

WIGAN

NW WEST MORRIS WORKSHOP - "WIGAN"

There is much emphasis in print on how dances were done rather than on dancing them now. Problems exist because the dance is not usually done in procession anymore, nor with the full width of a road available and numbers of dancers are often restricted to 8 rather than 16 or 24. Club style in hand implements, costume, footwear and stepping impose restrictions. Also written notations often need understanding, interpretation, shuffling and development of figures to be interesting or to contrast with other dances in a club's repertoire.

Source: a member of a boy's side in the last decade of the 19th cent.

Step: Polka, free leg crossed over, danced "on your toes", knees well up.

Hands: short sticks held at bottom, shaken with twist of wrist on first 3 beats of bar.

Music: jigs like Cock O'North.

Dance - On the move: All figures except Grand Chain (fig 6) done on the move. Between figures walk forward with hands at sides.

- Stationary: Instead of walk forward one can use "Outsides" to walk step, or drop it altogether. The sequence to be described takes 5 to 7 minutes so a repeat of all the figures is not obligatory.

All figures have to be adjusted to some extent to be done on a fixed dancing spot. There are 6 figures. It is aesthetically satisfying to alternate simple and complex movements.

Simple moves adjusted to non-processional format:-

Fig. 1 Cross Over: Dance into line, right shoulder to right shoulder, taking 4 bars, continue to opposite's place and turn to right to face back, taking 4 more bars. Repeat to place, ending facing in. The movement should be timed to flow with no pauses.

Fig. 3 Turn Partner: Dance into line, right shoulder to right shoulder, taking 4 bars, turn partner by right, crossing right sticks and having outside hand up as well, half way round into line again to face out to own place, taking 4 bars, dance out to place in 4 bars, turning to face up, and dance on spot facing up for 4 bars.

Fig. 5 Right Hand Star: Dancers take 4 bars to move into a star. They move in along the diagonal as if going to the opposite diagonal's place and do not make a $\frac{1}{4}$ turn to left. The star makes a half turn in 4 bars so that dancers now face out to original place, move out to place in 4 bars and dance on spot facing up 4 bars.

In like this



not like



There is no turn by the left in either fig. 3 or fig. 5

Complex moves can be interpreted in various ways:-

Fig. 2 Crossings: General rules - each move takes 4 bars, passing is done by the right shoulder, all turns are by the right as in "Turn Partner".

Original Pattern - top pair only cross over, face down file & turn next dancer half round to change places, top pair only cross back, all face up and polka on spot. Top pair repeat with 3rd pair. Top pair repeat with 4th pair while 2nd pair now

start with 3rd. This pattern continues till all return to original starting places with new pairs coming in at top as soon as next pair is available. The pattern looks -

12 21 34 34 34 34 43 56 56
 34 34 21 12 21 56 56 56 43 34
 56 56 56 56 56 21 12 21 78 78 etc.
 78 78 78 78 78 78 78 21 12

Gorton Pattern - to shorten the figure the movement goes down the set and back but not the dancers. So the turns on the sides are complete turns taking 4 bars. The movement is also speeded up by using a skip step and doing the cross over in 2 bars and facing the next person to be turned for 2 bars. The pattern is the top pair cross over, complete turn of 2nd pair on side, then both 1st and 2nd pair cross over, 2nd pair turns 3rd pair and they both cross over, 3rd pair turns 4th pair and they cross over etc. Thus -

12 21 12 12 12 12 12
 34 34 43 34 34 34 43 34
 56 56 56 65 56 65 56 56
 78 78 78 78 87 78 78 78

Combined Pattern - the original pattern is made more effective by adding in the idea from Gorton of both pairs crossing over after the half turn so that at different times one, two or four pairs are crossing. The pattern now looks -

12 21 34 43 43 43 43 34 65 56 56 56 65 78 87 87 87 87
 34 34 21 12 21 56 65 65 34 43 34 87 78 78 65 56 65 21 12
 56 56 56 56 56 21 12 21 78 87 87 34 43 34 12 21 21 65 56
 78 78 78 78 78 78 78 21 12 12 12 12 12 34 43 43 43 43
 78 12 21 21 21 21 21 21
 12 78 87 78 34 43 43 43 43
 65 43 34 34 78 87 78 56 65 and partners are reversed.
 43 65 56 56 56 56 56 78 87

Fig.4 Reel : Start with bottom pair facing up and rest facing down. Bottom pair work their way to the top up their own files doing a right hand turn with each dancer and taking 4 bars for each. One way is, for each two who are to turn, to face out or in with right sticks crossed at the start of the turn, make the turn in 3 bars and turn to face the other way in bar 4 ready for the turn with the next dancer. The original intent must have been for each pair to come in from the bottom as soon as the next pair is available, as in fig 2. Once the figure is underway neutrals at the end can mark time facing in. Gorton introduces a different feel to the figure by making each turn skipped, going round $1\frac{1}{2}$ times, only having one active pair at a time, and making the turns alternately right and left.

Fig.6 Grand Chain : The dancers move out to form a circle and then do a progressive grand chain starting at the top with nos 1&2. Each turn takes 4 bars and is alternately right then left. It is possible to make it with only right hand turns as in Fig.4 making quick turns to face other way on bar 4. In this case it helps to form a complete circle with all knuckles touching before each turn starts. Alternatively, Gorton make each passing a $1\frac{1}{2}$ turn.

Clubs still have to fill in detail like direction to face while waiting to come in or when filling up time at the end of a figure and to find a satisfactory ending - perhaps start the Grand Chain all facing in to the centre and all end facing out?

WIGAN PROCESSIONAL

Sources: a member of a boys' side in last decade of 19th century.

Step : Polka, free leg crossed over, danced "on your toes", knees well up. Assume left ft sta

Hands : 16 in sticks, twist of wrist in stepping. 1, 2, 3 and a bit of a shake on 4th beat

Music : Cock O'North but depended on band.

Dance : All figures except Grand Chain done on move. Walk between figures. Use "outsides" with a walk step on stage. Assume hands down in walk. Number of polkas per fig guess

1. Cross over diagonally with partner (8 polkas) then cross back (8 polkas)
2. Top pair cross over, right shoulders (4b) face down the file and turn next dancer by right, sticks crossed between them (4b) cross back to own side (4 bars) polka up street one place down in set (4 bars). Outside hand up in turns. As top pair work down the set other pairs start from the top as soon as practical. Suggest work in sets of 3/4 pairs rather than complete set.
3. All turn partner. 4 polkas to approach, 4 around by right hand, face out and 4 bar out to place, 4 bars up street.
4. As figure 3 but done in 4's (right hand star) once round with right hand (not back)
5. Bottom pair work their way up their own files doing a right hand turn with each dancer as they go. 4 bars for each turn. Work to top and back down again to place. Again sensible to work in groups of 4 pairs.
6. Grand Chain : this figure is only done without progressing
Dancers form into a circle (4 bars) then do a progressive grand chain started by 1&2 doing a right hand turn (4 bars), left with next in line etc all the way back to place. After Chain start from fig 1 again.