

# Notation of Steps and Hands taken from The Morris Book by Cecil Sharp

## Morris Book 1

### **The Morris Step** (MB1 2<sup>nd</sup> p49)

Let the learner stand at attention and begin to mark time at an elastic trot: right – left – right – left, treading on the ball of the foot only, and springing from one foot to the other as in the military double. Instead however, of bending each knee by turns and picking up the feet alternately, he must keep the knees straight, and bring each foot forward alternately in a sharp swing (almost a jerk) of some 15-18 inches.

This constitutes the morris step in its elementary form, and will be marked in the music diagrams thus:-

- r. (step onto the right foot)
- l. (step onto the left foot)

as soon as the learner has acquired it in stationary step, he may practise it as a forward trot instead of a mark time. In moving forward, the distance traversed in any given number of steps should remain small: for the learner a yard in 4 steps may perhaps be suggested as a maximum. If he attempts to step out and cover ground he will lose the character of the step; moreover, he will find that in the dances the distance covered in 4 steps is, perhaps as frequently under a yard as over.

**\*\* cut\*\* 4 lines about rowing**

*Points to remember*

### **The free or swinging foot and leg**

1. the movement of the free foot is, as has been said, a sharp swing, not a lift; the thigh of the free leg is swung forward and backward, never lifted up.
2. the free leg should swing naturally and easily from the hip joint: the knee must be straight, but not rigid – indeed, it is better that the knee should be slightly bent than that it should be consciously stiffened.
3. the dancer will find that the extent of the swing is to a great degree naturally defined for him by his own balance (the throwing forward of the leg must not be enough to force him to lean backwards in order to counteract it) and by the time of the dance. As a rule, however, it may be said to be not more than 15 – 18", the heel of the free foot at the furthest point of the swing being some 3", roughly, from the ground, and 4-6" in front of the toe of the supporting foot
4. the toe of the swinging foot must not be pointed, nor the heel thrust forward; so long as the ankle is loose and flexible the foot will fall of itself into the right position – roughly, the angle between the shin and the instep should be rather more than a right angle.

### **The supporting foot and leg**

5. the step is executed wholly on the ball of the foot, not the toe; the heel, though always close to the ground, should never touch it.
6. the knee of the supporting leg naturally bends slightly for the spring.

### **General**

7. the dancer should hold himself upright, in an easy, loose posture, shoulders square, head erect.
8. he must not straddle his legs to cover too much ground, as the Morris men say, nor sway from side to side.
9. he must swing his legs equally, the beginner often fails to swing one leg (usually the left) as far forward as the other.

10. he must remember that the Morris Step is of the nature of a running, not walking, movement. To omit the spring from one foot to the other, thus converting the step into a walk, is a serious fault.

**The 4/2 and 6/2 Steps (MB1 2<sup>nd</sup> p52)**

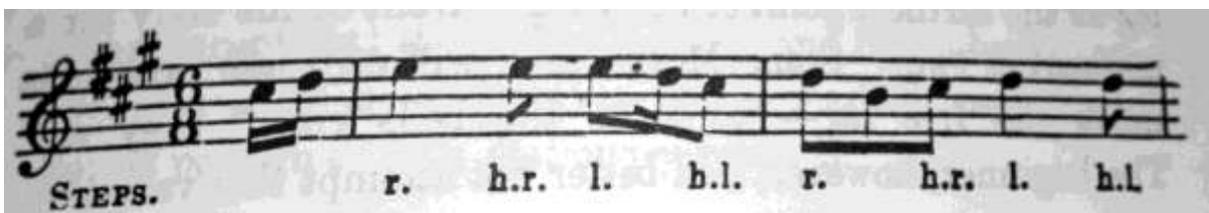
In this, the easiest form of the morris step, a hop is interposed between each step. By a hop is meant taking a light spring off the supporting foot, and alighting on the same foot. It will be marked in the diag. thus:-

h.r. (hop on the right foot)  
h.l. (hop on the left foot)

Ordinarily, the step and the hop together occupy half a bar of the music. In tunes in simple time the steps fall onto the 1<sup>st</sup> and middle beats of the bar, the hops on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> divisions, i.e., midway between the steps. This is called the 4/2 step and will be marked in the diags. thus:



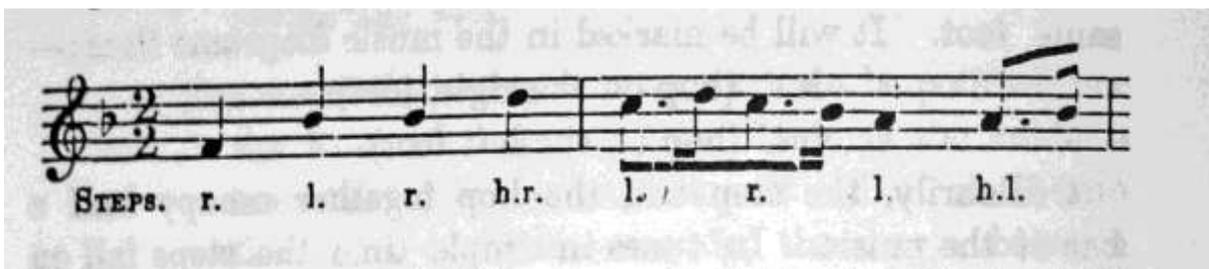
In tunes in compound time, say 6/8, the steps fall on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> beats in the bar, and the hops on the 3<sup>rd</sup> division of each beat, that is, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> quavers of the bar. Consequently, in tunes in compound time the steps and hops fall unevenly, the steps taking twice as long to perform as the hops. This is called the 6/2 step, and will be marked in the diags. thus:-



**The 4/3 and 6/3 Steps (MB1 2<sup>nd</sup> p53)**

This variety of the morris step occupies a whole bar in performance, and consists of 3 steps, on alternate feet, followed by a hop on the last supporting foot. It will thus be seen that when this step is repeated the bars will begin alternately with right and left foot.

In tunes in simple time the 3 steps and hop fall, successively, on the 4 divisions of the bar, that is, equal intervals of time. This form of the step is called the 4/3 step, and will be notated in the music diags. thus:-



In tunes in compound time, say 6/8, the second step and the hop will fall on the 3<sup>rd</sup> divisions of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> beats of the bar i.e., on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> quavers respectively – and therefore be executed in

half the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> steps. This is called the 6/3 step, and will be marked in the music diagrams thus: -



In the execution of the above steps it will be found that, except in very slow time, it is practically impossible to swing the forward free leg the full 15" when step follows step. When, however, the step is followed by a hop there will always be time to do this and even to hold the leg at the furthest point of its swing in front of the body for a moment or two. Some morris men will, on occasion, shake the free leg - to make the bells ring - they say. The beginner, however, had better not attempt this variation.

**The Caper** (MB1 2<sup>nd</sup> p54)

This is an ordinary morris step with an exaggerated spring; indeed, the spring should be as high as possible, or as high as the time given by the music will allow. The springing leg must be in line with the body, which must be erect. The free leg is swung forward in the same way as far as in the Morris step, but no further. Some morris men habitually shiver the leg in the Caper. That is, shake the free leg as described above.

In the music diagrams the Caper will be distinguished from the morris step by use of capital letters, thus: -

- R. (caper on the Right foot)
- L. (caper on the left foot)

**The Side Step** (MB1 2<sup>nd</sup> p54)

This step may be used in a stationary position, or in moving backwards or forwards.

When it is executed in a stationary position, one foot is swung in front of and across the other, and placed on the ground parallel to, and from 4-5" away from it. The weight of the body is then successively transferred from one foot to the other in rhythmical, rocking movement set up, the feet being raised alternately an inch or 2 from the ground. The centre of gravity of the body must always be directly above the supporting foot. The extent of these oscillations varies with each dancer and, to some extent, with the nature of the dance in which the step occurs. Some dancers habitually emphasize the rocking movement, while with others it is scarcely perceptible.

In advancing or retiring at the Side step one foot is placed from 6-2" in front of the other, and in line with it. The step then becomes akin to a chasse, one foot chasing the other, except that the dancer rocks to and fro as he moves. This rocking movement, however, is less marked than when the step is performed in a stationary position.

Usually, the course of the dancer is diagonally to his right or left, according as the front foot is right or left. Consequently, when the relative position of the feet is periodically hanged, the dancer will pursue a zigzag course.

Whenever the side step is used, the body should be twisted at the hips into line with the feet, right shoulder over right foot, left over left, and the head turned so that the eyes over the front shoulder.

Ordinarily, the head and body are held erect; we have, however seen dancers incline both slightly backward.

The side step is, perhaps, the most graceful, as it is indubitably the most troublesome of all the steps of the Morris dance. The difficulty lies in adapting the step to the character of the dance, or of the music. Sometimes as, e.g., in "Old Woman Tossed Up" the side step is executed with the greatest vivacity and spirit; whereas in "Trunkles" it is danced with almost languishing, lackadaisical air.

The side step will be marked in the music diagrams by 2 rows of symbols. In the upper line the symbols will show the steps in the usual way, in the lower line, after the letters **s.s. (side Step)**, the relative position of the feet will be indicated by the symbols **r.b (right foot behind)** or **l.b. (left foot behind)**, followed by a line which will be continued until the position of the feet is changed, thus:-

| r. l. r. l. | r. l. r. h.r.. | l. r. l. r. | l. r. l. h.l. |  
 s.s.l.b..... s.s.r.b.....

**The Cross Backstep** (MB1 2<sup>nd</sup> p55)

In this step the feet are alternately crossed and thrown apart in a scissor like action, in the following way...

One foot, say the right, is placed close behind the other, so that the right toe is within an inch or two of the left heel. The toes must be well turned out, and the weight of the body equally distributed between the feet. This is the first position. A low spring is now made on to the 2 feet, which are uncrossed and thrown apart about 12" or less. This, the second position, is immediately followed by a spring back to the first position, this time with the left foot behind the right. These two movements alternately repeated, constitute the cross backstep. The step must be executed throughout on the balls of the feet and may be performed in a stationary position or moving backward. It must never be used in going forward. The beginner is cautioned not to throw his feet too far apart in the second position.

In the diagrams the step will be indicated by 2 rows of symbols. In the upper line the 2 positions above described will be marked, respectively, **r.b. (or l.b.) i.e., right (or left) foot behind:** and **f.a (feet apart)**. In the lower line the letters x.b.s. (cross backstep) will be placed, followed by a line, continued while the step lasts, thus:-

| r.b. f.a. l.b. f.a. | r.b. Ju. |  
 x.b.s.....

**The Jump** (MB1 2<sup>nd</sup> p56)

The jump is made with straight legs and as high as the ability of the performer or the time of the music will permit. The dancer should alight on the balls of the feet, and then, if the opportunity offers, lower the heels to the ground.

When the jump is made without change in position, it will be marked in the diagrams thus:-

Ju.

If, however, the dancer changes foot as he jumps it will be marked in the following way:

j.

**Feet Together** (MB1 2<sup>nd</sup> p56)

This is the posture known to professional dancers and “first position” i.e., both feet flat on the ground, heels touching, toes turned out.

This will be marked in the diagrams thus:-

f.t (feet together)

**Hands****Down and Up** (MB1 2<sup>nd</sup> p57)

The arms, loose but straight, are held horizontally at shoulder level, and then smartly swung down, and as far back, i.e., behind the body, as they will go without strain, and without throwing the dancer off his balance; the arms are then immediately swung forward and up again to shoulder level. Throughout these movements the wrists must be kept level so that the hands and arms are in one straight line. The arms must never, intentionally, be bent at the elbows.

In the music diagrams these movements will be marked:-

Down. or d.

Up. or u.

Sometimes in the forward swing the arms are swung a little higher than shoulder level, and slant upwards at an angle, roughly, of 15-20 deg from horizontal. This will be marked in the music diagrams:-

h.u. (high up)

**The Swing** (MB1 2<sup>nd</sup> p57)

This is a similar movement to down and up, but executed less vigorously and with the arms bent at right angles at the elbows. In the forward movement the hands approach the and very nearly reach each other in front of the body, at breast level; in the backward swing they move apart and away from the sides. We have occasionally seen dancers straighten their elbows in the backward movement; usually however, the swing is confined to the shoulder joint. The length of the swing is, roughly, 18”, the movement is a quiet, easy one, and should have somewhat of a jaunty swaggering appearance. In the music diagrams these movements are marked thus:-

s.f. (swing forward)

s.b. (swing backward)

when the swing is used with Capers, or otherwise as indicated, the arms are swung forward and backward more vigorously and further - in the forward swing the hands would rise 12-18” above the head. This will be marked in the music diagrams thus:-

s.h.f. (swing high forward)

s.h.b. (swing high backward)

**Straight up** (MB1 2<sup>nd</sup> p58)

The arms, loose but straight, are smartly swung forward and up until they are erect (or nearly so) above the head, in line with the body. This movement, which usually accompanies the jump, will be marked in the music diagrams:-

s.u. (straight up)

**Circle** (MB1 2<sup>nd</sup> p58)

The arms, well bent at the elbows, are raised until the hands are about 8" immediately above the forehead, and 14" apart. The hands are then simultaneously swung round in circles, first inward and toward each other, then outward and apart, each hand describing a circle in the horizontal plane, the right hand clockwise, the left counter clockwise. The swinging movement is executed partly by the wrist and partly by the forearm; the upper arm must not be allowed to move.

Each circular movement is made in half a bar of the music, the hands moving inward and toward each other on the accent, i.e., on the first and middle beats of the bar.

In the music diagrams this will be marked:-

Circle.

**The Twist** (MB1 2<sup>nd</sup> p59) (see also p18)



The arms, well bent at the elbows, are held so that the hands are 12" or less in front of the body, a little above chin level, and about 2½ to 3 feet apart. The position is approx. that shown in the picture of Kempe

The hands are then twisted in the way described in the previous hand movement (circle) the circle movement being executed partly by the forearm, but mainly by the wrist. The upper arm must be motionless.

This will be marked in the music diagrams thus:-

Tw. (twist both hands)

When one hand is twisted, the arm is less bent at the elbow, thrust forward less (i.e. nearly in line with the body), higher, the hand being 6" or more above head level. This will be marked thus:-

Tw.r. (or l.)

When the twist is repeated, each successive movement will be marked with an asterisk, thus:-



**Waving** (MB1 2<sup>nd</sup> p59)

The arms, well bent at the elbows, are held so that the hands are about 12-15" in front of the body and about 4-5" apart, at breast level. The hands are then swung round in large circles, in a vertical plane, the left hand moving counter clockwise, the right clockwise. The movement, which must be executed with the greatest vigour, is performed partly by the upper arm, but chiefly by the forearm and wrist. This is marked in the music diagrams thus:-

Wave.

On p74 CJS remarks on the once to yourself but recognises that this is different in different dances (and subsequently different traditions).

Headington dances are given from p76 ff but no further specifics are given. References to further research are [oxford review march 16, 1899](#). Mr Manning, whose info may predate CJS.

The Spin used in Maid of the Mill; Ilmington MB1 2<sup>nd</sup> p103

Hands and Foot Up noted for Shepherd's Hey; Ilmington; MB1 2<sup>nd</sup> p106

**Morris Book 2**  
**Headington Dances**  
**Hands**

**Circle and straight up (s.u.)** (MB2 2<sup>nd</sup> p7) (see also MB1 and p6 of this document)

These movements which occur in the final bar of the cross step may be done in either of 2 ways:

- 1) by making one large circle, sweeping the hands well forward and bringing them together above the head on the middle beat of the bar:

or

- 2) by making 2 circles, the first one in the usual position, hands apart, and the second, a very small one, with the hands above the head and close together.

**Headington – Reel Step.** (MB2 2<sup>nd</sup> p12)

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The first staff is titled "REEL-STEP." and is in 4/4 time. It contains a sequence of notes: a quarter note, and a quarter note. Below the staff, the directions "h.l.", "r.t.", "h.l.", "r.", "h.r.", "l.t.", "h.r.", "l.", and "h.l." are written. Below these, "l.b." is written under the first, third, fifth, seventh, and ninth notes. The second staff is titled "Last Bar." and contains four notes: a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, and a half note. Below the staff, the directions "h.r.", "l.t.", "h.r.", and "f.t." are written. Below these, "r.b." is written under the first, second, and third notes.

The legs are crossed as in the ordinary side step, but the whole weight of the body is supported on the hinder foot, while the toe of the front foot is pointed as in the Scottish Reel. On the third beat of each bar the free foot in front is swung back in a semi-circular movement, placed behind the hinder foot and the weight transferred to it.

In the second half of the dance the heel instead of the toe is planted on the ground, toe up.

Throughout the Reel-step the arms are held akimbo, palms inward.

### **Morris Book 3** **Hands**

#### **The Point** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p7)

The performer raises his right or left hand according as he is setting out to right or left in an outward and upward curve, to a point level with the top of the head; at the same time the head is bent and the body inclined in the same direction. The arm is held in the raised position for one bar, and then gradually lowered to the side of the body in the next bar. These movements of hand, head, and body must be performed easily and gracefully; the dancer is merely pointing out the course upon which he is setting out.

This movement is marked in the diagrams:

p.r. (point with right hand),  
p.l. (point with left hand).

#### **Hands Out** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p7)

The arms slightly curved at the elbow are held out on either side of the body, the hands, palms down, approx. Level with the waist. The arms and hands should be held very loosely so that a balance may be preserved during the execution of more or less complicated foot movements.

This is marked in the diagrams:-

out  
or, if one arm only is used,  
r. (or l.) out.

#### **Hands Together** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p7)

The hands, loosely clenched, are held, palms downward, close together about 3 or 4 inches in front of the midriff. The elbows must be sharply crooked and held well away from the body

This is marked in the diagrams:-

Tog. (together)

#### **Hands Separate** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p8)

This position follows Hands together and is reached by sharply drawing the hands apart to a distance of about 18". The action is entirely from the shoulders: there should be no movement of the hands or of the elbow joints.

This is marked in the diagrams:-

Sep. (separate).

**Hand In** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p8)

This arm movement accompanies the backstep.

The right or left forearm is brought up from the side and laid horizontally across the chest, the inside of the hand resting on the left or right breast.

The movement, in which the upper arm takes little or no part, should be made easily but swiftly in order that the arm may rest in this characteristic position as long as time will allow. At the end of the movement the initial movement is reversed, and the forearm dropped to the side.

This is marked in the diagrams:-

in.

or, if only one hand is used,

r. (or l.) in,

**Hands Across** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p8)

The arms, sharply bent at the elbows, are crossed, right arm over left (right hand, palm down, resting on left elbow, the right elbow upon the back of the left hand), raised and held in front of the body, horizontally, i.e., at shoulder – level.

This position, which is preparatory to Hands wide, is very like the way in which the arms are carried in the dance round of the Sailors Hornpipe.

This is marked in the diagrams:-

x

or, if only one hand is used,

r. (or l.) x

**Hands Wide** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p9)

The Arms, held in the position above described, are slightly raised from the shoulders and then, with the elbows still crooked, swung outwards, separated, and lowered till the hands, palms down, are at breast level and about 18"-24" apart.

This is marked in the diagrams:-

w.

or, if only one hand is used,

r. (or l.) w.

**Dip In: Dip Out** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> P9)

The arms are raised to shoulder level and the hands held about a yard apart and some 20" in front of the body. The hands are then dipped down about 5" and up again, and at the same time brought forward toward each other sixteen or eighteen inches. This movement is then repeated, bringing the hands to within an inch or two of each other.

These two movements are then made in the reverse direction, outwards, bringing the hands and arms back again to their original positions.

The dipping movements down and up, are executed by the forearms and wrists, chiefly by the latter. The effect produced is that of a rhythmical, dancing motion of the arms and hands.

In the diagrams these movements will be marked thus: -

d. in..... in. (dip in..... in).  
d. out..... out. (dip out..... out).

**High Across: High Wide** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p9)

The arms, slightly bent at the elbow, are raised above the head and crossed at the wrists (High Across). They are then rapidly separated until each arm is about 30 deg from the vertical (High Wide).

These two movements are marked in the diagrams as follows:-

h. x. (high, across).  
h. w. (high, wide).

**Show** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p10)

One arm, say the right, is first brought across the body, the forearm approx. horizontal, the wrist bent inward with the fingers touching the left shoulder. The arm is then swung outward and downward in a wide semi circular sweep well away from the body, and the forearm gradually straightened as it falls to the side of the body. The movement must be started with an accent and timed so as to accord with the musical phrase which accompanies it.

This is marked in the diagrams:-

show r. (or l.).

**The Low Twist** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p10)

This is a slow, continuous twist of the hands held in front of the body at breast level or a little lower, the elbows three or four inches away from the sides.

The hands describe circles in a vertical plane parallel to the front of the body, right hand clockwise, the left counter clockwise.

This is marked in the diagrams:-

l.tw. (low twist with both hands)  
l.tw.r. (low twist with the right hand only)  
l.tw.l. (Low twist with the left hand only)

When the twist is repeated each successive repetition is marked with an asterisk.

**The Bent Swing** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p10)

The fore arms are raised and folded back upon the upper arms, the backs of the hands close to the shoulders; the upper arms are held loosely by the sides of the body, pointing downward and slightly forward. On the first beat of the Bar the forearms are swung forward and down and the arms are straightened; while on the second beat the movement is reversed and the arms are raised to the original position. The movement, which is almost entirely from the forearm, should be executed in a quiet, leisurely manner, without jerk or accent.

These movements are marked in the diagrams:-

Bt.d. (bent swing down)

Bt.u. (bent swing up)

**The High Bent Swing** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p11)

The arms, bent at the elbows very nearly to a right angle, are swung forward and up until the hands are 2-3" above the head.

This is marked in the diagrams thus:-

h.bt. (high bent swing)

**The High Twist** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p11)

One arm, slightly curved at the elbow, is raised and the handkerchief waved immediately over the head with one quick circular movement of the wrist, clockwise for the right hand, anticlockwise for the left.

This is marked in the diagrams thus:-

h.tw.r. (high twist –right hand)

h.tw.l. ( high twist – Left hand)

**Arm Raised** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p11)

One arm is raised laterally in the plane of the body and held at an angle of about 30 deg from the vertical.

This is marked in the diagrams thus:-

r.r. (right raised)

l.l. (left raised)

## Steps.

### **The 9-2 Step.** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p12)

The only difference between this and the 6-2 step is that the step-and-hop occurs three times in each bar instead of twice, thus:-



### **The Cross-Hop.** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p12)

This is a hop with both feet crossed at the ankles. The weight of the body must be supported equally by both feet.

This is marked in the diagrams:-

r.b. (Right Behind)  
X.h. (cross Hop)

and

l.b. (left Behind)  
x.h (cross Hop)

### **The Straddle** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p12)

This is a spring alighting on both feet, well turned out, with the legs wide apart, the knees well bent and the body erect.

This grotesque attitude is not very suitable for women dancers, who are on that account advised to substitute the **feet apart (f.a)**. This substitution will not involve any violation of traditional practice, as the Bampton dancers frequently execute the movement this way.

This is marked in the diagrams:-

st. (straddle)

### **The Back Step** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p12)

This is a simplified form of the cross back step

The dancer, standing on one foot, well turned out, swings the free foot round in a shallow curve outward and plants it behind the supporting foot, with the side of the big toe in contact with the back of the heel of the front foot – the feet roughly at right angles. The weight is then transferred to the hinder foot.

*And as described in MB3 1<sup>st</sup> edition...*

This is often used instead of the Cross-step, of which it is a variant much simplified. One foot, right or left, is swung, loosely and in a slight curve, behind the supporting foot, so as to cross the legs just above the ankles. As the forward foot is raised to be swung behind the other foot, it should be given

a slight but lively turn or twist outward, giving the heel a slight inward movement. This gives the impression that the dancer is giving himself a gentle thrust backward with each step.

The Back-step is made entirely on the ball of the foot; and at each crossing of the feet a slight and natural inclination of the head and body is made in the direction of the moving foot. The Back-step is always accompanied by the hand movements,

"r. In "

Or

"l. in."

There should be no hop in the execution of the Back-step; when a turn or a jump follows the Back-step, it is made without a preliminary hop.

*Again returning to the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*

This is marked in the diagrams :-

r.b.. (right behind)  
b.s. (back step)

or

l.b. (left Behind)  
b.s. (back Step)

*and omitted from MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> - the Fudge step is noted under the Back Step!*

This step is often used, arbitrarily, by the dancer at the end of an evolution when he has accidentally got out, and in front of his proper place.

**The Wide Back step** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p13)

The dancer stands with the feet straddled 15" or so apart.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> beat of the bar, one foot, say the right, pivoting on the ball, is screwed round clockwise and the heel thrust inward and forward. On the middle beat of the bar, the left foot is screwed round counter clockwise in like manner while at the same moment the right foot is straightened.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> beat of the second bar the left foot is straightened and on the middle beat a jump is made alighting with feet together.

These movements are made in a stationary position, the weight of the body being throughout supported equally by both feet

The steps will be marked thus:-

r. l. f.a. Ju.  
w.b.s.....

**The Swing Step** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p13)

This step has already been described, though unnamed, in the third figure of the "Bacca-Pipes Jig" (Part 2., p. 40).

It is a variant of the 4-2 or 6-2 step, in which the free foot is swung across and in front of the supporting foot, alighting eighteen inches or so on the further side of the latter.

This step is marked in the diagrams thus:-

r. h.r, l. h.l.  
sw.s.....

**The Quick Caper** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p14)

This is the ordinary caper, but danced at a quicker pace and therefore with less spring. This step will be marked in the diagrams with the capital letters like the normal caper but with q.c. (quick caper) in the line below, thus: -

R. L. R. L.  
q.c.....

**The Slip** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p14)

This is the same as the country dance slipping step. It consists of a series of springs, made sideways, off alternate feet, the major spring being on to the outside foot i.e., the left when moving to the left and the right when moving to the right. Although the legs are thus alternately opening and closing, scissor fashion, the motion is effected almost wholly by the spring, not the straddle; the legs should be separated as little as possible. The free foot should not be allowed to scrape the ground.

The accent falls upon the foot on to which the major spring is made, that is the left or right according to the direction of motion.

This is marked in the diagrams thus: -

l. r. l. r.  
sl.....

**The Straddle Slip** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p14)

This is the slipping step without the spring. When moving to the left the left foot is raised and inch or two and placed on the ground about 2 feet to the side and the weight transferred to it. The right foot is then scraped along the ground, brought up to the left foot and the weight transferred to it.

This is marked in the diagrams

l. r. l. r.  
st.sl. ....

**The Pause** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p15)

At the conclusion of a dance, especially of a jig, the performer will sometimes remain for a moment or two posed in the attitude in which he executed the last step. This will be marked in the diagrams with a fermata or pause over the step symbol, thus:-

⤴  
R

**The Low Jump** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p15)

In this the dancer does not leave the ground, but merely rises on his toes.

It is marked in the diagrams: -

l. Ju or l. j

**The Spring** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p15)

This is a caper in which the free leg, instead of being swung forward, is allowed to hang loosely by the side of the other leg.

It is marked in the diagrams thus:-

η

**The Twirl** (MB3 2<sup>nd</sup> p15) Refers to a Brackley Stick movement.

**Morris Book 3 1<sup>st</sup> Edition**

**THE BACK-TOE.** (MB3 1<sup>st</sup> p26)

A slight jump is made, the dancer alighting upon one foot. As he does so, the other foot is thrown backwards in a straight line, and set upright, heel up and toe resting on the ground two feet or more behind the supporting foot. At the same moment the supporting leg is bent at the knee. The Back-toe is always followed either by the Jump or the Spring, made by the supporting foot, the rear leg being swung quickly forwards. This is marked in the diagrams :-

r.t.b. (right toe behind)

or

l.t.b. (left toe behind).

**THE CROSS-LEG.** . (MB3 1<sup>st</sup> p26)

This is a variation of the normal method of performing the hop in the ordinary Morris step. The free leg, instead of being kicked forwards (see Parr I., p. 33), is swung, heel foremost, across and in front of the other leg, overlapping it by two or three inches. The leg as it swings across is bent at the knee ; the heel is raised and thrust forwards ; and the toe turned out and down. To preserve a balance, the body is inclined, very slightly, away from the direction in which the leg is swinging. The hop made by the supporting leg must be a very mild one. Some dancers, indeed, especially in quick time, dispense with it altogether, and are content with This step is marked in the diagrams in two lines, thus :-

h.l.

r.a. Bright across)

or

h.r.

La. (left across).

The Cross-leg is generally used in the 4-2, 6-2, 4-3, or 6-3 steps, and sometimes, though very rarely, in the Side-step.

**THE HOOK-LEG.** . (MB3 1<sup>st</sup> p27)

This is an exaggerated form of the Cross-leg. A high spring is made by the supporting leg ; the swinging leg is sharply crooked at the knee, which is raised as high as possible.

This is marked in the diagrams in two lines, thus :-

h.l.  
hk. r. (hook right leg)

or

h.r.  
hk. l. (hook left leg).

When the Hook-leg is followed by a step and a jump, it is called "hook-leg and jump."

## **Morris Book 4**

CJS mentions publishing 64 dances by MB4 – roughly half of his collection in total (p10) he offers the opinion that Sherborne and Fieldtown are the most intricate yet seen and therefore are the pinnacle “highest form” of the Morris.

In many of the steps and movements described in the following pages the student will find much that is interesting and instructive. **He will note that five forms of the Backstep have now been recorded, viz., the Cross-step, Shuffle-backstep, Hop-back-step, Step-back, and Back-step.** Danced in the order named it is patent that, while each has a distinct individuality of its own, the five steps are closely akin and must have sprung from a common origin. They represent, no doubt, variants evolved by groups of dancers in different villages and, as such, provide an instructive example of the way in which traditional steps have in the course of ages changed and given birth to new forms. Another very characteristic step which occurs in all the dances in the present volume is the Gallery, or Galley. This is a step upon which the best dancers especially pride themselves.

Indeed, by many Morris men it is regarded as a test, no one being accounted a first-rate performer who cannot "Galley out" in the approved fashion, and make his bells ring lustily with that artful twist and shake of the leg, which the cultivated dancer finds so difficult to imitate. Mr. Simpson told me that the Sherborne men were renowned for their Galley, and the skilful way they used it in negotiating the turns in "skew-corner" dances.

**The Sherborne form of the 4/3 and 6/3 Morris-step should not escape the notice of the student; the hop on the second, instead of the last beat, is a very graceful and captivating variation.**

The tunes include four characteristic airs in the Dorian mode, "London Pride", "I'll go and enlist", "The Cuckoo's Nest" and "Princess Royal"; and several first-rate major melodies, e.g., "Swaggering Boney", "Heel-and-Toe", "Dearest Dicky", "Step Back" &c.

The title of the Sherborne dance "Lads a-Bunchun" may, perhaps, throw some light on the meaning of the cryptic "Laudnum Bunches" of (Morris Book) Part 1. "A-bunchun" may denote (see Wright's Dialect Dictionary) butting or striking, dashing in dress or appearance; or it may simply mean bunched together, i.e., in a cluster as in a set-dance. On the other hand both "Laudnum Bunches" and "Lads a-Bunchun" may be corruptions of the original title which further research may someday unearth.

The present instalment brings up the number of dances and jigs in The Morris Book to 64, counting variants. This represents, roughly, half of the dances which Mr. MacIlwaine and I have so far collected. The rest we have withheld from publication for various reasons; some because they were but indifferent variants of those printed ; others because of some doubtful point of notation, or because they lacked full traditional authority.

Whether further investigation will lead to the discovery of more dances worthy to be published, time alone can show. We have, it is true, covered a great deal of the ground where the Morris tradition survives; nevertheless, there are still several areas to be explored, and it is impossible to say what these may yield. In the meanwhile, we have thought it advisable to append to this volume a general index to the dances, steps, figures, &c., described.

### **The Dance**

In the following pages the terms "**clockwise**" (**cl.**) and "**counter-clockwise**" (**c.cl.**) will be used in defining the direction of circular movements, instead of, respectively, "right to left" and "left to right," as heretofore (see Part 3. p. 67). The following expressions are to be interpreted thus: To "pass by the right" is to pass right shoulder to right shoulder; "by the left," left shoulder to left shoulder.

### **Hands.**

#### **Hands Forward** (MB4 2<sup>nd</sup> p14)

Both arms, elbows straight, are swung forward and upward to a horizontal position level with the shoulders.

This is marked in the diagrams:-

fwd. (forward).

#### **Hands Up** (MB4 2<sup>nd</sup> p14)

The arms, well bent at the elbows, are swung forward, so that the hands are six inches or more above the head, and twelve to eighteen inches in front of the body.

The position is similar to the Swing-high-forward (see Part 3 p.16), but the hands are raised higher and the elbows bent forward, not outward.

This is marked in the diagrams:-

b. up (both hands up)

or, if one hand only is raised,

r. (or l.) up.

#### **The Twist** (see also p6) (MB4 2<sup>nd</sup> P14)

The hands are held "up," as above described, and rapidly twisted in small circles, clockwise. The circular movement is executed mainly with the wrist, but partly with the forearm; the upper arm must be motionless.

This is marked in the diagrams:

tw. (twist both hands)

or, if one hand only is raised and twisted,

tw.r. (or l.).

When the twist is repeated, each successive repetition will be marked with an asterisk, thus:-



### **Hands Apart** (MB4 2<sup>nd</sup> p15)

The arms, in the position -of Hands-up, are straightened, swung out and down, and lowered to the sides or till the hands are level with the hips, according to circumstances The movement is like a "There you are!" gesture, and usually accompanies the Jump.

This is marked in the diagrams:-

APART.

### **The Salute** (MB4 2<sup>nd</sup> p15)

One hand is brought from the dancer's side to the top of his forehead with a wide semi-circular sweep of the arm. Directly the hand touches the forehead, hand and head are ducked down. The movement, which is like "pulling the forelock" or "making your obedience," must be executed with the greatest deliberation and ceremony.

If, as is usual, the Salute is performed in one bar of the music, the duck of the head should be made on the middle beat of the bar.

This is marked in the diagrams:-

sal.r. (or l.), i.e., salute with right (or left) hand.

## **Steps.**

### **Kneeling** (MB4 2<sup>nd</sup> p15)

The dancer puts one leg forward, bends the knee, and then lowers the body until the knee of the other leg rests upon the ground. The action is usually accompanied by Hands-forward.

This is marked in the diagrams:-

kn.r. (or l.), i.e., kneel on right (or left) knee.

**The Kick-Jump** (MB4 2<sup>nd</sup> p15)

The dancer springs as high as possible off both feet and alights on both feet. While in the air, he swings one leg forward and upward, as in the Caper, and doubles back the other leg at the knee. It is an operation which calls for some agility.

This is marked in the diagrams:-

k.J. (kick-jump)  
r.b. (right leg doubled back) ;

or

k.J.  
l.b. (left leg doubled back).

**The Back Kick** (MB4 2<sup>nd</sup> p16)

A step is taken with one foot, say the right; the left leg is simultaneously bent at the knee and its lower part quickly swung back so that the back of the heel approaches the back of the thigh. It is then immediately straightened and the foot planted on the ground, heel down, toe up, close beside the toe of the right foot. The left thigh should not be raised, but must be moved forward an inch or two to allow the heel to be thrust forward. The movement is almost wholly confined to the lower part of the leg.

This is marked in the diagrams:-

r. l.H. (left heel).  
b.k. (back-kick).

or

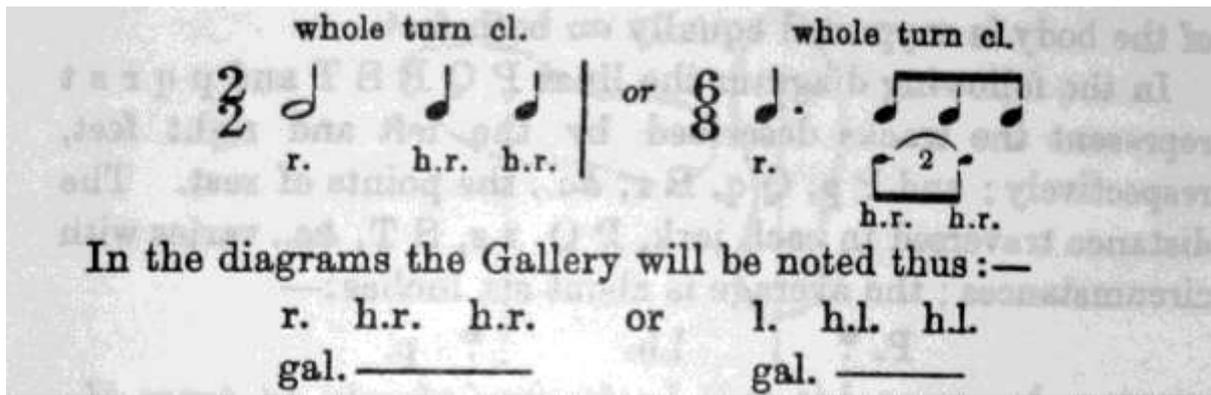
l. r.H.  
b.k.

**The Gallery or Galley** (MB4 2<sup>nd</sup> p16)

Standing on one foot, say the right, the performer raises the left thigh, bends the knee, and swings round the lower part of the leg, the foot describing one or two circles in a horizontal plane level with the knee of the supporting leg. The toe of the swinging leg must not be pointed. The direction of the circle is clockwise or counter-clockwise according as the swinging leg is left or right.

The movement is sometimes made in a stationary position, but more often while the dancer is turning on his axis. In the latter case, it is technically known as the "Galley out," the performer turning clockwise or counter-clockwise according as the supporting leg is right or left.

The Gallery occupies one bar of the music, the supporting leg taking a step at the beginning of the bar and either one or two hops during the second half of the measure. If two hops are taken they should fall on the third and fourth quarters of the bar, whether the time be simple or compound, thus:-



**Draw Back** (MB4 2<sup>nd</sup> p17)

Sometimes, especially in caper-movements, a step is made backward instead of forward, as the context would otherwise suggest. In such cases the letters d.b. (draw-back), will in the diagrams be placed under the steps which are to be made backward, thus:-

l.      r.  
          d.b.

**Toe Forward** (MB4 2<sup>nd</sup> p17)

Standing on one foot, say the left, the right foot is swung forward and the toe placed on the ground about eighteen inches forward. The right foot is then brought back beside the left and the weight of the body transferred to it, while a slight spring is, simultaneously, made off the left foot. The movement is similar to the Back-toe (see Part 3 p26), with the omission, however, of the initial hop on the supporting foot. This will be marked in the diagrams:-

r.t.f. (right toe forward)    r.  
  d.b.

or

l.t.f.                                    1.  
  d.b.

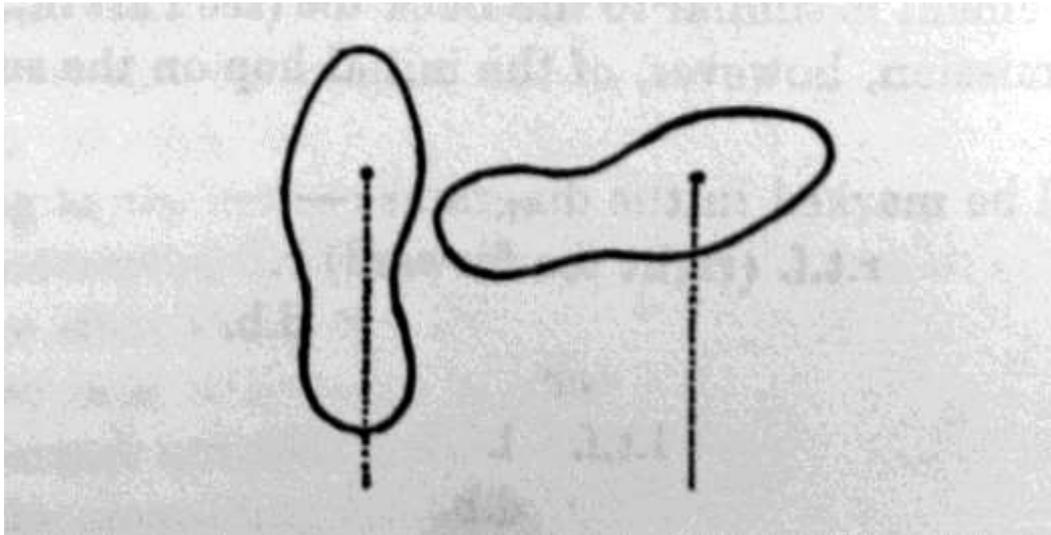
**The Shuffle Back Step** (MB4 2<sup>nd</sup> p18)

In this movement the feet, about ten or eleven inches apart, are slid backward in a series of jerks along straight and parallel lines. The sliding motion is executed on the balls of the feet, with the heels an inch from the ground.

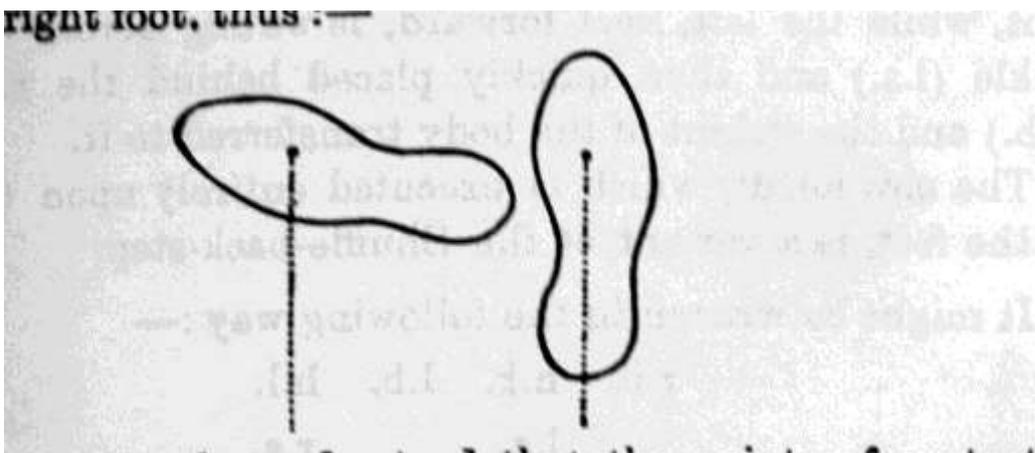
The weight of the body is supported equally on both feet. In the following diagram the lines P Q K S T and p q r s t represent the tracks described by the left and right feet, respectively; and P p, Q q, R r, &c., the points of rest. The distance traversed in each jerk, P Q, r s, S T, &c., varies with circumstances; the average is about six inches:

P.	l.b.	p
Q	r.b	q
R	l.b	r
S	r.b.	s
T	f.t	t

At P p the position of the feet is l.b., i.e., the left foot lies in the line P Q, and the right foot approximately at right angles to it in the line p P, the right heel resting close beside the toe of the left foot, thus:



During the passage from P p to Q q, the position is reversed from l.b. to r.b.; that is, the heel of the right foot is swung back to its normal position in the line of motion, while the left heel is swung forward and inward until it rests beside the toe of the right foot, thus:



It must be clearly understood that the points of contact between the feet and the ground are parallel throughout the movement.

The movement is thus a dual one, compounded of a backward jerk of the feet along parallel lines, together with a pivoting movement on the balls of the feet, one heel swinging outward, the other inward. The knees must be slightly bent and turned, synchronously with the heels, alternately outward and inward. The feet are usually brought together (f.t.) at the last resting place.

The beginner is advised to practise these two movements separately. First, let him place his two feet parallel, about ten inches apart, and practise the back shuffle along the double track P Q R, p q r, the feet lying throughout in the line of motion, with the weight of the body evenly distributed between them.

Next, let him place his feet alternately in the positions l.b. and r.b., as above described, pivoting on the balls of the feet, without moving backward. These two movements mastered, it will not be difficult to combine them. This step will be marked in the diagrams:-

l.b.    r.b.    l.b.    r.b.  
 b. s . .....

**The Hop Back Step** (MB4 2<sup>nd</sup> p20)

One foot, say the right, is placed close behind the left (r.b.) and carries the weight of the body. The toes of both feet must be well turned out. A hop is then made on the right foot, while the left, heel forward, is swung across the right ankle (l.a.) and then quickly placed behind the right foot (l.b.) and the weight of the body transferred to it. The movement, which is executed entirely upon the balls of the feet, is a variant of the Shuffle-back-step. It might be written in the following way:-

r.b.    h.r.    l.b.    h.l.  
 l.a.                    r.a.

For brevity's sake, however, it will be marked in the diagrams:-

r.b. l.b. r.b.  
 h.b.s.

**The Step Back** (MB4 2<sup>nd</sup> p20)

This is a close variant of the Back-step (see Part 3 p.24).

Instead, however, of the ball of the free foot being placed quietly and deliberately behind the heel of the supporting foot, the free leg is bent back at the knee and the foot placed flat and decidedly upon the ground, the toes, with a forward scrape, coming into contact before the heel. Directly the heel touches the ground the leg is straightened and the weight of the body transferred to it. Throughout the movement the toes of both feet must be well turned out. At each crossing of the feet the body should be slightly turned on the hips, and the head inclined in the direction of the moving foot.

The step is accompanied by the hand-movements "r.in," or "l.in," executed with great decision and with a twist, almost a shrug, of the shoulders. The Step-back is thus a forceful and robust form of the Back step.

It will be marked in the diagrams thus:-

Hands    r.in    l.in    r.in  
 Feet    l.b    r.b    l.b.  
           s.b.....

**Morris Book 5**

**Hands.**

**The Wide Twist** (MB5 2<sup>nd</sup> p15)

THE arms, slightly bent, are held wide apart, parallel with the ground, the hands at shoulder-level. In this position the hands are rapidly twisted (the right hand clockwise, the left counter-clockwise), so

that they describe small circles in a vertical plane about six inches in front of the body. The circular movement is executed almost entirely with the wrist.

This is marked in the diagrams:-

w.tw. (both hands)

or, if one hand only is twisted,

w.tw.r. (or l.).

When the Wide-twist is repeated, each successive repetition will be marked with an asterisk.

**The Counter Twist** (MB5 2<sup>nd</sup> p15)

The arms, bent at the elbow, are held well in front of the body, the hands at head-level. In this position the hands are rapidly twisted (the right hand counter-clockwise, the left hand clockwise, i.e., in a direction the reverse of the normal), so that they describe small circles in a plane very nearly vertical. The circular movement must be executed mainly with the wrist, but partly with the fore arm.

This will be marked in the diagrams:-

c.tw. (both hands)

or, if one hand only is twisted,

c.tw.r. (or l.).

When the twist is repeated, each successive repetition will be marked with an asterisk.

**Quick Down** (MB5 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

**The Jerk** (MB5 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

### Steps.

#### **Leg Across** (MB5 2<sup>nd</sup> p17)

A slight spring is made on to each foot in succession, the two feet striking the ground, in turn, at approximately the same spot. Synchronously with the spring, the free leg is smartly swung in front of, and well across, the supporting leg, so that on alighting the two legs are crossed. During the execution of this movement the body must be held erect and not allowed to sway from side to side.

This will be marked in the diagrams:-

r.            l.  
xl.          xr. (cross left ; cross right)

or

l.            r.  
xr.          xl.

The accompanying hand-movement is Circle (Part1., p. 58).

#### **The Hockle Back Step** (MB5 2<sup>nd</sup> p17)

This is a variant of the Swing-step (Part 3, p. 27). A step followed by a hop is made on each foot in turn; while, simultaneously, the free leg is swung behind the other and takes the ground a few inches on the outside of the supporting foot, and at about the same distance behind it. Dancers must be careful not to exaggerate the movement by, for instance, swinging the free foot too far across.

This will be marked in the diagrams:-

r.b. l.b.  
hkl.b.s. ....

#### **The Split Jump** (MB5 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

**The Double Caper** (MB5 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

This will be marked in the diagrams:-

R.	h.r.	L.	h.l.
sh.l.		sh.r.	