

THE COMPLETE SPOTTER'S GUIDE TO KENNET MORRIS DANCES - WRITTEN BY A FOOL

Join in the fun and learn whilst collecting points using this guide to the noble art of the Cotswold Morris and The Kennet Morris Dances. The person with most points at the end of each season will be ... the winner.

The Kennet Dances

We perform perhaps the best known variety of the Morris - collected in the early 1900's by Cecil Sharp in the villages on the uplands of Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire, and which has therefore become known as "Cotswold Morris". The old teams mainly consisted of six dancers and a musician or two, and often a Fool or Animal character.

Each village produced its own steps and dances, and these have become the "traditions", known by the name of the parent village. There are still traditional teams at Abingdon, Bampton, Chipping Campden and Headington Quarry, but some villages have revival teams continuing the work of the old sides, notably Adderbury, Ducklington, Eynsham, Ilmington and Kirtlington.

Each side would have its own kit, of which there are many variations, but Kennet's garb of white shirt, baldrics, black breeches, white stockings and black shoes is fairly typical, though long white trousers are often considered traditional. What is common to all sides are the bell pads, the use of oversize handkerchiefs and, usually, big sticks.

That's the serious stuff – let the fun begin! Listed below are the "traditions" and dances we have been taught at some time in the recent past, though not all have been chosen for this season (see last page), and not all will see the light of day again! The descriptions are to help you identify what is being performed if the Squire or the Fool had not made it clear (unlikely) or you weren't paying attention (most likely). The guidelines set out the main features of each tradition and dance - what the Kennet should actually be doing. They are not guidelines on how to perform each set – there's the two inch thick "Black Book" we supposedly learnt the dances from – and our own "<u>interpretations</u>" - but there should be enough for you to recognise each dance (and perhaps to remind the dancers).

To make it even easier each dance is categorised as a *Hand Clapping*, *Handkerchief* or *Stick* and as a *Set Dance* (where the dancers all move together across, up or down the set) or as a *Corner Dance* (where the opposite corners dance in turn). An asterisk * by the title shows it's one created or adapted by Kennet, in the style of the tradition.



Click on \mathfrak{S}^{\prime} and you can listen to the tune – this doesn't work on the printed version of the guide!



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Adderbury

We've been dancing Adderbury for as long as we can remember - so we've no idea how long, but we've decided to revive and refresh the repertoire. The tradition should be active and lively, we live in hope, and (a public health warning here) often features the dancers singing.

Beaux of London City

Stick Set Dance



The Beaux of Kennet know this dance as "Shooting Adderbury" for reasons that should become obvious to the observer. The long stick is held as gun (a blunderbuss?) during the corner sequences where the dancers variously shoot each other, passing pigeons or the odd rubber chicken, and lastly the musicians. They used to be revived by the kiss of life – though that is not deemed appropriate these days – besides, they're not the beaux they used to be.

U-Spy Points: 50 if someone volunteers to raise the musicians from the dead

Cuckoo's Nest

Stick Set Dance 🚮



A "new" dance from Adderbury featuring much stick clashing, which we hope we've learnt properly – it involves alternately striking down on your partner's stick whilst it is held over the head - facing away. What could possibly go wrong? Maybe if the stick flew over the ... I'll get me rag coat.

U-Spy Points: 15 if no one's hurt 100 if Jack Nicholson appears.

Happy Man

Stick Set Dance



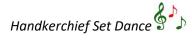


This dance was reintroduced the year the Kennet presented me with wonderful pressies to celebrate my 40 years as a Fool – a very happy man indeed. The dance itself is a jolly affair too featuring singing throughout as we clash sticks, desperately trying to remember the words for each verse. The stepping is a little unusual as well – probably more so as we've only just getting used to it. It can also include loads of dancers - as long as it's an even number!

U-Spy Points: 25 if you're able to sing along with all the different verses



Haste to the Wedding





The Adderbury side traditionally included this as the second dance in their programme. We don't. It's sometimes called Rory O'More. We don't call it that either. The handkerchief movements are said to describe the shape of an apple complete with stalk. We describe it as something a lot ruder, but it's very appropriate for a hasty wedding. So is the featured macho chest-beating. U-Spy Points: 5 for identifying the hankie move, 100 if a bride's involved

Post Man's Knock

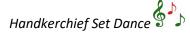




Shepherd's Hey

Unusually for a Cotswold dance this is an 8 person dance normally – the dance not the dancers. It features lusty singing in many languages as the postman was apparently delivering air mail letters. The knocking follows a very impressive sticking sequence which has surprised many a knuckle, often accompanied by unscripted words.

I'm glad I have a door-bell. U-Spy Points: 5 for recognising each language, 10 for any expletives





One for everyone to join in – we'll teach you how – though it may differ from the original! U-Spy Points: 20 for joining in. Minus 20 if you don't, unless you've a sick note or blue badge



Sweet Jenny Jones





The tune is actually Cader Idris, which inspired a song named after Jenny Jones, said to have been a dairymaid at Pontblyddin Farm, who fell in love with a ploughman named Edward Morgan. Edward went to sea and spent twenty years in the Navy, however, he returned to marry Jenny.

There are many other claims on the title, but see <u>https://tunearch.org/wiki/Annotation:Sweet_Jenny_Jones</u> for a lot more.

It was also traditionally the first dance of the season for the Adderbury Morris Men, who introduce it with their own version of the song.

John Kirkpatrick noted that the 3/4 time morris step is different from the normal one used, and that the pause in the stepping coincides with the pause in the musical phrase. "The stepping in the cinquepace (meaning five steps), or galliard, of Elizabethan times is exactly the same rhythm as this". I thought you needed to know that.

U-Spy Points: 100 if you can sing the song in Welsh.

The Black Joke





The Adderbury version of The Black Joke – it was a very popular tune (see Bucknell and Ilmington for a little about its provenance), so much so that the Royal Navy named several ships after it. The most famous was the third of that name, assigned to the West Africa Squadron to chase down slave ships. It was the most successful of the fleet, capturing a couple of dozen slavers and freeing thousands of slaves, so if anyone thinks the song is racist, you can correct them. It is however, very rude!

The standard figures have an added chorus where the dancers "wind down", travelling as far away from the musicians as possible in the time, before returning at speed to their exquisite melodies.



U-Spy Points: 10 if the dancers manage any distance in the wind down. An additional 10 if they get back in time



Bampton

Bampton is a living tradition and has an unbroken history stretching back centuries within the village. There are now three sides dancing "around the gardens" of Bampton every Whit Monday (though in 2022 it was uniquely a Saturday because of the late Queen's Jubilee holiday celebrations). This is another tradition we introduced in 2021 and is going down well amongst the dancers. The musicians like it too as the same dances can be performed to several different tunes. The Squire likes it too as he doesn't have to worry about forgetting the sticks- they are all handkerchief dances.

Corner Dances



Bampton may well have danced outside the village's Corner House, but that's not quite the meaning. The dances, also known as "Through Dances", as each corner crosses over the middle of the set - or not - they may turn back from the middle. And the two dancers in the middle are corners too. Simple. Again identical dances are performed to different tunes.

We'll be using Banbury Bill \Im \square and The Rose Tree \Im \square most often, possibly. U-Spy Points: 25 if no one crashes in the middle. 50 if both dancers end up in the same corner.

Bobbing Around

Handkerchief Corner Dance



An American song first published in 1855, it was more popular in Britain than the USA following a variety tour. A was often the case the jaunty tune suited the morris and was adapted by several Cotswold musicians. The bobbing theme suits the figures of the dance which involves much capering, leaping high in the air – in theory. Whilst it can be danced as dance in sets, we prefer the corner version -you get well earned rests! U-Spy Points: 25 if no one's out of breath at the end.

The Old Woman Tossed Up Handkerchief Corner Dance 🖇

Derived from the old nursery rhyme:



There was an old woman went up in a basket, Seventy times as high as the moon: What she did there I could not but ask it, For in her hand she carried a broom. "Old Woman, old woman, old woman," quoth I, "O wither, O wither, O wither, so high!" "To sweep the cobwebs off the sky, And I shall be back again by and by!"

If he's nothing better to, and should you give just the least bit of encouragement, Jon Holmes, our Master of Music and Bagman, will recite this flawlessly. You have been warned. The original song is "old" (17 or 18^{th} century) and originally sung to Lillibolero, a tune that is even older. If you've heard Jon sing you'll be very happy that he only recites it. The Morris tune is very different and more-so, in that we've pinched the Ilmington version.



Sidestep Dances



Bampton has a variety of sidestep dances, as exquisitely illustrated by the Bampton Fool who is proudly displayed as the Morris Clown's pub sign in the village. Who else? The dances, also known as Half-heys, are very similar, apart from the tune. However the three traditional sides all interpret them differently, and to confuse matters further some are single sidestep and others double. We will probably use the music for The Blue Eyed Stranger and Highland Mary Other tunes may be used

including Brighton Camp U-Spy Points: 1 if you hear Blue Eyed Strangler joke (very likely)

Step and Fetch Her

Handkerchief Set Dance



The Maid of the Mill

Handkerchief Set Dance



Bonny Green Garters

One of the "old" dances revived in 1967 by the Traditional Bampton Morris Dancers with a few additions to the "original". This "whole hey" dance involves much capering and leaping around across the set. The "Step and Fetch Her" appears to be the calls in an old country dance "Down the middle, Up the middle, Fetch her back the pretty little dear". We don't do that one.

U-Spy Points: 50 for spying a fetching dancer

The Maid of the Mill was a popular comic opera first performed in 1765 as a musical version of a very well-known novel of the time. Patty, a miller's daughter has been educated above her station by the late Lady Aimworth. Lord Aimworth, her son, is in love with Patty but engaged to Theodosia. Patty, in turn, is engaged to Farmer Giles. Theodosia is in love with Mr. Mervin. Farmer Giles loses both Patty and her father's estate: an 18th century version of The Archers?

But back to the dance: it's a stomping, handclapping dance of some vigour featuring capers and side-steps.

U-Spy Points: 5 if you can remember who's who in the opera. 50 if you've seen her picture in the Ightham Mote gallery, a favourite Kennet venue!







The traditional morris farewell dance, where you'll often be invited to join in "for as many as will". After a rousing song – of which there are several conflicting versions – some of them saucier than others, it's a simple set dance. The performance concludes with a circular "procession" which, just to confuse everyone, changes direction halfway through! (See also page 13 for the reason for wearing of green garters.) U-Spy Points: 25 if you join in. A bonus 25 if we all sing the same words.

Ο

Bucknell – or Kennet!

The style is best described as "brisk and jerky". If you hear the Fool shout "make it snappy" it's Bucknell, unless it's an instruction to the bartender. The hand movements, whether with hankie or stick should be sharp downward movements, rather like bouncing a ball. I think a better description is that it should be like shaking something unpleasant off the ends of your fingers. Kennet, of course, will remember to keep this going right to the end of each dance. We enjoy the tradition so much we've added several dances of our own devising, in our own inimitable style. So much so that our Foreman refers to it as the Kennet tradition, in the style of Bucknell.

Allen Key

Handkerchief Set Dance



The late Clive Allen, AKA Matron, created this Bucknell style dance for 2018. The chorus is a unique and intricate set of turns and corner crossovers whilst maintaining the basic Bucknell tradition. Matron certainly took a delight in difficult operations, but we think that it's rather clever and it became a firm favourite. I prefer the name Matron's Delight but we're sticking with The Allen Key for now (it's got a lot of turns in the dance and it's six-sided).

U-Spy Points: 5 for if no one gets dizzy, 50 if you agree Matron's Delight is a better name.

Black Joke or Old Black Joe*





A new dance devised by young Brian Jones in the Bucknell style. The Black Joke tune derives from a bawdy song heard in London around 1730 and referenced in Hogarth's 'Rake's Progress'. It was very rude. The Bucknell lads renamed their version Old Black Joe for decency's sake. Which name Brian gives this is up to him! We won't be singing the song whatever he determined. We blush too easily.

U-Spy Points: 5 for not blushing, 10 if the sticking goes to plan.

Jack O Newbury*





You won't spy this old Kennet man – Jack Pearce died many years ago, but this dance, created in 1986 in the style of the Bucknell tradition, was named in his honour on 27 February 1988. No U-Spy points for guessing where Jack came from. It is not to be confused with the lesser known Tudor gentleman of the same name and of <u>The</u> <u>Pleasant Historieof John Winchcombe</u> fame.

The distinguishing feature of the dance are the Cross-overs, each different. The dancers travel right across the set before turning back and "capering" face to face along the set, all rising and falling at the same time. We can but hope. Spoiler Alert: The last figure climaxes with simultaneous star or split-jumps – an excellent photo opportunity.

U-Spy Points: 5 for recognising the dance, 10 if simultaneous is unrecognisable.







Princess Royal*

Handkerchief Set Dance



Room for the Cuckolds

it).





unique and is challenging a few of our old dogs. The format is a processional on, a set dance for six, and a processional off. Sounds easy - what could possibly go wrong? When we get it right, it has the potential to be one of the more interesting dances in our repertoire. You could be the first to witness that.

A dance introduced in 2016, created by our ever resourceful Clive Blunt. It's certainly

Another new dance created by Brian Jones in the style of Bucknell featuring stick clashing and twirling, as well as the usual Bucknell figures. It also features the song:

U-Spy Points: 5 for not sniggering when you recall "the other" version.

O dear, what can the matter be? Dear, dear, what can the matter be? O dear, what can the matter be? Johnny's so long at the fair.

U-Spy Points: 5 for not getting in our way, 10 if we complete it (only 5 if the Fool's not in

This is easier to identify as we sing with each stick clashing chorus. What may be less identifiable are the words which should start with:

We do it all day we do it all night, because it's our fertility right. (Rubbish of course.) Any more words would spoil the fun! They are all very tongue in cheek which is why they might sound garbled – but they are repeated each time so there's a chance you may understand them second time around! The Fool may find the dancers's posture when striking the ground with their sticks quite irresistible. U-Spy Points: 10 if you understand all the words, 20 if the Fool bladders someone.

The Blue-eyed Stranger

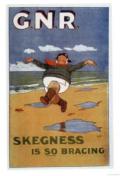


This is very much a non-stop dance the chorus of which is what is called an open side-step. We rarely do it for this reason. In theory, whilst dancing on the spot facing across the set the right hand will raise up to the right, both hands will then snap down together and the left hand will then raise to the left, then off they go on a Half-hey, before repeating the whole lot. This chorus will be interspersed with the Bucknell standard set crossing figures of Belly to Belly and Back to Back – and into line. Aren't theories wonderful?

U-Spy Points: 2 points for each man crossing one foot behind the other during the Side-step, 10 points if the Back to Back is actually one straight line and 10 if no man collapses exhausted.







Matron's favourite dance in days gone by; he/she enjoyed watching others exhaust themselves. The tune is thought to be Elizabethan, but you'll have to ask our musicians about that, though they do get confused trying to remember that long ago. You'd think as a corner dance that there would be plenty of rests for those waiting their turn, but somehow the mental challenges deny the opportunity for respite. Features of the dance include the "Skeggie", a travelling caper similar to the illustration (not that any of Kennet resemble the rotund character), and the rousing climax, where we call out in celebration.

There's also a song to start:

Isn't it the Queen's delight To step abroad and take the air. Stepping out and treading lightly On the way to Towersey fair.

Hustling bustling, hurrying scurrying, Nobody caring and nobody worrying, Early, early in the morning, On the road to Towersey Fair.

U-Spy Points: 10 for each Skeggie dancer who goes behind you (assuming you were watching). Score 10 points for each translatable shout in the final corner.



The Twenty Ninth of May*





Another dance of our own devising created by Clive Blunt our Forman back in 1994. Oak Apple Day or Royal Oak Day was a holiday celebrated in England on 29th May to commemorate the restoration of the English monarchy. "*Parliament had ordered the 29 of May, the King's birthday, to be for ever kept as a day of thanksgiving for our redemption from tyranny and the King's return to his Government, he entering London that day.*" Whatever happened to that? Charles reputedly took refuge in an oak after the Battle of Worcester. Anyone who failed to wear a sprig of oak risked being pelted with bird's eggs, thrashed with nettles or having their bum pinched – in many parts of the country it was known as Pinch Bum Day! (Charles II hid from the Roundheads in an oak tree and was kept awake by his guard pinching his bottom.) The Royal Oak also features prominently on our badge and Berkshire's coat of arms.

It's also a bloody good tune, part of which you may recognise as a version of "All Things Bright & Beautiful" - and this tradition is deperately short of decent stick dances. The dance is unique in having circular choruses. After a clever bit of stick clashing the dancers cross the set passing right shoulders with their opposites and dance clockwise half-way around before repeating the clashing. Crossing left shoulders and dancing "widdershins" returns them to their place. That's the theory.

U-Spy Points: 5 points if you think the dancers are All Things Bright & Beautiful

The Willow Tree

Handkerchief Set Dance 🐓



Kenworthy Schofield with Pipe & Tabor

This dance is a something of a reconstruction from the wonderfully named collector and musician Dr R Kenworthy Schofield who got the tune from Joe Powell, the pipe and tabor player of the Bucknell side of the late 19th century. Kenworthy went on to be totally fascinated by these instruments (also known as whittle and dub) and invented his own versions, still much used today. Powell was reported as saying that '*His side was about as good as any and as a Rule about as sober and altho they returned Home Very Tired they were up with the lark in the morning Ready for another Day's Dancing. They Started Clean and Bright Each Day as there sweethearts were very Particular they should appear to advantage. Sometimes they returned home very wet Both inside and out.' I'm not sure why he spoke with*

wrong capitals. Apart from the tune the dance figures are the same as The Blue Eyed Stranger – but what a difference a tune makes! Blue Eyed is in simple 4/4 time whilst The Willow Tree is 6/8 - more often associated with double-jigs - and even more exhausting.

It's possible we might sing: Once they said my cheeks were red But now they're scarlet pale, For I like a silly girl Believed his flattering tale. He said he's never deceive me, And I like a silly believed he, For the moon and the stars so brightly shone Over the willow tree.

... but unlikely.

U-Spy Points: 5 if the dancers are still snapping their hankies by the end. 10 if any of the audience danced an Irish Jig and an extra 30 if it was you



The Woodman*





This was the first dance invented by Andy Parker who was our Foreman from 1982 – 1987 before he moved back to Bradford. He also created Jack of Newbury, which rather cancelled out this additional stick dance! The distinctive figure in this is the wood chopping action of the initial stick clashing, one partner holding their stick level above their head whilst the dancer opposite tries to chop right through it. The roles are then reversed so, should they have survived, the chopped becomes the chopper. The other set figures are standard for the tradition.

U-Spy Points: 10 for each broken stick, 50 for each broken head. 10 if rude jokes about choppers are resisted.

Andy Parker



Ducklington

We've been dancing Ducklington since 1996, and have in 2022 doubled the numbers of dances in our repertoire – to 2! The late Roy Dommett, an Honorary Member of Kennet and one of the giants in the development of Morris dancing reconstructed this "lost" tradition's dances from manuscripts written by Cecil J Sharp and Clive Carey in the early 1900s. There were also some local informants, one of which may have "corrupted" the telling as he danced with nearby Bampton. Current thinking, and certainly the style adopted by the present Ducklington side, is more energetic and influenced by Field Town and Ascott-Under-Wychwood with whom they were known to have shared a musician. Kennet has adopted our own style, as usual.

Nutting Girl





This dance is unmistakable – a one man jig, danced by multiples of 3 in columns, each column facing a central spot, sometimes occupied by a Fool. Those in the centre will dance their part and then retire to the back of their column as the others move forward to take their turn. At the time of writing 15 is the maximum numbers of dancers to have performed it together.

U-Spy Points: 1 for each dancer and 10 for the Fool surviving the dance. 20 for each foot stamped on by another man. 50 if more than 15 dancers participate. (The Fool does not count unless he's actually dancing).

Green Garters

Handkerchief Set Dance



If a girl marries before her elder sisters, they should wear green garters at the wedding. This is believed to date from a medieval English custom that part of the costume of an elder unmarried sister at the marriage of a younger sister was green stockings. It used to be the bride who would throw the garter to the eligible men. It is said that sometimes the men at the wedding would become drunk and impatiently try to forcefully remove the garter from anyone wearing one. We don't do that, and anyway it could have been worse – another tradition was that the older sister should dance in a pig's trough. Even Kennet wouldn't consider that (or would they?).

The dance? It is known as a Hey and Rounds dance. The rounds go halfway then they dancers will galley out, with a double hop, executing a 180° turn with their right thigh at right angles, parallel to the ground, whilst the foot describes two inward circular movements, and then they continue the dance "widdershins". I live in the hope that the dancers will read this before attempting to perform it – it's a while since it was danced out!

U-Spy Points: 5 points for each perfectly executed galley (don't worry about doing too many sums). You may keep any green garters left lying around



Field Town

A problem for pedantic U-Spyers as Field Town doesn't exist and the area is named Leafield on all maps and the Domesday Book. But the locals called it Field Town and so that was the name given to the tradition by Cecil J Sharp. And as it was vernacular it was variously spelt Fieldtown, FieldTown and Field Town. The dances are about as varied too and some probably came from the nearby so-called Wychwood villages such Minster Lovell and Finstock. Lionel Bacon, in A Handbook of Morris Dances, describes it as "More graceful but less powerful than most ... more complex than in other traditions, and call for a high degree of individual control and of teamwork. In some ways the best tradition." No problem then. It has some good tunes too.

Look out for the high throws upwards of the handkerchiefs, the dancers drawing them gently down to look like candle flames, and the caper which starts with "Squash beetles". Another unique feature of Field Town is the Side-step Hey. Each arm is held high on alternate steps, alternately, starting with the outside arm and, as it's a side step, the back foot crosses behind the other each step. Don't worry - we just make it seem difficult! But in particular look and listen for "the anacrusis" – the surge at the beginning of each phrase of the dance, no doubt beautifully emphasised by our wonderful musicians.

Balance the Straw

Stick Set Dance



A simple name but probably one of the most politically incorrect titles in our repertoire:

"It is easier to please a woman than to balance a straw ..."

It's a very old fiddle tune collected as early as 1770, but if there's another reason for the name it's long lost. It's also known as Balancey Straw, which doesn't help at all.

The main feature of the dance is the older men holding their backs as they bend to begin the sticking chorus.

U-Spy Points: 1 point per groan. 5 points per back creak. 10 points if you hear a postman's "rat tat a tat tat, tat tat" from a more foolish dancer.

Banks of the Dee

Handkerchief Set Dance



The river in question is the Royal Dee, so named as it flows past the Queen's Balmoral Estate and the subject of a sentimental song popular in the 18th century. The music is in fact adapted from the old Irish air Langolee, so a Scottish song to an Irish tune, about a British soldier in the American civil war danced in the Cotswolds of England. Hmm. The dance itself is easy to identify as the chorus is danced in columns, each couple taking it in turns to perform the distinctive figure, which is different each chorus. The first time we dance facing up to the Musicians before repeating the chorus facing down in the opposite direction – so everybody gets a Dee see.

U-Spy Points: 1 point for each couple dancing the chorus on the same foot. 5 points if all hankies are still "candle

flaming" at the end







Field Town is the only tradition we dance where the "even" side of the set, i.e. those on the right hand side facing the musicians, strike first when sticking. It is important we remember that as in this dance as the first strike is aimed at your partner's head – from behind. Fortunately there are many opportunities to get it right during the dance or, unfortunately, to get it wrong.

Who Bobby & Joan were is a mystery, but similar versions of the tune go by the name Bobbing Joe and Bobbin-a-Joe which could be found in Playford's first edition of his The English Dancing Master of 1651. Quite old, it was considered part of the traditional repertoire even then and by 1666 was already corrupted to Bobbing Joan. Perhaps the Great Fire of London spoiled the manuscript.

U-Spy Points: 10 points if any odds and evens just end up staring at each other instead of clashing. 50 points if they hit each other over the head

Country Gardens

Stick Set Dance



Percy Grainger

We said this tradition has good tunes – so you'll recognise "In an English Country Garden" straight away – if you're old enough! Feel free to sing along. Collected by Kenworthy Schofield it was given by Cecil Sharp to Percy Grainger in 1908 who made it famous as one of his many orchestral English Folk Song arrangements. He ended up collecting over 300 songs, many never written down before, and made over 200 cylinder recordings of our folk singers. Not a bad legacy for an Aussie who ended up hating the tune (I won't go into his rather unpleasant dark side). It's a good job it has a fine tune as in many respects it is identical to Bobby and Joan, except partners do not turn their backs on each other, but boldly defend themselves with a stick held over the head, hopefully.

U-Spy Points: As Bobby and Joan, 10 points if any odds and evens just end up staring at each other instead of clashing. 50 points if they hit each other over the head. 10 points for each onlooker singing along and 100 points if the musicians forget the tune.

Dearest Dickie

Handkerchief Set Dance 🚰

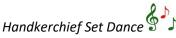


The dance takes over twice as long as typical dance because of the combination of "Long Field Town" (see also Old Molly Oxford) with a corner dance, slow music and a longish chorus. Very suitable if the tune name refers to Richard The Lionheart who spent most of his time on long Crusades, or long periods in captivity. Legend and folk song suggest Dickie and his armed men, rescued Robin Hood from the Sheriff of Nottingham. Unlikely as he probably only spent 6 months of his reign in England!

Whilst you have been reading this, the two on opposite corners may have completed their chorus with one long, very slow galley turn of 360°, or not. You may be able to complete the rest of this booklet during the remainder of the dance. On the other hand, you may enjoy watching the dancers demonstrate their prowess – or observing their, and your fellow audience members', suffering.

U-Spy Points: 50 if you resisted getting the drinks in during the performance. 100 points if you did and they still hadn't finished.





The tune was written by James Hook an English composer and was published about 1790. The words, which



happily for you we don't sing, were written in honour of Miss Janson, of Richmond Hill, Leybourne, Yorkshire, by her fiancé Leonard McNally. He combined poetry with being an Irish political informer; he joined the United Irishmen and with his barrister wig on very unsuccessfully defended several of them in court. After his death it was discovered that McNally had been in the pay of the British government. Not a lot of people know that. The dance itself is a recent (1970) creation by The World Famous Hammersmith Morris Men (their description, not mine), but for a different tradition. They were more likely to have been celebrating the pub of the same name just up the Thames. Being a "Smiff's" dance is has a dramatic conclusion, but I'm not going to spoil the surprise! Apart from the very recognisable tune, the dance is unique in its chorus progression with each couple ending each phase in a new position, having cast up the set, as the bottom couple dances up with leading the new figure. You'll see what I mean, I hope.

U-Spy Points: 5 points if you agree with the chorus description, 20 points if you can come up with a better one,

Old Molly Oxford (Step Back)

Handkerchief Set Dance 🚰



So is Molly old or not (look at the picture carefully)? The tune's called Old Molly but the dance was usually called Molly Oxford in most traditions. To be different the Field Town version is usually known as Step Back, for reasons that hopefully will become obvious when you see the dance – it's not stepping back in time (though we do try to dance it in time!). Sing along if you wish:

Old Molly Oxford slept on a featherbed, The cat jumped up and fell asleep on her head, Smothered her until she was dead. Poor old Molly Oxford.

U-Spy Points: 5 points for each man you see looking round to see where he's going,

Skirmish*

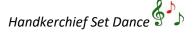




Many traditions feature a Skirmish or fighting dance, but not Field Town, until this was introduced by Foreman Clive Blunt a few years ago. Although the dance may appear as chaotic as this illustration, the stick clashing chorus should be rotating the set across the diagonal with each strike, with clearly defined lines. Or it may look like a battlefield.

U-Spy Points: 5 per casualty, 1 point for each degree off the 45° rotation.







To see the dancers three on three Is a most illustrious sight, And if anyone saw a better one Then you'll very know well he lied. And if you'll come along with us You're numbered as a friend And the faded flower of England Will rise and bloom again. A beautiful dance enhanced by the masterly inclusion of a unique circular hey, with half the dancers dancing clockwise, passing alternate shoulders with the widdershinners. Each figure is then danced as a round. Identifying the dance is made even easier as we introduce the dance with our own version of The Rose – you won't find the lyrics in any book – well not in the order we sing them, which may be different to Hartley Morris Men's version, from whom it was pinched. We often start a dance spot with this as our singing tends to wake up the audience.

U-Spy Points: 5 points if you were out of the Pub in time to see the dance. 10 points if you didn't get dizzy

Shepherd's Hey

Handkerchief Set Dance



An elegant dance also known as "Signposts" or "The Kennet Handkerchief Drying Dance" as each phrase is punctuated with a feet-together and arms outstretched jump. Our arms will, of course, form a straight line at shoulder level giving the appearance of an old fashioned fingerpost or, more likely, a scarecrow.

U-Spy Points: 10 points if you get to see this dance as it was not supposed to be in our repertoire and has not been practiced

Valentine

Handkerchief Corner Dance



A careful examination of this picture will reveal someone other than a Morris Man in the set. The dance is often performed without the inclusion of a sacrificial maiden (as they tend to get bored – it's a long dance as each corner takes turns to show their prowess). But if there's an embarrassed would be Valentine in the middle, it can only be this dance. Even without her the dance is the only one of this tradition where each opposite corner takes centre stage so easy to spot and not many points up for grabs (unlike the victim).

U-Spy Points: 1 for each yawn from the Valentine. 50 if the Fool didn't get a smile.

Hinton in the Hedges

A Northamptonshire village of some 200 souls, a very decent pub (The Crewe Arms) and Rookery Farm which makes Pillow-wad animal bedding: my guinea pigs used to love it. By the way, according to Graham Thomas, a



well travelled member of Kennet, guinea pig tastes very much like squirrel. I thought I ought to share that. As you might have guessed by now, not a lot is known about the Hinton tradition; in fact it was first collected as Brackley. It is probable one of the old sources, John Stutsbury, a Brackley man who moved to Hinton, taught a new side there. A distinctive feature of the tradition is the "Show Out", a big cross-over movement with the instruction to dancers to "go as far as possible". You have been warned. The Hey is a bit unusual too.

Getting Upstairs

Hand-clapping Set Dance



Yes, a picture of Kennet "going as far as possible" – it's difficult to tell there's a dance going on at all (we'd started on the path outside Laycock Abbey). This was the first dance we learned from the tradition because it's just so much fun, and there aren't too many hand-clapping dances, and we get to sing. We first included it in our repertoire in 1995 and it's been a favourite ever since, despite being a tad complex. The hand movements, for example, are forward and back for two of the figures and "twists" or waves for others, but generally we just make it look difficult.

U-Spy Points: 5 for a hand clapping fresh air, 10 if all six dancers are doing the same arm movements and 20, and our apologies, if you get knocked over in the Show Out.

Lads A Bunchum

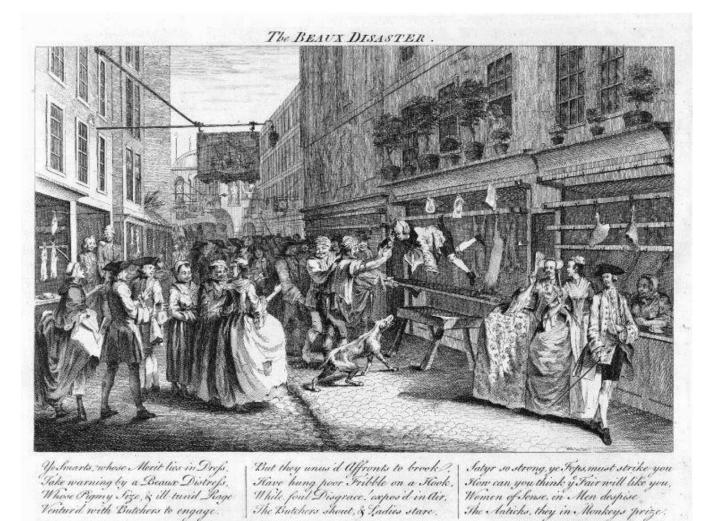
Handkerchief Corner Dance 🖇



A newish corner dance so anything could happen. Each corner challenges in turn progressing from gentle foot tapping, taking the form of shin kicking for some, to hat doffing and several other inventive methods of greeting.

U-Spy Points: 5 if you're lucky enough to hear it called, 10 if enough of us get up to perform it and 20 should it ever be successfully finished.





Not that our dance could ever be a disaster, apart from the fact that after "shooting" your opposite in the chorus – with a morris stick – everyone changes places in a "hey" and you have to remember who to shoot next. The dance also features stick twirling, which could be a disaster for audience members if one goes flying. You have our permission to hang any offender from the nearest butcher's hook.

U-Spy Points: 5 for each stick dropped, 20 for the shooting of an unarmed man – who's forgotten it's his turn,

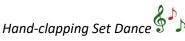
Ilmington

Ilmington is in what is now known as Shakespeare Country, or Warwickshire, some 10 miles south of Stratford on Avon. A bit like the tradition, which has seen several revivals, Kennet had performed these dances from 1988 - 1999 (when it made way for the reintroduction of Field Town). We brought them back for the 2012 season, after a hard winter's practice, and officially "dropped" it a couple of seasons later when our brains gave up. We still may be tempted to give it a go, but unlikely!

It is a fairly relaxed tradition with smooth flowing but energetic movements punctuated by "feet together jumps". The Hey is also unusual with dancers performing an extra shoulder to shoulder turn, or knot, when at each end of the set. But our best description is "knackering".

and a knee slapping, clapping and "clap-unders".

Black Joke





dance.

Cuckoo's Nest





This is another familiar folk-favourite tune, and another bawdy song – which might get sung late at night as, by Black Joke standards, it's quite subtle. The sticks are held out horizontally for the 'even' to be struck to start the chorus, stamping in time (if we're on grass you might not notice that) before sticking and step-hopping. This is more bit like patting your head and rubbing your tummy whilst scratching your nose.

The Ilmington team had several dances where they would use either hands or sticks: quite useful if you've forgotten the sticks or handkerchiefs. Black Joke was a very popular tune with very bawdy lyrics that even we would be too embarrassed to sing in public. The dance can be identified by the dancers capering on the turns

U-Spy Points: 5 for the sound of one-hand clapping. 50 points if it started as a stick

U-Spy Points: 5 if the sticks are still 23" when we've finished the dance. A less than generous 10 if they swop hands by mistake

Maid of the Mill

Handkerchief Set Dance 🜮



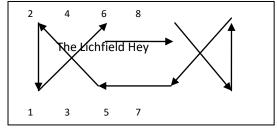
Far too easy to espy as it's the only dance where partners are linked by two handkerchiefs knotted together throughout the dance. So no points for that – you can just stand and enjoy the dance's complexity, marvelling at the Hey where, after much gyrating by each dancer, the pairs "dip and dive" up and down the set. If we're feeling really showy it may be danced using Kennetshire flags in place of handkerchiefs.

U-Spy Points: 5 for each dip that should have been a dive. 10 points if the grand finalé isn't grand.



Lichfield

We learnt Lichfield with help from Jack Brown of Stafford Morris Men who are one of the custodians of this unusual and sometimes controversial tradition (though our foreman refused to change the way we use sticks). The dances were "recovered" from three unidentifiable lady collectors of the late 19th century (that's collectors who were ladies, not collectors of ladies), and the memory of a Tom Skelton, who danced between the wars. The manuscripts were donated anonymously to Jack and others over a period of time, and are said to be from the same man who contributed some tunes on a flute over the phone! The dances were verified by a long term resident of the local mental hospital. Whatever the origins, the dances are a bit Cotswoldish and instantly recognisable as they all feature eight dancers. The main distinctive figure of the tradition is The Lichfield Hey, or The Kennet knit one, purl one routine as it's been called.



See if you can work it out – they may need your help!

The Bare Footed Quaker

Handkerchief Corner Dance



A dance we have reintroduced after a long interregnum. The older members can well remember why we stopped dancing it – it's fast, complicated and quite like no other. It's a variation on the Black Joker dances in other traditions and refers to George Fox, founder of the Quaker movement who, in 1651, upon his release from Derby Gaol was "commanded by the Lord of a sudden to untie my shoes and put them off ... so I went down the streets crying with a loud voice 'woe unto the bloody City of Lichfield.'" Our very thoughts. An eight man dance, it is danced in two "minor" sets of four, the unique distinctive figure being back to backs for each corner. The rest is more complicated, and there certainly is not enough room here to describe it (see Milley's Bequest below if you really need to know).

U-Spy Points: 5 points for each dancer dragged kicking and screaming into the set. That should be plenty

Castlering

Handkerchief Corner Dance



The Castle Ring Iron Age Fort, Cannock, Staffordshire – a sort of circle – a bit like our version of the dance.

Ok, so it's only a sort of corner dance as you can't have corners in a circle, but the chorus is danced facing diagonal partners, so that's good enough. The second chorus is the one you must get your cameras out for to catch eight dancers simultaneously leaping skywards in a Split-jump. There's plenty of chance to get the framing right as the chorus is danced first by those on the ends, then the middle four, before all eight perform it in a ring. There's not another dance like it so you'll know it when it comes. And the good news is that it's often our last dance.

U-Spy Points: 5 if any man forgets his "magic foot" (someone will explain it

to you - there's not enough room in this book!) 10 if you spy the Ring.







Milley's Hospital is in Beacon Street, Lichfield. Over the door a plaque reads 'This hospital for fifteen women was founded by Thomas Milley, Canon Residentiary of the Cath. Church of Lichfield, 1504'. Quite why it gave its name to this dance is a mystery – perhaps to impress the inmates? The dance is recognisable as each man carries two sticks with which he "dibs" the ground in turn before clashing with his opposite. That's the easy bit, the rest is "challenging" with unique distinctive figures such as "Doubling up" and "Rounds in fours" guaranteed to test our skills and memories.

U-Spy Points: 5 points if you spot a smile through the pained expressions of concentration (the end of the dance doesn't count – they're smiles of relief).

Nuts in May





Although described as a stick set dance, the sticks are quickly abandoned in favour of hands and feet, and the set is danced on the side against opposites, so it's also a sort of corner dance, without the diagonals. It'll make sense if you see it, and why it's aptly called challenging. The tune gives its name to the dance, which people, of a certain age, will recognise:

Here we go gathering nuts in May, Nuts in May, nuts in May, Here we go gathering nuts in May, On a cold and frosty morning.

As nuts are not gathered in England in May, it is thought that the lyrics could be a corruption of "knots of may", referring to the blossom of the common hawthorn. Either that or it refers to the nuts who dance in May, especially at dawn on May 1st.

U-Spy Points: 5 points if every dancer resists pretending to drive a motor-bike during the introductory walk round. 3 points for a fall, submission or a knockout.

Ring O' Bells

Stick Set Dance



Tom Skelton and other sources of the recovered tradition lived in Burntwood just outside Lichfield, home to the Ring O'Bells pub. Cynics might suggest that this is where the dances originated, perhaps after a session or two. Another two stick per man dance, the clashing chorus is also said to represent ringing bells – striking them, not disappearing up into the air attached to a bell rope. This is where the phrase "going like the clappers" originates. To complete the theme, the chorus is completed with the dancers forming a ring, rather than the perfect straight lines you normally expect of Kennet. You may see a straight line of eight at the end of the dance, but probably not as this Heading-out figure usually leads to total confusion.

U-Spy Points: 5 points if you spy bell ringing, another 5 for spying a ring and 1 for each dropped stick (you'll see)



The Sherriff's Ride





The Rain dance version - seen far too often

A Corporation Charter granted or confirmed by Charles II provided that 'the bailiffs and common councilmen shall annually on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin (September 8th) perambulate the boundaries of the city and county of Lichfield and the precincts thereof'. This observance of the "Sheriff's Ride" has been maintained unbroken since the reign of Queen Mary.

We also dance it in the rain of Kennetshire, replacing handkerchiefs with our rather wonderful umbrellas. In the dry version, the chorus again demonstrates the use of regimented lines and the high shows of hankies in unison.

The tune also lends itself to yet another politically incorrect song: When apples are red and nuts are brown, Petticoats up and trousers down. She'll lay down for half a crown, 'long with the raggle-taggle gypsies oh.

U-Spy Points: 5 if we have to use umbrellas and an extra 10 for each inside-out brolly. 5 points if you spy unison.

Vandalls of Hammerwich

Stick Set Dance



'a certain heath was burnt by the Vills of Hammerwich, to the injury of the King's game' Staffordshire Pleas of the Forest, 14th January, 1262. Now that's vandalising. The only injury we're likely to cause is too ourselves in this most vigorous stick clashing dance, although the odd broken-off stick tip has hurtled in the direction of the crowd. I can speak from experience having needed 3 stitches in a self-inflicted split eye-brow dancing this in my very early days: another good reason for being The Fool

The initial walk sound may include a song: *Will she, won't she Will she, won't she Come to the Bower? Will she, won't she Will she, won't she Come to the Bower?*



U-Spy Points: 10 for each broken stick, 50 for a broken finger or split eye-brow.



Oddington

This is another tradition that owes a lot to Roy Dommett's scholarship, or "reinvention" as he preferred to call it. The dance style is described as "free and relaxed" with smooth movements; perfect for dancing after a beer or two. They were collected between the World Wars from a local man Charles "Minnie" or "Tich" Taylor (he wasn't very tall). He was also deaf, half blind and very old. His dances seem to suit Kennet well. From an audience viewpoint, the most unusual feature of the tradition is a form of salute when carrying out the "galley and hook leg" where the first the right arm is raised with a twisting wave, and then the left arm with a raised back and forth wave, whilst each leg does something similar. And that's just to start the dance -there's another 4 pages describing the basics in our notes! The one that catches us out is the lack of stick clashing when the music is really telling you to wallop your opposite. No points for mistakes on this I'm afraid – they're all too common.

Constant Billy





No the picture isn't Constant Billy – no-one seems to know who he was, even though he's been appearing as a dance tune since 1657 (also known as Lofty Mountains, but as Kennet only know one Lofty, and his wife, we'll stick with Billy). No, the dashing cove in the photo is Clive Carey, a British baritone, singing teacher, composer, opera producer and folk song collector, when he wasn't interviewing Morris Dancers. He joined the heavenly choir in 1968 aged 85. The chorus of stick clashing, whilst we stamp then caper, is quite distinctive as are the sticks swinging whilst moving - like demented wind screen wipers; handy when it's raining.

Clive Carey 1928

U-Spy Points: 5 points for each man wobbling after the final salute, waiting for you to applaud.

Highland Mary

Handkerchief Set Dance 🖤



This is a sidestep dance, but the Oddington side-step is very original and unusually asymmetric (if you don't understand that, you will when you've seen it). The chorus is what's known as a Foot-up – we have to be careful announcing that – finishing with the Salute sequence, as in the photograph. The tune itself is often associated with the (last?) mistress of Robbie Burns who wrote a beautiful song for her but, although a lovely air, it is not the same. Sorry, our tune's English.

U-Spy Points: Go on, you can have another 5 for a wobbly man and 20 if anyone salutes with the wrong hand.

Young Collins





The main difference between this dance and Constant Billy is the tune – it's a bit slower and more deliberate and the ground is tapped first in the chorus. Otherwise loads more side stepping and Foot-ups. There's an old Hampshire song called Young Collins but the music is probably an even older dance tune. As so often, it was only first recorded at the turn of the twentieth century even though it is found in several of the known Morris traditions. The song is a variant of the poisoned kiss gained from a water nymph by, in this case, Young Collins. He rather foolishly takes another lover and becomes a ghostly corpse. Some say many of our men are a fair reconstruction of his latter form, especially after a Morris tour or weekend of dance.

U-Spy Points: 5 points if anyone is scared by a ghost. 20 points for any kisses offered – we'll risk the poisoning

Sherborne



Roy Dommett taught Kennet the tradition in a series of workshops from the late 1970's and we were good



1933 - 2015

enough, in the Master's opinion, to perform "his tradition" as a show side for the week at The 1981 Sidmouth International Festival. He's a lot to answer for as we've been returning nearly every year since – but probably not as a show side again – that was too much like hard work, even when we were young!

The Morris dancers at Sherborne were renowned for their skill in performance. A local fiddle player William Hathaway, described Sherborne as 'a desperate Morris place,' while the collector Cecil James Sharp claimed to have 'repeatedly heard other Morris men speak in similar terms ... I gather that the Sherborne men must at one time have held a leading position among the Morris dancers in that part of the country.' (Cecil J Sharp, The Morris

Book. Part IV). We've a lot to live up to. The tradition is unique in the stepping with the hop coming on beat two of the music giving the dancers an accentuated rise and fall, which is extended by up and down movements in so called "shuffles". The dances have a smooth elegance about them (not necessarily the dancers).

Cuckoo's Nest

Handkerchief Set Dance



The chorus of this set dance is performed in columns, with each pair of partners dancing in turn before galleying about to face the opposite direction (or galleries as the Sherborners called them). One way or another you'll get to see the back of us. And don't worry if the last pairs dance something different – they're supposed to.

U-Spy Points: 10 points if all the dancers remember to face the right way for the chorus every time, and 10 points if the partners all remember when it's their turn

How d'ye do?

Handkerchief Corner Dance 🐓



Bit of a give-away identifying this as on the first chorus as each corner in turn sings "How do you do?" If you were still in the bar when the dance started, the final chorus features the corners performing Upright-capers or Splitters where the men do really get to show off their prowess, and much else (as in the photo). Chris Tunnicliffe has been known to come down with snow on this hat, when it hasn't been knocked of by overhead power lines or telephone wires.

U-Spy Points: 5 if the men find a forelock to tug whilst singing "*How do you do*?" 10 if you understand the Fool's gag about the oldest Morris joke in the world. 50 if there's snow on hats after the dance (under doesn't count).

The Monk's March

Handkerchief Corner Dance



George Monk (sometimes spelt Monck), afterwards Duke of Albemarle, was born in 1608. He died 1679. The fine tune is found, as "Lord Monk's March" in print in 1665. At a later date, 1719, it is printed as "Monk's March with the Wanders". He fought for Charles I during the Parliamentary wars. He also fought for Parliament in Ireland, and then helped Charles II back to the throne. He knew how to pick a winner. The dance is said to commemorate one of his reluctant battles – a very slow march from Scotland to arrive after all fighting had finished en route to London. The dance stepping is a sort of "heel-and-toe" – i.e. one step forward, one step back – as perhaps was his march.

We often dance this indoors or in the most confined spaces we can find – this has included a playground slide, Concorde, a Cross Channel Ferry and passenger trains and memorably, a phone box (there are 6 men in there!).





U-Spy Points: 5 points for each time a head hits a pub ceiling beam. 100 points if 6 of us are still slim enough to fit in a phone box

The Orange in Bloom

Handkerchief Corner Dance 🚰

Sherbone Waltz regime
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A dance to challenge our musicians. The rather beautiful tune has to change tempo for the different chorus figures and has to be adjusted to suit each corner pair's movements – which can be quite varied. There is some suggestion that the name of the tune was corrupted to "Orange and Blue", the colours of the Sherborne side. We traditionally know it as our rain inducing dance and it is in much demand in times of drought, like when we are very thirsty and want to get in the pub. The corners are similar to How d'ye do, but different enough to confuse the dancers – and the musicians. This is the short version of the dance. In the full version the corners repeat

each corner movement. I'm sure you will find ours quite long enough - the dancers certainly will. U-Spy Points: 5 if the corners remember to stay back in the challenges (unlike How d'ye do where they will have advanced nose to nose - possibly). Deduct 10 points if you really think the dance wasn't long enough

Upton upon Severn

For a tradition with only two collected dances, The Stick Dance and The Handkerchief Dance, there has been much written and argued about. The stick dance version now popularly displayed was in fact invented by Chingford Morris in the early 1960s from a half remembered version of a performance of the Upton dance. What is factual is that it is a Welsh Marches Border tradition rather than Cotswold, even though it is more often Page | 28



danced by Cotswold teams. Inevitably, we have stamped our own style on it and it is even less recognisable (especially our Upton-Under-Severn version, performed in snorkels and flippers at our 50th birthday party).

Stick dance





In what is said to be typical Border fashion, the dance is accompanied by much whooping and shouting when performing the vigorous stick clashes which precede each figure. The figures were created as various versions of a Hey –on the ends, in pairs as a crossover and on the side, all danced almost on the run. The final sung chorus is unique to Kennet (he wrote rather smugly). We often use this dance to conclude a performance, so please do not block the way to the bar (it is safe to assume there is one) unless you are ordering us beer.

U-Spy Points: 5 for a broken stick (it's where we get our short sticks from) and 10 for the blood of a Morris Man

Processionals

Many Cotswold traditions include processional dances. In days of old teams would process between local villages, processing (and collecting) as they went. These may have been organised May Day processions, or Whitsuntide parades, but were often Morris Tours, organised as money-earners by individual sides. All the dances collected were handkerchief dances. Carrying and clashing sticks was probably too exhausting – especially as some of the tours lasted several days!

Saturday Night (Bucknell)





This is usually performed as a set dance but Kennet have adapted it as a processional. Sidesteps are danced in pairs with much vigorous capering and charging forwards, before taking a breather whilst others take up the dance. If someone has remembered it, it includes the passing on of our superb Kennet Banner as each pair concludes their element of the dance's sequence – it could look very professional. It certainly has been enjoyed by audiences as far afield as Cyprus, France, Switzerland, Sidmouth and ... err Wokingham.

U-Spy Points: A rare dance so 10 points for seeing it and recognising it

Sherborne Processional

Handkerchief ⁹



The Sherborne processional features much tugging of forelocks, stepping and capering in line. That's about it. They probably kept it simple as it was a long way from Sherborne to anywhere. We don't dance it very often so we don't even have a photograph. U-Spy Points: An even rarer dance so 20 points for seeing it. 10 points if all the men tug their forelocks to the same side, and 50 bonus points for a photo of a performance

Wheatley







If you've had one of our programmes or visited our web site, you'll recognise this processional. It has its very own tune which was whistled by one of the old dancers, Albert Gomme, to Cecil Sharp in 1921. His father had been the side's Squire and Albert himself danced between 1854 and 1874. The Wheatley lads were claimed to be "the best our part of the county". They would dance for a whole week at Whitsuntide and make week long annual tours on foot as far as London. That's a lot of processing. The tour highlight appears to be regular fights with the Headington dancers. The Wheatley side was asked to give a performance in London but the poor (literally) young men couldn't afford to buy suitable clothes. The team died out before the end of the 19th century. By the time you've read all that the dance will probably be over. It is another "follow my leader" dance in two parts, stepping with swinging arms followed by "up two three" half capers. Despite the evidence of the above photo, this is all carried out simultaneously, throughout the file. This processional makes Sherborne seem very complex.

U-Spy Points: 5 points if we reproduce the Mexican wave in the photo (now entitled 'Kennet Evolution')

Winster – The Morris March





This is an oddity from Derbyshire – a sort of cross between Cotswold and North West traditions danced in flowery hats (the left hand "Ladies' Side"), without bells and with hankies attached to cuff-links. The dance would be lead by the King accompanied by the Queen, and preceded by the Witch and the Fool who would clear the way with good natured foolery. The dancers would occasionally sing:

This is it, and that is it, And this is Morris Dancing. The piper fell and broke his neck And said it was a chancer*.

*An accident

There was also a hobby horse – with a real horse's head on a pole, stuffed with straw with wine bottle bottoms for eyes – but its own teeth. Whenever possible, the horse would have been well known in the area and the audience would address it by name and stroke it.

You may be pleased to learn we do none of the above, apart from the good natured foolery. The dance itself is danced in two files with normal Cotswold stepping. The left hand column crosses in line in front of the rights on the change of tune whilst flicking up their handkerchiefs, and vice versa on return (the "odds", The Ladies, do like their vice versa) before stepping another 8 bars. For the eagle-eyed-spyers, the stepping finishes each time with a Feet-together-jump with the instruction "... very gentle with the toes not leaving the ground". Some of Kennet have introduced this element into many of their dances, whatever the tradition. U-Spy Points: 5 if you spot a Feet-together-jump off the ground. 10 if you spot any lines on the cross-over

I hope you have enjoyed our light-hearted look at this finest of English traditions and have learnt a little more about Cotswold Morris and The Kennet Morris Men's dances. Any similarity to I-SPY books is completely coincidental. Besides I think <u>you</u> ought to do the spying, not I. If you want to learn even more, visit our Website <u>www.kennetmorrismen.co.uk</u> where there is a mass of information about our dances, our full programme and maps of the venue and the complete <u>dance instructional notes</u> for the current season's repertoire.

You will also find another book in this (growing) series, U-Spy Kennet Morris Men, an A-Z of Kennet & Morris terminology, and a companion volume, The Kennet Morris Men – A Foolish History". Have fun.

Yours foolishly Peter de Courcy April 2024

2024 Season Core Dances

Adderbury

Beaux of London City Black Joke Cuckoo's Nest Happy Man Shepherds' Hey Sweet Jenny Jones

Bampton

Apple Tree Wassail Banbury Bill Blue Eyed Stranger Bobbing Around Bonny Green Garters Highland Mary Just as the Tide was Flowing Rose Tree Step and Fetch Her The Maid of the Mill The Quaker The Old Woman Tossed Up

Kennet Dances – Bucknell Style

The Allen Key Black Joke or Old Black Joe Johnny's So Long Princess Royal Room for the Cuckolds The Twenty Ninth of May The Woodman

FieldTown

Balance The Straw Dearest Dickie The Rose Shepherds' Hey (Signposts) Valentine

