

SOME FUN & SKIT DANCES

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Skit Dances

1. DORSET FOUR HAND REEL

- From** : Anne Claydon of Dorset, but now universally known in the folk dance world. Reels were mentioned by Thomas Hardy as common when he was a youth. This was formerly used as a pub dance in which the dancers attempted to tread on each others feet in the "stepping". It has now become very stylised in performance when compared with the original rather freer interpretation.
- Steps** : walk, skip change and the universal "polka" or "rant" stepping on the spot, swing buzz step at end.
- Set** : 4 in a line, facing in pairs, 1) <2 3> <4.
The reel has the path of a 3 loop figure eight. Dancers pass right shoulders to start and then alternately left in the centre and right at the ends, except when turning to face back at the end of the set where there are two right passings in succession.
- A1/2 Walk a Reel of Four, **without** giving hands, passing right shoulders first with the one being faced, and do the reel twice through plus an extra change, so that the original ends face each other in the centre.
- B1/2 Middle two only, "step" to each other for 8 bars, then turn to face the new ends and "step" to them for 8 bars.
- A3/4 Walk a Reel of Four, **giving** hands, twice through plus one extra change to end with original middles facing in the centre. The "handing" is the same as the shoulder passing, right, left, etc but at the turn back at the end of the line there will be two right handings in succession.
- B3/4 Step to each other for 8 bars, turn and step to the ends for 8 bars.
- A5/6 Dance a Reel of Four, **without** giving hands, twice through plus one extra change, using a skip-change or polka step.
- B5/6 Step to each other for 8 bars, turn and step to the ends for 8 bars.
- A7/8 Dance a Reel of Four, **giving** hands, twice through plus an extra change, using a skip-change or polka step.
- B7/8 Step to each other for 8 bars, turn and step to the ends for 8 bars.
- A9/10 Pairs swing, using normal ballroom hold.

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2. THE FOREST REEL

From : an old lady, Dolly and friend in The Crown, Bransgore, New Forest.
Steps : walk, skip change step, back setting step, swing buzz step
Title : to distiguish from similar four hand reels from elsewhere.
Set : four in a line, as for the "Dorset Four Hand Reel", but with the middle two facing each other, 1 > 2 > <3 <4.

A1 Two facing in centre, backstep on the spot (single or double step)
A2 Pass by right shoulders and pivot (hullighan, see later) swing the next person, ending with the other two facing in the centre.
B1 Other two backstep on the spot facing in the centre.
B2 Pass and pivot swing.
A3 Walk a Reel of Four, first passing in the centre.
B3 Dance a Reel of Four, giving hands in passing.

Repeat ad lib

3. HULLIGHAN ROUNDABOUT

In NE England this was danced for-as-many-as-will in a complete circle, all dancing from the start, with alternate 8 bars of setting and swinging, going on till near exhausted, perhaps speeding up steadily throughout. This is a useful dance for bringing in the audience.

Hullighan Swing : the name is probably gaelic. Two dancers stand right side to right side facing in alternate directions. They link right arms at the elbows and place the right hand, palm outwards, against the small of the other's back, where it held by the other dancer's left. It is important that the right arms are interlocked otherwise there could be an accident during the swing. The body weight is taken on the right foot, raised onto the ball of the foot, and the body leans to the left a little, balancing the pull of the opposite's weight. The pair rotate clockwise, with short pushes from the left foot. It is wise to stop the swing before releasing hands, although it was common in the Scottish lowlands to try and get the opposite flying!

294.

4. BROMSBERROW HEATH in a CIRCLE

Like the above this dance is very simple, involving alternate movements of reeling and sticking. However in practice it was found that typical members of the public had problems with the turn back at the ends of the reel and discovering the rule on which shoulders to pass. It was realised that this could be avoided if the set was formed into a ring so that no one ever had to turn back!

From : as used by the Farnborough (Hants) Morris Men.

Music : "Yankee Doodle" or the tunes collected from the Bishop family.

Stick : long sticks.

Set : a circle, facing in pairs. Inexperienced dancers should be made to face the same way around the circle to avoid meeting similarly uncertain persons. Persons to be honoured can be placed in the centre of the ring.

A - reel for eight bars, passing alternately right and left shoulders, hopefully eight passings, and stop and face the ninth person. Use a walking step, two steps to a bar. Normally carry the stick sloping over the right shoulder. If the new dancers phrase badly, it may be desirable to have everyone clash when passing on the first beat of each bar.

B - face and clash sticks, alternately butts left to right and tips right to left in each bar, while doing plain capers on the spot. The leader's reminder call is "bottoms, tops, & bottoms, tops, &....".

This is done ad lib, but with the music gradually increasing in tempo.

295.

5. SHEEPSKIN JIG

From : Broughton Monchelsea in 1984. No sticks or handkerchiefs, or hats.
Steps : stephops, left foot start.
Arms : tendency to push both hands up at the start of phrases.
Set : three objects on ground in a row, in this case hats and three dancers in single file at one end. x x x <1 <2 <3

1. **Sheepskin Hey** - this is a three loop Figure of Eight danced around the objects on the ground. The feature that makes it a "Sheepskin Hey" is that as the string of three dancers passes the middle object, the last one in the line turns back around that object to get ahead of the leader and so in turn becomes the leader of the string. In this particular dance the turn back is only done when the string is going **down** the line of objects and not when coming back up. This means that at times all three dancers circle the top object together. The hey continues until No 1 is leading again and they start another part of the travel to get the dancers in the desired places.
2. **Clapping** - Nos 1 & 2 having started another hey stop when No 1 is by the the furthest object and No 2 by the middle object. They face up and down and clap / b - r+r - / b - l+l - / etc, swinging both arms out to side, about horizontal, between claps, while stephopping and No 3 dances around the whole area clockwise, ending behind No 2 who then turn $\frac{1}{2}$ way clockwise and claps with No 3 while No 1 goes round anticlockwise.
3. as 1. No 1 passes between the further two objects and the other two $\frac{1}{2}$ turn and follow into the hey.
4. **Circles** - come out of the hey in a convenient place, straight into circle around the central object, three times to the right, anticlockwise and to the left, clockwise, turning outwards at the half way point to come back, with an emphatic raise of both arms.
5. as 1.
6. **Star Burst** - all face across the central object in different directions and dance across and away from the centre, pause at the crowd, turn and come back, forming a line going clockwise around to the top of the objects to start the hey.
7. as 1. and lead off at end.

296.

6. THREE JOLLY SHEEPSKINS

From : Fleur de Lys Morris, 1990, developed from a workshop dance.
Music : "Three Jolly Sheepskins".
Stick : medium length, and sloped over right shoulder when not in use.
Step : stephops.
Set : six dancers in two rows facing.

CHORUS - starts dance.

Evens have sticks in the "hold" and take the "posture". Odds stephop and hit the proffered stick tip vigorously, r to l, l to r twice in each bar for four bars, 16 strikes in all. Then all turn to face up and follow No 1 around No 2 to dance a Sheepskin Hey along the evens line. When the last cast back is done, by No 1, the dancers pause and hold position between the evens thus,

2 1 4 3 6 5

all facing to the odds side, then the odds dance back to place turning up to face across. This is repeated immediately by the evens striking the odds sticks, the evens going round the top of the odd row and doing a Sheepskin Hey which is the mirror image of that done by the odds. They also pause in a single line, the evens below their opposites, and cross to place turning up to face across.

1. **Back-to-Backs.** The odds dance the first half of a conventional back-to-back, passing right shoulders first, around the evens who stand still in their positions. Then the evens dance, passing right shoulders first, around the odds who stand still. The odds and then the evens dance the other half of the back-to-back passing left shoulders first. 16 bars in all.

2. **Reel.** Both opposites stephop on the spot, and clash their stick tips together high, four to the bar, for four bars, then move forward, passing right shoudlers and turning to the right into a Reel of Six along the centre line of the set. 16 bars in all.

3. **Circle.** Dance rounds clockwise, anticlockwise, and off following leader.

297.

7. VICTORY OLD MEN'S or GROCKLE DANCE

From : Victory Morris Men of Portsmouth, no definitive version!

Music : "Greensleeves".

Dress : "Grockle" is a tourist. Proper dress is rolled up trouser legs and on the head a handkerchief knotted at the four corners.

Set : four dancers standing in a circle, each with a long stick, butt on the ground, which they lean on as if it is a walking stick.

CHORUS : walk around one's own stick slowly, one step per bar, not lifting the stick off the ground. Posture, well bent forward, as an "old man", perhaps "shaking", and hamming it up.

FIGURES : all actions go round ring anti-clockwise.

1. **Kicks.** In turn, each dancer claps own hands together, spits on right hand, slaps own right thigh and knees their right hand neighbour up the backside. The neighbour leaps into the air under the supposed impact. (Well something like this! - alternatively slap neighbour's shoulder so that person staggers under the "effect"). This takes two slowly played bars per dancer so it takes eight bars in all for each to have a turn.

2. **Sticks.** In turn, each dancer rocks from one foot to the other, onto left, right and left and then kicks the right hand neighbour's supporting stick away with their right foot so that, in principle, the neighbour falls over.

3. **Hats.** All face in and pass hats around simultaneously. Reach for right hand neighbour's hat (maybe handkerchief) and put that hat on one's own head at a rate of one change per bar. It usually goes wrong, if not the music can always speed up! Keep the action going even if a hat is not there.

4. **Ring.** Link up in a ring with the sticks, giving the butt to one's right hand neighbour. In turn each dancer rocks from one foot to another, putting weight onto the left, right, and left, then lift the right leg over the right hand stick so that the stick is under the knee. End with all four standing on left legs only, the least stable ones!

Then hop on the left leg and circle round which ever direction is easiest. Consensus may have to be achieved by pushing! The aim is for it to fail, but not for all the dancers to fall over, as there is still more dance. This "rounds" could replace a chorus.

5. **Throws.** Everyone throws sticks across the diagonals. Facing across the diagonal the first corners throw their sticks and dib them when caught, whereas the second corners dib them then throw. The concept is to avoid crashes in the centre, at least early on in the figure! One should find that on a hard surface the stick actually can be made to bounce quite well without holding onto the stick when forcibly "dibbed". The music for this figure can be speeded up till there is a catastrophe.

298.

8. BRIMFIELD MORRIS DANCE

Miss Leather and Cecil Sharp met Mr Trill's Brimfield morris men Boxing Day 1909. There were four dancers, with medolian and tambourine men. Sometimes they had more and sometimes less. When there were more, they introduced Country Dance figures into the dance. The dance that Sharp saw was similar to the Four Handed Reel, except that when the dancers faced they did not "step" but clashed their sticks together. The men wore fancy dress, has their faces blacked with white painted patches, but had no bells or handkerchiefs, only short thick sticks, six to eight inches long and one and a half inches diameter. The melodian player had no fixed music for the dance, polkas were preferred but sometimes schottiches played rather slow.

Set : four men in a line, facing in pairs, 1 > <2 3 > <4.

Steps : simple, but suggest use step-hops throughout without any jumps

NAPPING : 2 and 3 hold their stick in both hands, resting their hands on the midriff, and keeping the stick steady during the tapping. 1 and 4 strike these stationary sticks from side to side as in "single stick" for eight bars in rhythm with the music. That is, in general hitting from right to left on the first beat of each bar and from left to right on the middle beat, but phrasing it overall according to the particular tune played. All step-hop (4/2 step), marking time during the "napping".

FIGURE EIGHT : alternately between nappings, 1 and 4 dance a figure eight not a hey or chain, around 2 and 3, who remain in their place marking time. 1 starts by passing his partner by the right and 4 by the left, and 1 passes before 4 in going between 2 and 3, so that both 1 and 4 follow the same track. All call "Ho!" as they start the figure eight and use plain steps (4/1 step) or step-hops (4/2 step) taking eight bars to complete the move.

Instead of the figure eight the following can be interpreted as also having been used, although the mss is not clear that they are truly distinct moves.

1. **Swing in Pairs** usual clockwise direction, either with right arm round partners waist, facing opposite directions and waving free hand, or facing partner and using a "cross-hands" hold.
2. **Setting** to partner to right and left for eight bars. Presumably more elaborate "steps" could be used and this would make it more compatible with the character of the rest of the dance.
3. **Link Arms**, first right and then left, taking four bars each way.
4. **Star Dr Cawte** was told a right and left hands across, eight bars each way. Start by 2 and 3 stepping to the left away from the middle and 1 and 4 stepping towards the middle to allow joining right hands in the centre.

SUGGESTED ORDER :

Nap / Figure 8 / Nap / Set / Nap / Figure 8 / Nap / Arming /
Nap / Figure 8 / Nap / Hands Across / Nap / Figure 8 / Nap / Swing.

A personal suggestion is to use the arming, hand across or swing to change places with one's partner so as to share being on the receiving end!

299.

9. BRIMFIELD FOR EIGHT

From : film of Rogue Morris of Oxford.
Step : stephops continuously throughout.
Stick : short stick, carried on right shoulder when not clashing.
Set : eight dancers in two lines of four forming a cross, with the middles back to back in the centre and the ends facing in.

1. **Reel.** Each of the four inner dancers dance out on the line they are facing and retire backwards, two bars each way, twice.
Each of the four outer dancers dance an asymmetric Figure of Eight. They move forward passing the inner dancer in front of them by the right shoulder, and all four pass the centre together by the right shoulder, they cut to the right behind the inner dancer on the other side and dance a loop around to the left, going round the opposite outer's position anticlockwise, passing the other inner by the left shoulder both going and coming back. The outers then cut to their left behind the other inner, pass the centre point again simultaneously by the right shoulder and turn to right to face inwards at their starting position.
2. **Sticks.** The outers clash the inners sticks 16 times, taking eight bars, hitting alternately from right to left and left to right, and the receiving sticks are held by both hands on the butts, hands at chin level and stick pointing forward and sloping upwards.
3. **Reel.**
4. **Right and Left Turns.** Using a wrist grip, twice round each way, turn in at half way. Change stick to other hand so that sticks always on outside.
5. **Reel.**
6. **Sticks.**
7. **Reel.**
8. **Waist Swings.** One way only, right arms around facing dancers' waist front.
9. **Reel.**
10. **Sticks.**
11. **Reel.**
12. **Four Hand Star.** Go two times round each way, end feet together, arms up.

300.

10. MUCH WENLOCK

There are interesting dances for 6 or 8 dancers generically called "Much Wenlock" but without evidence of being based on collection. The dance seen by Maud Karpeles in 1937 and seen again in 1949 was very simple.

- From** : collected by Maud Karpeles when Mr Minton, as the melodian player, came with 3 dancers, two stick men and a tambourinist, to show the dance.
- Music** : various tunes, including jigs. The band consisted of melodian, bones, triangle and tambourine, depending on numbers available.
- Stick** : stick 14" long and 4" in circumference, not decorated.
- Set** : The dance could be performed by from 5 to 8 dancers. There were always two "standards" in the troupe, a bones and a melodian player, who did not dance.

When 8 there were 4 stick men and 2 tambourineers who danced in a set of 6.
When 7 there were 2 stick men and 2 tambourineers who danced, and a triangle player who did not dance.

When 6 there was no triangle player.

When 5 there were 2 stick men and a triangle man who did not dance, but no tambourine player.

Thus the set for the dance was either,

T	S	S		T	S	S
(top)		(bottom) or (top)		(bottom) or (top)		(bottom)
T	S	S		T	S	S

A1 1-4 : Partners cross over, passing left shoulders, and take a half turn to the right to face back.

A1 5-8 : Partners cross back, passing left shoulders to places, and then arm once around with the left arms linked, to end in place.

The tambourines are held up and shaken during the crossing. The "step" during the above was something between a run and a walk. In jig time, the dancers put in occasional fancy steps, such as a cross step and a hockle step, but only indeterminately. Dr Cawte was told that for part of the dance they used a clumsy single shuffle as for the rapper dance. When in the streets, the dancers progress slightly in these movements, by making their track slightly diagonal. They are then headed by the melodian and the bones.

B1 : Stick Tapping : Partners stand still, facing each other. The even stick dancers hold their sticks still in a vertical position whilst the odds hit the tips of the even's sticks alternately from right to left and left to right with their tips to the rhythm / x x x x / and finish with / x . x . //. The strikers sticks are also held almost vertically and the tapping is done mainly by a movement of the wrist. The tambourine players beat time and the bones player, who has hitherto been silent, joins in.

A2B2 : The above is repeated but the evens hit the odds.

Whole dance continues ad lib.

The same men performed in 1949 when some were living at Stretton Westwood for Geoffrey Mendham in English Dance and Song Dec/Jan 1953/4 p.100.

301.

Skit Dances

"The Westwood Morris Men, five of them, met in August 1948. Dressed in fancy dress mostly modelled on circus clown costume. One wore a tightly fitting blue costume, wide waisted and tightly banded at wrist and ankle - carried two pairs of bones. Another wore top hat and tail coat and was almost immaculate - with a tambourine. Other three in coloured pyjama like suits. Two has short sticks one foot long - third had a small melodian. A full team included two more stick men. All had blackened faces.

Four dancers stood in a square 12 feet wide, with musician in middle - reading sunwise - tambourine, stick, stick, bones - musician played 16 bar tune loud, fast and inaccurately. Second tune was recognisably as "Three Jolly Sheepskins", largely as at Sleights - this because Sharp's "Sleights" came from John Locke of Leominster!

During first strain the three in motley moved rapidly round each other in a serpentine track, apparently arbitrarily - came occasionally near a hay for three. Step was a rapid rolling walk - as if a hurry to get somewhere. Meanwhile the top hatted tambourinist moved fairly slowly anticlockwise round the set and performed a variety of polka and rant steps in an almost sitting position. At the end of 8 bars all back to position, except stick men now within reach.

One held his stick very rigidly vertically at arms length. The other beat it from side to side with great vigour, four times in each of first six bars, twice in bar seven and three times in eighth. Tambourine and bones did same rhythm, both facing away from centre, the bones at head level, the tambourine at knee level. All instruments played with extreme vigour. Sequence done three or four times, stick men change roles each time. Dance ended on second strain. Usually performed at Xmas."

302.

11. MUCH WENLOCK FOR EIGHT

From : film of a joint Bollin and Rogue Morris side on an Oxford tour.

Set : eight dancers in two rows with sticks.

CHORUS : one side "holds" their stick and makes the "posture", while the other side hits. Sequence is,

/ r to l, l to r, r to l, l to r / r to l, l to r, r to l. - /

/ r to l, - l to r, - / r to l, - hit down - /

Then the other side repeats this clashing.

To "Hit Down" the stiker has a two handed grip of the stick butt to hit down in a vertical plane onto the receiver's stick. The receiver holds their stick for this receive only, at the ends, horizontally in front.

12. BROUGHTON SIX HAND REEL

From : film of Broughton Monchelsea on Victory Morris Tour 1984.

Step : stephops with exaggerated lift of the knee.

Stick : medium sticks, on right shoulder for travelling, in both hands at butts for hitting.

Set : six dancers in two rows. Start facing opposite.

CHORUS - dance starts with a chorus and ends on a hey.

First Half : Evens - stand still, "hold" stick and adopt the "posture".

Odds - stand still but upright and hit tip of opposite's stick.

Eight strikes right to left for four bars with a small swing, and then eight strikes, alternating right to left and left to right, using full swings from one side of body to the other. But the eighth of these is another right to left rather than a left to right strike.

Second Half : as above in reverse, evens hitting odds sticks.

FIGURES - usually a whole hey followed immediately by a figure.

1. Whole Morris Hey, tops and bottoms turn out to start, complete in 6 bars and have 2 bars facing across. Then a cross over with opposite, passing right shoulder and turning to the right and approaching a little, all in four bars, then drive forward and do a left hand turn of opposite, with a wrist grip, to end in starting place, after another four bars.

2. Whole Morris hey, ending with all facing up. Then turn easy way into a clockwise whole rounds taking four bars, with the stick held out at arm's length by the middle and vertical, followed by left hand swing of neighbour, 1&3, 3&6 etc two times around in three bars and ending in starting place, taking another four bars in all.

3. Hey and end facing across. Then all turn to face out and dance towards the audience, if necessary dance on the spot before turning, turn right and come back.

4. Whole Hey and end dance facing up.

13. ROYAL GEORGE 3 HANDED STICK DANCE or HELLO AUNTIE MAUREEN

- From** : Filmed at Waterlooville Festival and at Sidmouth. The detail has been developed over the years.
- Music** : "The King of the Fairies".
- Stick** : each has one medium length stick.
- Steps** : usual Royal George sequence of three stephops and two running steps or "rushes".
- Set** : three dancers in a circle facing in.

Some terminology :

- Hold** : hold the stick with both hands on the butt, in front of the groin, with the stick pointing forward and slanting up at 20° to 40°.
- Gesture**: an upward rotation of the stick from in front of the legs up to the hold position. Can also be just a small rotation.
- Posture**: during a hold the dancer can stand feet apart, legs bent with knees forward and leaning back a little. Amount of posture varies with the individual.

ONCE TO SELF - stand close together, shoulder to shoulder facing in, with the three sticks vertical and together in the centre.

1. **Rounds** - back out and clash on the first beat, turning clockwise into clockwise rounds. Go round twice, taking eight bars in all. Twirl the stick over head, clockwise looking up, on the hops, and lower onto right shoulder for the rushes. Turn out to left on the last 2 bars and face in & gesture.
2. **Batter** - No 1 adopts the posture and hold and the other two strike down on the tip of the stick alternately, seven hits in all. They all then dance a small circle clockwise on their own with two stephops, twirling overhead, and face in with a gesture. This is then repeated with the other leading.
3. **Star** - form a three handed right hand star by resting the wrist of the arm holding the stick on the forearm of the person in front so that the sticks are vertical. Go round for one step sequence, two bars, turn out to left in a small circle clockwise, two bars, carry on with a right hand star, and turn out again, two bars, and face in and gesture.
4. **Batter** - No 2 is hit.
5. **Hey** - Reel of Three twice/three through. 1
On one performance this was not a reel
but dancing round in a circle with two 2
of them working as a pair around the other. 3
6. **Batter** - No 3 is hit.
7. **Rounds** - as before but in reverse direction, anti-clockwise.
8. **Batter** - strikes passed round, each in turn hits their right hand neighbour's stick so the hit goes round anti-clockwise. In the repeat hit the other neighbour so that the hit goes clockwise.
9. **Exit** - instead of the last small circle, the dancers move off towards the crowd, turn to face the centre and posture and gesture.

14. MAIDEN'S PRAYER

From : film of Shropshire Bedlams on a number of occasions 1977-81.
Music : Bromsberrow "Three Hand Reel".
Steps : used a sequence of two stephops and a double, ad lib.
Stick : medium length, carried over right shoulder when not in use.
Set : six dancers in one line, facing in pairs, > < > < > <.

ORDER OF MOVEMENTS - each takes eight bars.

1. **Reel of Six**, once round in eight bars.
2. **Odds Stick**. Evens 'hold and posture'. Odds strike tips with vigour, right to left, left to right, four times a bar, 31 hits in all, while stepping. The swings are long, starting from out to the side of their body, with a good shoulder twist. Both stand still, not stepping.
3. **Odds Circle**. Evens stand still retaining their posture. Odds move to their left, pass their opposite by the right shoulder, and dance right round all the line of evens clockwise, until back by their starting position into which they turn clockwise.

> < > < > <

4. **Evens Stick**. Odds take up the 'hold and posture' and evens strike.
5. **Evens Circle**. Odds stand still retaining posture. Evens move to their left and and dance right round the line of odds clockwise back to the start.
6. **Odds Stick**. As 2.
7. **Both Circle**. All move to their left and dance a circle, more of an ellipse, round to place clockwise.
8. **Evens Stick**. As 4.
9. **Reel of Six**, passing right shoulders first.
- 10 **Odds Stick**. As 2, but after the 31st strike, end standing to attention, stick sloped over right shoulder.

306.

15. ILMINGTON BUFFOON

From : Sharp saw Sam Bennett's side dance a comic Buffoon dance and commented on it with reference to the Wyresdale dance in the Sword Books. Bennett gave it to Kenworthy Schofield as a dance in a line of six and here it is combined with the village revival's interpretation of the dance which they do in a normal morris set.

Music : Ilmington version of the tune.

Steps : single or double steps for the reel, depending on which period of Ilmington morris is being simulated.

Set : in a line of six, 1) <2 3> <4 5> <6, to start.

A1/2 Reel of Six for 16 bars, ending in two rings of three, one at each end of the set, 1, 2 & 3; 4, 5 & 6.

B1 bar 1 on each beat, one person in each circle claps both hands together, slaps their right knee with their right hand, strikes their right hand on their right hand neighbour's shoulder, ie round anticlockwise, pause.
 bar 2 on the first beat, knee the same neighbour up their backside.
 bar 3/4 the receiver does it to their right hand neighbour.
 bar 5/6 the last does it to the first.
 bar 7/8 all get back to their place in the line, perhaps turning round.
(use hop backsteps and a step and jump)

A3/4 Reel of Six.

B2 as before but instead of kneeling, make a feint with the fist.

This sequence was repeated ad lib.

The village side has the order of 'business' as kick backside, punch the face, stamp on the left foot, and pull the nose. They end the dance by going into whole rounds and all-in from the reel.

Skit Dances

16. THE BUFFOON or SIX HAND REEL

From : recording made at Sidmouth 1977 and 1981 of Shropshire Bedlams.
Music : Ilmington "Buffoon" tune, one day played AB(A²B²)⁵ and another A²⁰.
Steps : usual Shropshire Bedlams sequence of stephops and a double step.
Set : six dancers in one line, facing in pairs.

1. Reel of Six.

2. **Clapping I.** Pairs stand still and clap with their opposites, for 8 bars.

/ b r+r b l+l / op op op - / b r+r b l+l / op op op - /
/ b r+r l+l r+r / l+l r+r l+l b / r+r b l+l b / op op op - //

b = clap both own hands together in front, l+l = clap left hands with opposite, r+r = clap right hands with opposite, op = clap both hands with opposite, right on left and left on right.

3. **Reel of Six.** Pass right shoulders to start, passing smoothly into,

4. **Circles of Three,** anticlockwise, about twice round in six bars, and each dance a small loop on their own clockwise, outwards, in two bars, ending facing round the set of three anticlockwise. The "loops" in the various figures can take the dancers up to half way round the ring.

5. **Kicking,** facing anticlockwise. Each in turn claps both own hands together, strikes the person in front on the back of their shoulder with their outer hand and, moving forward to be close, knees them up the backside, the recipient leaping up into the air. In this and the next figure each dancer takes two bars for this movement, later in the dance it is done twice as fast. In the last two bars each dancers does a small loop out and clockwise to end facing round the set the other way, clockwise.

6. **Kicking,** facing clockwise. As figure 4, ending all dancing own loop out and anticlockwise going smoothly into,

7. **Three Hand Stars, Circle & Swing.** Left hand star going to the right, about three times round, anticlockwise for six bars, loop outwards for two bars to face back, and circle clockwise back (not a star) about two times round, for four bars. Then pairs waist swing with right arms across the front of opposites about three times round in the last four bars. During the swing they move a little to get into a line ready for the next figure.

8. **Clapping II.** Pairs stand still and clap with their opposites for 16 bars. This starts with the eight bars of Clapping I above then onto slapping faces.

/ b r+r l+l r+r / l+l - slr1 - / b r+r l+l r+r / l+l - slr2 - /
/ b - slr1 - / b - slr2 - / p - p - / p - p - //

slr1 = dancer 1 slaps opposites face with the flat of right hand. slr2 = other dancer slaps. p = supposedly a slap, but often degenerates to punches.

9. **Reel of Six.** As figure 2.

10. **Circles of Three.** As figure 3.

11. **Kicking,** facing anticlockwise. As figure 4 but taking only one bar per person so that there are six kicks before the loop in bars 7&8. They shout "ooh!, agh!" in each bar.

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12. **Kicking**, facing clockwise. As figure 5, at the speed of figure 10.

(Somewhen about here it starts 'getting out of hand')

13. **Three Hand Star** anticlockwise, turn out and **Circle** back, moving into a large circle of six on the turn out.

14. **Kicking**, facing anticlockwise, loop out and end facing round clockwise and kick again, turning out in a loop into,

15. **Six Handed Star**, anticlockwise and clockwise. Turn out at half way with a wide sweep of the arm like the stick movements in other dances. Dancers start to insert some backside kicks to the persons in front of them.

16. **Fighting**, facing anticlockwise, start by every other one kicking once, but immediately the other half of the dancers turn outwards to face back and start to fight or wrestle with the one behind, degenerating into a general melée, eventually the pairs falling over on to the ground.

17. SOUTH AUSTRALIA

- From** : teaching of the Britannic Bedlam Morris Gentlemen of Wellington, New Zealand in 1990. The second makes a good Ale dance!
- Music** : the shanty "Bound for South Australia".
- Stick** : long morris stick. The "double" hold is with the stick being held in the left hand at one end, knuckles on top, and the right hand in the middle, knuckles underneath.
- Figs** : Adderbury figures used.
- Set** : six dancers in normal morris set.

A) as taught by BEDLAM MORRIS

They do not use music. All should sing all of the shanty, but remembering all the words with everything else going on is difficult, so at least one sings the verses and all sing the chorus of the shanty. The sticks are held in the "double" hold diagonally across the chest during the figures.

ORDER and WORDS

1. **Capstan,**
In South Australia I was born, Heave away, haul away,
In South Australia round Cape Horn, We're bound for South Australia.
Chorus,
Heave away you rolling kings, Heave away, haul away,
Heave away you'll hear me sing, We're bound for South Australia.
2. **Back-to-Back,**
As I walked out one morning fair, Heave away, haul away,
'Twas there I met Miss Nancy Blair, We're bound for South Australia.
3. **Tops-Down,**
I shook her up, I shook her down, Heave away, haul away,
I shook her round and round the town, We're bound for South Australia.
4. **Bottoms-Up,**
There ain't but one thing grieves me mind, Heave away, haul away,
To leave Miss Nancy Blair behind, We're bound for South Australia.
5. **Hands Around,**
And now we're sailing round Cape Horn, Heave away, haul away,
You'll wish to God you's never been born, We're bound for South Australia.
6. **Adderbury Hey,**
And now I'm safely on dry land, Heave away, haul away,
With a bottle of whisky in me hand, We're bound for South Australia.

CAPSTAN FIGURE - During a normal walk round and sing, hold sticks with a two handed grip at one end with both knuckles on top horizontally with free ends into the middle simulating the arms of a capstan, and walk round pushing.

CHORUS - All stand facing opposites, stick held in two handed grip at bottom and stick sloping up to the right across the chest. In bar one the evens push their stick forward on the first strong beat and hold it steady, and the odds strike (more of a vigorous swipe) its tip on the second strong beat. In bar two the evens hit the odds in a like manner. In the next bar both strike their partner's stick, up high, with a forehand and then a backhand clash. Then the stick is swung horizontally over the head (clockwise looking up) to strike partner's stick again with a forehand on the second strong beat of the fourth bar. This swing starts either with a

preparatory movement to the right as if ready for a forehand, or as a bounce off of the backhand. **END** on a chorus.

All continue facing across and step and close twice, moving sideways down the set with the stick held as if heaving on a rope. Face up and dance up with stick on shoulder, clashing with opposite at the end.

B) STEAMBOAT version

The Adderbury figures could be replaced with movements representing elements of a steamship that was in passage to the far side of the world. The fun comes from the problems of dancers coordinating opposing movements. The nautical name for such an idea might be "to dance and skylark"!

1. **Weigh Anchor** : As Capstan, but noting that an anchor is heavy to lift and the men would go round slowly.
 2. **Poppets** : Hold stick by middle, horizontal and full arm stretch above head. Raise and lower stick by bending at knees. 1,4&5 and 2,3&6 work in opposition to each other, one set going up while the other goes down.
 3. **Rockers** : Hold ends of own and opposite's sticks across set. Stand erect and pump them alternately, having left hand up while right hand is down.
 4. **Clean Tubes** : Turn to face outwards, bend over and put stick between legs, just above knees, push and pull as if they are rods being forced in and out, odds push when evens pull.
 5. **All Hands to the Pumps** : Hold both ends of the sticks in right hand and pump, with a good bend of the body, 1,4&5 down when 2,3&6 up and vice versa.
 6. **FIRE!** : Hold both ends of own stick and form them in a line along each side and the two sides of the set pump alternately, as an old fire engine.
- Drop Anchor** : As the anchor is falling, this is fast, unlike weighing it!

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18. HEY BOYS UP WE GO!

From : At the CDS Pinewoods Camp in 1980 a "garland" dance was offered for skit night.

Step : dance walk. A "double" is 1 2 3 together.

Music : its Playford tune.

Set : four dancers, each with U shaped garland, in a square, two facing two, each pair being considered a working unit.

1. Pairs forward and back a "double" twice.
 2. Turn opposite by the right once around. But put the lead hand against the middle of the opposite's back, not touching hands in any way, so that the dancers are half way to being back to back. Then turn opposite by the left once around. This time with the lead hand in front of the opposite, the leading hand somewhere between middle of the chest and armpit position, so that the dancers are half way to being face to face.
 3. Each turns neighbour as in 2.
 4. Siding with neighbours, pass by left shoulders, turning body to pass face to face, and as do so swop each other's ends which are in left hands, so that a line of four arches is formed. Come back on same track and swop back garland ends. Siding with opposite, exactly the same, to the left etc.
 5. Diagonals cross in turn, first then second, passing face to face and garlands almost touching in vertical plane, moving smoothly into whole rounds clockwise. Diagonals cross back, first then second, and whole rounds clockwise again. In the round the knuckles touch so that the garlands form a "crown".
 6. Arming with neighbours, link right elbows, letting the garlands slope backwards to allow it and turn once around and continue to form a basket. The two pairs do not let go but further link their free arms at the elbows. Alternate dancers are facing in and out. The basket goes once round, breaks, the dancers go to their starting positions with garlands vertical.
 7. Captures. Opposites capture each other by lowering their garlands around the other so that their opposite is within the garland which is horizontal. The persons who are the first corners lower their's first and the others lower their's on top. Opposite's capture when face to face, and the "first corner" persons push-&-pull, without rotating as a pair, to change places with the other pair in a clockwise direction, then they raise the garlands.
 8. Neighbours capture differently. The "first corner" persons who are now in the second corner positions, turn to their right, clockwise, and cast behind their neighbours to go round the outside of the set clockwise to their starting place, with their garland horizontal at waist level in front of them. As they pass their neighbour, the neighbour captures them from behind with their garland, and the pairs, one behind the other, go round a circle clockwise but not around the other pair, and raise garlands. The opposites capture again face -to-face and do a reverse push and pull going half round the other pair anti-clockwise to change places without rotating as a pair.
- Neighbours capture and then the pairs turn clockwise themselves, not around the other pair, then approach and use the free garlands to link into a circle anticlockwise. Pause in this position.

3/2.

9. Exit. One who can, raises their garland vertically and leads the line off linked together.

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19. THE TWO RONNIES

From : The "Two Ronnies" Show on TV about August 1977. They were dressed in long whites, hats and baldricks. The two women wore shorts.

Stick : Each started with a long stick held Adderbury fashion, and during the dance swapped it for a bladder.

Step : stephops.

Set : two lines of three, starting by facing across towards opposite.

A Casts -

- a) bottom pair - cast up the outside to the top, clash sticks in the middle at the top and dance down the centre to places.
- b) middle pair - cast up the outside to the top, clash sticks in the middles at the top and dance down the centre to their place.
- c) top pair - dance a small circle around their place, clash and then dance another circle in the other direction.

B Swops -

- a) bottom pair - repeat A but when back in place swop their sticks for a bladder from a pile at the bottom of the set.
- b) middle pair - like A but taking a longer path, cast up the outside to the top, down the middle and cast up again to starting place, swapping sticks for bladders at the bottom.
- c) top pair - clash at top then go down centre, swap, up the outside.

C Waggon Wheel - whole rounds each way but putting **both** hands on the shoulders of the dancer in front.

D Cross Over - pairs cross over the middle. Two dancers in turn, cross to meet face to face, dance a step on the spot, then sidestep, moving a little to the right side so that they can lean both forward and round the other dancer and smack the other dancer's bottom with their bladder. The order appeared to be the bottom pair first, then alternate ones from each side so that each dancer has two goes in succession. The pairs were never corners.

E Whole Rounds.

F Leapfrog - face up to the top in two lines. All dance a pas de basque step while dancing on the spot.

- a) bottom pair - balance then two leapfrogs up to the top, and dance back down the outside to place.
- b) middle pair - balance then leapfrog over top pair, cast to the bottom and leapfrog up to place.
- c) top pair - dance down the outside of the set and leapfrog to the top.

G Cast -

Cast out from the top, lead by the first pair, and come up the middle, forming a line of six across the set facing the top.

20. CITY MEN'S DANCE

From : film of EFDSS Albert Hall Show 1965.
Kit : City Dress with bowler hat, rolled umbrella carried in the right hand and folded newspaper under the left (unless otherwise stated)
Extra : a bus stop sign at the top of the set.
Music : various Longborough morris and sword tunes.
Set : six dancers, standing in a ring off from the dance area.

1. **Entry** - "Belle Island March" A - Dancers advance in two lines with "Monks March" Heel-&-Toe step, facing across till they make a single line down the centre, swinging their umbrellas through a large arc, about 200°, and turning the easy way face up at the end for the "break", which is dibbing the bottom of the umbrella on the ground twice, bending forward a little, and putting the handle over the left elbow to let it hang down on the 1 2 3 of the end of the hornpipe music phrase.

2. **Greeting** - "Belle Island March" B - The top man, No 1, turns half round clockwise to face the next, No 2, and both step to their right, and greet each other by raising their hat up to the right by the brim with their right hand in a wide sweeping gesture, weight on the right foot and leaning to the right. Nos 3&4, then Nos 5&6 ditto. *[Then all do it again, moving out further to form a normal morris set]*

3. **Hey** - "Belle Island March" A - Half Hey with the normal morris track using a Heel-&-Toe step. Unbutton the umbrella and shake it loose, start to raise it in bar four and have it fully open and up vertical held by one hand by the end of the phrase, when the dancers have moved into a single file again facing in pairs.

4. **Progression** - "Saturday Night" AB - With the umbrella still vertical, all dance two double steps, galley on the right foot, moving out to the right, turning on the hops, and making the feet-together-&-jump and sideways movement back into the file. All dance two furies and then four plain capers to pass by the right shoulders to change places but still facing the same directions. As they pass they tilt the umbrellas to the left and spin them about the stem in their hands. Repeat all a turn *[or two]*, to end in pairs back to back, ie ends facing out.

5. **Rounds** - "Travel By Steam" (Swaggering Boney) A - Stand in this line and fully open, rhythmically and all in the same manner, the newspapers, holding them with hands at head level to obscure vision. Move into half rounds, clockwise and galley outwards to face back and dance back ending in a circle, while reading their newspapers.

6. **Corners** - "Travel By Steam" BB - The top and bottom pairs face, up and down the set, while the middles, having moved out a little, stand facing across and read their newspapers. The ends, still with newspapers up in front and umbrellas hanging from the left elbow, simultaneously dance a long open sidestep to the right and a short open sidestep to the left, to approach their other end along the set, and jump to land feet together, so that they are face to face (except for the newspapers!) across a line between the middles. Both of these pairs spring sideways away from the centre of the set, and then spring sideways back towards the centre, so that they remain facing. The springs are off both feet and the landings are on both feet. They then half lower their newspapers and walk past each other, passing right shoulders, acknowledging each other, changing ends. They fold

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the newspapers during the next phrase.

The middles stroll forward, No 4 engrossed in the newspaper, the other with it folded as a baton. No 4 stops at the end of bar 4 and lowers the newspaper, while No 3 does the jump. In bar 5, No 4 raises their hat and holds it up during bar 5 when No 3 hits his bare head with the rolled up newspaper. They then walk across to change places and turn and face across. All put newspapers into their left side jacket pocket.

7. **Arch** - "Lass O'Dallowgill" etc - The top pair make an arch by crossing the point ends of their umbrellas high in the middle of the set between them. The other pairs face down with umbrellas sloped over the right shoulder, and walking, cast up the outsides of the set and cast back down the middle under the arch.

8. **Double Under** - Form a ring using the umbrellas, handle in right hand, point held by right hand neighbour. *[Circle and stop in starting position, top pair at the top.]* Bottom pair lift the umbrella between them to above head height and the top pair move down the centre to pass under it, with the umbrella between them in front and held horizontal, while the bottom pair carries this umbrella over the heads going up the middle. At the bottom the top pair turn away from each other, casting out and going up the outside, lifting their umbrella over the heads. Carry on till reach starting place.

9. **Threes** - Still maintaining the hilt-&-point links, the middle pair approach closely and exchange handles while everyone brings the two ends their are holding in different hands together into their right hand. The umbrellas are then lifted horizontally to show two separate rings of three with the umbrellas forming triangles. The triangles walk around anticlockwise, with the two sets rotating to keep the former middles close in the centre.

10. *[THE ENDING - Final movement not filmed. Could continue the "Threes" by one of the triangle ducking through as in the Ampleforth and Ryedale sword dances. If the umbrellas are flexible enough an attempt could be made at a lock or the tips of the umbrellas could be released, dancers face their opposites, link up in pairs and do a roll.]*

For the purposes of the show the number of repeats of any movement was minimised. For other performances repeats are desirable as the audience will not recognise the movements quickly in the way that a folk one would do.

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