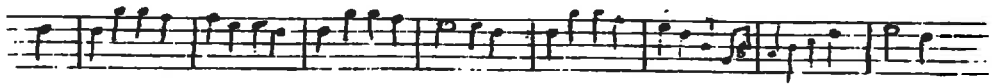
Curly Headed Ploughboy A then ABAB.....



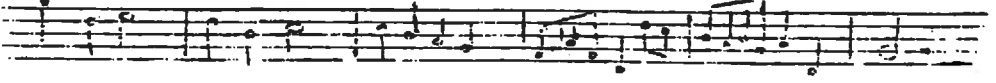
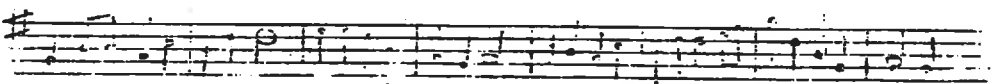
Maid of the Mill AABA



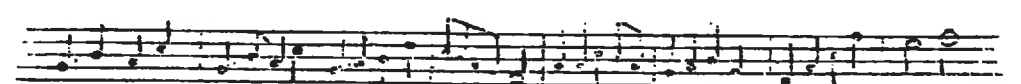
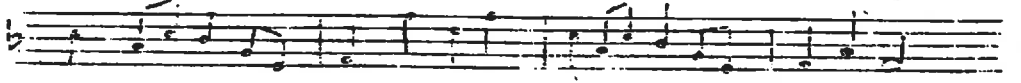
Nutting Girl A then ABAB.....



Princess Royal A then BCBBC.....



Sally Laker AAB



A music of Girl I Left Behind Me. ABA

