

STANTON HARCOURT WORKSHOP

TO BEGIN

These notes are to help anyone who wishes to learn this Cotswold Morris Dance Tradition but is unfamiliar with it or has only met it briefly, and probably is not very familiar with the elements of the Cotswold dance idiom. Stanton Harcourt is actually a reconstructed tradition from the 1960's, based on manuscript sources. As a number of independent interpretations exist of interest, some these are be described at the end. The prime version described is essentially as it was evolved with Bath City.

Whoever is instructing should make themselves familiar with this material which is set out in a sensible order for teaching in a workshop. It is not divided into packages for club practice, which is matter for the club's foreman. Before beginning, an understanding should be reached with the musician on the music to be used and how it is to be controlled by the instructor. Considerable care should be taken if using a band when learning new material as they are relatively unresponsive. The pace of working should be sufficient to keep up interest but not so fast that confusion is caused by trying to learn too many things at the same time. Each element should be understood and practiced in turn and dancers should concentrate on developing skills without too many long pauses between for resting and distraction.

BASICS

There are a number of basics that need to be well learnt which are the foundation of good morris and good dancing. Attention should be drawn to these at the start of all practice sessions. Basics do not require dancing in any set formation and it is helpful for all to stand in a circle to allow a clear view for each dancer of every thing being shown and as it is practiced. It should be realised that some dancers have difficulty in following demonstrated movements when the leader is not facing the same way as themselves and this should be allowed for when teaching.