

MOLLY DANCES.

## REFERENCES.

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2. Plough Monday 1933 at Little Downham. W Palmer.  
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3. Molly Dancing in SW Cambridgeshire. R Wortley & C Papworth.  
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4. A Penny for the Ploughboys. R Wortley.  
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5. Plough Monday 1974 at Balsam Cambs. R Wortley.  
E D & S Vol XXXVI No. 3 1974 p 109.
6. Visit to Mepal Molly Dancers on Plough Monday 1979.  
Private communication. J Swift.
7. Molly Dancing (S.W. and W. of Cambridge) C Papworth.  
Personnal communication + tape cassette.- WMF.
8. Molly Dances. R Dommett.  
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9. Rattlebone and Ploughjack - record - Help 24, Island Records 1976.  
Ashley Hutchings.
10. The Comberton Broom Dance by Cyril Papworth.  
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MOLLY DANCES.BIRDS A BUILDING.

Refs: 1, 7 and 8.

Molly and Feast Dance.

Source: Comberton, Girton and Histon - Cambridgeshire.

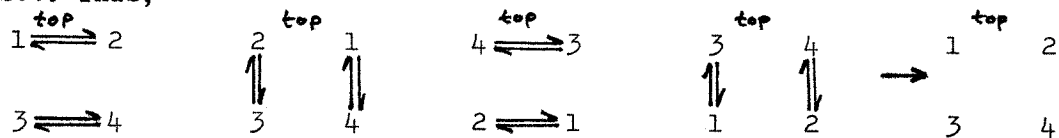
Set: 6 or duple minor for Feast.

Tune: Birds a Building (Rattlebone and Ploughjack record - Help 24, Island 1976),  
(timing slower than other Molly dances).

Step: Molly step - step hop alternating feet, (Ref 7 - polka step) walking step.

Dance:

A1/2 - 1st and 2nd couple cross over giving right hands, Nos 1&amp;3, 2&amp;4 change down the sides, again cross over with opposite then change along the side of the set. Thus;



The top four dance as a square giving right hand each change.

As there are 4 bars (8 steps) per change, a wide set is desirable.

Alternates:

A1/2 1 bar taken to meet oncoming person, 2 bars taking hands at shoulder height, passing right shoulders, 1 bar to turn corner. (4 bars/each side of square)

A1/2 It is suggested that 2 bars can be taken for each side of the square, either fitted to half the length of music or done twice.

A1/2 (Ref 1 - Girton and Histon) states that No 1 &amp; 2 cross over then 1&amp;3, 2&amp;4 cross over giving right hands - this would imply that the second cross is diagonal, also there would not be equal numbers of steps per cross.

B1 - No 1&amp;2 lead down the middle and back (walking step)

B2 - First 2 couples swing and change (polka  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times round each other to progress).

Final B2 - at the call of SET (after the lead down) the dancers would bob down (Ref 7) to represent the birds sitting on a nest. The square was the building of the nest.

SET is called when the Lord and Lady (or No 1&amp;2) regain the top position.

MOLLY DANCES.

Gipsies in the Wood (Comberton)/Smash the Window (Girton & Histon).

Refs: 1, 7 & 8.

Molly and Feast Dance.

Source: Comberton, Girton and Histon - Cambridgeshire.

Set: 6 or duple minor for feast.

Tune: Smash the Window. (Moderate speed).

Step: Molly step - step hop alternating feet, (Ref 7 - polka step), walking step.

Dance:

A1 - Nos 1, 2 & 4 hands 3 around 4 bars anticlockwise (left-hand star),  
4 bars back clockwise (right-hand star)

A2 - Nos 1, 2 & 3 hands 3 around 4 bars clockwise (right-hand star),  
4 bars back anticlockwise (left-hand star)

B1 - 1st couple lead down the middle and back, (walking step).

B2 - First 2 couples swing and change (polka  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times to progress).

This is repeated until Lord and Lady (No 1&2) regain top position.

Double Change Sides. (Girton and Histon)

Refs 1 and 8.

Source: Girton and Histon, Cambridgeshire.

Set: 6

Tune: Not available.

Step: Molly step - step hop alternating feet, walking step.

Dance:

Nos 2&4 lead between 1&3 and fall back.

Nos 1&3 lead between 2&4 and fall back.

Nos 1&2 lead down middle and back, (walking step).

First 2 couples swing and change.

Repeated by No 1&2 until they regain top position.

MOLLY DANCES.

COLLEGE HORNPIPE.

Refs: 1. 3, 7 & 8.

Molly and Feast Dance (Feast dance details denoted \*() ).

Source: Comberton, Girton and Histon - Cambridgeshire.

Set: 6 \*( triple longways minor)(Ref 7, set 8?)

Tune: Sailor's Hornpipe or tune given on Rattlebone and Ploughjack record - Help 24, Island 1976.

Step: Molly step - step hop alternating feet, (Ref 7 - polka step), walking step. Knee well raised in stepping.

Dance:

A1 - Hands 6 circle left - 8 steps (Ref 8 - 7 slip steps)

A2 - Hands 6 circle right - 8 steps ( - ditto - )

B1 - Face up and cast off to left in pairs, arm behind opposites back and waving a handkerchief in the free hand, \*(Man with rt arm round waist of lady, lady with hand on man's shoulder, no handkerchief waved). At the bottom of the set, turn in and dance back up middle to places.

Refs 1&8 (Girton and Histon) Additional movements at this point.

Nos 1&4 swing, Nos 2&3 swing.

Nos 1&2 lead down middle of set and back, (walking step).

B2 - 1st and 2nd pair polka round each other  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times to change place (swing and change).

Ref 7 - 3rd and 4th pair stand still or jig on the spot.

The dance is repeated until the Lord and Lady (or No 1&2) regain top position.

NB - a very lively dance, my Uncle tells me (Wally Papworth) they picked their knees up in this one.

MOLLY DANCES.

Special Molly Dance. (Comberton). Collected from William Papworth.

Refs: 3 and 7.

Source: Comberton, Cambridgeshire.

Set: 8.

Tune: Not known - suggest Bob Ridley-0 (Ref 3), Shave the Fiddle or Triumph.

Step: Molly step - step hop alternating feet, (Ref 7 - polka step), walking step.

One large handkerchief held up between each couple to make arches down the set.

Dance:

A1 - Opposites move forward and back originally described as 'a lot of dodging about' (Ref 7 - to right and forward, to left and back as a triangle). Cross over.

A2 - Repeat crossing back to places.

B1 (or B) - 1st pair walk (more lively if 'stepped') down middle of set under arches followed by 2nd, 3rd and 4th pairs. Edge up (sideways shuffle) to original places.

B2 (or C) - 1st pair swing/polka to bottom of set under arches with arm hold.

Repeat with new top couple - until Lord and Lady (No 1&2) regain top position).

Haste to the Wedding.

Incomplete information.

1st couple galloped down middle as hard as they could - this was the haste - then another part of the dance?

1st couple went down to the bottom of the set and the next couple followed then down.

MOLLY DANCES.

Cross Hand Polka. (Comberton).

Refs: 3 & 7.

Molly and Feast Dance.

Source: Comberton, Cambridgeshire.

Set: 6 or duple minor for feast.

Tune: Broom Dance Tune (given in 'The Comberton Broom Dance' by C. Papworth, ED&S Vol XXXVI No.1.). Moderate speed.

Step: Molly step - step hop alternating feet, (Ref 7 - polka step), walking step.

Dance:

A1 - 1st corners  $\frac{1}{2}$  turn with right hand and  $\frac{1}{2}$  turn back with left hand. (It is suggested that this dance is more lively with complete turns in place of  $\frac{1}{2}$  turns.)

A2 - 2nd corners as above.

B1 - 1st couple lead down middle and back, (walking step).

B2 - 1st and 2nd couple polka round  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times to progress.

Six Hand Reel. Comberton.

Refs: 3 and 7.

Molly and Feast Dance.

Source: Comberton, Cambridgeshire.

Set: 6 or triple minor for feast.

Tune: The Girl I Left Behind Me.

Step: Molly step - step hop alternating feet, (Ref 7 - polka step), walking step.

Dance:

A1/2 - 1st couple cross over and cast down outside of set, cross over again at bottom of set (or below 3rd couple) and up other side to place.

B1 - 1st couple lead down middle and back, (walking step).

B2 - 1st and 2nd couple polka round  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times to progress.

Birds a Building. (Flowers of Edinburgh variant) (Hornpipe)

C. Papworth.

Musical notation for 'Birds a Building' in 4/4 time, G major. It consists of two staves. The first staff is labeled 'A' and contains a melody with two first endings marked with circled '1's. The second staff is labeled 'B' and contains a more complex melody with many sixteenth notes.

Smash the Window. (Gypsies in the Wood) (Jig)

C. Papworth.

Musical notation for 'Smash the Window' in 6/8 time, G major. It consists of two staves. The first staff is labeled 'A' and contains a melody with two first endings marked with circled '1' and '2'. The second staff is labeled 'B' and contains a melody with many sixteenth notes.

Sailor's Hornpipe.

C. Papworth.

Musical notation for 'Sailor's Hornpipe' in 4/4 time, G major. It consists of two staves. The first staff is labeled 'A' and contains a long, flowing melody. The second staff is labeled 'B' and contains a similar long, flowing melody.

Bob Ridley-O or Shave the Donkey.

Frank Beeton, Balsham, Cambs.  
(R. Wortley. Dec. 1956)

Musical notation for 'Bob Ridley-O or Shave the Donkey' in 4/4 time, G major. It consists of two staves. The first staff is labeled 'A' and contains a melody with two first endings marked with circled '1' and '2'. The second staff is labeled 'B' and contains a melody with a section marked with a circled 'c'.

MOLLY DANCES.

Cross-Hand Polka.

Ms. of Mrs Mary Ellis,  
Comberton, Cambs. c 1935.

A

B



NOTES FROM:-

The Country Dance Book - CJ Sharp. Parts I and 2. EP Publishing 1934.  
1st Edition 1909.

This comprises 18 traditional dances collected in country villages.

Many of these are very similar to the Molly Dances collected by Wortley.

eg. Bonnets So Blue

Like Birds a' Building

Cross Hands

Brighton Camp (Derbys) - Cast out to left; Tops swing down; All swing.

The Butterfly (Warks) - traditional linked hankie dance in 4's -

Rt star, Lt star; Arches (1st over 2nd, twice) Swing change.

We Won't Go Home 'Til Morning (Warks) - Rt Star, Lt Star; Tops down  
set, All swing.

Speed the Plough also similar.

Virtually all 18 dances are like the published Molly.

Ribbon dance (Derby and Surry)?

*Swift 1982*

SPEED THE PLOUGH MOLLY DANCE

Source: Jill Sinclair, Kesteven Morris

Tune: Speed the Plough 2A 2B

Set: 8 Longways

Steps: Slow skip step with knee well raised, arms swinging alternately and opposite to feet. Double skip step for swings.

STARS: Right hand star, turn out then left hand star.

(A)

CAST: Top two pairs and bottom two pairs cast out (up and down

(A) respectively) then top four pass between end of set. Turn out (tops) or in (bottoms) and weave through each other to place.

REEL: Reel of four along each side.

(B)

SWING: Top pair clasp arms and swing down middle of set using the

(B) double swing step.

The dance continues until all pairs have swung down then all swing on spot to one extra B music.