

LICHFIELD

BACKGROUND

Source : "mss" written in the 1940's or 50's from the paper's watermark date.

Dances : several exist, appearing in pairs of a stick and a handkerchief dance, each pair with somewhat different sets of figures.

Object : dances for eight with a consistent and standard set of five figures and four choruses using sticks, with figures that look rather different from the other traditions done, producing tidy dances and minimising weaknesses.

Steps : double steps, backsteps, and, in particular movements, short lateral open sidesteps and plain capers. Start on to the right foot.

FIGURES

Once-to-Yourself : stand in a circle facing the centre of the set. End with a jump to face around the circle, odds clockwise, evens anti-clockwise.

Swagger-Round : all dance around in a circle in the direction now facing until back in place, all the four middles spiralling in at the end to form two equally spaced columns facing across the set ready for the first chorus. Odds pass outside at the top, by right shoulders, and inside at the bottom, by left shoulders.

Cross-Over : all dance across the set in two bars, passing their opposite by right shoulders, travelling as far as practical, to end in two lines facing out away from the set. Turn to the right, more or less on the spot, to face back over the next two bars. Repeat to places, but approaching to be within reach for a stick clash.

Heading-Up : all face up, working in fours, the rear pair dance up in two bars to be in a line between the top pair who move sideways so that the set is now as wide as it was long. Dance on the spot for four bars, with two double steps and two open lateral sidesteps (as in *Vandalls* chorus), to right and to left, and then ordinary backstep to place, ending with facing one's opposite across the set.

Doubling-Up : top pairs face down, bottom pairs face up to start and throughout the figures. This is back-to-back along the side of the set, working in pairs. For example, Nos 1 and 3, keeping their relative position, dance a back-to-back down the set with Nos 5 and 7, passing right shoulders, who also move up the set, nos 1 and 7 actually passing back-to-back. The other pairs also pass right shoulders. It is one double forward and one double sideways. They then retire backwards, using ordinary backsteps, towards their places, passing left shoulders, but only so far that they form two lines of four across the set, 1 5 2 6 and 3 7 4 8. Repeat to place retracing the same path in reverse direction, but this time a double step forward and a double step both sideways and backwards, to get to the two lines across and then backsteps to starting place. It is not symmetrical.

Lichfield Hey : a large movement, taking 16 bars to complete and normally to an A+B music. The call is "*first corners cross, second corners cross, pause and change*", done four times until back to place. The changes go with the place in the set, not with the dancers starting number. The first two crossings are done in succession and take one double each, working in units of four, passing right shoulders, those on the "first" diagonal going first, the pause is a double step danced on the current spot, and the change is now done passing left shoulders by the pairs currently at the ends and along the sides in the middle. End by facing up with a jump. There may be dances which do not use or end on the hey. The dancers do not turn out the "long" way at the corners.

101.

DANCE CHORUSES

Start facing across the set within a stick's reach of one's opposite dancer.

Horsham. Two sticks, one long and one short. Short one in the right hand.
All stand still with weight on balls of feet not on the heels.

Strike : hit tips of left on ground twice, hit opposite's left low down with tips twice / hit end of own left with tip of right twice and hit opposite's right tip high twice / repeat second bar twice more // repeat first and second bar // "sharpen" left stick with right, stroking both ends alternately away from middle of left stick / hit opposite's right with right three times in alternate directions.

At the end of the dance the chorus can be repeated much faster.

Come Landlord Fill the Flowing Bowl. Single long stick, held in "doubles" position.
All stand still with weight on balls of feet not on the heels.

Strike : o e o e / o e x - / o e o e / o e x - /
 o e o e / o e x - / o - / e o e o / x - x - //

o = odds hit evens sticks middles with tip, e = evens hit odds, o = hold, x = clash.

At the end of the dance the chorus can be repeated much faster.

Vandals. Single long stick, "doubles" hold.

Strike : slide both hands down to the butt, without stepping or a twisting of the feet, strike stick diagonally to the right, then diagonally to the left, partner's stick right to left, left to right, right to left, and pause. All do a lateral open side step to right and to left, perhaps turning the body about 30 degs, holding the stick diagonally upwards to the right across the chest, then three plain capers on the spot facing partner, raising the stick in both hands horizontally at head level the first time, trying to keep the levels all the same. In the repeat, end with clashing on the third plain caper.

Windmill. Single long stick, double hold.

Neighbours are 1 & 3, 5 & 7, 2 & 4, 6 & 8, that is, on the same side of the set.

Strike : partner tip and butts, neighbour tip and butts, partner tip, then moving forward diagonal to right tip, neighbour tip (to right or left) and new opposite's tip. Repeat three more times to get back to starting place. The diagonal strike is made while passing left shoulders with the opposite, and continue on a quarter circular path to end with lines of four at right angles to start. The line of four folds in the middle so that the ends meet. Outsides are always outside etc.

At the end of the dance, the chorus can be repeated several times, gradually getting faster.

Ring O'Bells. Two sticks, one long and one short.

Strike : diagonal right with right, partner with left, diagonal left with right, partner with left / repeat / four plain capers turning to the left to form a circle as in once to self // hit neighbour's left with right three times, step forward into lines of four on fourth beat.

file : lichfile.wri (issue 3)