

SOCIAL DANCES COLLECTED IN THE SOUTHERN COUNTIES

The 19th century social dances that have been recovered can not be considered traditional in the way that the ritual dances are, because like instrumental music and song, it is the technique not the material that is traditional. The social dance of the ordinary people in the south of England has always reflected fashion and novelty but has also preserved good sociable dances of the past. Even today one will meet MCs with no interest at all in "folk" using Strip the Willow Russian Ballet Tempete as well as party versions of late Victorian couple dances.

Many dances have been published by the EFDSS since Cecil Sharp's original Country Dance Book 1. Dances collected in the south include

- CDM 1 - Double Lead Through, Cross Hands or Bonnets So Blue,
Speed the Plough Steamboat.
CDM 2 - Hunt the Squirrel, Bonny Breast Knot
CDM 3 - Tempest, Russian Ballet Dorset Ring Dance
CDM 5 - Bonny Breast Knot (Sussex), Wilts 6 Hand Reel, Dorset Triumph
Dorset 4 Hand Reel
CDM 7 - Up the Sides & Down the Middle, College Hornpipe,
Soldiers Joy, Haste to the Wedding
EFD in Primary Schools - Three Meet, Brighton Camp.

COUPLE DANCES

Because we have an "Old Time" dance movement most of the Quadrilles and couple dances are not considered folk although they are so considered everywhere else in the world. The Scots, Irish, Americans & north Europeans have used their equivalent period as the basis of their national dance style and technique where as the English flounder (partly as a consequence of reviving Playford) with the too few relics of older traditions. Meanwhile the Old Time world has thrown away the genuine thing.

There were many couple dances of local fame of which the polkas and schottisches are most likely to be recognised and collected as an example

MARMALADE POLKA - Drayton Berks.

Music Marmalade or other polka
Form Progressive couple dance

- Bars 1-8 Couples polka round room
9 All stamp right foot three times
10 All shake 1st finger of right hand at partner 3 times
11 Stamp left foot three times
12 Shake 1st finger of left hand three times
13-15 turn partner linking right elbows
16 Man moves on to new partner.

This is an English version of the dance, widespread in Northern Europe generically known as the Finger Polka.

REELS

Step dances and reels seem to be the oldest elements of the British traditions although the former must have been strongly influenced by the dancing teachers and the latter by the periodic fascination for things Scottish, although the reels (3 & 4 hand) are no more Scottish than is the Dashing White Sargeant. There is no complete consistent stepping tradition in the south and there are no recognised travelling or stationary steps characteristic of any part of the region although with the help of persons such as Peter Kennedy a system based on observed steps could be constructed.

BRIXHAM REEL - an eight hand reel for 4 couples. (nr. Plymouth)

Music
Form Four couples in circle, men with partner on their right

- A1 Join hands & all circle round to the left
A2 Circle back to the right ending in two lines of 4 as for
Four-hand-reel each man facing the girl on his left in the
circle
B1 Step facing this girl (4 bars) step & change places (4 bars)
B2 Reels of four ending in the changed places.
In repeats of circling, end with men moved one place further round
clockwise ie girls in original position. Dance ends with swing partn.

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DUMMER REEL - a 5 hand reel from nr. Basingstoke

music Girl I Left Behind Me
form 5 persons in a circle

- A1 Join hands and circle round to the left, stopping
- A2 1st person turns back and does a grand chain with the other 4 who continue in the same direction as before releasing hands.
- B1 1st person goes into centre balance and swing one of the other four.
- B2 Balance and swing person opposite that swung in B1
- A3 Reel of three
- A4 5 handed basket
- B3 Same person balance and swing the 3rd person
- B4 Ditto the 4th.
- A5 as A3
- A6 as A4

Repeat from A1 each person in turn leading. End on a basket.

LONGWAYS PROGRESSIVE, duple minor proper

NUTTING GIRL, Dorset. Danced with ribbons it becomes the "East Coker Morris Dance", danced to a hornpipe it becomes "The Butterfly"

- A1 Right and left hands across
- B1 Arches twice over.
- A2 Swing and change

HASTE TO THE WEDDING, Devon -5/6 cu set

- A1 bar 1 1st man and 2nd girl bow
- 2 both stamp and then clap
- 3-4 turn round on spot on heels
- 5-8 swing
- A2 Right and left hands across
- B1 1st cu down middle and back to place
- B2 Cus swing round slowly to change places.

SINGLE CHANGE SIDES Cowley, Exeter.

- A1 Lines cross over to opposite side & retire backwards to place Girls joining inside hands in pairs & crossing between the men.
- A2 Hands four round and back
- B1 1st cus down middle and back to place
- B2 cus swing and change places.

THE ROCK collected from man in Surrey formerly from Devon

- A1 Partners link right arms and turn once around, then with left.
- A2 1st cus lead down middle cast out & walk back to place up outside.
- B1 Hands four round and back
- B2 Swing and change places.

OFF TO CHARLESTON same source - whole set dance

- A1 Partners cross & return as in Speed the Plough
- A2 Hands four round and back
- B1 top couple separate walk down outside of set & meet at bottom
- B2 same cu moves slowly up to the top under arches (with handks if liked) made by all the other dancers. (stepping)
- A3 Right hands across and back with the left
- B3 Top cu waltz slowly down to bottom while rest clap.

As collected short sets, only top 2 cus did A1, A2, A3.

CUMBERLAND REEL same source - whole set dance - "Quakers Wife"

- A1 Arches as in Nutting Girl or Butterfly
- A2 Single cast lead by top cu but bottom cu stand & make the arch
- B1 as B3 above

Both above dances can be done with handks or ribbons linking partners

TEMPETE 4 v. 4 Devon

- A1 lines of four forward and back twice.
 A2 with person opposite (not partner) gallop 8 steps to right and swing on spot 8 steps gallop 8 steps to left & swing again.
 B1 middle four right hands across and back with the left while outside pairs continue to swing.
 B2 lines go forward and back & forward & pass through.

UP THE SIDES AND DOWN THE MIDDLE

Every village seems to have had its own way of doing this simple usually non-progressive dance.

Version 1 (Wilts)

Form Long set of four couples

- A1 Lines of 4 balance right and left twice (cross feet) & then cross over to opposite place & turn to face.
 A2 Repeat to place.
 B1 Top couple swings slowly down centre to bottom & there make an arch while rest of set do a single cast, clapping.
 B2 Couples lead up through arch & all swing.

Version 2 (Beaminster, Dorset)

Form Long set for as many as will

- A1 1st couple leads down the middle followed by the rest in order, and all single cast up the sides to places (man turns toward partner at bottom before casting)
 A2 Repeat with stepping
 B1 1 - 4 partners line up
 5 - 8 Foot-it
 B2 1 - 4 Partners cross over to change places
 5 - 8 foot-it

Repeat all this on opposite sides ad lib.

CROSS HANDS FOUR (Beaminster, Dorset)

Music Pop Goes the Weasel

Form Two couples facing non-progressive

- A1 Right hands across and back with the left
 B1 Partners swing both clockwise and anticlockwise
 A2 Both the men & the girls join both hands across the middle and turn to left and to right.
 B2 as B1
 A3 Hands four round (with hands raised & elbows bent)
 B3 as B1
 A4 Basket to left and right
 B4 as B1

Dance proceeds by repeating or ad libbing to A music

RUSSIAN BALLET, Hants.

Variants of this dance have been published in CDM 3 & "Folk" No.3 However the essential feature of the dance, the kissing which has ensured its survival in tradition has been ignored.

Form Trios of a man with a girl on either side all facing round ballroom direction

Version 1

- A1 Join inside hands & march forward 8 steps
 Man bows to right hand partner & then to left hand partner who curtsey in turn.
 A2 Man swings right hand partner with ballroom hold & then left hand partner
 B1 Double arches - man joins inside hands again, raises right to form an arch with right hand partner. The left hand partner goes through & turns behind man back to her place, the man & right hand partner then turn inwards under their arch.
 Repeat with left hand arch. Repeat all.
 B2 Man kisses his right hand partner, then his left hand one. The man only then does 4 high kicks facing forward on the spot. He walks forward to stand between the next pair of girls.

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Version 2

- A1 Lines of three walk forward & back twice
- A2 Man arms right hand girl once round & left hand girl once round (man does a figure 8)
Arches as before but done only once
- B1 Kiss as before & walk on to next pair of girls.

Version 3

- A1 Lines of three walk forward 8 steps & retire 8 steps.
- A2 Lines go forward 8; back 4 steps
Arches once through.
- B1 Kiss partners in turn then walk onto next pair.

HASTE TO THE WEDDING Wilts

Form Long set of three couples

- A1 Lines of three forward & back then cross over to opposite place
- A2 Repeat to place
- B1 1st & 3rd cus do right hands across & back while the centre couple cast up to the top of the set.
- B2 All join hands & circle once round to the left.

In repeats of B1 the successive middle couples cast to bottom & top.

SWEDISH COUNTRY DANCE

Form Longways set for 4 or 5 cus (5 preferred)

- A1 Top couple gallop down middle and back
- A2 & B1 Top couple strip the willow to the bottom. Start giving right hand to partner
- B2 man walks round inside of set, holding partners left hand in his right. Girl walks round outside of set. Other dancers may kneel and/or clap
- A3 Partners form arches by joining both hands. 1st couple pass up set to place under arches, ending improper
- B3 1st man alternately pushes & pulls his partner weaving between the couples in a sort of hey to the bottom of the set. As each couple is passed they move in the opposite sense to the 1st couple ie the men push & pull in unison. If desired all the couples could move in unison throughout the figure. 1st couple turns to their own side at the bottom.

An alternate much longer ending

- A3 When making the arches the men hold their partners right hand in their left & the left hand of the girl next down the set (to his right) in his right so that the girls have their arms crossed left over right. When the first couple reach the top they join the arches in the same manner.
- B3 etc. - 1st girl leads the chain down under the arches - it unravels naturally - & leads it off circling clockwise. The last man stands firm & does not turn on the spot so that the set winds up on him in a "snail". When it is wound up, not too tight the last man ducks out anywhere & leads the chain circling clockwise as the snail unwinds from the middle. When unraveled all circle right until 1st couple at the top. The 1st man breaks the circle & leads his partner down to the bottom of the set, the other couples following them in the order that they were circling behind them. It will be found that the progression has happened naturally.

This dance as popular in ballrooms at the turn of the century & was frequently taught by English teachers till 1914 under such names as the "Scandinavian Dance" or the "Norwegian dance". Traditional versions have been published by the RSCDS as Heabridean Weaving Lilt & Foola Reel & by the EFDSS as Stoke Golding Country Dance & Foola Reel.