

# DANCES FOR FIVE & NINE

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## 1. MAKING COTSWOLD DANCES FOR FIVE

The asymmetry of five dancers is difficult to handle. There are two obvious starting patterns,

**(a) four in a square and the other in the centre, as for the pipe on a playing card.**

The fifth dancer would act as a wild card, in the centre for foot-up and rounds and able to dance a path at will in the intermediate figures, perhaps joining one group for half of whole gip or hands round etc making it a threesome and changing to the other group for the second half.

The obvious chorus pattern is the Dorset Five Hand Reel with the four corners working together along the diagonals and the joker moving out of phase with them.

**(b) three on one side and two on the other.**

Rather than make the foot up unbalanced, all the dancers could face the centre and dance to and from the centre rather than up and/or down the set. The half gip works only to one side or shoulder, the three embracing the two, thus it should be to the same side twice (like Kirtlington). Back-to-back would best be done as a Cross-Over. Heys for five would take too long, but a Reel of Four with one of the ends, probably preferably the bottom, dancing a half or whole-round as appropriate on their own outside would be acceptable.

If the set starts in a ring, there need be no natural top direction, and choruses could rotate around the set each dancer in turn being the equivalent of the leader. Chorus stepping, eg sidesteps and jump, could be danced facing the centre rather than to an opposite.

## 2. DORSET FIVE HAND REEL

- Source** : the same as the Dorset Four Hand Reel. Anne Claydon taught this at the first Christchurch Folk Festival.
- Steps** : backstep for setting and skip-change for travelling.
- Set** : Four dancers stand in a square, facing in along the diagonals, with the fifth or extra dancer in the centre.
- A1** : Centre dancer backsteps to any one of the four who also backsteps (4 bars) and turns to face the opposite direction and backsteps to the diagonally opposite dancer (4 bars)
- B1** : Reel of Three with the other two dancers. The two dancers who had been set to, reel through the other line of three at right angles.
- A2** : Centre dancer steps to the two not set to yet in turn as in A1.
- B2** : Reel of Three, with the other two dancing across it. Leader changes places with one of the others so that all take turns at leading.

Traditionally the centre would go on till they had had enough before changing. Other dancers would change out with dancers standing around as they tired. There is also a Dorset tradition of starting with an six hand reel and changing to smaller number reels as dancers dropped out one by one.

## 3. FIVE HAND REEL

**Source** : As danced by Jolly Holly Molly of NE Hants, at Christmas. Notation provided by Grahame Upham, now at Glastonbury.

**Music** : 32 bar hornpipe.

**Step** : gentle stephop, arms swung loosely at the side, except for the person holding the stick with a model fool's head on the top, which is held up fairly high.

**Set** : five persons, four in a square and the fifth in the centre. It ois basically reels of three danced on the diagonals, each dancer taking it in turn to go into the middle.

Start	Music	Figure
4 1	A1	reel 5 with 4 & 2, [ 5&4 start the reel ]
5	A2	reel 5 with 1 & 3, [ 5&1 start the reel ]
3 2		5 & 1 change.
4 5	B1	reel 1 with 5 & 3,
1	B2	reel 1 with 2 & 4,
3 2		1 & 2 change.
4 5	A3	reel 2 with 1 & 4,
2	A4	reel 2 with 3 & 5,
3 1		2 & 3 change.
4 5	B3	reel 3 with 2 & 5,
3	B4	reel 3 with 4 & 1,
2 1		3 & 4 change.
3 5	A5	reel 4 with 3 & 1,
4	B5	reel 4 with 5 & 1,
2 1		4 & 5 change.

END

3 4  
5  
2 1

To make the change of dancers into the middle, the two who are swapping have to get round further than if they were doing a reel to end where they started. They also pass the sticks as they make the change, right hand to right hand. As they pass the stick, they almost do a half hands-round, because each time the change is made, the reel starts with the two who have just changed. When that reel is completed, the dancer in the middle starts with the next person round to their right, and that is the one they swap with. If the dance is successful, all the dancers should have moved round one position clockwise.

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#### 4. DUMMER'S FIVE HAND REEL

At the turn of the century many young people learnt the elementary skills of social dancing at classes. The series of lessons would often end with a ball or even a series of subscription dances. It was obligatory to wear evening dress, white gloves and patent leather shoes and to use dance programmes so that one could be booked for every dance. The programmes would include the fashionable new sequence dances, then being composed, as well as the older waltz, polka and gallop and the Set Dances such as the Lancers and the Quadrilles. There would be party dances for fun, often the relics of the longways repertoires of the early nineteenth century, such as Pop Goes the Weasel and Sir Roger de Coverly, the latter often the finishing dance for children's parties. To show the teacher's skills, the pupils would often have learnt special dances for display. One such was a "Five Hand Reel", that is a dance for five people, learnt at a class covering the Overton, North Waltham and Dummer area of central Hampshire before WWI.

The reels and step dances were the old social dances of the labouring people of the south. Thomas Hardy remembered that when he was a youth the longways dances arrived in Dorset for ordinary people, even though such had been done for a century at the Assembly Rooms by the better classes. Accounts of such polite events, as by Jane Austen, show why they had not appealed to a more rumbustious clientele.

New dance forms brought new ideas that influenced all that followed them. For example the popularity of the waltz and polka steps ensured that they became incorporated into the Quadrilles and Longways dances and the "new" movements possible in the Quadrille formation became used in later composed dances in the older formations. This Five Hand Reel included a "basket", a linked arms circular figure from the Lancers, which suggests that it is not a particularly old dance.

- Source** : originally from an old lady in Dummer, near Basingstoke, Hampshire, where the Duchess of York came from, who had gone to a dancing class in Nearby North Waltham before WWI.
- Music** : dances well to "Portsmouth" or other slowish polka. My source mentioned "Brighton Camp" or "Girl I Left Behind Me".
- Steps** : **Travelling** : polka or the skip-change. **Setting** :
- a) simple single-step or step-hop form of backstep, the foot going down behind the supporting foot and scuffing forward so that the dancing is on the spot.
  - b) polka step but with the free foot crossed behind instead of in front of the supporting foot. The source danced with the rear foot well turned out and the flat of the foot touching down not just the tip of the shoe.
  - c) a crossed Cotswold Morris like sidestep, with the crossing done behind and with an exaggerated sideways swing of the free foot on the hop.
- Set** : five dancers who form a ring with hands joined. The "Leader" for each repeat of the sequence holds vertically in their right hand the "Jack", which is the local name for the fool's bauble or small clown's head mounted on a short stick. It is held up during the dance to be as visible as much as possible. As it does not require partners it can be danced with a mixed set of any proportions.

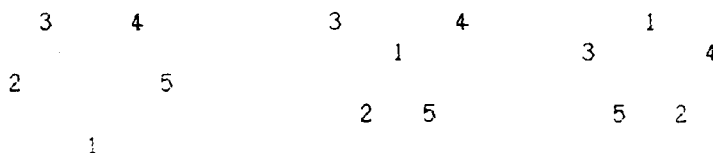
**ENTRY**

The dancers form a line across the road when processing along a street. The five dancers dance on in a single line with hands joined, led by the dancer with the Jack, and polka to form a complete circle.

**THE DANCE**

The following sequence is led by each dancer in turn. Each takes about one minute. As a display dance, five repeats is over long and only three are recommended.

1. CIRCLE LEFT - all the dancers face the centre of the circle, hands joined and raised to shoulder level, and circle clockwise to the left for eight bars using the cross over polka step. An option is to leave a gap in the ring at the Jack.
2. WEAVE - all let go hands with neighbours and all turn about a  $\frac{1}{4}$  to the left to fully face around the circle clockwise and all but the leader continue to circle round clockwise for eight bars. The leader casts out to their left to face back and goes round the set anti-clockwise, weaving in and out of the other dancers, passing alternately by left and right shoulders through the others, holding the Jack up high, and ending in the centre of the set, who should now be equally spaced and facing the centre.
3. SET & REEL - the leader faces one of the other four and the two of them "set" in one of the ways described for four bars. Then the leader turns  $\frac{1}{2}$  way round clockwise on the spot to face the dancer opposite the first one chosen and they then set to each other using the same step. These three then dance a Reel of Three across the set for eight bars, the first pair passing by the right shoulders. The other two continue to stand still. The leader ends in the centre and immediately drops back into the ring and all join hands to reform a full circle.
4. BASKET - with all keeping their hands linked, the leader only raises their left hand and turns half way round clockwise, backing under this arm, so that they end facing out from the set with their arms crossed in front of their body, left over right, at shoulder level. The leader then separates their arms, raising them over the heads of the two next to them, and pulling these two dancers so that they change places sideways with each other. The leader steps back to be between the other two dancers behind them, brings their arms down behind these dancers, while one of the dancers changing places ducks under the arms to form a basket of five, without anyone letting go. With practice it takes only two bars (four steps) to form and unform this basket. The basket goes around to the left, clockwise, for four bars. After breaking out to the circle all let go of hands and the leader goes back into the middle.



5. SET & REEL - the leader faces one of the dancers not set to in part 3 and repeats the setting and reeling as in part 3.

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6. BASKET - as part 4, but on the break do not let go hands, and form a circle with joined hands and pass the Jack onto the next dancer.

Repeat the sequence from the beginning (part 1) with the new leader.

#### EXIT

- a) having formed the circle after the last basket, break it at one point and lead off following the leader as in the entrance.
- b) finish on a basket, speeding the spin and holding the linked position stationary for a while before dancing off.

#### VARIATIONS

- A. It is not easy for the leader to remember where to fall into their starting place in the ring to form the baskets and as it does not really matter it is simple just to fall back to wherever is convenient. For the repeat of the setting, the dancers to be set to should signal who should be faced. The problem generated by not worrying about position is finding the person to pass the Jack to at the end of the turn. Towards the end of the dance it may not be either of the leader's neighbours!
- B. Breaking from the basket may be found to be more difficult than forming it, so a solution is just to let go hands, one gets a longer basket swing, but again it muddles up the order around the set and the dancers have to remain quick witted.
- C. When the dance was recollected, the SET & REEL was extended by adding to the setting a two handed turn by the pair, which took another four bars.
- D. The basket can be formed in other manners, and it makes for interest to vary the method for each repeat of the sequence.
  - a) that originally taught was for the leader to pull the person on their right hand side across in front of the leader and the dancer on the leader's left, while the leader moves two places to their right passing one more dancer and ducking under the arms, having the right arm making a big clockwise circle. The control of the change of position is different but topologically it is identical.

```

          3
    2       4       5       1       5       3       1
          1       5       2       4       2       4
  
```

- b) just move in and link up arms in a basket. As there are five dancers, not four, it can not be formed as in country dances. If one stops to look, the pattern of the arms behind the bodies for those formed without letting go from the ring are not symmetrical, everyone is different. For b) it is possible to be tidier and have one's right arm "over", that is outside, one's neighbour's left.

```

          3
    2       4       2       3       4
          1       5       1       5
  
```

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E. Initially I had understood that the dance started with four dancers in a square and the fifth in the centre, and that the ring was of the four dancers around the middle one who danced on the spot. This was not confirmed but it is an interesting option.

F. The weaving could have been a grand chain with giving of hands but this was not confirmed by those who remembered the use of the Jack.

G. The whole has been taught elsewhere as a dance in clogs, which makes the stepping different, the pace different etc.

When this dance was first explained, it seems to be a cut down version of a bigger set dance and as I had never heard of Five Hand Reels the description was not taken very seriously. Many years later I was told of the Flett's work in the north of England, which suggested that such formations were not uncommon, so I started to use it at workshops. Eventually the Reading Cloggies taught it to a WI team from Dummer and they danced it in the village. They were told that the dance at that time lacked the key feature of the "Jack", a Jester or Punch head on a short stick which was passed round the set to the leader of each sequence and which was flourished when that leader danced in the centre of the set. They added the information about the procession along the street and the two handed turn after the setting but did not recall the fancy way of forming the basket at all!

Recognition was achieved when the dance was performed on TV by Knitbury May Maids as part of the Royal Wedding celebrations.

The dance has a special place in my life, not only because it was in the first set of dances I ever collected, but also because of the reason it became to be recovered. My grandmother had been brought up by her grandmother in a settlement just north of Great Wishford in Wiltshire, but because her grandfather so ill treated her she ran away at the age of eight to her cousins the Pullingers at Dummer. When I was young, I went with my parents and grandparents to visit them. In 1958 the Farnborough Morris arranged a weekend tour in the area and we went to the Queen's Head where I spoke to two old ladies about the Pullingers, who they remembered well, and this lead to talking about the old days and their involvement in local social dancing.

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## 5. FIVE HAND REEL

- Source** : Martha Rhoden's Tuppenny Dish at Sidmouth 1989 as recorded by the local video company. Dance appears derivative of the Dummer Reel.
- Handks** : two carried, waved alternately in travelling, with special flourishes with one hand at specific points. Hands on hips in stepping sequences, fingers facing forward and handks hanging down in front.
- Set** : five dancers, four in a square and the fifth in the centre.

1

2 C 4

3

- Steps** : travelling - skip/stephops

**Heel-&Toe-Setting** - heel touch ground diagonally forward, toe touch ground by heel of supporting foot, heel touch ground diagonally forward again, toe touch ground in front and a little across the supporting foot. Start with the right heel and do the sequence four times in all, taking eight bars, off alternate feet, springing to change the weight carrying foot. The dancers do not rotate during this setting.

**Kick-Step-Setting** - spring on both feet to left, landing feet together and then kick right leg up high, pas de basque to the right while turning a quarter to the right, clockwise, on the spot. Do four times in all for a complete turn on the spot in eight bars.

During the dance, the music and movements sometimes allow for extra spins for some dancers.

1. Centre and No 1 face and all dance heel-&-toe-setting on spot.
2. Reel of Five. The Reel is started in the first bar by the Centre passing the one being faced by the right shoulder, the two dancers on the side dance forward to meet right shoulders, turn sharply to their left into the reel. The far dancer turns to the left and dances a complete loop at the bottom before passing the first dancer who arrives by the left. The Reel takes 16 bars. The dancer being faced by the Centre does a complete Reel of Five plus one more change with the Centre, so that they have changed places and there is a new Centre. Because of this progression, during the dance the outer ring finally moves round one place anticlockwise.
3. Centre faces No 2 position and all do a kick-step-setting turning once round on the spot.
4. Basket. The centre moves forward to the No 1 place and all join hands to form a circle. As they circle to the left the Centre moves round inside the circle, past two dancers, crossing their left hand behind and over their head, the other dancers following, then all lower arms to form a basket (see Dummer Five Hand Reel). They take two bars to get all under and four bars in all to get the basket together and rotating. It rotates for 8 bars and

takes four bars to undo. They all let go hands as the Centre would be about to duck out so that the Centre stays in the middle.

5. The Centre faces the No 2 position and all dance heel-&-toe-setting.
6. Reel of Five, as fig 2, across the set. The person in No 2 position changes into the centre.
7. Centre starts facing No 3 position and all do a kick-step-setting.
8. Five-Handed-Star. One bar in, to go round clockwise with right hand in middle and waving the free hand for seven bars, turn out quickly and come back with the left hand in the middle, and move out to place in the last two bars.
9. The Centre faces the No 3 position and all dance heel-&-toe-setting.
10. Reel of Five, as fig 2, along the set. The person in No 3 position changes into the centre.
11. Centre starts facing No 4 position and all do a kick-step-setting.
12. Weave. The Centre moves to the outside of the set by passing through the No 4 position behind No 4, who with the whole of the outer ring has started to dance whole rounds clockwise. The Centre turns to the left and goes round anticlockwise, weaving in and out till they reach the No 2 position, all turn out to face other way, and as they do they make a flourish with both hands, and weave back to the starting position.
13. The Centre faces the No 4 position and all dance heel-&-toe-setting.
14. Reel of Five, as fig 2, across the set. The person in No 4 position changes into the centre.
15. Centre starts facing No 1 position and all do a kick-step-setting.
16. Cloverleaf. Each of the outer dancers, goes into the centre, two bars, turns to their right with a flourish of the right hand, facing out to the next position round, 90° to right, then spin clockwise to face the centre and retire out to this next position round in two bars. This is repeated three more times to get the dancers back to where they started, 16 bars in all. The Centre dances four clockwise loops or petals going out around the No 1 position first and then going around No 2's and so on anticlockwise.
17. The Centre faces the No 1 position and all dance heel-&-toe-setting.
18. Reel of Five, as fig 2, along the set. The person in the No 1 position changes into the centre which is where they started.
19. All face the audience and all dance a kick-step-setting ending with feet together and both arms up in the air.

**6. FIVE HAND REEL**

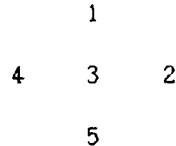
**Source** : film of Shropshire Bedlams in the Market Square at Sidmouth, 1980. Appears to have developed from the Three Hand Reel "Speed the Plough" and to have led to the Nine Hand Reel, "The Triumph". The characteristic of the dance is that it 'flows'.

**Steps** : as usual for Shropshire Bedlams.

**Sticks** : medium length.

**Set** : five dancers, four in a square and one in the center.

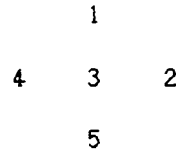
**O2YS** - stand, all facing same way (towards No 5). At end all dance a small loop on own, anticlockwise.



**DANCE** - there are two alternating movements.

**1. REEL & CIRCLE.**

The first Reel of Three is danced by 1,3&5. 5&3 pass first by the left shoulder, while No 1 waits and then 1&3 pass by the right etc. The other two dancers, 2&4, turn in a small loop to their left, and set off anticlockwise once around the set.

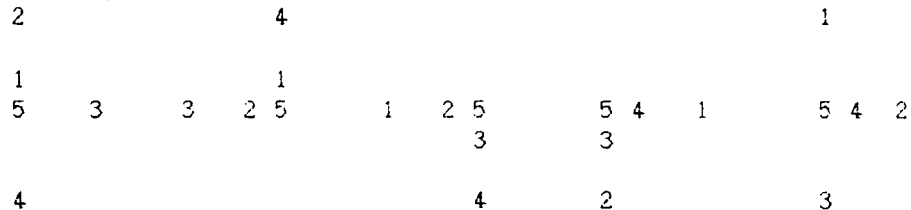


At the finish of the Reel of Three the ends, 1&5 approach for the first sticking, and the initial centre, No 3, carries on out into the circle being made by 2&4 and joins it between 2&4.

**2. STICKING.**

The pair of facing dancers, stephop on the spot and clash, hitting tips from right to left, for two bars in the rhythm / x - x - / x x x - //.

The first round of sticking has No 5 in the middle. No 5 sticks with Nos 1 to 4 in order, making a quarter turn anticlockwise to meet each. The three dancers circle round the strikers, the leading one falling in to take over from the dancer who has just been hitting, and that one turning to their left and spiralling out to join the back of the circling group. When a dancer has come in and is ready to start clashing, the next in the circling group is usually in the outer circle immediately behind them.



I think that the indicated directions into the hey may be wrong but what I

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had on film is not logical. The spacing around the outer circle starts at first at about one person per quarter circle, that is, spread over half the circle, but during the dance it reduces often to the three dancers covering only one quarter between them.

**CONTINUATION**

The next middle is No 2 and the turns rotate, 5,2,1,4,3. The Reels of Three alternate along and across the set, again the direction of the reel rotating 90° each time. The direction faced for the initial sticking in each turn rotates anticlockwise 90° each time.

## 7. BUNCH OF FIVES

**Source** : Mary Rose of Portsmouth, as taught at an instructional for the South Hants EPDSS at Soberton. All danced with spirit and drive.

**Music** : own tune

**Step** : stepping sequence of 2 doubles, 2 stephops and a double without a hop, right foot start. Good spring on the steps and kick forward on the hops. Closed Sidestep, right foot crossed first, brought down under body, lean over it, other foot lifted well behind.

**Arms** : alternate arm swings in each bar, usually little in last bars.

**Set** : five dancers, arranged three facing two.

```

      2      4
    m
      1      3      5
  
```

**ONCE TO YOURSELF** - tap right foot on the main beats.

**CHORUS** - before each figure.

Dance a double forward into line, with a "yelp", the two's between the three's, meeting with hands touching palm to palm, pushed back till past a line shoulder to shoulder, and then the kick of the double. Retire to place on another double, cross over to other side along the same track on 2 stephops, turning right, clockwise, to face back on a final '1 2 3'. Repeat to place.

### FIGURE ONE - Weave Clockwise

Form a circle and all dance continuously. Each in turn weaves around the set, going between the next two dancers first. No 5 starts.

```

      2      4
      1      5
      3
  
```

It takes four bars to get round. Each starts after a two bar delay, so that there is an overlap, and the previous dancer is going out between the last two when the next dancer starts, eg 1 is going out between 5&3 when 2 starts to go out between 4&5. 16 bars in all. Hands on hips when on spot.

### FIGURE TWO - Step & Turn

Nos 5&4 do two closed sidesteps, right in front and left in front, hands on hips, and alternate pairs left hand or right hand turn once around, for a total of four bars. 4&3, 3&2, 2&1, repeat in turn. The sidestep is done by swinging the foot forward and across and turning the body to follow, then bringing the foot back and making a hop.

### FIGURE THREE - Weave Anticlockwise

as fig 1 but in reverse, with No 4 starting.

### FIGURE FOUR - Ending

Face in to centre, form tighter circle on two closed sidesteps with hands on hips, all  $\frac{1}{2}$  turn anti-clockwise on the spot on four stephops to face out, repeat till last bar then three stamps, 1 2 3 and raise both hands up, standing feet together.

## 8. SHOT GUN WEDDING

**Source** : Mary Rose Street Dancers at Sidmouth, from video made locally.  
**Steps** : Mary Rose sequence, two doubles, two stephops and a double.  
**Hands** : long ribbons tied to wrist bell strap.  
**Set** : five dancers arranged 3 v 2 with the leader in the centre of the 3.

```

      5     L     1
                m
      4     2

```

Once to Yourself - stamp right foot on the strong beats, hands on hips.

## CHORUS

Dance into one line on a double step, 5 4 L 2 1 and turn to face neighbour, leaving top free, 5> <4 L> <2 1, who dances to the bottom of the line and joins it, travelling on a single double step. The pairs start a clap and turn sequence. Each pair claps both hands on own thighs and then rights with the other (r+r), clap both thighs again and clap lefts (l+l). As doing this, all dancers are turning clockwise onto two stephops to face the other way to clap with person behind them, so that the left hand clap is done as turned away. As the dancer at the top turns to face up and be neutral they peel off down the "even" side of the set to the bottom, taking one bar, and join the line facing up the set. The sequence ends when No 1 has reached the top again and is neutral for a bar, turning on the spot. Fall out backwards to place in the last bar of 8.

## FIGURE ONE

Clockwise circles of three, each taking two bars, the leader first with 5&4, then 4&2, finally 2&1, then all dance into the centre and back to place.

## FIGURE TWO

Clockwise rounds for all. Each come in to centre, one bar, raises right arm nearly vertically and turns  $\frac{1}{2}$  on spot to face round clockwise in one bar, go round set for two bars, with arms into the centre, then all peel off to left and make a very large loop anti-clockwise for three bars, and back out to own place on the last bar.

## FIGURE THREE

Join hands, all except between 5&4, and form a U shape with No 1's back to the music,

```

      5     L
                1     m
      4     2

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The dancers do "arches" twice in eight bars. Nos 4&5 lead under the arches between 2&1 and 1&L respectively and cast back to place, pulling 2&L through after them. No.1 does not rotate. Do it half more so that end in a tight bunch, as below. No 1 turns to face in so that all have crossed hands.

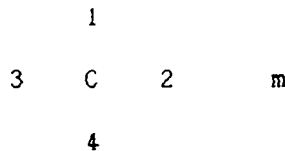
## EXIT

- L 3 With the set as shown, 1 leads off up through the centre between the others and 3&4 cast back to the bottom and follow off last.
- 1 2 4 At a workshop it was found that the 5 formed a star with crossed wrists and could go round clockwise a few times with doubles.

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**9. DAD'S IN THE PRIVY**

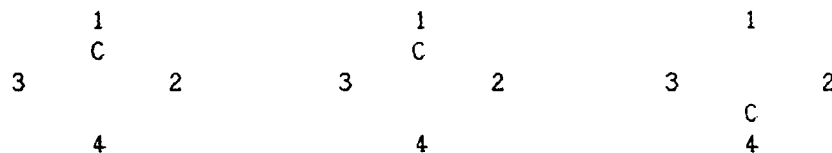
- Source** : Mary Rose Street Dancers at Sidmouth, from locally made video. Copies from JKL Video Film Services, 60 Temple St, Sidmouth, Devon, EX 10 9EQ. A sort of Five Hand reel like Dummer.
- Steps** : skip or stephops throughout.
- sticks** : two short sticks, held at the butt end. When not being used for clashing they are carried almost vertically in front of the chest, forearms almost horizontal.
- Set** : five dancers arranged four in a very large square facing in on the diagonals, with the Centre in the middle of the square.



Once to Yourself - bounce up and down. Jump to start dance.

**SEQUENCE** - done twice or four times.

1. Outer four dance once around circle clockwise in four bars, while the Centre dances around inside anti-clockwise and ends facing No 1.
2. Centre and No 1 clash. They step by landing feet together and then kicking a foot across in same direction as stick hit, 4 times for 4 bars. While they are doing this, No 4 dances forward and back once, towards the centre dancer. Then Nos 1&4 do a right shoulder first back to back while the Centre follows a looped path, passing No. 1 by the right shoulder and crossing the set to face No 4. , Nos 2&3 face the other way to No 4 and dance a forward and back twice.



3. Centre and No 4 clash. This is repeated with the Centre starting with dancer No 4, 4&1 doing a right shoulder back to back and the others all facing the opposite ways.
4. Reel of Three by the active dancers, 1, Centre and 4, started progressively by the Centre and No 1 passing left shoulders, while the other two, 2&3, stand still and face across. The Centre ends facing the person who is to be danced to next, and all dancers jump to start the next sequence repeat.

In the next repeat of the sequence the Centre starts facing No 2. The repeats can continue to rotate clockwise.

**FINAL FIGURE** - "Five Reel"

Form a line of five across the set, taking 4 bars, two bars in and two bars on the spot, and facing as shown. No 3 has to turn to face other way as

## 10. ADDING ANOTHER DIMENSION

No this does not mean leapfrogging or performing in space or underwater but the additional freedom gained in choreography with greater numbers of dancers. It is the common experience that more can be done with floor patterns using eight dancers rather than six, but at the cost of making it more difficult to focus on the individuals' actions. The Carnival Morris which has the flexibility of 16 dancers, a leader and one or two mascots, is the extreme example of complex pattern making.

This collection of over one hundred dances shows the problems of creating movements for an odd number of dancers. Very little thought has been put into dances for seven. Only the Shropshire Bedlams Seven Hand Reel, to "Hunt the Squirrel" is effective, but even this is a dance for six plus one. Minden Rose have considered a half "Wain" for seven. One possible formation is an extended asymmetric "five",

```

      2     4     6
    1     3     5     7
  
```

Another is to have a "three" embedded within a "four",

```

      2         4         6
    1     3     5     7
  
```

which can be worked as if it were,

```

      2         6
          4
        3     5
    1         7
  
```

The challenge is the choreography when going to three rows of dancers,

```

      2         5
    1         4         7
          3         6
  
```

Barley Morris had a dance for six in a related formation,

```

      2         5
          3         6
    1         4
  
```

but the formation was not very exploitable, unlike when there are eight,

```

      2         5         7
          3         6
    1         4         8
  
```

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For the disbelieving there has been a traditional dance in such a formation. One of the set of enhanced Abingdon dances, known as the Royal Morris because they had been arranged for dancing in front of members of the Royal family at the turn of this century, and some of which were documented for the team in the late 1930's, was Sally Luker for 10! It was like the above for eight but with two extra dancers on the centre line.

Nine dancers allows a simpler symmetry,

```

    3      6      9
    2      5      8
    1      4      7
  
```

and this suggests another formation for seven,

```

    3      5      7
    2 -----
    1      4      6
  
```

with the odd dancer having freedom of position along the whole of the centre line. The problem might be to avoid the odd dancer appearing to be like the morris fool in tagging onto movements.

NINE MENS MORRIS is a phrase associated with Tudor times because of Shakespeare's reference to the outdoor game with this name. There are a few dances for this number, including a pair of Cotswold style dances from Rosewood Morris, Palmerston North, New Zealand and a Nine Hand Reel, "The Triumph" from the Shropshire Bedlams.

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## 11. NINE MEN'S MORRIS

A phrase evocative of Tudor England, Shakespeare and the Betley and Kingston windows, implying a morris team and its supporting characters. Unfortunately many of the known literary references were to the game of Morris or Merrels. This game was reputed to have been particularly popular in the Middle Ages and to have been suitable to play in church during a sermon. At least boards can be seen cut into seats at Norwich, Canterbury, Gloucester, Salisbury and Westminster Abbey. The game is very old, the earliest being in Egypt c.1400 BC, but also found in the first city at Troy, a bronze age burial in Co. Wicklow and a Viking ship tomb of c.900 AD. It is still played in some northern pubs.

The game is akin to noughts and crosses, each player in turn placing his tokens so as to achieve a row of three, or "mill", which allows the removal of an opponents token. After all the tokens are laid, they can be moved one at a time, the players taking alternate turns, to form new mills until one payer is reduced to only two pieces. Morris is a family of games with the number of men in the title equalling the number of tokens to each player. More tokens allow more complex boards, usually described by the number of "holes" or intersections of the board pattern. In "Midsummer Night's Dream" Act 2 Scene 2, the reference is to a turf cut morris board. Its occurrence outdoors further confuses the literary references to morris.

3/4 men

6 men

9 men

12 men

9 holes

16 holes

24 holes

These games could not have got their names because the players blacked their faces, so there may have been some association with the dance, perhaps in the moving around on the playing area when out of doors.

We are used to struggling to reach six or eight dancers and often our inventive bent has to go towards what to do with fewer. As a consequence there seems to have been little exploration of what might be done with nine. It allows a symmetry that is denied a lesser odd number, but three columns are difficult when one has been brought up on the two column longways with the idea of partners.

There have been occasions when a Bampton side has done Bonny Green Garters with nine. The order of their dance is Foot-Up, Whole-Hey and Half-Caper off in single file, probably in a spiral, and not the Bonny Green of the rest of the Morris World. The central column mirrors the left hand as does the even side in a six handed set, and the right hand matches the left hand column in the hey. The central man is the last of the file in dancing off.

In the late 1960's the Halsway Manor Advanced Morris weekends used to have a session on the Sunday morning where groups were asked to invent a dance against some set theme or idea. One such was to create an **Essex Nine Men's Morris**. It was so successful that it lasted in clubs' repertoires for several years and this was how it was done at the Blackmore Morris feast on 6.1 73. The tallest dancer was in the centre.

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All the figures were done with a single step and ended on four plain capers. The distinctive figure was an Adderbury Hey along the columns followed by a similar hey across the rows. Each hey matched, there was no mirroring.

Figure 1 : **Foots.** Foot North, Foot East, Foot South, and Foot West. Danced on the spot, facing each direction in order.

Figure 2 : **Eight Handed Star** around the dancer in the centre, ruffling hair!

Figure 3 : **Eight Handed Ring**, not the ordinary rounds but "elephant" rounds. All join hands in the circle and do not let go. One at a time each swings their right leg over their right hand making a ¼ turn to the left, so that the right hand is between the legs and the dancer is facing to the left, while other dancers step-hop. The set can be either stationary or circling clockwise. Then break into "conga" rounds with conga step and yells.

Figure 4 : **Layers**, or All-in. Dance whole rounds and then All-in in threes. Nos 4,5&6 lay down alongside each other with their heads pointing to the left of the set, then Nos 7,8&9 lay across them with their heads to the bottom of the set, and finally Nos 1,2&3 lay on top with their heads to the right of the set.

One would guess there was no definitive version of this bit of buffoonery!

Great Western Morris have a **Nine Men's Morris**, Fieldtown style.

The distinctive figure was all face up, a crossed sidestep left in front, an uncrossed double step, a crossed sidestep right in front, feet together and jump. The front two of each column then bend forward to be ready for the back row to leapfrog forward over them on four strong beats. Then all hop-back-step and jump, falling back one place so that now the bottom row are at the top. There are three repeats of the distinctive figure so that the dancers end up where they started in the set.

Figure 1 : **Foot-Up-&Down**, all galleying on the left in each half and ending all facing up.

Figure 2 : **Heys.** Half-hey down the columns, half hey across the rows, half hey up the columns and half hey back across the rows. The outer heys turn out to start and the central line follows the right hand line.

Figure 3 : **Diagonals.** While the centre dancer does fore-capers on the spot, the diagonals cross, first the corners of the set and then the middles of the four sides, and then both lots back again, turning towards the central dancer as they pass and hop-back-stepping out to the new place.

Figure 4 : **Rounds.** While the centre dancer does upright capers on the spot, the other eight dance rounds, going into the centre at half way and hop-back-stepping out, and coming in to the middle and lifting the centre dancer at the end.

## 12. MINDEN ROSE'S NINE MEN'S MORRIS

**Source** : composed for Minden Rose, Alton and worked out one practice night, then later given to Knots of May, from Sussex.

**Music** : jigs.

**Steps** : skips.

**Set** : a square of nine dancers, 3 by 3, with each having two sticks, or handkerchiefs, which are swung alternately. The central dancer of the nine is distinguished by having a U shaped garland. Those at the corners of the square are "the corners" and those in the middle of the sides are the "centres".

**ENTRY** - The garland holder comes forward and stands in the middle. The rest then follow in single file to form a circle around the garland facing in.

**DANCE** - This is a series of figures, each followed by a chorus, except the last, which goes straight into a dance off in single file with the garland holder last.

**CHORUS** - all face up to start. It is in three parts.

1. The top row cast to their right and dance a complete progressive Reel of Three along their columns.
2. The right hand column face to their left and the rest to their right and dance a complete Reel of Three across the set along each row, starting progressively from the right.
3. The four centres reel through the middle of the set by a half right hand star while passing in the middle and dance a loop to the left in the opposite diagonal's place before coming back with another half right hand star and loop to the left to their starting place. The phrasing is one bar into the star, one bar to pass, two bars to loop, etc. The four centres dance the same thing but across the long diagonals, dancing a bar on the spot at the start to left the centres go through and then completing the movement in the remaining seven bars. The garland holder joins in one of the reels, passing left shoulders with one of the centres as they come in to the middle.

**FIGURES** - the garland dances on the middle spot through every figure.

1. The outer eight dance a circle once round clockwise.
2. The outer eight dance clockwise in a double circle once round, the centres moving forward to dance alongside and inside the corner in front of them.
3. The outer eight dance contra-circles, the centres going clockwise inside once round and the corners going anticlockwise outside once round.
4. The outer eight dance a circular hey or grand chain once round, starting as for the contra-circles in figure 3, but weaving to pass left and right shoulders alternately.
5. The outer eight dance a circle once round anticlockwise and lead off.

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