

### THE ALTON FIGHT

Steps : polka step throughout. Dance counted in number of "steps". Garland Dance.

Tune : Brighton Camp - written at time of Militia Camps in 1758

Source : seen by a member of the Yorkshire Chandelier in the Basque country being attempted by a team of women, as interpreted by Yorkshire Chandelier and modified in practice.

Title : The noise of the clashing and the movements remind of the fight at Alton in the English Civil War during which Col John Bolle was shot in the pulpit of St Lawrence Church on Wednesday 13 December 1643.

Formation : dance for 12 in two files, facing up to start. This is the only dance which starts with the two files close together, almost shoulder to shoulder.

Music : played AABB. The polka rhythm must be very marked in the playing to fit the natural movement of the step.

CHORUS : Face up, 4 polkas forward moving a few feet, 2 polkas back to starting place still facing up, turn to face partner and raise garlands, hitting garlands together on the first beat of bar 7 and holding them together, touching at the tops only, to make arches for 2 bars.

Lines retire, away from partner for 4 polkas, approach on 2 polkas, and hit and hold as before for 2 polkas.

FIG 1 - DIAGONALS ARCH - working in 4's.

In each 4, the second corner (2&3) make an arch across the diagonal by raising their garlands and tilting them so that they touch at the top. This pair stand still while the other two dance round them. The moving dancers round their partner and then their neighbour to place. They first pass face to face under the arch leading with the left shoulder, dance around <sup>anticlockwise</sup> the back of their partner, facing out, then turn to lead under the arch again leading right shoulder, face to face with the other dancer and go round their neighbour, facing out, clockwise to place.

They then form a similar arch across the first corner and the other two dance around, passing face to face right shoulder leading and round partner clockwise and face to face left shoulder leading and round neighbour anticlockwise to place.

FIG 2 - RINGS - working in 4's.

Immediately form rings of 4, right wrist over right hand neighbour's left wrist, so that garlands are vertical and form crowns. Polka once round to left, clockwise, taking 8 polkas for the one rotation, taking care to only move round one "place" every two polkas. Circle to right, anticlockwise, once around to place & face up.

FIG 3 - TURN PARTNER - working in 2's.

All take half turn to left so that left file faces up and right file faces down and inside knuckles of partners are touching. Turn partner once round by the right, clockwise, turn in and turn partner by the left once around to place. Each turn takes 8 polkas. Care to be taken to be in a single line up and down set at end of bars 2 and 6, and in pairs exactly across set at end of bars 4 and 8 in both halves. Face up at end.

FIG 4 - CLASH IN SQUARES - working in 4's.

The dancers move around clockwise taking 2 polkas for each change of place. They face across to their partner on the first beat and clash tips of garlands together, and then move round to left, being half way between places at start of 2nd polka so that 1 & 4 would be facing down and up and 2 & 3 facing each other across the set at that moment. Having moved one place round the square they all clash across the set, this time with their original neighbour, and continue moving round clockwise. This repeats till they have clashed 4 times in all and regained their starting place. It is then repeated in similar manner moving anticlockwise. The clashes occur at the start of every other bar.

FIG 5 - CLASH and CLASH & GO - working as complete set.

In the two lines facing, dancers polka on the spot for 8 bars hitting garlands together, at the top, on the first beat of every other bar, bars 1, 3, 5, 7. (8 bars) Dancers continue clashing every other bar. The top pair clash and immediately cast off to the bottom of the set and all others move up one place. This clash and go is repeated every other bar till the original top pair is back to place, and the last pair has reached the bottom. Each pair should reach the bottom in 6 polkas including the one on which they clash and go, so that dancers moving down miss 2 clashes only. (16 bars)

Dancers continue clashing every other bar. The top pair clash and immediately go down the centre of the set under the clashing garlands. The garlands need to be raised high for the clashes. When going down the two garlands are brought together flat and swung over to lead the pair so that no part is above head level. The top pair is followed by each pair in turn as before.

At the bottom the lead pair can either lead off the dancing area, or fall back onto the bottom of the files and clash all the way back to the starting place.

GARLAND DISCIPLINE

- 1 Garlands are "up" only during the music - that is Once to Self, the dance and any formal lead off.
- 2 Garlands are "down", that is lowered so that the top is near the ground, for forming up, casual walking off and for walking about.
- 3 Garlands are lowered for "bows" or "curtseys" to no more than waist level and horizontal
- 4 Garlands are carried off the dance area by the dancers and not collected off them by one dancer or a non dancer. Sticks may be dished out or collected while dancers are in position for a dance.