

Knights of King Ina

Beginner's Fieldtown Jigs at Sarum Workshop 23rd Feb 2014

GENERAL NOTES and INTRODUCTION to FIELDTOWN

Background

The dances of Fieldtown, along with Sherborne, was considered the “ballet of the Cotswolds” meaning that C# felt that they represented the highest pinnacle in the development of the Morris. This style is widely danced and interpreted in the Morris world. The contents here represent a “back to first principles” look at Fieldtown that may depart from some current practice in other teams. References are: Lionel Bacon (LB), Bert Cleaver (BC), Cecil Sharp (C#), JEFDSS, Clive Carey (CC), R. Kenworthy Schofield (RKS) and Roy Dommett (RD)

Style

Graceful with poise (LB) and with control and vigorous (RKS) the dances tend to be taken slowly and emphasize the lift from the ground and not the travel across the ground, 6-7 feet of travel being considered enough in set dances (CC,BC).

There is an accent on the preparatory hop before the surge of the dance on the first beat (LB) of a section, this preparation on the anacrusis with the feint step or hop is a feature of the tradition. The slower pace and emphasis on height leads to bounce with the necessary control.

Right foot lead. Repeated sequences are usually left foot lead with a fudge or feint step to end up ready for a right foot lead in the next figure; however for simplicity they can all be danced with a right foot lead.

Arms are described as “place and slow down” the travel from up to down takes 3 of the 4 beats in a bar, the 4th beat is when the arms are brought smartly back up with a flick of the wrist to make the hankies stand up. Control and vigour – the control is the smooth flow of the hands and the vigour is the height achieved.

Steps

- Basic steps are double (step right, step left, step right, hop right), free foot kicked in front, thigh at no more than 45 deg and avoiding knees up or heels up style, weight on the toes lower leg relaxed, knee slightly bent. The change in supporting foot is in the air, rising off the weight bearing foot before the free foot is placed on the floor. [In the dance notes which follow, this is abbreviated as: (ds)]
- Hop Back Steps, step onto the right foot, placed behind the left, hop on the right. During this hop the left foot is turned heel inward so the heel comes well across in front of the weight bearing right foot. The toe of the twisted foot remains on the ground. (hbs)
- Plain caper – a leap from one foot to another as high as possible; arms down on the 1st caper and up on the second. (PC)
- Side steps can be open or closed; in either case the trailing foot is placed behind the lead foot on beat 2. Long and short sidestep sections are used. A long side step is step, behind, step, behind followed by a double step in feet terms this will be / r l r l / r l r hr /. A short side

step is step, behind, step, hop or / r l r hr /. (Long = / cs cs / css / and the lead foot indicated as l or r; and short = / css / and the lead foot again indicated)

- Feet together jump. (ftj)
- Galley – in this example a galley right is to – BEAT 1 - plant the right foot whilst lifting the left knee high enough to form a right angle at the hip. The lower leg should hang down making a right angle at the knee. The toe is not pointed. BEAT 2 – 2 quick hops on the right leg turning the body as far as the dance requires, the left foot (non weight bearing) is circled twice in quick circles to aid the turn of the body, typically followed by feet together jump where the movement required can be finished. BC says do not turn into the galley meaning the initial plant of the foot should not aid the rotation that is next needed. Other sources and modern practice to not emphasize this. But KOKI have been taught to galley this way in Fieldtown dances. (g)
- Hocklebacks – this is a back stepping movement with greater show than a hop back. Arms are out. Swing the foot in an arc from the hip (get the knees apart) to place the foot where the other one is – the free foot should knock the other one out of the way; hop on the weight bearing foot whilst the arc is made. This is done on the spot. (hkbs)

Arms

- Gather – the preparation for a jump or other high movement. The arms are low, in front of the body, elbows bent
- Show – one or both arms thrown up high e.g lead arm in side steps
- High Up – arms up hands above the head – used in a Jump
- Up – arms out in front at shoulder height, elbows slightly bent – used in double stepping and plain capers. Place and slow, with the flick on the hop of the double step.
- Out – arms out to the sides hands at shoulder height elbows bent. This is the end position for out and it takes about a half bar of music to reach there from the starting position at chest level. The movement is a deliberate push to the side to reach the out position. Used in hop back steps where the hands make a small fig 8 pattern.

Figures

The Figures for all dances are Once to Yourself, Foot Up, Forrie Capers (Beetlecrushers), and Upright Capers (RXBs). In between these Figures comes the Distinctive Figure or Jig which is unique to the dance. The key movements in the Figures are described below but the precise step sequence varies from dance to dance.

Once to yourself (OY)

This is a signal that a dance is beginning, and gets you moving. A preparatory movement in bar 6 to start the dance. In bars 7 and 8 dance 2 hop backs and feet together jump.

Foot Up (FU)

This sets out the tradition and the overall style of the dance so should be dance with great precision. Danced with double steps (two or four), galley or back steps and feet together jump.

The “Slow” Figures

There are two “slow” Figures, danced to a slower rhythm. The emphasis of these sequences is to make the biggest movement on the 3rd beat.

Forrie Capers – Beetlecrushers (FC)

Beat 1 - Make a low hop on the weight bearing foot (left) and tap free foot (right) down in front approx 18”; weight bearing is evenly split; arms out. (rtf; stands for right toe forward)

Beat 2 – feet together, draw back (a kind of scrape); gather hands

Beat 3 – plain caper left; up to down arms – some use waves

Beat 4 – plain caper right; down to up arms – some use waves

Some sources write the final 2 movements as Caper : Step as the beat 3 is more emphasized than the 4th beat.

Upright Capers – Right Cross behind (UC)

Beat 1 – tap the toe of the right foot behind the weight bearing left foot (RXB); arms out

Beat 2 – feet together; gather hands

Beat 3 – jump; arms high up

Beat 4 – step onto the right foot; arms down.

THE JIGS

We will dance one or more jigs, depending how the session goes. The notes below give a short aide-mémoire for each dance, and a more detailed description of the distinctive figure; in each dance, the sequence of the dance is:

OY:FU:DF:FC:DF:UC:DF

Ladies of Pleasure

According to RKS a good dancer would do this in just a foot of ground.

OY – ... / hbs / ftj / at the end of the musical phrase

FU - / ds / ds / hbs / ftj / repeat - right foot start, left foot repeat (but see note under “Style”)

DF - / cssr / cssl / HKBS / HKBS / ds / ds / g / ftj /

FC - / beetle R foot / beetle left foot / 2pc / 2pc / beetle left foot / beetle right foot / 2pc / 2pc /

DF

UC – Rxb / lxb / 2pc / 2pc / lxb / rxb / 2pc / 2pc /

DF - Ends 2PC

Lumps of Plum Pudding

This dance can also be danced to Month of May and (Old) Molly Oxford. It incorporates a long sidestep section – see notes above

OY – ... / hbs / ftj / at the end of the musical phrase

FU - / ds / ds / ds / ds / cssr / cssl / hbs / ftj /

DF - /cs csr / cssr / cs csl /cssl / cssr / cssl / g / ftj /

FC - / beetle R foot / beetle left foot / beetle right foot / beetle left foot /cssr / cssl / hbs / ftj /

DF -

UC – Rxb / lxb / rxb / lxb / cssr / cssl / hbs / ftj /

DF – Ends 2 PC

Princess Royal

OY – ... / hbs / ftj / at the end of the musical phrase

FU - / ds / ds / ds / ds / cssr / cssl / hbs / ftj /

DF - / cs csr / cssr / cs csl / cssl / cssr / cssl / x / x / cssr / cssl / g / ftj /

FC - / beetle R foot / beetle left foot / beetle right foot / beetle left foot / cssr / cssl / hbs / ftj /

DF -

UC – Rxb / lxb / rxb / lxb / cssr / cssl / hbs / ftj /

DF – Ends 2 PC

In the jig (DF) at “x” the following is danced

1st time – heel and toe step - / r toe, left heel, right toe, tap left heel launch from right toe to land on / left toe, right heel, left toe; tap right heel / (this leaves the right foot in the air to place for the coming sidestep). The weight on the toe is under the body and the weight transferred to the heel is in front of the body; it becomes a rocking movement.

2nd time – /clap front; clap under right knee; clap front / clap front; clap under left knee; clap front /.

3rd time – / clap front; clap front; show / lap front; clap front; show / (the show is a high wave of the right hand 1st time and the left 2nd time).

FINAL COMMENTS

KOKI (or the Knights of King Ina) aim to learn jigs and perform them in public; anyone with the same aim can be a member of KOKI. We have learned these jigs, using the oldest available descriptions, as a basis for development and understanding other styles – to date we have learned dances from some 15 styles. We have gone on to consider how jigs can be developed to suit an individual's strengths

and weaknesses; and how new jigs can be created. We have also worked on approaches to the development of jigs for more than one dancer. The jigs above are given for one dancer, however they can be danced for two or even more dancers, they could even be danced in a set of six and six people doing a solo all at the same time.

There are a number of ways of organising the dances for two, here are some suggestions:

Combative jigs – each dancer trying to outdo the other

The most usual format is **turn and turn about** which extends the length of the dance somewhat, it is usual to add a further DF to the end of dances like this where both dancers dance together one final time. This further extends the dance. Danced for yourselves and to a knowledgeable audience this is fine but at a pub outing the audience could be bored by this as could a festival audience who are looking to be entertained. If you choose to dance this way you might consider adding a degree of byplay from the non-dancing person – interact with the crowd, engage in some fooling; the solution that the Sherborne dancers use is that the non performing dancer dances round to the back, still performing but not detracting from the dancer in the spotlight. Remember if you start a dance you are performing until the dance ends – whether you are doing anything or not.

Another alternative, and one favoured by The Outside Capering Crew, is to **alter the format of the dance** in order to shorten it and to make sure each dancer gets their time in the limelight. They usually dance 2 person dances in this format:

OY; 1 foot up; 2 foot up; 1 jig; 2FC; 1FC; 2Jig; Both UC; Both Jig

Making 8 sections rather than the turn and turn about which would have 13 sections.

Collaborative Jigs - both dance together and on occasion interact. The Fieldtown None So Pretty is a dance of this nature. There is scope to show how good two dancers are at being evenly matched and exactly in time with each other; they dance each the same way and in the same direction. To dance it as a mirror image gives a completely different feel to the dance. Try dancing it back to back, facing away from each other both straight and mirrored. Each form will look different from the audience viewpoint.

WANT MORE?

KOKI have organised a series of all-day jig workshops for beginners and more advanced dancers; we have also been asked to run shorter workshops at a number of festivals and other events. Take a card, and for more details,, drop us an email or look at our website, www.koki.org