



Knights of King Ina Oxford Folk Festival Workshop 21st April 2018

<http://www.koki.org.uk>

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.

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.

Formula Movements

- Right foot lead. The repeat is left foot lead.
- Where the steps in a bar are noted a / is used as the bar separator.
- Arms are described as “place and slow down” or “flick 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

- Steps are double (step right, step left, step right, hop right), free foot kicked in front, thigh at no more than 45° 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. (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 PC 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) Being aware that you pull the toes up as you rise in a jump will give the illusion that you are further from the ground. People will think you have jumped higher;

as another advantage this also allows the calf muscles to re-supply with resources and thus work more efficiently. There is research that shows this improves performance.

- 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 do 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
- 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 (many Ring sides for for higher), elbows slightly bent. Double stepping. 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

- Once to yourself – a preparatory movement to start the dance. In bars 7 and 8 dance 2 hop backs and feet together jump.
- Foot Up – outside foot start; 2 double steps, galley and feet together Jump. Repeated. This will use 8 Bars of music and is danced up to the music the first time, galley out to face down and FTJ, repeated facing down galley out, to end facing partner on the final Jump.

“Slows”

The emphasis of these sequences is to make the biggest movement on the 3rd beat.

FC – Beetlecrushers.

e.g. right foot

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. Though this is somewhat difficult to write, the focus of the movement is the big spring between the FT and the plain caper (beats 2 to 3) thus the FT does not occupy the same duration as the spring and its landing into the caper. In some clubs, they teach that the arms go up and over (which KOKI now favour as a distinction to the Bledington move), making a high up out and down movement. As always – one should follow what your foreman teaches in that club.

UC – Upright Caper

e.g. right foot

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 timing inflection is as in the Beetlecrushers move above and the arms can be similar in that they will go “over the top” in some club teaching.

Dance Sequence and finish

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

Jig dances typically finish with 2 plain capers instead of the final Jump after a galley. In set Dances, this is usually 4 plain capers all facing up.

Sharp, and Bacon / Dommett following on from the published material give the above jig format which has become “standard” in the Morris world. In “Folk Tunes” 2564 of Sharp’s MSS (see “The Full English” online at the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library) Franklin (7/1/1911) gave that all Fieldtown jigs were danced with the following sequence: -

OY: FU, FU, DF, DF, FC (Beetlecrushers) **DF, DF, UC** (toe behind and Jump).

Music therefore **A: 2A 2(2B C)** rather than the modern A: AB 2(CB)

The repeats beginning on alternate feet. None of the dances give a galley in the DF of the Jig (per Bacon) with all of the “break” sections being 2 Hop Backs and a Feet Together Jump. The only exception was the final bar where a galley was performed to end the jig (thus the break to end would be 2 Hop Back steps and a Galley). This final Galley did not have a jump after it and Sharp notes that he presumes there was no turn in the galley.

Fieldtown – None So Pretty

Jig for 2 persons together, can be done to Constant Billy tune.

“Bacon” version recorded here as to dance the MSS variation doesn’t add anything to the performance of this jig (AMK opinion).

OY – 2 Hop Back steps, land onto the right foot to begin; feet together Jump

FU – 2 Double steps; 2 Hop Back steps; feet together Jump – repeat whole beginning left foot.

JIG – clap, right hand touch right cheek, clap left hand touch left cheek, clap, right hand touch left shoulder, left hand touch right shoulder, clap, under right knee, clap, under left knee, clap slap right thigh bringing right leg up. 2 double steps galley right feet together jump. Repeat whole beginning left hand to cheek and following the same pattern to galley left at the end of the chorus.

The thigh touch / slap is given in MSS as a variant of the clap under leg. KOKI tend to raise the thigh to horizontal letting the lower leg hang from the knee, balancing on one leg with arms full forward horizontal at shoulder height.

This is taken fairly briskly - In shorthand with the bar count
/F rc – F lc /F rsh – F lsh /FURK FULK / F thigh - - / DS / DS/ G / FTJ / :
(F= clap in front; rc =right cheek etc. rsh = right shoulder etc.

Beetle - tap right forward, feet together Caper Right Caper (Step) left; tap left forward, feet together. Caper left Caper (step) left, 4 plain capers on alternate feet – repeat whole.

JIG – as above

Uprights - tap right toe crossed behind left, feet together; Jump; Caper (Step) left; tap left crossed behind right, feet together; Jump; Caper (step) left, 4 plain capers on alternate feet – repeat whole.

JIG – as above. But finish the whole section on 2 plain capers R and L with arms presented.

KOKI have taken to making the final thigh slap and leg lift a held poise for as long as possible – duration is defined by the female dancer closest to the lead musician.