

# TRUNCH

## (Norfolk)

Sources "*Ancient Ceremonial Dances of Eastern England*" by Dr Magdalene Carthorse, 1932 (MC); "*Trunch: the Final Frontier*" by Rev Basil J Flatte (BJF); "*Horace Dances of Trunch*" 1st ed. (HDT); Jour DFDS Vol. 18, No. 4 & Vol. 35 No. 2; Hugh Dunnet (HD) - his main sources are the MSS of BJF and RKM. There is uncertainty as to some of Kenwood-Mixer's material, of which the available manuscripts are incomplete. In all cases the informants were members of the Kipper family, who were hereditary squires of the Trunch HM.

### Characteristics of the tradition

Music, The Dances, Style, Steps, Arm-movements, Figures

### THE DANCES

#### Processional Dance

Horace On (The Trunch Professional)

#### Stick and Hand-clapping Dances

Old Collins,  
Evening Star/Frightened Vamp/The Girl I Left Unconscious,  
Swineherd's Pay,  
Monster Willy,  
Falling Downstairs

#### Handkerchief Dances

Ronald & Nancy/Yankee Noodle,  
Cuckoo Brain,  
Old Trunchells,  
Staggering Tony,  
Princess Spoiled/Red Haired Sloane Ranger

#### Jigs

Lumps of Rice Pudding,  
Balance The Books,  
The Rutting Girl

## Characteristics of the tradition

A living (and dying) tradition. The present Trunch HM were re-formed in 1926 by William Kipper (WK), the original side having been disbanded by the Vicar as a consequence of their last performance in North Walsham at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. As with all living traditions, it is somewhat fluid and the dances are not now precisely as described in the MSS. Some of the THM have themselves varied their dancing over the years, while others retain the older styles.

**The Music** before dissolution was by pipe and tabor ("wattle and daub"), but since the revival under WK has been by comb-and-paper and portable harmonium. The music was in a variety of keys and is here printed as collected: however, current practice of the Trunch HM is to play all tunes in the key of D, "so that we have to remember C Sharp every time we play."

**The Dances** nowadays number 14, including five stick or hand clapping dances, 3 jigs and a processional. Many forgotten dances survive only as names - (Bone Setting, Bonny Green Gilberts, Eel & Roe, Gallons of Tar, Gory Shears, Jack-high Don't Beat a Pair, Loads o' Bunkum, Made Her Feel Ill, Rakes or Harrow, Visigoths of Overstrand, We Won't Go Home Till Closing, etc.). MC states that there were as many as 30 at one time, and there are hopes that new material may yet turn up to enable some of these to be reconstructed. Identical or similar dances were performed at the neighbouring villages of Southrepps and Gimingham.

**The Style** has many resemblances to Cotswold Morris. Local tradition maintains that travelling Cotswold shearers brought it to Norfolk around 1450 when the wool trade was at its peak. Legend speaks of a split around 1600 when Horace Kipper and the rump of the side ("Horace Dancers") stayed in Trunch, while a breakaway side under his wife, Molly, was driven out to Suffolk, where Molly Dancing continues to this day. In the intervening 500 years of isolation from mainstream tradition Trunch has developed many peculiarities of its own, and may now almost be regarded as a separate branch.

## The Steps

The **Trunch 4-step (T4)** is unusual, the hop coming on the third beat - e.g. | r l l r |.

The **backstep** used by the old side bore some resemblance to the Headington Cross-Backstep - e.g. | fa x fa x | fa x t - |. The present backstep is a series of backward jumps - e.g. | j - j - | j - j - |.

The **sidestep** always starts on the right foot, and so is 'open' when moving to the right and 'closed' to the left.

The **galley** ("Gully") is of normal pattern, usually followed by 2PC ("Plain Kippers").

**Half Capers** ("Furry Kippers") are | r l R - | l r L |.

The **Fore Capers** ("Side Kippers") are | rts t | R L | lts t | L R |, with the main emphasis on the kipper in beat three; the initial sideways movement is a small introductory movement with the weight-bearing leg bent and the body inclined steeply forwards.

The **Upright Capers** ("Splatters") are | x x | J fa |. In the jump the dancer attempts to turn completely round in the air, and in the final feet-apart it is common for one or both hands also to finish up on the ground.

Start on inside foot for HH, left for CFs and outside for most DFs, although BJF MSS state "invariably start on the wrong foot."

**The Arm-movements** are large straight-arm circles ("Windmills") in front of the body, using alternate arms with T4 and right arm only in ss. No arm movements in TY and bs. In Kippers the arms are waved vigorously ("struggling") in a manner that defies description.

**The Figures** are Twice-to-yourself (TY), Foot Out (FO), Double Cross (DC), Whole Kyp (WK), Back-to-back (BB), Half Rounds (HR), Half Hey (HH), and Whole Hey (WH). The full sequence was very long, but was often shortened, especially during licensing hours.

**TY** is four ninety-degree jumps down and out, followed by four ninety-degree jumps in the other direction.

**FO** is two bars T4 outwards, two bars bs, turning on the final beat, then two bars T4 outwards to partner's side and two bars back to place. It is considered bad form to trip one's partner on crossing to his side.

**DC** is cross over with two bars T4, turn with bs (as in TY), and repeat to place.

**WK** is | T4 | slip dn | slip up | slip up | slip dn | slip up | slip dn | bs |, "as if trying to cross, but being balked by partner". It is normal to shrug the shoulders and shake the head ruefully during the final bs.

**BB** Partners do not cross, but pass back-to-back facing their own side - e.g. | T4 | G(r) | slip(l) | slip(l) | slip(r) | slip(r) | G(l) | bs |.

**HR** is | T4 | T4 | bs | bs | rpt. Both sides go up in the first half and down in the repeat, passing alternately by right and left shoulders, but this is often misinterpreted.

**HH & WH** are | T4 | T4 | bs | bs |. The track is normal (turning outwards), but middles always go to their left (i. e. 3 goes up in both halves, 4 goes down).

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## Processional Dance

[HORACE ON \(THE TRUNCH PROFESSIONAL\)](#) HDT p. 9

Sequence: TY, FU (repeat ad-lib)

FU - 6 bars T4, 2bs.

HORACE ON (THE TRUNCH PROFESSIONAL) HDT ad lib



## Stick and Hand-clapping Dances

Sticks ("Truncheons") are long, and held at the side pointing up when not in use, but high, crossed at the start, middle and end of TY. Whenever possible, partners should clash sticks at the end of each half of CFs, but individual dancers vary in their assessments of the safety risk inherent in this.

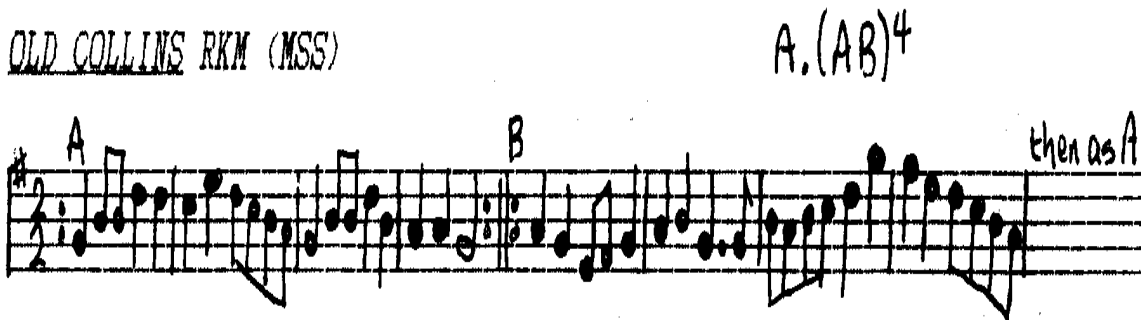
**OLD COLLINS** MC p.113, HD (RKM MSS)

Sequence: TY, FO, DF, DC, DF, WK, DF, BB, DF

DF - Stick tapping and half hey

Stick tapping: - | T B T - | D D D - | B T B - | D D D - |

In bars 1 & 3 the sticks are alternately swung to left, right, and left. In bars 2 & 4 the three dibs are respectively to the front, side, and rear.



**EVENING STAR (FRIGHTENED VAMP) (THE GIRL I LEFT UNCONSCIOUS)** This dance is unpublished, and the Norfolk Constabulary wish it to remain so.

Traditionally danced at Flint Henge at the Winter Solstice, immediately before the human sacrifice. This dance requires the participation of a young lady. The clubs used are longer and heavier than the normal sticks: local legend says this was originally a sword dance.

**SWINEHERD'S PAY** HDT p. 15 MC

Sequence: as Old Collins

DF - Stick-tapping or hand clapping and Half Rounds

Stick-tapping:- as Old Collins

Hand-Clapping:- | F RK ULK - | F LK URK | F RK F LK | F B F - |

(At RK & LK the leg is raised and slapped above the knee: clapping (F) is at waist level).

SWINEHERDS' PAY HDT

A.(AB<sup>2</sup>)<sup>4</sup>



I can't sing, I can't play, I can't live on a swineherd's pay

**MONSTER WILLY** Journal 1957 p. 48

Sequence: as Old Collins

DF - Stick-tapping and Half Hey

Stick-tapping:- Sticks are held at the base by both hands. Evens hold sticks at 45 degrees below waist level, leaning slightly backwards. Odds strike forcibly with tips alternately to rt and l: | R - L - | R - L - | R - L - | R - L R |. In repeat odds hold and evens strike.

MONSTER WILLY BJT (Jour)

A.(AB)<sup>4</sup>



**FALLING DOWNSTAIRS** HDT p. 25 HD (BJT MSS)

Usually the last dance on the programme. Should be danced as a set: the practice of including "as many as still can" is fairly recent.

Sequence: as Old Collins

DF - Caper & Clap, Cross & Turn

Caper & clap:

Feet | R - L - | - - - - | L - R - | - - - - |

Hands | - - - - | F B F - | - - - - | F B P - |

Cross and Turn: - 3 bars T4 (1 forward, 1 turning, 1 to centre), bs.

FALLING DOWNSTAIRS HDTA.(AB)<sup>4</sup>Handkerchief DancesRONALD AND NANCY

HDT p. 30

these two dances are identical except for the tunes.

YANKEE NOODLE

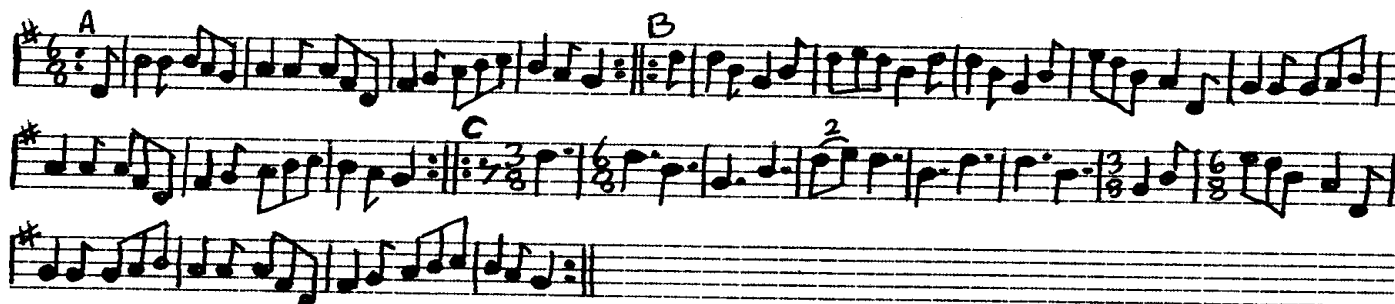
HD (RKM MSS)

A Gimingham dance traditionally danced on July 4th (Hindi Pendants Day) outside the "Stars and Stripes" inn.

Sequence: TY, FO, DF, DC, DF, WK, DF, HR, DF

DF - Corners and half hey

1st time - corners in turn salute (two large circles upwards finishing with rt arm aloft and index finger extended) then jump (forward bs) into hey. Other three times salute is replaced with HC (rt), FC and UC respectively. (Possibly these dances were alternatively danced in column as Cuckoo Brain)

RONALD AND NANCY HDTA.(AB)<sup>2</sup>(AC)<sup>2</sup>YANKEE NOODLE B/JF (MSS)A.(AB)<sup>2</sup>(AC)<sup>2</sup>CUCKOO BRAIN

Unpublished. Collected by RKM and taught by him at a Horace Feast ca. 1938

Sequence: As Ronald &amp; Nancy

DF - Caper in columns and half Hey.

Same steps as Ronald and Nancy but in pairs - 1 & 2 first (facing up), then 3 & 4 (facing out), then 5 & 6 (facing down). Reverse order in repeat.

CUCKOO BRAIN HD (RKM MSS)

$A.(AB)^2(AC)^2$



**OLD TRUNCHELLS** HDT p.39

Sequence: TY, FO, DF, HR, DF, HR, DF, HR, DF, WH

DF - (a) corners salute (b) corners cross

(a) | T4 | T4 | bs | bs | with salutes as Ronald & Nancy in bars 3 & 4.

(b) 1st time: 4 bars ss (rt), G(rt), bs  
 2nd time: 4 bars HC, G(rt), bs  
 3rd time: 4 bars FC, G(rt), bs  
 4th time: 4 bars UC, G(rt), bs

BJF MSS state that when they danced with two sets facing each other they did half straights with the other set's evens. *[This is perfectly feasible and pleasant to do if the sets are close enough together].*

OLD TRUNCHELLS HDT

$A(AB^3C^3)^2(AB^3D^3)^2-A$



**STAGGERING TONY** a new dance devised by WK during the 1935 Silver Jubilee celebrations. Not previously published.

Sequence: TY, FO, DF, HR, DF, HR, DF, HR, DF

DF - (a) corners sidestep (b) corners 'fight', and cross.

(a) | css | oss | css | bs |

(b) Fight in 4 bars | bs | bs |

1st time: "challenge" - flick handkerchief at partner.  
 2nd time: "provoke" - push rt shoulder with rt hand  
 3rd time: "fight" with punches (R L)  
 4th time: "finish" with massive lunge, both opponents overbalancing and collapsing in centre. Dance ends with all six in a heap.

STAGGERING TONY HD (from WK 1939)

A.(AB<sup>3</sup>)<sup>4</sup>

PRINCESS SPOILED

RED-HAIRED SLOANE RANGER

MC p. 120, HD (BJF MSS)

Sequence: TY, FO, DF, DC, DF, WK, DF, BB, DF

DF - Slip and clap, half rounds. 4 slips to rt, 4 to lt, 2 to rt, 2 to lt, 2 bars clapping (| F RK B | B LK F |). In slips leading arm is fully raised, with hand flapped downwards and outwards, trailing arm is placed on hip with elbow out ("posing"). HR of final DF finishes with 4PC and all-in shouting "Oh, yah!"

PRINCESS SPOILED HD (BJF MSS)

A.(AB<sup>3</sup>)<sup>4</sup>

RED-HAIRED RANGER HD (as sung by WK, 1947)

A.(AB<sup>2</sup>)<sup>4</sup>

(The Red Haired Ranger tune as collected has an 8-bar B section, and must be modified for the dance. WK told BJF "play the first 4 bars again" [After B4 or B8?]. The dance is unknown to the present THM).

## Jigs

The jigs are all stationary. In HDT they are presented as danced by only one man, but MC records that pre-1897 they were danced in sets "between Ascension and St Barnabas Day". All jigs finish with 2PC instead of bs in final DF.

### LUMPS OF RICE PUDDING HDT p. 48, HD (MSS of BJF & RKM)

Sequence: TY, FU, DF, FC, DF, UC, DF

FU - 6 bars T4, bs, bs (as Horace on)

FC - 4FC, T4, T4, bs, bs

UC - 4UC, etc

DF - turn 360 degrees ccl with 4css, 2HC, bs, bs

#### LUMPS OF RICE PUDDING HDT

A. AB (CB)<sup>2</sup>

### BALANCE THE BOOKS MC p. 138, Jour 1963, p. 309

Sequence: as Lumps

FU - T4, T4, bs, bs, rpt

FC - 2FC, bs, bs, rpt

UC - 2UC, etc

DF - 1-hand star (rt), bs, bs, star (lt), bs, bs. (wave wildly with outside arm during star).

[Presumably they did one 6-man star when dancing as a set, or two 3-man stars - 1, 2 & 3 and 4, 5 & 6].

#### BALANCE THE BOOKS BJF (Jour)

A. AB (CB)<sup>2</sup>

### THE RUTTING GIRL HDT p. 53, MC p. 150, HD

Sequence: as Lumps



FU - 4 bars T4, css, oss, bs, bs

FC - 4FC, etc

UC - 4UC, etc

DF - css, T4, oss, T4, salute (rt), salute (lt), bs, bs. Salutes as in Ronald & Nancy.

*THE RUTTING GIRL HDT*

A. AB (CB)<sup>2</sup>

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