

COLNE

STICKS

Sticks with ribbons on one end.

STEPPING

Varies throughout dance, includes walk, kicks, single steps, etc. All right foot start. Every figure and every chorus (except for the final chorus) end with a jump, with feet together, as a preparatory move for the next chorus or figure.

HAND MOVEMENTS

Varied, but most common one is one arm straight up in air, as high as possible, with stick held vertically. Other hand and stick down by side. Other hand movements will be described when relevant.

STEP-UP

Set starts facing the music and all move forward and back twice using following stepping.

Walk forward three steps (R,L,R), then kick left (high). Walk back three steps (L,R,L) then feet together. Hand movements on walk forward start from down by side, then cross on first step, apart on second, cross on third and up on the kick. The cross is with arms low in front of body, the apart is with arms out (about 45 degrees from body) to sides and the up is with both arms straight up (as described in Hand Movements, above). The hand movements on the walk back are: cross, apart, cross and down by sides to fit in with the three steps and feet together.

This is then repeated, except that instead of the final feet together, there is a small jump, bringing feet together, at the end of the walk back. On this jump, everyone turns to face in.

This step up is only danced like this at the start of the dance, but the same stepping is used in other figures.

CHORUS

This is a stepping sequence danced on the spot, facing across the set.

While hopping four times on the left foot, the right foot is kicked high (slightly to the left), then brought back level with the left leg, then behind and then a second high kick. These four movements coincide with the four hops. The right arm is held up.

All then turn on the spot to the right, using three steps (R,L,R) and jump with feet together to face across the set again. The left hand is held up during the turn.

CHORUS Cont.

While hopping four times on the right foot, the left leg is kicked as the right was at the start of the figure (high, beside, behind and high), with the left hand up.

All then turn to the left, using three steps (L,R,L) and a jump with feet together to finish facing across the set. The right hand is held up during the turn.

The chorus is danced after every figure.

PAIRS

This is danced by each pair of dancers in turn, starting with 1 & 2, then 3 & 4, 5 & 6, and finally 7 & 8.

Each pair walks across the set, passing right shoulders, and back on the same track, using the same stepping and hand movements as in the Step-up. They each only walk across and back once. While each pair is dancing, the rest stand still, facing across.

At the end of the figure, all of the dancers jump with feet together, to go into the chorus.

LINES

The stepping is similar to that described for the Step-up, the main difference is that the movement is always forward.

All walk across the set, R,L,R,kick,L,R,L,kick, by which time all the dancers are in a straight line in the middle of the set, right shoulders to partners. Care must be taken not to travel too far at the start of this movement. Then continue forwards, R,L,R,kick, by which time everyone is in their partners' position facing outwards. All then turn to the right, while walking L,R,L,feet together, to face back across the set.

The hand movements are also similar to the Step-up. On each set of three steps and a kick, the hands are: cross, apart, cross, up. On the turn, the hands are: cross, apart, cross, down by sides to co-incide with the feet together.

The whole of this is then repeated back to place.

BALANCE IN FOURS

This figure is danced in two sets of four.

All face across the diagonals of the four, eg 1 faces 4, etc. Everyone then dances four balance steps. A balance step consists of one foot being hopped on, while the other foot is swung across the weight-bearing leg. The first step is with the weight on the right foot, with the left swung across in front. On each of the balance steps, the arms are both swung across the body, low, then back out to the sides.

BALANCE IN FOURS Cont.

1 & 4, 5 & 8 then change places in pairs, passing right shoulders and turning right in their new positions, to face back across the diagonal. The cross is danced in single stepping, R,L,R, together, with the left hand up. While these are crossing, the other dancers do 2 more balance steps.

2 & 3, 6 & 7 then change places as above, while the rest perform 2 balance steps.

The whole of this is then repeated (ie 4 balance steps, first corners cross, second corners cross).

OUTSIDES

When this figure is called, everyone finishes the preceding chorus facing up the set.

Only 1 & 2 dance first, facing up the set. While hopping four times on the left foot, on the spot, the right is crossed over the left to touch the right heel on the floor to the left of the left foot. The right foot is then swung to the right to touch the right heel to the floor to the right. The right foot is then crossed to the left again, to again touch the right heel to the floor to the left of the left foot. The right foot is then kicked high in front. During this, the right hand is held up. 1 & 2 then walk forward for four steps, starting on the right foot, with the left hand up. Everyone else stands still in place.

1 & 2 then turn out, and walk down the outside of the set, with their right hands up. At the same time, 3 & 4 repeat the steps given above, eg the cross steps and the walk forward. They then turn out and follow 1 & 2 down the outside of the set. As 3 & 4 turn, 5 & 6 repeat the steps above, then turn and follow 3 & 4. When 5 & 6 turn out, 7 & 8 repeat the steps above. When 1 & 2 reach the bottom of the set, they stand facing up the set with their right hands still in the air. 3 & 4 follow them.

When 7 & 8 have finished the walk forward (just before they turn), all of the dancers start to do the stepping as in the second half of Lines. 1 & 2 lead up the set, with the rest of the dancers following in the same track, with the same stepping: R,L,R,kick,L,R,L,kick, R,L,R,kick,L,R,L,jump together. On the jump everyone turns to face across the set, in place. The hand movements are the same as in the second half of Lines.

LONG CORNERS

This is danced in pairs in turn. Each pair change places in four or six steps, passing right shoulders and turning right into place to face across the set. The left hand is held up while crossing. The pairs cross as follows: 1 & 8, 2 & 7, 3 & 4, 5 & 6.

The pairs then cross back in the same order, with the same stepping.

LONG CORNERS Cont.

Each pair starts to cross at intervals of four steps. The first two corners (1 & 8, 2 & 7) each take 6 steps to cross and turn, while the others (3 & 4, 5 & 6) each take 4 steps. This means that there is some overlap during the figure, with 2 & 7 and 3 & 4 starting before the preceding pair have finished.

SMALL CHAIN

This is danced in two sets of four. All face across the set and cross over passing right shoulders into their partner's place. Everyone then turns to face the next dancer, eg 1 & 2 turn to face down and 3 & 4 face up, etc. Everyone then passes the next dancer, crossing left shoulders and turns to face across the set. All then cross the set passing right shoulders and turn to face the next dancer, eg 1 & 2 turn up, 3 & 4 turn down, etc. Everyone then crosses on the sides, passing left shoulders to place, to face across.

The stepping for each cross and turn can either be four single steps (as in the Final Figure below) or three walking steps (with high knees) and a jump to land feet together, turning on the jump. The starting foot alternates, eg right first cross, left second, and so on. The stepping sequence is therefore R,L,R,jump,L,R,L,jump, etc. The left hand is held up for the first cross, then the right for the second. The hand movements then alternate. The change from one arm to the other is performed on the jumps.

The small chain is then repeated by everyone, so that it is done twice through. At the end, everyone leaves their right hand up for the chorus.

FINAL FIGURE - GRAND CHAIN

At the start of the figure, 3 & 5 and 4 & 6 face in pairs. A grand chain is then started by everyone crossing into the position of the person they are facing, passing right shoulders, as shown below:

2	4	6	8	-->	1	6	4	7
1	3	5	7		2	5	3	8

The dancers who just crossed on the ends then turn the easy way to face along the sides, and everyone crosses with the facing dancer, passing left shoulders. The chain continues in the same manner, with everyone dancing around the whole set, passing by alternate shoulders. The figure is danced in single steps, right foot start, with four steps for each pass. The left hand is held up first, for four steps, then the right for four, etc. This means that the hand held in the air is the farthest away from the dancer being passed. The change between hands is on the first step of each four.

At the end of the figure, all of the dances face up the set, with 3,4, 7 & 8 turning left to face up. Everyone leaves their right hand up for the final chorus.

FINAL CHORUS

The last chorus is the same as the usual chorus, except for three points. The dancers face up, rather than across. After the first turn the left hand is pulled down after the jump and the rest of the chorus is danced with both hands down till the end. At the end the turn is danced with three steps and then finished, facing up, with the right foot in the air and both hands up, with sticks crossed above the head.

DANCE OFF

The dance can either be finished by all the dancers walking off in pairs, in an inside cast, followed by the caller, or by dancing off as follows.

After the musicians have played one phrase of music, everyone starts stepping as for Lines. 1, on the first step, turns in and casts down the centre of the set. 2 follows at the start of the next set of steps, ie after the first kick. 3 follows 2 after the next kick, then the rest of the set follow in turn at the same interval. Unlike Lines there are no feet together, ie each three steps are followed by a kick, with the hands up. The caller moves down the set and joins the line after 8.

All of the dancers continue to follow 1 off, stepping as above until out of view of the audience.

This interpretation of Colne is based on how I learnt it with Bath City Morris (from Roy Dommett) in the mid 1970's and how it was taught by Rose and Castle Morris at Warwick Folk Festival c.1984. I then taught it to Chinewrde Morris (in Kenilworth) in 1986, and this is how they still perform it today. This notation was prepared for Chippenham Folk Festival, May 1991.

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