

MAKING COTSWOLD DANCES FOR THREE

CHORUSES

A. STICKS

Sticking has to be with someone. Having half a Cotswold set gives either,

(a) three dancers in a line, 1, 2, 3.

To maintain symmetry, the centre, No.2, can tap with one end, No.1, and then with the other end, No.3, and then all three dance half a Reel of Three, and then repeat all, to place. The choruses that fit this pattern are those where the tappings in bars 1-2 are duplicated in bars 3-4. An example is “Balance the Straw” from Fieldtown. Another is “The Bull” in the Fieldtown style from the Great Western Morris. Here the middle faces down and raises their stick in both hands overhead on the first beat of bar 1, and the top hits the middle’s stick over the middle’s head on the middle beat of bar 1, then the middle faces up and the bottom hits them similarly on the middle beat of bar 2. Then follows the inverse, the top faces up and raises their stick overhead in both hands and the middle hits it also facing up on the middle beat of bar 3, then the bottom faces down and raises their stick and the middle hits it, now facing down, on the middle beat of bar 4.

(b) three dancers who form into a circle.

The virtue of this configuration is that tapping can be “passed” on around the circle. It was attempted one Wheatley Day of Dance by half the Adderbury side when the other half inadvertently went down the M40.

A typical arrangement could be for any chorus.

No.1 hit No.2 in bar 1, No.2 hit No.3 in bar 2,

No.3 hit No.1 in bar 3, No.1 hit No.2 in bar 4.

Take “Lads A Bunchum” from Adderbury, a simplified notation is,

o o o - / e e e - / o e o e / o e x - //

1 on 2 2 on 3 3 on 1 1 on 2 or,

1 on 2 2 on 3 3 on 1 1 on 2 2 on 3 3 on 1

One can construct handclapping dances along the same lines.

B. HANDKERCHIEFS

Movements requiring a recipient might be handled like the stick dances above. Some choruses, such as the “sidestep-&-half-hey” dances can be done in a line without an opposite. The lack can even be exploited in that all the dancers could face alternately to the right and to the left, either for different choruses or within one chorus. They could even face up, across, down and out in successive repetitions.

Dances with choruses that have a “cross over & hey on the wrong side” can be performed with no change, as the repeat back to place makes the symmetry.

Corner dances present difficulties. One solution is to dance the corner movement as a solo, like a jig, rather than competitively, and also to exploit a freedom of path not available with a full set of dancers.

HALF DUCKLINGTON

The Ducklington tradition is unusual in having a suite of dances without the usual Cotswold figures, being set dance variants of jigs. Jockey to the Fair, Nutting Girl, Princess Royal and Shepherd's Hey have figures which were done 2-by-2 and which can be done 1-by-1, and the choruses done with all facing to one side.

Some traditions, such as Ducklington and Wheatley, lack the common to-&-fro figures such as half-gyp, back-to-back and face-to-face. Consequently they are easy to adapt.

Corner dances can sometimes be changed to a cross-over & hey on the other side form. "Lollipop Man" can become "Bobby Shaftoe" by all dancing simultaneously with one's opposite rather, than the corner, and crossing over on the spring capers and jump, and going into a half hey the easy way.

THOSE FIGURES

When Janet Blunt and her friends were noting the Adderbury dances from William Walton they naturally had difficulty in distinguishing between Foot Up, Foot Down, Processional Up and Processional Down when shown them by a single person. The differences are actually small, as are the variations between the paths of the forward and back figures elsewhere. Without an opposite, the slanting paths and lateral movement in half-gip, back-to-back etc can be ignored, leaving only two basic movements,

- (a) Forward and retire backwards twice,
eg. Foot-Up twice, Half-Gip, Back-to-Back.
- (b) Forward and turn to come back to place forwards.
eg. Foot-Up-&-Down, Whole-Gip, Hands-Round and even Cross-Over.

Thus dances can be constructed with either or both of these two figures performed in any of the four basic directions of up, down, left or right. All could be called Foot-* !

MAKING COTSWOLD DANCES FOR FOUR

Dances for four imply starting in a square, either facing the centre or side-by-side facing the other pair. The formation allows the exploitation of features not available when in a set of six. The solutions can be different to those suggested for three dancers. To be successful the changes to make a dance “work” should appear choreographed, that is something definitely different, and not fudged. The adaptation of dances has to face two issues,

(a) ALTERNATIVES TO THE MORRIS HALF HEY.

The following may be used to replace the half heys, either using the same substitution throughout a dance, or to use them all.

1. Rounds.

The simplest and least interesting possibility is to use half rounds instead of the half hey and to drop rounds out of the figure order. A variation could be to start with a cross over and then move into the remainder of half rounds.

2. Diagonals Cross and Back.

First corners cross and turn in the opposite diagonal's place and come back, passing right shoulders both times, and taking 4 bars in all. The second corners do the same but not quite simultaneously, lagging sufficiently to cross behind the first corners. It is a simple movement but it has a lot of bustle.

3. Diagonal Reel.

The first corners move into the centre, bearing to their left, passing right shoulders, going into a Reel of Four on the diagonal, and starting by passing their original opposite by the left shoulders. The dancers end the half reel in the diagonally opposite place. They have to get a move on. There is no time for a hesitation in starting the movement because of the distance to be travelled. Alternatively, or in a repeat, the other corner could lead into the reel.

4. The Figure.

Instead of thinking of a set of four as the end pairs of a set of six, they could be the top two pairs. The middles following the tops is the basis of “The Figure” of the Stourton Caundle Stave Dances. Both pairs face up to start and each second follows their first. The top pair casts out and moves down till they are passing outside their seconds, they then turn in to face across and start a half Reel of Four across the set, ending finally in the opposite place from which they started.

5. The Valiant Soldier.

The whole sequence described for the Valiant Soldier stick dance elsewhere could be used as a chorus.

6. Round the Square.

Opposites move forward and meet right shoulder to right shoulder and swing, by the hand, elbow or waist hold, once or twice round. Then move on to meet the person, who was originally their neighbour, on the far side of the set and swing again, either the same hand or the reverse. They are now half way round. To complete the second half, continue for two more repeats to get back to their starting places.

(b) ADJUSTMENTS TO THE FIGURES.**1. Square Morris.**

The intermediate figures have two halves. These can be split, doing the first half with one's opposite across the set and the second half with one's neighbour along the side of the set. This concept seems to go well with stick dances.

2. Line Morris.

This concept is rather like turning the set inside out. The team's starting position is in one line rather than in two lines, <1 <2 <3 <4.

Figures :

Foot-Up etc as one would expect.

Half-Gip done moving out to the side, two going one way and two the other, and the second half being to the other side. Suggest that the set is thought of as normally 1> <2 3> <4, so that dancers do the first half to their left and the second to their right. Note that this is out at right angles to the line not to shoulder to shoulder as with the normal Cotswold Morris.

Back-to-Back done along the line with the dancer one is facing.

Rounds the dancers move out to their left so that they move easily into a circle going clockwise.

Hey is a Reel of Four along the centre line.

Choruses :

Some choruses are easily adapted by,

(a) dancing the distinctive part in the pairs and then doing a half reel. Examples could be clapping dances.

(b) move forward during the distinctive part, passing as in a reel, and then doing a half reel back to place. In this arrangement there is no need to repeat the second half of a chorus to get back to place! Examples could be "Bobbing Around" and other active dances that do not require partner interaction.

This concept seems to go well with handkerchief dances.

MAKING COTSWOLD DANCES FOR FIVE

The asymmetry of five dancers is difficult to handle. There are two obvious starting patterns,

(a) four in a square and the other in the centre, as for the pips on a playing card.

The fifth dancer would act as a wild card, in the centre for foot-up and rounds and able to dance a path at will in the intermediate figures, perhaps joining one group for half of whole gip or hands round etc making it a threesome and changing to the other group for the second half.

The obvious chorus pattern is the Dorset Five Hand Reel with the four corners working together along the diagonals and the joker moving out of phase with them.

(b) three on one side and two on the other.

Rather than make the foot up unbalanced, all the dancers could face the centre and dance to and from the centre rather than up and/or down the set. The half gip works only to one side or shoulder, the three embracing the two, thus it should be to the same side twice (like Kirtlington). Back-to-back would best be done as a Cross-Over. Heys for five would take too long, but a Reel of Four with one of the ends, probably preferably the bottom, dancing a half or whole-round as appropriate on their own outside would be acceptable.

If the set starts in a ring, there need be no natural top direction, and choruses could rotate around the set each dancer in turn being the equivalent of the leader. Chorus stepping, eg sidesteps and jump, could be danced facing the centre rather than to an opposite.

COTSWOLD CHORUSES

1. Source of idea : Ring O'Bells , New York, USA

Dance into single line, right shoulder to right shoulder with one's opposite. Only the ends turn on the spot, at the end of bar 2, turning towards the rest of the set, to face back. Now they are to be thought of as new pairs, with new opposite's, who are left shoulder to left shoulder and they retire to their new places, all having moved one place around the set clockwise. This movement is repeated three times till the set is reversed but on the wrong side, then they dance a half rounds to go back to their starting position.

DUCKLINGTON IN A RING

The Ducklington set dance “jigs” can be performed in a circle for as many dancers as are available.

Set : all face centre.

FIGURES

Foot-up twice danced on the spot facing the centre, rather as in the 2-by-2 formation.

Sidestep and spring-capers danced facing in following the usual path as in the 2-by-2 formation.

Tap capers danced moving forward to the centre on the first two capers, turn to the right to face out on the spring capers, move out to place on the next two tap capers and turn right on the spring capers to face the centre again.

CHORUS : all face centre.

Nutting Girl : all long open side step to left and to the right facing the centre throughout. All turning to the right to start, dance two double steps around the ring clockwise, turn outwards, to the left, on two spring capers to face front. Long open side step to the left and to the right facing the centre. All turning to the left to start, dance two double steps around the ring anti-clockwise and then turning out, to the right, to face the centre on two spring capers.

Princess : as above but no second set of long open side-steps.

Royal

**Jockey to:
the Fair** : as Princess Royal but two extra spring capers on the spot before turning right into the double steps for the rounds movement.

SWEET GARLAND DANCE

- Source** : filmed at Chirstchurch Folk Festival, June 13 1981, as danced by Wessex Woods, a women's clog dance group.
Step : danced in clogs, polka step, right foot across first.
Garland : a garland covered with flowers.
Set : four dancers, starting in a square, facing across,

3 1
 m
 4 2

- O2YS : stand still
 A1 1-2 two bars polka on spot facing across to opposite, turn and,
 3-6 back-to-back with neighbour on side, pass right shoulders first, two bars each way, turn front and
 7-8 two bars polka on spot to opposite again.
 A2 1-4 dance forward and back to opposite, two bars each way, turn and
 5-8 dance forward and back to neighbour on the side.
 B1 1-6 right hand star **once** round only to place, knuckles touching in centre,
 7-8 turn outwards alone, to the left, taking two bars to face back,
 B2 1-6 left star once around to place,
 7-8 turn **out** alone to end facing across to opposite.
 A3 1-8 **Reel of Four** - two bars hesitation to start, then an eight bar reel
 A4 1-2 which runs into the next musical phrase. 1&4 start passing left shoulders and going to their right to start reel with neighbour.

3 1 3
 m to start,
 4 2 2

- The second corners (2&3) end in place in bar A4-2 and turn the short way to face across.
 3-8 **Chain** - while the second corner (2&3) polka on the spot, the other two (1&4) continue the path of the reel (figure eight) till they reach their place around the now non-travelling second corner.
 B3 1-2 two bars polka on spot facing opposite,
 3-6 turn opposite once around, touching right knuckles,
 7-8 two bars polka on spot facing opposite.
 B4 1-2 two bars polka on spot facing neighbour along sides,
 3-6 turn neighbour once round touching left knuckles,
 7-8 two bars polka on spot facing opposite again.
 A5 1-4 opposites dance forward and back, two bars each way,
 5-8 keep moving back and turning to end in a line of four facing down.

3 3
 3 1 1 1
 m m m
 4 2 2 2
 4 4

- A6 1-4 line of four polka down and back, two bars each way, facing down throughout.
 5-8 all turn outwards on the spot to face down again, taking the full four bars for the turn, 1&3 to the right, 2&4 to their left.
- B 5/6 **Turns** - all turns are done by pairs shoulder to shoulder, and take two bars and one bar pause for a half rotation, and four bars plus one bar pause for a full rotation, except for the last turn which is only two bars in all and has no pause because it is the end of the dance!

<3	1>	1>	1>	1>	<3
<1	3>	<4	<4	3>	<1
<2	4>	<3	<3	4>	<2
<4	2>	2>	2>	2>	<4

ends	middles	ends	middles	ends	: who
½ in	½ right	full out	½ right	½ in	: turn
3 bars	3 bars	5 bars	3 bars	2 bars	: length

ENDING all face down and make two bows.

EXIT all turn to their left and polka off in single file.

JACKS THE LAD

Source : danced by the Corn Dollies from Wantage, composed and led by Carol O'Rourke, filmed near Didcot 29 June 1980 and it has appeared on TV in a programme about the area.

Music : "The Sailor's Hornpipe", also known as "Jack's the Lad".

Set : four dancers, wearing clogs, stand side by side forming a square. There are no implements.

m
1 2
3 4

O2YS stand facing opposite across set.

A1 bar 1 : wave right hand high to side twice,
2 : clap both own hands together three times,
3 : wave left hand high to side twice,
4 : clap both own hands together three times,
5 : wave right hand once and clap right hand with opposite's once,
6 : wave left hand once and clap left hand with opposite's left once,
7 : wave both hands twice,
8 : clap both hands with opposite, right on left, etc, three times.

A2 Dance a left-&-right-hands-through with polka step. Go round a square, passing opposite first by the left shoulders and giving left hand, and the next by the right shoulders and giving right hand, two bars per passing. The last passing by the right becomes a right hand turn into a line of four in front of the music, facing alternately up and down and using a "1,2,together" break.

m
3 1 4 2

B1/2 Half a Reel of Four in a special way, one polka step per movement. Dancers rotate on the spot, a quarter turn each bar. Two dancers turn as a pair only when back-to-back. The illustrations show the positions at the end of each bar. Note that nearly all turns are counter-clockwise, except that, in bars 8 and 16, the dancers at the end of the line do a quarter turn clockwise.

b d

1. a b c d 2. a c 3. b a d c 4. b a d c

d

5. b a d c 6. b c 7. b d a c 8. b d a c

a

d c

9. b d a c 10. b a 11. d b c a 12. d b c a

c

13. d b c a 14. d a 15. d c b a 16. d c b a

The order in the line is now reversed (2 4 1 3).

A3 1-4 the line moves apart, in the direction the individuals are facing, to form a square again with the dancers now on the wrong side, but 1&2 above 3&4, as at the start. The tops turn in to face down the centre and the bottoms turn out to face up the outside,

5-8 the top pair lead down the middle for two bars, turn out and go up the outside to place for two bars, while the other pair go up the outside, turn in and go down the middle. All use a 1 2 3 hop travelling step and hold inside hands when going down the middle. End the movement facing across to one's opposite.

- A4 bar 1 : with weight on the left foot, twist the right foot on the heel in front of the left, across on beat one, forward on beat two and out on beat three and pause on beat four.
- bar 2 : toes together, heels apart, click the heels together three times.
- bar 3 : as bar 1 on other foot.
- bar 4 : as bar 2.
- bar 5-7 : six hop steps, swinging the free foot forward and back.
- bar 8 : two clashes of own heels together as in bar 2.

Repeat all the above from the other side to get back to starting place.

The style of this club's performance of the polka step was for a small kick forward of the free foot as it is lifted from the tap down. In the half reel B1/2 only they did not have a hop in the polka step.

On TV it was a little different, Carol thought it needed a contrast in the second half reel and changed the step from the polka without a hop to a positive step and tap of the free foot, giving more "snap".

The team held bunches of short ribbons in their hands for this dance, which is more effective than sticks or handkerchiefs.

DUMMER'S FIVE HAND REEL

At the turn of the century many young people learnt the elementary skills of social dancing at classes. The series of lessons would often end with a ball or even a series of subscription dances. It was obligatory to wear evening dress, white gloves and patent leather shoes and to use dance programmes so that one could be booked for every dance. The programmes would include the fashionable new sequence dances, then being composed, as well as the older waltz, polka and gallop and the Set Dances such as the Lancers and the Quadrilles. There would be party dances for fun, often the relics of the longways repertoires of the early nineteenth century, such as Pop Goes the Weasel and Sir Roger de Coverly, the latter often the finishing dance for children's parties. To show the teacher's skills, the pupils would often have learnt special dances for display. One such was a "Five Hand Reel", that is a dance for five people, learnt at a class covering the Overton, North Waltham and Dummer area of central Hampshire before WWI.

The reels and step dances were the old social dances of the labouring people of the south. Thomas Hardy remembered that when he was a youth the longways dances arrived in Dorset for ordinary people, even though such had been done for a century at the Assembly Rooms by the better classes. Accounts of such polite events, as by Jane Austen, show why they had not appealed to a more rumbustious clientele.

New dance forms brought new ideas that influenced all that followed them. For example the popularity of the waltz and polka steps ensured that they became incorporated into the Quadrilles and Longways dances and the "new" movements possible in the Quadrille formation became used in later composed dances in the older formations. This Five Hand Reel included a "basket", a linked arms circular figure from the Lancers, which suggests that it is not a particularly old dance.

- Source** : originally from an old lady in Dummer, near Basingstoke, Hampshire, where the Duchess of York came from, who had gone to a dancing class in Nearby North Waltham before WWI.
- Music** : dances well to "Portsmouth" or other slowish polka. My source mentioned "Brighton Camp" or "Girl I Left Behind Me".
- Steps** : **Travelling** : polka or the skip-change. **Setting** :
- a) simple single-step or step-hop form of backstep, the foot going down behind the supporting foot and scuffing forward so that the dancing is on the spot.
 - b) polka step but with the free foot crossed behind instead of in front of the supporting foot. The source danced with the rear foot well turned out and the flat of the foot touching down not just the tip of the shoe.
 - c) a crossed Cotswold Morris like sidestep, with the crossing done behind and with an exaggerated sideways swing of the free foot on the hop.
- Set** : five dancers who form a ring with hands joined. The "Leader" for each repeat of the sequence holds vertically in their right hand the "Jack", which is the local name for the fool's bauble or small clown's head mounted on a short stick. It is held up during the dance to be as visible as much as possible. As it does not require partners it can be danced with a mixed set of any proportions.

ENTRY

The dancers form a line across the road when processing along a street. The five dancers dance on in a single line with hands joined, led by the dancer with the Jack, and polka to form a complete circle.

THE DANCE

The following sequence is led by each dancer in turn. Each takes about one minute. As a display dance, five repeats is over long and only three are recommended.

1. **CIRCLE LEFT** - all the dancers face the centre of the circle, hands joined and raised to shoulder level, and circle clockwise to the left for eight bars using the cross over polka step. An option is to leave a gap in the ring at the Jack.

2. **WEAVE** - all let go hands with neighbours and all turn about a $\frac{1}{4}$ to the left to fully face around the circle clockwise and all but the leader continue to circle round clockwise for eight bars. The leader casts out to their left to face back and goes round the set anti-clockwise, weaving in and out of the other dancers, passing alternately by left and right shoulders through the others, holding the Jack up high, and ending in the centre of the set, who should now be equally spaced and facing the centre.

3. **SET & REEL** - the leader faces one of the other four and the two of them "set" in one of the ways described for four bars. Then the leader turns $\frac{1}{2}$ way round clockwise on the spot to face the dancer opposite the first one chosen and they then set to each other using the same step. These three then dance a Reel of Three across the set for eight bars, the first pair passing by the right shoulders. The other two continue to stand still. The leader ends in the centre and immediately drops back into the ring and all join hands to reform a full circle.

4. **BASKET** - with all keeping their hands linked, the leader only raises their left hand and turns half way round clockwise, backing under this arm, so that they end facing out from the set with their arms crossed in front of their body, left over right, at shoulder level. The leader then separates their arms, raising them over the heads of the two next to them, and pulling these two dancers so that they change places sideways with each other. The leader steps back to be between the other two dancers behind them, brings their arms down behind these dancers, while one of the dancers changing places ducks under the arms to form a basket of five, without anyone letting go. With practice it takes only two bars (four steps) to form and unform this basket. The basket goes around to the left, clockwise, for four bars. After breaking out to the circle all let go of hands and the leader goes back into the middle.

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3  4      3  4      1
      1      3  4
2      5
      2  5      5  2
1

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5. **SET & REEL** - the leader faces one of the dancers not set to in part 3 and repeats the setting and reeling as in part 3.

6. **BASKET** - as part 4, but on the break do not let go hands, and form a circle with joined hands and pass the Jack onto the next dancer.

Repeat the sequence from the beginning (part 1) with the new leader.

EXIT

a) having formed the circle after the last basket, break it at one point and lead off following the leader as in the entrance.

b) finish on a basket, speeding the spin and holding the linked position stationary for a while before dancing off.

VARIATIONS

A. It is not easy for the leader to remember where to fall into their starting place in the ring to form the baskets and as it does not really matter it is simple just to fall back to wherever is convenient. For the repeat of the setting, the dancers to be set to should signal who should be faced. The problem generated by not worrying about position is finding the person to pass the Jack to at the end of the turn. Towards the end of the dance it may not be either of the leader's neighbours!

B. Breaking from the basket may be found to be more difficult than forming it, so a solution is just to let go hands, one gets a longer basket swing, but again it muddles up the order around the set and the dancers have to remain quick witted.

C. When the dance was recollected, the SET & REEL was extended by adding to the setting a two handed turn by the pair, which took another four bars.

D. The basket can be formed in other manners, and it makes for interest to vary the method for each repeat of the sequence.

a) that originally taught was for the leader to pull the person on their right hand side across in front of the leader and the dancer on the leader's left, while the leader moves two places to their right passing one more dancer and ducking under the arms, having the right arm making a big clockwise circle. The control of the change of position is different but topologically it is identical.

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      3
    2   4   5   1   5   1
      4
    1   5   2   2   4
  
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b) just move in and link up arms in a basket. As there are five dancers, not four, it can not be formed as in country dances. If one stops to look, the pattern of the arms behind the bodies for those formed without letting go from the ring are not symmetrical, everyone is different. For b) it is possible to be tidier and have one's right arm "over", that is outside, one's neighbour's left.

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      3
    2   4   2   4
      3
    1   5   1   5
  
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E. Initially I had understood that the dance started with four dancers in a square and the fifth in the centre, and that the ring was of the four dancers around the middle one who danced on the spot. This was not confirmed but it is an interesting option.

F. The weaving could have been a grand chain with giving of hands but this was not confirmed by those who remembered the use of the Jack.

G. The whole has been taught elsewhere as a dance in clogs, which makes the stepping different, the pace different etc.

When this dance was first explained, it seems to be a cut down version of a bigger set dance and as I had never heard of Five Hand Reels the description was not taken very seriously. Many years later I was told of the Flett's work in the north of England, which suggested that such formations were not uncommon, so I started to use it at workshops. Eventually the Reading Cloggies taught it to a WI team from Dummer and they danced it in the village. They were told that the dance at that time lacked the key feature of the "Jack", a Jester or Punch head on a short stick which was passed round the set to the leader of each sequence and which was flourished when that leader danced in the centre of the set. They added the information about the procession along the street and the two handed turn after the setting but did not recall the fancy way of forming the basket at all!

Recognition was achieved when the dance was performed on TV by Knitbury May Maids as part of the Royal Wedding celebrations.

The dance has a special place in my life, not only because it was in the first set of dances I ever collected, but also because of the reason it became to be recovered. My grandmother had been brought up by her grandmother in a settlement just north of Great Wishford in Wiltshire, but because her grandfather so ill treated her she ran away at the age of eight to her cousins the Pullingers at Dummer. When I was young, I went with my parents and grandparents to visit them. In 1958 the Farnborough Morris arranged a weekend tour in the area and we went to the Queen's Head where I spoke to two old ladies about the Pullingers, who

they remembered well, and this lead to talking about the old days and their involvement in local social dancing.

THE DUMMER DIVIDE

- Set : a country dance in Sicilian formation, as above, 2's facing 3's.
- A1 : lines of 2's and 3's go forward and back and forward to meet and join hands in a circle of five.
A2 : middle of line of 3 leads a dishrag, one to one side and the two to the other the fifth dancer following the centre.
- B1 : 5 basket formed as for Dummer. Now in different order to start.
B2 : "Grab" - when baskets are going, which may not be till into B2!, then grab to form a new 2 and a 3. Then swing as a 2 or a 3 onto find another appropriate group to dance with!