



Knights of King Ina 4th Workshop; 16th November 2014 Bucknell

By default KOKI use the earliest reference for a tradition and, having learned that, go on to make any modifications that might make it more appealing to the dancer or audience. We have found that, with practice, the dances are able to be performed exactly as they are recorded.

Background and extent of notes available

Butterworth and Sharp collect in the same summer and are in contact during the collecting. Both Butterworth's diary and Sharps notes show collection from the same persons. The informants being the Rolf(e) brothers. See also Refs at the end of the notes.

Abbreviations

r – morris step – onto right foot (l for left foot)

R – Caper onto the Right foot (L for left foot)

OSS – open side step

HBS – Hop back Step

RTB – right toe behind (LBT for left toe etc.)

FT – feet together in dance notations and Folk Tunes with a number in references to source material

J – Jump

OY – Once to yourself

FU – foot up

Style

Sharp, does not describe a specific style in MB5; in MSS he says about the collecting but little about the style of dance (field notes 1912 and 1921)

Butterworth describes collecting in the Diary but not of the style of the dance (GB)

Dommett has the entire above noted, (RD), and some historical info from Travelling Morice and MSS notes.

Left foot lead in set dances and some Jigs, Right foot where indicated (and in Bonnets So Blue).

Bacon says Brisk and Jerky, as a result of the arm movements, necessitates a high degree of precision if it is not to be ugly. (LB114) Bacon takes much from RD.

Cleaver describes this as “somewhat digital” by which he means that the movements are sharp and precise as opposed to flowing and continual. The tempo is described as “brisk” though we feel that to make it too fast would not leave adequate time to adequately perform and complete the various movements and steps thoroughly. We feel the brisk nature defines the sharpness of the movements rather than the speed of the performance.

Steps

Double – the typical Morris step, 1 2 3 hop.

Sidestep – open (Butterworth Diary) feet not crossed. Diagram (FMJ 1977 p201)(EDS 41 p13)

Long sidestep Sequence – covers 2 bars of 6/8 music the stepping in the 1st bar is a Side step with feet placed in this example for a right foot start / r l r l /; double step /r l r hr /, given CJS MB5 with no other evidence to contradict it.

Short Sidestep – Open, as an example for the right foot to lead; /r l r hr / where the track of the movement is to the side; no turn of the body whilst performing this.

Back Step – FT2781 – like Bampton, but feet touching – heel in front touching toe of hinder foot, both well turned out, sometimes a hop on the back foot but not always. When Published described “as Fieldtown”, described as “Unobtrusive” (EDS 41 p14).

In a presentation given by Barry Honeysett at Farnborough – hosted by Windsor Morris for Roy Dommatt - the backstep was given “as Fieldtown” but with more weight on the front foot with a twist as the back foot makes contact with the ground

Half Caper – (CJS FDN163)(MB5) consistently given as a spring at the end of a bar. In practice it is the same step as in other traditions but begun early, instead of the hop of the preceding double step make the launch into the start of the half caper. In the notations this makes reading it odd.

The Double Caper (MB5 2nd p18)

This is a step followed by a hop. As the step is made, the free leg is thrown forward, knee slightly bent, and the lower part of the leg swung quickly backward in a hook, then forward, and finally backward again, the last movement synchronizing with the hop of the supporting leg.

These three movements of the free leg which are not altogether unlike the vibratory shake of the forward leg in the ordinary Morris step affected by some dancers (Part I., p. 68) are executed by stiffening the thigh and shaking the lower part of the leg, in much the same way as the wrist may be shaken by a movement of the fore-arm. The knee must be very loose and the thigh raised approximately to a horizontal position, and in the backward movements the lower part of the leg must be tightly hooked, or tucked up, under the thigh.

In EDS 41 1979 p13 Russell Wortley explains more about the Double Caper as follows: -

...“If I may proffer a hint, it would be to point out that in the second line of the above description the most important words are “thrown forward” .. i.e. the free leg must be *already* thrown forward (though not necessarily completely straight) *as the first step is taken*. Then, while the dancer is in the air, the free leg is quickly tucked back pushed out again, and finally tucked back as the weight bearing leg lands for the hop. For the repeat on the other foot, the leg that has been bearing the weight must be *immediately* thrust forward and *simultaneously* the other foot is placed *straight down* on the ground (not forward and down). The whole operation is greatly facilitated when the thigh of the free leg is raised high, as stated in the description. William Pertlett of North Leigh once said to Sharp “ you must step out forward, you’ve got to shiver your legs in the capers – and that’ll fetch out the sweat on you (EFDS Jour May 1914 p6)””

In this article Dr Wortley advises a lot of practice and expresses the opinion that it is well within the reach of the averagely good dancer on the right side of 40!

The Split Jump (MB5 2nd p17)

The dancer springs as high as possible off both feet and alights on both feet. While in the air, he separates his legs sideways, and brings them together again as he descends.

This movement should at first be practised with some restraint, as it is apt to be dangerous; dancers, however, will come to no harm so long as they are careful not to separate their legs until they are high in the air.

This will be marked in the diagrams:-

sp. J.

When the jump is being made, the arms will be found to swing naturally outwards, then in again; as this is not really a distinct movement, it will not be noted in the diagrams.

Upright Caper

RTB, stand up & walk forward 1 pace, Sp.J (above). The RTB is a deep lunge the stand up and walk forward are preparatory for the split jump (LUNGE stand recover and SPLIT JUMP).

In the Honeysett presentation it was given as RTB (weight on the left with the leg bent and the right foot thrown back so that the toe touches the ground well behind the body with the right leg extended); r; feet together jump throwing the feet apart to each side and land with feet together. The Arms are out; out; jerk; apart and in naturally at waist level; the 3rd beat (hands apart) the arms are thrown up and out at 45 deg. the dancer making a star shape.

Arms

Quick Down (MB5 2nd p16)

The arms, well bent at the elbow, are raised till the hands are at chin-level and about twelve inches in front of the body.

On the first beat of the bar, the hands are brought sharply down, and the arms straightened and lowered to the side of the body. The movement, which resembles a "snatch" or "jerk" rather than a swing, must be executed as smartly as possible.

During the remainder of the bar, and without any marked rhythm, the arms are slowly raised to their original position.

The downward movement will be marked in the diagrams:-

qu.d. (quick down)

The upward movement being merely a preparatory one, and having, therefore, no significance, is omitted from the notation.

Given in FT 2781

In s.b. (swing back) hold wrists over shoulders, forearm to side, elbows bent as much as possible, then straighten arms with a jerk and throw the hands down, not forward and down. (Also given in AMcK from RD)

From the Honeysett presentation - the track of the arms is straight down rather than in an arc down in front, keep the arms as close to be body through the travel as possible the elbows must be bent to

achieve this and as the arm straightened down the hankies will give the characteristic “whoosh” of the Bucknell movement

The Jerk (MB5 2nd p16)

This movement is a variant of the Wave (Part III., p. 17). The elbows, well bent, are held close to the side of the body, while the circular movements of the hands are executed solely by the fore-arm without any assistance from the wrist. The movement is smaller and sharper than that of the Wave, and has an appearance almost of stiffness. A slight but distinct pause is made between the repetitions of the movement.

This will be marked in the diagrams:-

jk.,

each successive repetition being indicated by an asterisk.

In EDS 41 p13 Russell Wortley comments on the Jerk as often dancers forgetting to keep the elbows close to the sides of the body.

Also as relating to **Double Capers** particularly. Jerk i.e. bend back and up forcibly the forearms wrists over shoulders – CJS FT 2780.

Sidestep “Show Arms” lead arm starts in the same place as for Double Step, hanky over the shoulder, and is extended straight upward on the anacrusis to float down through the rest of the side step. This is markedly different from the sharp movement of the Double Step.

Finishing the dances

Omit the final plain caper, feet together with a present.

Bonnets So Blue Jig

This one is a right foot start

Sequence is

Once to yourself, Foot Up, Jig, Double Capers, Jig, Double Capers, Jig.

Once to Yourself

Rise onto the toes, bring the hands together at chest level, take them apart swiftly, 2 hop backs. Feet together Jump

Foot up

6 Double Steps, 2 hop backs, feet together Jump

Double Caper section

8 double capers (see above) 2 double steps 2 hop backs feet together jump.

The Jig section is

Long open sidestep right;
long open sidestep left,
short open sidestep right,
short open sidestep left
half caper;
2 plain caper;

Long open sidestep right;
long open sidestep left;
2 Half Caper;
4 plain caper.

The tricks to timing it correctly are to begin the half capers a beat early, omitting the hop at the end of the previous bar and launching into the half caper instead, the half caper bars are, then - DOWN 2, 3 - rather than - HUP 2, 3 - in character, i.e the 1st beat of the half caper bars are a landing rather than launching that is normally how a Half Caper is danced.

There is a change of feet required to dance correctly into the 2nd half of the chorus.

The 2nd Double Caper section could be danced to the Upright Capers instead, this is not as given in the notation for the Jigs in Bucknell, it remains an available option to personalise the jig but have it remain true to tradition.

Little Highland Mary Jig

Also danced to Lumps of Plum Pudding; this one is a left foot start; and in this dance the Half Capers are not started early!

Sequence is

Once to yourself, Foot Up, Jig, Double Capers, Jig, Double Capers, Jig.

Once to Yourself

Rise onto the toes, bring the hands together at chest level, take them apart swiftly, 2 hop backs. Feet together Jump

Foot up

6 Double Steps, 2 hop backs, feet together Jump

Double Caper section

5 double capers; 2 half capers; 2 plain capers.

Jig section

Long open side step left;
long open sidestep right;
short open sidestep left;
short open side step right;
half caper;
2 plain caper.

Music

(from Tony Warren)

There is no more intimate relationship between musician and dancer than that required when playing for jigs. It is important that the tempo is that which the dancer requires and that note duration is shrunk or stretched to match the dancers stepping. In a good partnership only the most experienced in the audience will notice these adaptations. That being said I would advise that when practicing a new jig you should start off playing rigidly to time and only start varying tempo when polishing the jig for performance. Right and wrong, for both tune and tempo, have little meaning. It is the finished dance overall that is important.

It is the policy of KOKI to seek out the earliest notations for both dance and tune. Today's version of Bonnets so Blue is taken from the faded pencil notations of George Butterworth. The tune differs slightly from that given in Bacon. Butterworth noted the tune in F and after transposition to G the slight variation in the B music is that the C is natural throughout. The biggest difference comes in the transitions into and out of the slows, however it does exactly match the stepping notation. Remember that the finished jig belongs to the dancer and musician and that any changes made to the music are not wrong, they are only different.

A different challenge for a musician is that presented by a dance whose stepping is recorded, but for which no tune exists. Such is the case with the jig in the Bucknell tradition "Little Highland Mary". When approaching this problem I decided to take the tune for Highland Mary given for another tradition and modify it based on the supposition that if the dance name is the same the tune is likely to be also. However this is not universally true, for instance "Ladies Pleasure" Bledington is completely different to "Ladies Pleasure" Field Town.

For Little Highland Mary I took the tune given for Bampton and having studied the tunes given for various Bucknell dances decided that there was a consistent tendency to use dotted rhythms. Once I modified the tune to take this into account and presented it to Andrew Knight to dance, it turned out that this modified tune exactly fitted the notation for stepping and "looked right". I certainly do not wish to claim that my version of the tune has any fundamental basis, it is merely my opinion.

(from Andrew)

As Tony notes above, the basis for "reconstructing" the tune was that the style of the other tunes given in the given tradition was followed, this mirrors how the collected musician tended to play.

Tunes given by musicians before the collected one in any tradition may have been completely different in character – but we don't have those to refer to. So we remain taking inspiration from the tunes in a tradition or from that musician and use the melody from somewhere else to give the Air and the style of that musician to give the character.

The test is whether – as Tony notes – the dance "feels" right and also whether other dancers and musicians familiar with that tradition recognise it as from a given tradition. This is usually followed by them asking where the tune came from as "that dance doesn't have a tune in Bacon". Some writers have noted that Morris dances should not be grouped by village but by the musician that played for the dancers or even the teacher / foreman / leader that taught the dances.

References

Many of these original manuscripts are available from the Full English Project online via the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library.

Bert Cleaver – Morris Jigs from Bledington, Headington, Lngborough and Bucknell (BC)
Lionel Bacon – A Handbook of Morris Dances (LB)
Cecil Sharp – Morris Book. Parts 1-5; part 5 (MBv)
Cecil Sharp – Folk dance Notes MSS books 1-4 (FDN)
Cecil Sharp – Folk Tunes (FT)
Cecil Sharp – Morris Dance Tunes (MDT)
George Butterworth – Diary of Morris Dance Hunting (GB) and tune books to accompany.

Roy Dommett – Notes as collected by Anthony Barrand. vol 2 (RD)
Russell Wortley – Morris Workshops in English Dance and Song 1975,6 and reprinted in 1979 (EDS)
(nos 37,38 and 41)
The Morris at Bucknell - Edited transcription from recordings of a talk and instructional given by Roy
Dommett at Great Tree Hill Farm, Plymouth on 15th April 1973. Transcribed by Alistair McKenzie.
(AMcK)

Not viewed

R Kenworthy Schofield – MSS v7 d p129
Russell Wortley – Notebook – no 2 p25,26,64.
Morris Matters – v6 p4 and 11 and v12 1983 p4-11
Logs of the Travelling Morice

Kirtlington References

Roy Dommett – 2 papers on Kirtlington (from Morris Federation Notation)
Lionel Bacon – A Handbook of Morris Dances (LB)
Roy Dommett – Notes as collected by Anthony Barrand. vol 2 (RD)
Cecil Sharp – Folk Tunes v23 no 4925, 4926 and 4931
Cecil Sharp – Folk Dance Notes
Presentation by Barry Honeysett @ Roy Dommet Weekend instructional Oct 2014.

Not seen Kirtlington refs

Davenport – Kirtlington
Morris Dnacer Nov 1978
Morris Dancer Aug 1982
Manning MSS