

FLAMING MORRIS

A workshop was held with "Flaming Morris" at The Old Boys School, Ottery St Mary on Saturday 12th January 1991. They danced their four stave dances to show the style and content and then I taught them 6 new dances gathered from other active stave teams.

Ottery St Mary in Devon is famous for its tar barrels on November 5th and the dance team has rough stripped natural wood staves with a small wooden barrel as a stave head and a mass of essentially red streamers. The leader has a stave with small wooden clown's head instead.

The original leader of the club had chosen to interpret the dances and evolved an interesting new structure for the Stourton Caundle set which gave each dance a unique opening figure which was repeated as the 5th/last figure and performed the intermediate figures in the order, cross-over-&-back, into centre in 4's and out to end in 4's, and into line along centre in two's. This order was followed in teaching the new figures for eight dancers.

FIRST SET - dances for eight.

NUMBER ONE : tune : "Dorset Four Hand Reel"

Once to Yourself : all face up towards the music, feet together, stave sloped over right shoulder, left arm at side.

Opening Figure : "Arches"

Working in fours twice round, pair going down forming arch and going over.

CHORUS as "No.1". All turn 90° to left & dance 2 bars to left, turn out 180° and dance back to place, left hand turn opposite once round, hold half way.

Figure Two : "Cross Over"

Pass left shoulders and turn back to the right and return to place similarly, in flowing movement.

CHORUS

Figure Three : "In-&-Out"

All turn and the end pairs dance to between the centre pairs to form two lines of four across the set facing each other, the top four facing down and the other four facing up. Retire to place. Then the middle pairs dance out to between the end pairs to form lines of four across the set, the top four facing up and the other four facing down, and both lines the length of the set apart. Retire to places and face across the set.

CHORUS

Figure Four : "Into-Line-in-Pairs"

Dance into single straight line along centreline of set in neighbouring pairs, 1&3, 4&6, 5&7, crossing staves with neighbour, and retire to places. Repeat to other shoulders in pairs 2&4, 3&5, 6&8 and retire to places.

CHORUS

Last Figure : as Opening

CHORUS

End with staves into middle in fours. Music not slowed at end.

NUMBER TWO : tune : "Bricks and Mortar". Dance not done recently

Once to Yourself

Opening Figure : "Dance-Round"

No.1 leads odds file dancing a clockwise circle around the set, while simultaneously No.2 leads evens file around in an anticlockwise circle, the odds first passing outside the evens and then inside, going round to place.

CHORUS a form of "No.2". In fours, dance half way round a clockwise circle in 2 bars, and cross back to place along the diagonals, one bar for each pair's crossing. Repeat but start circling anticlockwise. Has to be danced very tight on space to complete the movement in time.

Figure Two

CHORUS

Figure Three

CHORUS

Figure Four

CHORUS

Last Figure : as opening

CHORUS & Finish.

Suggested Change to Chorus : take twice as long for the movements, two bars to travel round, two bars facing in along the diagonals and then each diagonal pair takes two bars to cross in succession. Make it a bigger circle and vary pace to avoid actually dancing on the spot. Aim for surges of movement.

NUMBER THREE : tune : "Galopede". Shown as dance for four only.

Once to Yourself

Opening Figure : "Figure of Eight"

In fours, all face up, top pairs cast out and lead into complete reel of 4 across the set.

CHORUS a form of "No.3". In fours, form line of four across the set facing down the set by top pairs moving between next. Dance down the set for four bars, travelling quite a long way, then face neighbour and dance a half reel of four to end in reverse order along the line. Face up and dance back to place for 4 bars and half reel of four to place.

Figure Two

CHORUS

Figure Three

CHORUS

Figure Four

CHORUS

Last Figure : as opening

CHORUS & Finish.

Suggested Change to Chorus : travel down the set for only 2 bars and face and dance on spot for two bars before dancing the half reel. In coming back reach the top pair's starting position. Choice of travel should depend on the dancing space available.

TWO DANCES TAUGHT FOR EIGHT**NUMBER EIGHT** : tune : "Over the Hills and Far Away"**First & Last Figure**

No 1 dances down the centre line followed by the other dancers, 2,3,4,5 etc in order and in single file. When all in the line, No 1 casts to left and comes up on the other side. The other dancers cast alternately to end on changed sides. This is immediately repeated to end with the dancers in their starting places.

CHORUS

The upper middles, 3&4 dance quickly between the top pair, 1&2, while the lower middles, 5&6 go between the bottoms, 7&8, as the end corners, Nos 1,2,7,8 start two reels of four along the set diagonals which cross in the centre. The dancers surge into the centre on one bar and then hold the position of left shoulders to the centre for a moment before passing on. The movement is like the Figure Eight used to start and end dance "Number Three" but done along the set diagonal with the diagonally opposite pair. Note that it is important to go through the middle at the same time, keeping the same relative positions throughout. The effectiveness of the chorus depends on NOT getting out of the pattern with each other.

NUMBER SEVEN : tune : "Speed the Plough"**First & Last Figure**

Danced in fours. Neighbouring pairs dance forward, rotating a little (45°) clockwise as a pair, to form on line of four across the second diagonal, in order 2,4,1,3, the pairs facing in opposite directions. Those in the centre of the line, Nos 1&4, turn round each other anticlockwise enough (135°) to face up or down the set, while the ends, Nos 2&3, turn clockwise in a circle away from the centre to face down or up the set, ready to turn Nos 1&4 respectively once round, with crossed staves to "push 'em round". It is important for the appearance of the dance that the four pairs turning are positioned in a square, and go round at the same rate. This is all repeated to starting places.

CHORUS

This chorus involves all eight dancers. The ends dance between the middles to form two lines of four facing and aligned across the set taking one bar. Each of the top row turns on the spot inwards to face up taking one bar, whilst the other row dances on the spot. The top row splits into two pairs who rotate (180°) on the outer end as a pair shoulder to shoulder, whilst the bottom row moves up between them to form a line of eight, taking two bars, with the centre four facing up and the outer ends facing down the set. The line of eight splits into two sets of four who spin about their individual centres half way round (180°) in two bars, so that all are facing the opposite way, and, most important, all are more or less facing where they started from. The line of eight breaks as each faces forward to their starting place, ending facing across the set.

SECOND SET - dances for six

WEDDING REEL : tune : "Three Around Three".

Appears to be a mixture of Seend's "Bricks & Mortar" and Buckhorn Weston's "Wiltshire Wedding Reel" dances.

The following sequence is danced two or three times.

Cast-In I.

Top pair lead a cast down the centre and up the outside of their own sides to place and then change sides with their opposite.

Cast-In II.

Repeat on other side to get back to place.

Heys-Across.

A form of "three-top", middles go to their right between the ends and dance complete reels of three with them, ending back in own place.

The Figure.

The figure eight danced in pairs once around. (but not back!)

FOUR DANCES TAUGHT FOR SIX

Jumping the Stone

The Step Dance

Three Jolly Sheepskins

Mad Moll of the Cheshire Hunt

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JUMPING THE STONE : tune : "Bobby Shafto"

Structure : chorus followed by a figure. Each figure starts with the same movement and each has a distinct second half.

CHORUS

All face up. The movement is a form of progressive hey starting with the top pair casting out, the two sides being mirror images. The bottom pair start by making an arch with their staves, which the top pair go under to reach the bottom. At the bottom the top pair turn inwards to face up and themselves make an arch with their staves. As each pair reach the bottom they form an arch and move up towards the top. Each pair from the top of the set dances outside the pair then in the middle and under the arch then at the bottom, while the other pairs are facing up and moving up. It is important that a pattern of actions with the staves is established so that each turn and repetition looks the same.

FIGURES

First Part : facing across to opposite, step on the spot for 4 bars, cross over passing left shoulders in one bar, all turning to the left (90°) to face up or down the set and dance on the spot for the rest of the second bar, then dancing a small loop clockwise to the right around the spot to end facing back across the set in one's opposite's place.

Second Part : a different movement for each figure except the last.

1. Into a Single Line down the Centre line of the set in neighbouring pairs, rather as the into-line figure of the Sets of Eight Dances, done both ways. Because the normal rule of the club is that the first time it is the pair at the top of the odds, ie Nos 1&3, that go together, in this dance it is the two dancers in those places, ie those who start the dance as Nos 2&4.
2. Rounds, all put their stave horizontally into the centre of the set in a circle and dance clockwise round for two bars, turn outwards (to the left, anticlockwise) to face back in a small loop on one's own, making the stave take a large sweep up and over and back to the centre of the circle taking two bars, dance back anticlockwise to place and again dance a loop outwards to face up (to the right, clockwise) taking four bars.
3. Circular Hey. The top pair (Nos 1&2) and the side pairs (Nos 3&5, 4&6) face and pass left shoulders, and then "grand chain" around the circle to their starting place passing alternate shoulders, and only having about 1 bar per pass in order to get round in eight bars in all.
4. All-in. The last time there is no extra movement and the dancers raise their staves and form a high cross in the centre with the six staves at the end of the first part.

STEP DANCE : tune : a Sussex Polka

The dance sequence produces a progression, taking the top pair to the bottom of the set, therefore needing three repeats to get the dancers to their starting places. The dance uses a heavy step or an exaggerated stamp for most of the movements and this should be assumed unless it is indicated to be otherwise. Various Dorset steps were shown. That preferred is a polka in which the free foot is well turned out and stamped flat footed behind the supporting foot instead of in front of it as is more common.

Petronella. This takes 16 bars. The pattern is danced with one's opposite. Each pair dances around a square path, each part is a going diagonally to the right and rotating on one's axis clockwise three quarters of a complete turn during the travelling on two bars. The first time it is to end facing up or down the centreline of the set, the second time in one's opposite's place, the third on the centreline again, and the last in one's starting place. At each position two "steps" are danced on the spot facing one's opposite. These "steps" should be heavier, ie noisier, than those used to travel while turning. So it is a "turn-&-step" taking four bars and repeated four times.

Insides. This takes 8 bars. Led by the top pair, they all lead down the centre to the bottom using a springy walking step, having moved up the outside as necessary, and then cast out at the bottom and come back to place up the outside, using the heavy step and making arches with the staves.

Cast Hey. This takes 8 bars. This movement has the same pattern for each repetition but the numbering of the pairs changes, being associated with the starting place for each repeat of the figure and not the starting position of the dance. All dance throughout, even when not having to travel. The top two pairs move up so that the middle pair are in the top pair's starting place, in two bars using a light step. The bottom pair face across the set. The top pair now cast round the middles into their middles starting place while the middle pair turn inwards to face across, all using the heavy step for two bars. The bottom pair and those now in the middle face down and move down one place till the original top pair reach the original bottom place, in two bars using a light step. The bottom pair cast out into the original middle place, while the rest face across the set, all using the heavy step for two bars. The top pair has now reached the bottom and the others have moved up one position. Note that the two casts are NOT done by the same pair!

THREE JOLLY SHEEPSKINS : tune : same

These two dances' structure is a chorus followed by a figure, three times.

CHORUS is based on the traditional **Sheepskin Hey**. The odds follow No 1 across the top of the set and reel down the evens side, passing outside No 2, inside No 3 etc. The Sheepskin Hey means that the last of the line of three to pass the middle casts back around the middle to become the first of the line. This behaviour continues until the original leader No 1 is in front again. That dancer then leads the line out to the top of the row of evens, casts around No 2 and takes them down the outside, across the bottom and up to their starting places. While being danced around, the other line dance on the spot, alternately 4 bars facing up and 4 bars facing down, the turns all being to the left, ie initially inward and down. The hey is then repeated by the evens dancing around the odds, everything in a mirror image. The evens move across on cue as the odds are coming back to their places. To get around comfortably the music should not be played too fast and the fixed dancers should not be too close, or too far apart! The musicians should not be suprised if one side takes four bars longer than the other to get around. Just do not tell the audience!

FIGURES

1. **Sidestep-Across**. All facing up, four open sidesteps across set to change sides, taking two bars, stave held in both hands sloped across body in direction of movement, left hand below right for odds, left above right for evens. All turn downwards a complete turn to face up again in two bars. Sidestep back, leading other foot and sloping stave in direction of movement and again a complete turn down to end facing up.

2. **Six Hand Star**. All dance round set clockwise for two bars, making a high basket with the six staves up in the centre, turn out in a loop going forwards and anticlockwise to the left in two bars coming back in where started to go out on the loop, and not stealing any of the distance to be returned, and putting the stave over the right shoulder. Return with a left hand star, Texas style, holding wrist of person in front for two bars, and turn out clockwise to the right in a loop back to place.

3. **Rounds**. All dance round set in a big circle, closing in towards the end and raising and crossing staves in the centre to end the dance.

MAD MOLL OF THE CHESHIRE HUNT

CHORUS The dancers face across the set and dance on the spot for four bars, retiring a little in preparation for the next movement. Then dance a cross over passing left shoulders and going as far as practical then turning to the right in a big loop and coming in turning to face up by the end of the fourth bar. They dance a complete progressive hey, ending facing up, in or round as required by the next figure. The emphasis is in the lines, or working in pairs in the hey, the surge into the cross over and the flow into the hey without pause.

FIGURES as above.

PUTTENHAM JUNIOR SCHOOL

Source : School girls at Puttenham and Warnborough Fair June 6th 1992.

Stave : A little taller than the dancers, with golden knobs on top.

CUTT MILL

Step : Double steps.

Set : 8 dancers.

Music : "Enrico".

ENTRY : On in a single file and into a clockwise circle and a chorus.

CHORUS : All 8 one big circle clockwise once round (8 bars) and form two lines along the set, each file facing to their left. Each file dance 4 bars to the left, and retire backwards for 4 bars to place.

The last time the team leads off in single file instead of dancing off to the left etc.

FIGURES

1. Two circles of four (at top and bottom) clockwise and anticlockwise, 8 bars each way. Turn outwards at half way.
2. Diagonals cross in order, 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th, two bars each, and return in the same order.
3. Circular hey for 8, all the way round. Two bars per passing, 16 bars all the way round to place.

KATIE'S DELIGHT

Step : Double steps and walking steps.

Set : 8 dancers.

Music : ???

ENTRY : Walk on in two files.

CHORUS : Circles of four, 4 bars each way and turn out at half way.

FIGURES

1. Processionals with double steps. Top pair only two bars down centre and retire for two bars to place. Top two pairs down the middle and back, keeping relative positions. Bottom pair only dance two bars up the centre and retire for two bars to place. Bottom two pairs up the middle and back.
2. Walk into single along centre, right shoulders, walk back to place, and dance cross over to opposite place with double steps, passing right shoulders and turning to the right to face back. Repeat all this to place.
3. In fours dance around small square, passing right shoulders across the set first, 2 bars of double step for each passing.
4. Circle of 8 clockwise and anti-clockwise.
5. Circular hey for 8.
6. Walk forward to meet opposite and retire twice, turning at end to face out and bowing.

URSA MAJOR STAVE DANCES

They did a four person stave at a Knobs and Knockers weekend. Here seen at Sidmouth Festival 1992. Dances choreographed by Wendy.

WINSTER GALLOP

Set : seen for 4, but intended as multiples of 4.
Step : skip-change and cross over polka
Source : video 12, reading 0386
Music : Winster Gallop

Entry : two lines at opposite sides of dance area, dance on in file till opposite each other, on spot evens facing down, odd up.

1. Chorus 1 : lines move to their left, turn out to come back to be opposite partner, turn opposite by left hand once round to end in place.
2. Cross Over and back figure.
3. Chorus 2 : top pairs dance between bottom pairs, all face down and dance down in line of four, face in pairs and step on spot, half reel of four across the set and end all facing up. Repeat to place.
4. Arches figure in fours.
5. Chorus 1
6. Into line in twos figure.
7. Chorus 2
8. All face up and polka step on the spot for 4 bars, dance half the Figure, moving out to form a square, face across and cross back to place without weaving.
9. Chorus 1
- 10 Top pair down the middle while other pair dance on spot facing across, turn in and come back to place. Bottom pair dance up middle, turn in and dance back.
- 11 Chorus 2
- 12 Bottom pair stand still, top pair cross over passing right shoulders and dance completely around the bottom pair to place. Then bottom pair do the same.
- 13 Chorus 1 but end facing out, away from opposite.
- 14 Lines dance out, turn to left to face back, approach and turn oppsite with the left hand once round.
- 15 Chorus 2
- 16 First diagonal face, back step on the spot, push 'em round turn, other diagonal repeat.
- 17 Chorus 1 and dance off in two files as entry.

FIVE HANDED STAVE DANCE

Source : Video 12 position 0961

Formation : 5 dancers, four in a square facing across the set and a centre in the middle facing up to start.

1. Sides cross their staves and open sidestep (slipstep) to their left and back and then to their right and back, 4 bars each way. Centre dances forward, dances to their right, back to the left and retires to starting place, 2 bars each move. Repeats in opposite direction, and going to the left and right.
2. Stars, centre with bottom two, while top two turn each other, staves in the middle, all clockwise for 4 bars. Centre changes to star with top pair anticlock for 4 bars and ends in middle.
3. Star for 5 clockwise, staves in middle, centre goes into ring between the top pair, once round in 4 bars, centre casts to left and leads them in a loop and back round into a complete circle anticlock, all completed in 4 bars. Repeat with anticlock star and cast to right, end as start, 16 bars in all.
4. Centre and bottom pair lead up, centre under crossed staves, turn in and dance down to places, while top pair dance down the outside, turn in and dance back to place. 4 bars each way.
5. Corner four dance a right and left through, starting across the set, 2 bars each change, while centre dances an anticlockwise loop around No 2's place and then anticlock around No 3's.
6. Centre dances a reel of 3 with the even side while odds mirror their opposites, then does a reel of three with odds, centre goes up first each time.
7. Centre steps on the spot, slowly rotating once round clockwise with stave held out vertically in front but not high, rest circle round, 2nd diagonal inside anticlock, stave on shoulder, 1st diagonal clockwise outside staves crossed over the heads.
8. Centre and No.4 form a stationary arch and step on the spot, while other 3 dance anticlock around the centre and under the arch, turn out at half way and come back clockwise.
9. Reel of 5 across, going in the easy way, lead off one at a time after once round as reach evens end again.

WEDDING REEL

Source : Bedworth Festival, 1992, outdoor performance by teenage workshop.
Video 25 position 0490

Formation : set of 6 in two facing lines.

The following sequence danced 4 times through.

1. All polka on the spot facing across for 4 bars, then middles going to their right do a half reel of three to change sides and then immediately, without other stepping, go to their new left and dance a whole reel of three.
2. The Figure 8 in pairs both directions as usual.
3. Dip and Dive hey from the top, progressive, go between to start, arches when going outside (over), on sholders when between (under). Go round once and another place so that end one place further down the set.
4. Push partner round with stave half way clockwise, and loop to left to face back, repeat to place.

End - on 4 with staves crossed with opposite.

WINTERBOURNE BISHOP

- Source** : danced by English Miscellany at Towersey 1991. Can be danced with staves.
- Steps** : skip-change step for travelling, cross over polka on spot.
- Set** : Six dancers in two lines of three, facing across set at the start. To keep the dance flowing the patterns have to be made large.
- Fig 1.** : **Whole Hey** : a Cotswold morris hey pattern for six, ends turning out and middles following the tops.
- Fig 2.** : **Reel of Four** : the centres stand still in their place facing across the set. The bottom pair go up between the middles, changing sides, odd side in front, and dance around the opposite middle, cross again and dance around neighbouring middle to place thus completing a 'figure of eight'. The tops cast down, just as starting the hey, and go below the middles, then follow the bottom pair around the figure of eight. As they end by going round their neighbour, they continue by passing up through the bottom pair and go up the centre to their starting place.
- Fig 3.** : **Cast** : All face up, top pair cross staves, and all lead up in pairs for 2 bars, then the top pair dance on the spot or retire bringing the crossed staves back over the other dancers heads, for 2 bars, while the other two pairs dance up under and go into a single cast. The old top pair join in the cast behind the others. All dance up the middle with staves crossed to form a set where everyone has moved a place in the set.
- Fig 4.** : **Step & Turn** : All face across and dance 4 polkas on the spot, staves still crossed with opposite or on own shoulder, then all push opposite once round with the stave.

Repeat two more times through till all back to starting place.