

SHERBORNE WORKSHOP

INTRODUCTION

Source - Nearly all the source material came from the Cecil Sharp interviews with George Simpson then living in Upton near Didcot, which was in Berkshire. He had taught a mixed children's team in the hamlet of which a photograph survives and he had a young local woman play the fiddle for it. His brother and another dancer have been met but they contributed very little. There is now an active team based in Sherborne village.

Basis - This material is based closely on transcriptions of the original write up of the collected material, in preference to Sharp's Morris Book IV and any other recent publications, and is as taught in many public workshops and to particular sides. Unlike other traditions collected by Cecil Sharp there is little extra in his Field Notebooks. Other important interpretations and dances are discussed later. A structured order for learning the dances is followed but this is not compromised in order to teach the basics of morris which can be found in more detail elsewhere. Some use is made of helpful mnemonics used to call sequences of movements. The morris jargon is used extensively, unfortunately words such as step, out, set, down and up have multiple usages but the context should make it clear which is intended.

There are three types of dances in the Sherborne tradition, and they are grouped together for this workshop, although they would be mixed together in any public show,

1. **Set** dances in which all six dance more or less continuously.
2. **Corner** dances in which the distinctive part of the dance involves diagonally opposite pairs changing places in turn.
3. **Jigs** danced as solos or duals.

BASIC FEET AND HANDS

Stance - The basic stance is upright with the weight forward over the balls of the feet, the stomach pulled in, the ribcage raised and the neck elongated, with head, eyes and shoulders level. This gives elevation and, by the stiffening of the upper body, provides a good foundation for movement. The feet are turned out with about a 45° to 60° included angle. This is not essential to the dance but it is characteristic of the Cotswold Morris. "Feet Together" means this position with the heels almost touching.

The Double Step - The basic **Cotswold Morris Step** is a quick change of weight from one foot to the other with the free foot in the air being swung forward parallel to the ground till the heel is in line with the toes of the supporting foot. The characteristic **Sherborne** double step is, in a mnemonic,

"step, hop, change, change"

which is different to any other village, although George Simpson might have been the only Sherborne dancer that performed it this way. Smoothness is achieved by having confidence in knowing what one is doing and doing it, rather than trying for continuous control of the movement by counter-balancing tensions in all the muscles. There is a fair amount of rise and fall in the steps, achieved by some bending of the knee as well as by the flexing of the ankle and the utilisation of the thigh muscles in lifting up.

Although there is a body sink inherent in each step, the emphasis here is given to the thrust upwards.

Sequence - The figures in the Set dances are mostly danced to a fixed sequence of steps, given as,

"1, hop, 2, 3; Step, &, jump, 'up'; Down, & a, down, & a; Down, together."

The first half of this sequence is normally danced travelling forward and the second half retiring backwards. In a figure this sequence would be done starting with the left foot and then repeated starting on the right foot. The '1 hop 2 3' is a normal Sherborne step, left, hop on left, right, left. From the 'Step' there is spring off of the one foot to land with both feet together. Immediately on landing - remember the feet should desirably be turned out from each other - the dancer rises onto their toes while twisting the heels

to the left or right as appropriate, so that one foot is now straight and the other is almost at right angles to it, with the heel against the other foot's instep - this is 'up'.

The Sherborne backstep as used for travelling backwards, is called **Shuffles**. It consists of moving from the 'up' position to a 'down' and back again as often as is needed to fill the music. The 'down' position is the mirror image of 'up', with the feet twisted to the other side, except that instead of the heels being high off the ground they are almost touching the ground. The rhythm of the sequence of shuffles is not even, more time is spent when up than down - 'down up &' = 'cha - chaah'. From the final 'down' there is a spring off of both feet to land with feet "together". The balls of the feet are in contact with the ground throughout. It can now be seen why the turn out of the feet is so large, so that the feet can be rotated without mutual interference. The emphasis is on the down and up of the body and not the twist of the feet, which is far less visible to the audience, and which can so easily degenerate into a flat movement with no grace whatsoever.

The emphasis of the movement of the body in ordinary stepping is upwards, achieving elevation. The emphasis of the movement in a Cotswold backstep is in the downwards drop, even though more of the time is spent 'up' - the switch or contrast from bar to bar is another attractive feature of the style - but the 'down' movement occurs here on the strong beats of the music not the weak. The beats of the tune mark the time of the first contact of the foot with the ground for each step. It is self evident that most of the body's movement occurs between beats, which is why it is easy to show movements but not to describe them.

There are no held poses or even momentary holds during the morris dance phrases as are used in classical dance forms, as they break the flow, but if those moments of change of direction in a movement, eg in arm swinging, are truly together around the side, the effect is impressive. The regular rise and fall of the body continues right through the stepping sequence and is characteristic of the tradition.

The Arms - Arm movements are to add style and balance to the dancing and to help dynamically in performing jumps and turns. During the fixed stepping sequence the arms move together as mirror images, not alternately.

The arms movements are with the arms "comfortably" straight. The starting position is with the arms horizontal at shoulder level, parallel, in front of the body, hands lightly clenched and palms downward. The arms are brought back to this position every time the dancer lands from a jump and are not raised any higher. This is another characteristic Sherborne feature.

The usual arm movements swing the arms back and forward, the hands passing close by the outside of the upper thigh. During "stepping" the hands in swinging back do not pass the back of the body and in the swing forward do not come more than half way up to the "starting" position. The same form of arm swing is used with other "steps", although perhaps being more emphatic or larger as would be appropriate to the "step".

During a stepping sequence in a figure then the arm movements are, starting from the arms in the forward, horizontal position, a swing down and half up on the '1 hop 2 3', a swing back and raise up forward again on the step and jump, a slight drop to hold at the half down angle or a little higher for the shuffles so as to balance, and then a swing back and up to the forward starting position on the final 'down and spring to land feet together'. There is no "snatch", nor a "scoop" or swing out to the side. The arm position during the shuffles may be thought of as either as they would be if two short sticks were being carried and held crossed up before the face as in "Constant Billy", or as they would be having just released someone from a hug! This particular arm position is called "out".

It is not easy to coordinate arm and leg movements when both are unfamiliar and some structured practice is desirable.

THE SET DANCE FIGURES

In the figures the first half is usually done beginning with (ie onto) the left foot and the second half starting with the right foot. Each figure therefore requires its stepping sequence to be done twice. The first four figures of set dances described use the stepping sequence already given.

FOOT-UP - The set faces up, towards the music, and dances the sequence in that direction, turning to face directly away from their opposite on the final jump. The set then turns to face down, with backs to the music, and dances the same sequence in the other direction, turning the shortest way to face across towards their opposite on the final jump. The facing “out” at the half way point is a distinctive Sherborne characteristic.

SET - sometimes it was called **Half Gyp**. Opposites start facing across the set. The dancers move forward to be just past each other, right shoulder by right shoulder, that is bearing a little to their left as they go forward. The travel is on the ‘1 hop 2 3’ and ‘step’. From the ‘just past’ position, they jump backwards a little to land to be actually shoulder to shoulder and then shuffle, step-&-jump backwards to their starting place, facing the same direction throughout. This is then repeated starting with the right foot, bearing a little to their right, moving forward and passing left shoulder by left shoulder etc.

BACK-TO-BACK - This figure starts similarly to SET but the dancers have to pass round each other, still facing the same direction throughout, hence the name back-to-back. The dancers move a little further on the ‘1 hop 2 3’ so that the ‘step’ can be done across and behind their opposite and they can land from the jump on the other side of their opposite, shoulder to shoulder. In this movement they will be left shoulder to left shoulder before the shuffle in the first half and right shoulder to right shoulder in the second half of the figure.

FACE-TO-FACE - sometimes it was called **Whole Gyp**. The path is the same as BACK-TO-BACK but the dancer rotates during the travel instead of facing the same way throughout. As the descriptive name implies, the dancers start by moving round each other keeping face to face until they have swapped sides and are facing back to their own position. They do not go very far past, being quite close before the next movement. On the ‘step-jump-&-up’ the dancers rotate in the opposite sense to that to which they have been turning so that they end shoulder to shoulder again ready to shuffle back to place. It should be remembered as bearing to the left while turning the body to the right, till facing back, then turn left with the jump to end left shoulder to left shoulder. Repeat going the other way and with opposite rotations. This turn at half way may be recalled as “bum-to-bum”.

It is a fine point that dancers should do the ‘up’ to start the shuffles such that the body (bum) moves away from their partner, thus it is different in the SET compared to the subsequent two figures.

Experience shows that the dancers should first practice the stepping sequences on their own, then to the track of the above figures and finally to add in the arm movements.

Each dance has distinctive movements specific to the dance, commonly called CHORUSES, which usually occur between the FIGURES and which are often the same thing repeated or with small variations to a common theme.

SOME OTHER STEPS

Plain Capers - These are high springs from one foot to the other, two to a bar, that is at about half the speed of ordinary stepping. The objective is achieving height, lifting the body centre of gravity up, rather than in kicking the legs out in front. They require a good preparatory sink so that the thigh muscles can properly contribute to the lift. The lower leg is not kicked forward but allowed to hang down fairly straight

from the knee without real tension in it. The arms do large swings back and forward, one or other movement per caper.

The movement is very similar to that needed to jump over a horizontal stick held 12 to 18 inches off the ground.

Galley - usually called **Gallery** by George Simpson. Although it was a common movement in the Wychwood and Stow areas, the Sherborne method of dancing it was peculiar to the team. They especially prided themselves on the gallery which they used at all 'corners' ie turns. Elsewhere, for example at Longborough and Fieldtown, the dancer used the galley to turn smoothly through the whole movement and it is essential to clearly distinguish this from the Sherborne way. The first step is forward, without any turning of the body, unlike elsewhere, then the dancer does as high a spring as possible to land on the same foot, turning in the air as much as possible for what is needed for that point in the dance, followed by another hop on which the turn can be completed or adjusted. The free leg is raised till the thigh is nearly horizontal as the first step is made and the thigh is turned out about 45°. If there is a turn following the step, the free leg is twisted across in front to help the dancer to turn quickly. During this 'twist' and the following hop, the raised free foot is turned in two small circles in the horizontal plane alongside and at about the height of the knee of the supporting leg. The foot is not pointed downwards particularly.

The direction of the small circles is clockwise or anticlockwise looking down according to the free foot being the left or the right. The Sherborne dancers did not usually make galleys that included a complete turn on the spot but preferred to do the galley without a change in the direction faced. The movement must not develop into a leaning back with the free leg out in front, throughout the dancer has their weight over the ball of the supporting foot, leaning a little forward, with the twists of the free foot under the body quite close to the other knee.

The 'turn' part of the galley, which often is used alone, is frequently finished by a 'step' and landing with the feet together. However it varies somewhat from dance to dance and even within dances, so that it can be followed by two plain capers or by putting the feet together, jumping and landing feet together again. Sharp published the latter consistently throughout all the dances and it was probably the declared objective of the dancers to do it this way if the music or movement allowed it, however Sharp mostly noted the 'step-&-jump' and this should be considered the norm.

The arm movements in the galley are "out" at the sides as in the shuffles and "down-&-foward" as in the 'step-&-jump' following the shuffles in a figure. So the arm movements are the same as they are in the corresponding part of figures which do not have the galley. Traditionally a galley with turn is called a "galley-out" because the direction of the turn is "out", that is away from the centre of the set. In turning out the dancer always galleyed with the leg most suitable for the direction of the turn, on the left going anticlockwise etc.

THE SET DANCES

The first dance given can be practiced with the following chorus and the figures already described, although it would not be complete.

CUCKOO'S NEST

CHORUS - All 6 dancers face down, away from the music. The bottom pair,

Nos 5 & 6 only, dance 4 plain capers on the spot starting with the outside foot, odds with the right, evens with the left, while the other 4 stand still. In the next two bars Nos 3 & 4 repeat this in their places while the other 4 stand still. Then the tops, Nos 1 & 2, dance on their own 2 bars of Sherborne double step, also starting outside foot, but note not doing plain capers, and then everyone galleys-out to

face up towards the music. The step forward when going into the galley must be emphasised as the feature of the chorus.

All this is repeated facing up and starting with Nos 1 & 2 doing 4 plain capers etc. It ends with all galleying-out to face front, that is towards one's opposite.

END OF SET DANCES

Most Set dances end with **Rounds, Whole Hey** and **Rounds-&-Caper Up**, without any further chorus movements, although the Whole Hey is usually danced to the chorus part of the tune played only once through.

The stepping in these figures is two bars of Sherborne double 'steps', '1 hop 2 3, 1 hop 2 3', and a galley-out, step-&-jump to land feet together. This is the same stepping as the last pair in the "Cuckoo's Nest" chorus.

ROUNDS - sometimes it was called **Half-Rounds** because the dancers go almost half way round the set in a circular path and then come back again along the same path to their starting place. The whole set start by making up to a quarter turn to their left to face round the set clockwise. The middles can move out a little during this turn to form a true circle. This is the "easy" way into the figure. They dance the step sequence just given, starting with the 'outside' foot, the left, moving round the set for nearly two places, not three, and then stepping forward in the direction of travel and galleying-out, on the left foot, into two lines to face across the set. In this case the dancers are not facing their normal opposites. However it is not always thought important to face across and dancers can turn to face back instead and not close in to form two lines, but stay in the circular formation. In this circumstance it is not important how far the dancers travel before they turn to face back, but it is consistent with the style of the tradition, which emphasises bounce rather than speed over the ground, not to travel very far. The dancers come back to their starting place starting with the new outside foot, the right, and galley-out on the right foot to face across the set at the end.

WHOLE-HEY - sometimes it was called a **Double-Hey** because it is two half-veys done consecutively. In a hey the three dancers on one side move round a figure eight, first to change ends and then to come back to their starting place. The centres go to an end but return to the middle in each half movement. It is not a reel of three in the Country Dance sense. The tops, Nos 1 & 2, turn up and out to their left and right respectively, move down the set through their middle's places, moving in to be almost shoulder to shoulder facing down and then step out to their bottom's places with the galley-out, again turning out and round to face across to their opposite. At the same time the bottoms, Nos 5 & 6, turn down and out to their right and left respectively, move up the set going through their middle's places, after the top pair have passed through, and, going in a little to be shoulder to shoulder, then galleying-out into their top's places, turning left and right respectively to face across to their opposite. Meanwhile the middles go up the centre close together, to allow the tops to go through their starting places, and then turn out from the centre line of the set to follow the tops round, but ending in their own starting places.

The second half of the whole hey is the mirror image of this, Nos 1 & 2 turn out at the bottom and go through the middle's places first, the Nos 5 & 6 turn out at the top and follow Nos 1 & 2 across the middle's places and Nos 3 & 4 do down the middle following Nos 1 & 2.

The travelling must only take the first two bars, that is the two Sherborne double steps, so that the step into the galley-out can be made into the final position. Each half movement ends with the dancers facing across the set.

Ideally the tops turn very quickly to go down the set and do not move far out in traversing the first loop of the figure eight, as they need to keep out of everyone else's way. The middles should follow the tops fairly closely, only leaving just enough room for the bottoms to pass between the tops and middles as they

come up the set. As the bottoms come through a little after the tops, they can make a larger loop to start and then move quickly between the others.

To turn out at the end of the half heys, Nos 1, 3 & 6 galley on their right foot the first half and on the left the second and the other three do the opposite. To avoid any adjustment of the steps the dancers start the half heys on the same foot that they are to galley on. Notice that not only do the middles follow the tops paths both times, but they have the same starting foot and galley foot. It is often difficult to visualise the foot to be galleyed on when starting a half hey, so it can be thought of as the foot that goes up/down the middle of the set and then starts to swing round the outside as the body turns.

There is a similar problem in sticking to the “first half left and second half right” starting foot rule in the Foot-Up, although it is not very apparent when doing Foot-Up with shuffles. In corner dances the Foot-Up is danced with galleys and then it is natural to start with the outside foot, that is, left for the odds and right for the evens in the first half and vice versa in the second.

The Cotswold Morris competitions were fussy about the choice of starting foot and appear as far as we know to have insisted on the “left and right” rule. Also extra “fudge” steps that would allow changing the lead foot during a movement were frowned upon and listened for as extra ringing of the bells. Thus to be strictly traditional it would be necessary to change step before the galley by altering one of the previous steps, say from the ‘1 hop 2 3’ to ‘1 hop 2 hop’ or to ‘1 2 3 4’.

To complete a dance there has to be a start and a proper finish.

ONCE-TO-YOURSELF - The dance starts with the musician playing the first part of the tune through once or more while the dancers prepare themselves and the foreman or leader judges the speed to be right. On the last beat of the third bar from the end, one gets used to spotting when this is, all do an ‘up’ ready to shuffle backwards etc a little, leading immediately into the Foot-Up.

CAPER-OUT - pronounced **Kipper-Out** by George Simpson. The dance finishes with all six dancers facing up for the last two bars of the dance and doing four plain capers on the spot. They hold the final position with hands forward in the air for a moment or two. The dances can end on either the Rounds for Set dances, or the Whole-Hey for the corner dances. In a final Rounds it is danced so that it opens out into a larger diameter during the figure.

The set should be at finger tip out-stretched spacing in both directions, along and across the set. It is very desirable to keep this spacing throughout the dance and only move forward towards opposites for the choruses that require stick tapping or hand clapping. However if there is a tendency to let the set shrink during the dance, it can be widened up again during the final set of figures.

Order of Movements - The collected order for a Set dance was :
Foot-Up, Chorus, Set, Chorus, Face-to-Face, Chorus, Back-to-Back, Chorus, Rounds, Whole-Hey, Rounds-&-Caper-Out. However it is usual for Cotswold figures to be in the order of increasing difficulty, complexity or travel and it is likely that Back-to-Back should really occur before Face-to-Face. The dances could be extended by having another chorus after the second Rounds if desired. It is now possible with what has been described to run through complete Set dances as soon as the appropriate chorus moves are learnt.

YOUNG COLLINS

CHORUS - Partners face across the set to their opposites.
In bar 1 all stamp with the right foot three times.
In bar 2 all clap both own hands together three times.
In bar 3 all stamp with the left foot three times.

In bar 4 all clap both own hands together again three times, as in bar 2.

The claps and stamps are on the first three beats of the four beats in each bar and there is a pause on the fourth beat. The claps should be at forehead level both for the effect and so that they can be seen, as the audience is mostly behind the dancers. During the stamps the arms are at the sides. The stamping and clapping is followed by a half hey, and then the whole is repeated from the other end.

CONSTANT BILLY

The Sticks - Each dancer has two 18 inch long short sticks, one in each hand, held at their bottom, or “butt”. At the mid point and end of each figure, in Once-to-Yourself and the end of the Half-Hey the dancers strike their two sticks together as they land from the jump. All the impacts of the clashing in ‘sticking’ occur just above head level, this is very important, and in striking the two sticks are to make a cross, sloping slightly forward, so that they are at right angles to each other. Usually each dancer holds the left stick still and strikes it with the right from above.

During Once-to-Yourself the sticks are held up crossed, the right behind, ie nearest the dancer, and above the left till the strike on the middle beat of the last bar. Then the sticks are lowered to the sides and the normal arm movements are used in the figures.

During the intermediate forward and back figures it has become common practice to strike the sticks on the jump in bar 2 and to hold the sticks crossed during the shuffles. This defines very well the arm positions during the shuffles in other dances.

CHORUS - The stick hitting is :

r+l.
b. r+r. / b. l+l. / b. r+r. / b. / and a half hey.
l+r.

b = each dancer strikes his own sticks together high up, holding the left still and striking it from behind with a forehander using the right stick starting the swing from over the right shoulder.

r+r = opposites strike right sticks together, moving them from right to left, also forehanders, and making a right angle when they hit.

l+l= opposites strike left sticks together, moving them from left to right, and not a backhanded movement.

r+l

= odds hold sticks close together, then move them both outwards

and

l+r

away from each other and so striking the evens sticks, who hold their sticks wide apart and bring them together to hit their opposites sticks.

After the sticking comes a half hey and the repeat of the whole to place.

Stick tapping with the opposite dancer should be done moving the stick upwards with a flourish, especially in the last double hit. The stick is wielded with a lot of wrist movement, making the most of the preparatory back swing but minimising any follow through, which is both unnecessary and a possible source for accidents.

THE HANDKERCHIEF DANCE to
“OLD WOMAN TOSSED UP IN A BLANKET”, “COUNTRY GARDENS”, “BLUE EYED STRANGER”

These are the “sidestep-&-half-hey” dances of which all Cotswold sides appeared to have several, often just calling it “The Handkerchief Dance”, and using any tune that took their fancy. There are two quite distinct manners of doing the “sidestepping” in Sherborne, thus there are really two separate dances. Also the character of the dance, that is the feel of it for the dancers, is determined by the rhythm of the tune, in particular whether it is in jig or hornpipe time, because this limits the effort and emphases that can be put into the movements. The tune “Old Woman Tossed Up in a Blanket” was recalled by different dancers in both rhythms, suggesting that it was originally played in a very “broken” jig rhythm, presumably as that was found to be the most comfortable to dance.

CHORUS

A. Simple Sidesteps

The most important point is to maintain the relative angle between the two feet no matter what their relative position, this is a normal Cotswold Morris characteristic. It seems very easy for dancers to be lazy and turn the feet with the body so that the feet become nearly parallel.

It has become customary to start sidesteps onto the right foot, even though the Cotswold Morris is a “left-footed” tradition. Either is acceptable as long as the same rule is followed throughout the dance.

The Sherborne sidestep is “open”, that is the first movement is to separate the feet. The first step is a little to the side and forward so that the second step brings the other foot up behind the first, instep of the rear foot against the heel of the leading foot. This “open” and “closing” movement is repeated twice more, then a fourth open step is followed by a hop on that same foot and the sequence of eight steps repeated in the other direction with the other foot leading. The total travel to the side in each of these ‘sidesteppings’ is small.

Only the leading hand is held up during the sidestep, the right when going to the right etc. The wave of the hand, done by the wrist only, is called a “show”, and is clockwise with the right, when looking up, and the opposite with the left. The hand has to be well raised. It was considered to be a special feature of the Sherborne Morris, “Can’t hold hands high enough in showing” they said. The upper arm should be quite close to the ear and not out to the side. There is one show for every two steps, ie half a bar, so that the sidestep sequence of eight steps in two bars has four of them.

B. Sidestep with Shuffles

“r l r up, down & down &, l r l up, down - together.”

On the first bar the dancers move diagonally forward to the right, and retire backwards on the shuffles, advance diagonally forward to the left in the third bar and retire to place on the last ‘down & jump’ to land feet together. The terminology is that of previous mnemonics. The same arm movements are used as for sidestep A, so one arm is up in the shuffles rather than both “out”. There is a great effect from the way the set moves, or slips around, especially if the travel is exaggerated a little. The sidestep as before is followed by a half hey and all is repeated to place. As before it can be done to the left first if so desired.

These different sidestep movements are both used in the corner dances.

There must have been other set dances. “Greensleves” and “Lumps of Plum Pudding” have been mentioned by dancers without indicating the nature of the chorus movement and “Highland Mary” was a

jig tune. Probably “Constant Billy” would have been done with hand clapping instead of using the sticks with exactly the same pattern of touching.

THE CORNER DANCES

These are a separate set of dances with their own structure and introducing new steps. The set is made a little larger, the dancers being a couple of feet further apart in both directions to allow “bigger” movement as the corner pairs dance together.

The dance order is different, after the initial Once-to-Yourself and Foot-Up, each chorus is done in turn by the corners 1 & 6, 2 & 5, then 3 & 4, during which they cross a diagonal of the set passing right shoulders and change places. Between each set of choruses, each of which has slightly different steps, the only intermediate figure used is Rounds, usually three times. The dances end with Whole-Hey-&-Caper-Out.

The FOOT-UP is different from that in the Set Dances in that it is stepped with the same sequence as the Rounds and the Hey, two Sherborne double steps danced on the spot facing up and a galley-out to end facing away from their opposite, and two Sherborne double steps facing down and galleying-out the long way to face across the set.

During the dances, dancers have to come into movements doing something as they have periods of standing still while the others perform. So as the first corner finishes, the second corner steps a “once-to-yourself” of one Sherborne double step and a ‘step-&-jump’. Note that this is not a shuffle as at the start of the whole dance, nor whatever the previous corner is doing. When the second corner is finishing the third corner does the same, and when the third corner is finishing both the first and second corners join in to be ready for the next figure.

Traditionally each corner chorus movement was repeated to place following a rounds figure with the same steps before going onto the next stepping sequence. This makes a long dance and was suitable in the days when one dance on someone’s lawn was enough for a show. It is unreasonable to do this today outside of a practice night or workshop. It was probable that the first crossing would have been danced off the left foot and the return off the right as elsewhere. In a shortened version one has to choose left or right foot lead. The following descriptions are in terms of a left foot lead.

HOW DO YOU DO?

The tune is similar to that called “Swaggering Boney” or “Travel by Steam” at Longborough and the “Old Frog Dance” at Oddington.

The galleys in the figures of this dance could be followed by either a step-&-jump to land feet-together or two plain capers, as there is no Mss indication for either. It would be consistent with the chorus stepping to end with the two plain capers.

The choruses start with a long sidestep to the left and right similar to that described under option ‘A. Simple Sidesteps’ against “The Handkerchief Dance”, being open so that the dancers move a little to the side following the leading foot and with only the leading hand up and ‘showing’. During the sidesteps the two corners approach to almost meet face to face at the end of bar 4. The next two bars are danced facing in the position reached, the movements being different for each set of choruses, and the music being played at the speed required for the steps used. Following these displays of virtuosity the corners pass each other, by right shoulders, crossing to the opposite diagonal place, with four plain capers, turning the easy way inwards to face across.

CHORUS 1 : The corners stand still and “salute” with the left hand and then the right singing “How D’ye Do?” each time. This salute, “making their obedience” or “pulling the forelock”, was done very slowly and ceremonially by a wide circular sweep of the arm forward and

round to the top of the forehead. Directly the hand touches the forehead, head and hand are ducked down on the middle beat of the bar. The music is a little slowed for these two bars.

Such subservience was commoner in the old days.

CHORUS 2 : Instead of the salutes the dancers galley, without turning, on the left foot and then on the right. These galleys should be thought of as competitive or challenging movements.

CHORUS 3 : Instead of the galleys the dancers perform, two “Forecapers”. The music in these two bars are played at about $\frac{3}{4}$ speed.

CHORUS 4 : Instead of the Forecapers the dancers perform two “Upright” capers. The music in these two bars is played almost at $\frac{1}{2}$ speed.

Forecapers - called “Half-Capers” by George Simpson but this causes confusion. In the 20th Century Revival they have been called “Kick-Capers”.

Cecil Sharp described it as : A step is taken with one foot, say the left, the right leg is simultaneously bent at the knee and its lowest 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 left foot. The right thigh should not be raised, but must be moved forward and inch or two to allow the heel to be thrust forward. The movement is almost wholly confined to the lower part of the leg.

These two movements are followed by two ordinary steps, the first onto the foot which was raised back. In a series of Forecapers the leading foot is alternated. Note that the lift back of the free lower leg and the planting of the heel are emphasised. Too often the lift is minimised and the foot is scraped forward or scuffed producing quite a different effect, which is to be avoided.

The arm movements are a swing back on the first step and a swing forward on the third. It is usual to swing the arms back on the first step and let the handkerchiefs fly out behind on the second by a snatch back.

Upright Capers - called “splits” in the Revival.

The first two movements are preparatory cross-hops. One foot is crossed over in front of the supporting foot, instep to toes, with some weight on the forward foot. The body does not get lifted much on these crossings which are not springs but a getting ready for the major effort of the caper. The arms are held ‘out’ to the sides during these preparatory movements, with the elbows close in to the waist. The Cotswold rule of weight starting on the left foot for each sequence is interpreted here as weight on the left so that the right is the working foot, thus the right foot is crossed first and then the left. In repeats of the Uprights the order alternates. Note that the second movement is a change to the other foot in front and not putting the first working foot behind with the majority of the weight remaining on the same foot.

The third movement is to bring the feet together and then spring into the air as high as possible off both feet and landing on both feet. While in the air, one leg is swung forward, not like a plain caper but preferably keeping the leg straight and getting it up to as near the horizontal as the dancer can achieve. The other leg at the same time is doubled back at the knee while the thigh is raised with the other leg. Ideally the lower leg is brought back against the thigh, which itself rises to be nearly horizontal alongside the straight leg. The doubling back of the leg is the most important feature to be achieved if compromises have to be made. To be avoided is performing a conventional ‘split’ with the thighs well separated.

The arms are swung high up on the jump, trying to keep the head up, shoulders back and not ducking the head down or curling the back. The posture of the upper body and arms should be held until the toes touch on landing to give the impression of height in the caper and of floating.

On landing it is necessary to dip, a plié, by bending the knees somewhat. No jump in the dance should be jerky, but should be a push off of the ground rolling up the foot to the toes while straightening the knees and pointing the feet. Landing is the reverse, the toes touch down first and the foot rolls down taking up the energy by the flexure of the ankles and knees. If the dancer aims to avoid noise on landing from the feet hitting the ground, it will happen almost automatically.

ORANGE IN BLOOM

The tune is known elsewhere as “Boys of the Bunch”. When played in 3/4 time, ie at half speed, it is known as “The Sherborne Waltz”.

The galleys throughout this dance are followed by two plain capers.

The first two choruses are structured differently from the last two.

CHORUS 1 : It starts with a short Sherborne sidestep to the left and to the right, a mere ‘1 2 3 hop, 1 2 3 hop’, on which the corners approach. They then ‘salute’ with the left and the right as before while standing still. Next they pass by the right shoulders with two Sherborne double steps and galley-out to face across in their opposite diagonal’s place. The galley direction is on the left foot for the first corner, on the right for the second corner and following the same direction as did their tops for the middles, that is ‘up’ for this first chorus.

As the galley direction is constant for the first two corners and to avoid adjusting the stepping to be on the ‘correct’ foot for the galley, it is possible for the dancers to start their corner movement on the foot that they are to galley on. Alternatively it looks better if the sidesteps are always the same, so the two Sherborne double steps for crossing could start on the galleying foot and the switch made at the end of the second sidestep.

CHORUS 2 : The two salutes are replaced with a galley on the left foot and then the right foot without turning the body.

CHORUS 3 : There are no sidesteps to start. The corners approach with four “Forecapers”, and then pass by the right and galley out as before. The music for the Forecapers is slowed of course.

CHORUS 4 : The four Forecapers are replaced with four “Upright Capers”.

It has been thought by some dancers that the galley at the end of the crossing should be done facing out on the diagonal, and the dancer should turn out to face across on the two plain capers or to turn as in “How Do You Do Sir?” This avoids any problem of mistakes with the starting foot.

LADS A BUNCHUM

The tune is known elsewhere as “Dear Is My Dicky”, such are the quirks of the tradition.

The galleys in this dance are followed by “feet-together-jump”, starting and landing feet together.

The first two choruses are structured differently from the last two.

CHORUS 1 : It is as the first chorus of “Orange in Bloom”, the music slowing

a little for the salutes. Throughout the choruses the two Sherborne double steps are replaced by two "Forries".

CHORUS 2 : It is as the second chorus but with the two "Forries".

CHORUS 3 : It starts with the option 'B. sidestep-with-shuffle' described under "The Handkerchief Dance", on which the corners do not approach very much. They then pass each other by the right with two Forecapers and finally galley out to face across.

CHORUS 4 : As chorus 3 with two Upright Capers.

Forries - also called "Fore-Capers" and "Half-Capers" - the Sherborne usage was at variance with elsewhere, although Half-Capers is a logical name.

This is a plain caper followed by two ordinary steps, given as, L r l, so that a sequence of them will alternate the leading foot. It is most profitably thought of as an exaggerated Sherborne double step in which the hop is eliminated by the height reached on the first spring. The arms go down and up as before with plain capers.

TRUNKLES

This dance has a double chorus movement. In the first part, the "Salute", which has nothing in common with the 'salute' in the previous dances, is danced in turn by the corners to the centre of the set and retiring to their starting places. In the second part, which occurs after each corner has completed the first part, the corners in turn cross over the diagonal, passing right shoulders, to change places.

The galleys in the figures and the "Salute" end with a step-&-jump, whereas the galleys at the end of the crossings finish with two plain capers.

SALUTE : The "Salute" is also called "Show-Out". The corners advance to meet on a Sherborne double step and a step-&-jump, which is the normal stepping for the start of a Set Dance figure. They then galley-out back to their own starting place and face across with a step-&-jump. The first corners will always start with the left foot and galley on the left foot, the second corners will do it on the right and the middles on the same foot as their neighbouring top, ie No 3 on the left and No 4 on the right. As there is a feet-together in the sequence at half way it is practical for everyone to start on the same foot and still galley-out to the rule if so desired. The Salute takes four bars only for each turn. The corners come in with a Once-to-Yourself which for the Salute only is reduced to a straight jump in position.

CORNERS CROSS : In turn each corner crosses the diagonal with their opposite diagonal person, passing right shoulders, and then galleys-out in the opposite place to face across in bar 4, galleys again, without turning, on the other foot facing across in bar 5 and end with two plain capers in the final sixth bar. Some dancers like to galley facing out in bar 4 and turn on the galley in bar 5.

CHORUS 1 : Start with three Sherborne double steps.

CHORUS 2 : Start with three Forries.

CHORUS 3 : Start with three Forecapers.

CHORUS 4 : Start with three Upright Capers.

If it is not desired to adjust the stepping while crossing, in order to galley-out correctly in bar 4, the first corner should start with the right foot, the second with the left etc.

Order of Movements - The order can be danced as the other corner dances ending after the crossing with Upright Capers with Double-Hey-&-Caper-Out. But traditionally the Sherborne side followed the crossing with Upright Capers with a further Rounds, a set of Salutes and then a Double-Hey-&-Caper-Out, without any further corner crossing movements.

It can be supposed that Sherborne would have had other corner dances or dances with the special "Slow" Capers. Most possible is a corner dance without any capers but just crossing with sidesteps. Also likely is that there was a dance which incorporated leap-frogging. Perhaps there were also normal dances structured as the following dance.

HEEL-&-TOE

Sherborne had a 'heel-and-toe' stepping dance called "The Monks March". The tune has nothing to do with General Monck who restored Charles II in 1660 nor to "The Mad Monks of Bangor". It is what is normally known as "Belle Isle March" a Swiss hymn tune picked up in the Seven Years War and used to celebrate the end of that war in the first Trooping of the Colour and still occasionally heard at that function. The biggest question with this dance is what is the correct speed. It was sprightly but the custom has grown of dancing it slowly and with little energy, thus changing its character.

Heel-&-Toe Stepping - this exists at several levels of complexity.

Simple Form - Step onto the ball of the foot and hop on it on the main beats (the 'toe' part_ keeping the weight on that foot while tapping the heel of the free foot in front on the same beats (the 'heel' part). Spring to change the weight to the other foot. This form is commonly used for the baccapipes jig. By learning this form first significant spring can be maintained in the normal form of the stepping.

Normal Sherborne Form - The tap of the heel is on the off beat between the step and hop, thus, step, tap heel, hop, change weight with a spring.

More Complex Forms - An extra tap is made of the heel or the toe after the hop, while making the spring to change weight, which requires an extra "dab" down of the free foot. Anything more complicated is unlikely to have been performed by average dancers.

Arms - The arms swing either down or up on each heel-&-toe. Traditionally it is not danced with handkerchiefs but it is very satisfying to do so allowing of a very full swing, particularly when bringing the handkerchiefs back to lay over the shoulders.

There are two heel-&-toe steps to a bar of music.

Phrase Endings - Half way through the figures in the second half of bar 4 the hop is suppressed and the arms held up the horizontal hold position as the heel is planted rather than tapped, and the following change of weight is done with a step not a spring. At the end of once-to-yourself, figures and half-veys there is a more deliberate ending, without the hops, of the weight onto one foot, the weight transferred to the other foot and then planting the free heel.

Dancers can follow the rule of starting with the weight onto the left foot or the outside foot.

The figures have their normal paths and features. The order of figures is as for Set dances but without any Rounds figures.

CHORUS - Each corner in turn does a 'step' or movement lasting one bar

