

# Cambridge Morris Men

## *A basic Introduction to Cotswold Morris Dance*

### *Notation and definitions*

**Set:** a group of dancers (usually six).

**The Top** of the set is where the musician is (or musicians are). Hence also bottom, up and down.

Numbering: each dancer in the set is identified by a number, based on his initial position:

	2	4	6
Music			
	1	3	5

This is useful as we can refer to odds, evens, tops, middles or bottoms and it is all fairly clear.

**In:** Towards the centre of the set. **Out:** away from the centre (or away from your partner). Hence inside foot and outside foot (special Morris anatomy!)

**Squire:** the leader of the dance, usually at position 1 in the set.

**Tradition:** the dance style, repertoire and tunes collected in a particular village

**Common Figures (CF):** Within a tradition, a set of figures used as the “verses” in each dance.

**Distinctive Figure (DF):** a figure repeated (as a chorus) during a particular dance.

**A music:** that section of the tune played for the common figures. Often 4 bars, repeated.

**B music:** a variant or related section, played for the distinctive figure. Often includes bars 5-8 of the A music. In some complex dances the DF has two or more phrases of music.

**Jig:** a solo dance, but also **Double Jig** for two men, usually dancing alternately.

**Morris Step, a.k.a. Double Step:** spring slightly onto the right, left, right, hop (i.e. right again) in one bar of music then **l, r, l, h** in the next bar and so on (or *vice versa* for left foot lead).

**Single Step:** right, hop, left, hop in one bar of music and so on (unless the left foot is leading).

**Side Step:** Very similar to double step, but the trailing foot crosses just behind the leading foot.

**Style:** Keep upright. Keep the free leg quite straight but not stiff; do not raise the knee. The free foot swings sharply forwards so the bells ring. Keep the ankle of the free leg loose; do not point the foot. Weight should be on the ball of the supporting foot; keep heels off the ground throughout the dance.

**Plain Capers:** spring from one foot to the other and back slowly, at half the speed of stepping.

**Spring Caper:** in the Bampton tradition, spring high from the right foot, land on the left and hop; repeat as required without changing feet.

### *Bampton hand movements*

**Single Step:** The forearms are held in front of the chest. The handkerchiefs flick upwards and slightly forward, mostly from the wrist, on the last beat of a phrase of music and on the last beat of bar 2, then fall gently on the first beat of bars 1 and 3.

**Back Step:** The arms swing slightly in an understated swager.

**Spring Caper:** The hands are thrown up to head height on the spring then return to chest height.

### *Adderbury hand movements*

On each bar of double step, single step or back step, starting together about chin height, sweep both hands down and round in circles in a vertical plane then flick up (do I need to draw a picture?).

## ***Basic figures***

***Once to Yourself (OY)***: All face up, poised ready to start. Towards the end of the A music (or half A if it is identical repeats) the Squire calls “This time”. Some dances include a move during OY, e.g. a jump or caper.

***Foot Up (FU)***: All in columns facing up, dance towards the music then away. Details vary greatly between traditions.

***Half Gyp (HG)***: Dance across the set, passing right shoulder with your partner (i.e. go to the left). Dance backwards to place then repeat passing left shoulder. How far to go depends on the tradition. Also called Half Hands (for confusion) or Set Straight (just go halfway across).

***Whole Gyp (WG)***: A clockwise circle right round your partner. Repeat counter-clockwise.

***Back to Back (BB)***: Dance across the set, passing right shoulder with your partner, then cross behind him to the right. Dance backwards to place then repeat passing left shoulder to start.

***Whole Rounds (WR)***: All dance in a clockwise circle, right round the set to place.

***Half Rounds (HR)***: All dance in a clockwise circle then back counterclockwise.

***Hey***: Three men dance in a figure of 8.

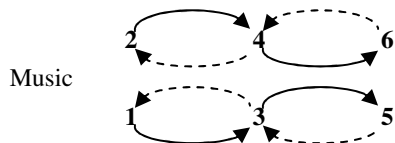
***Morris Hey***: Mirror image heys on the two sides of the set. Usually danced in two halves.

***Half Hey***: Middles dance up the centre, sweep apart at the top and loop back to places. Meanwhile tops turn up and out then dance down, outside middles and inside bottoms to bottom places. Meanwhile bottoms turn down and out then dance up, outside tops and inside middles to top places.

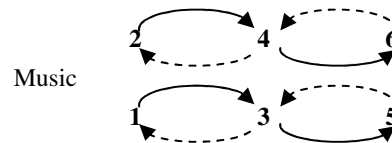
***Second half Hey***: Same as first half but inverted. Thus middles go down to start and the ends duck and weave to avoid them.

***Adderbury Hey***: Parallel heys on the two sides of the set. Tops face down, middles and bottoms face up to start. Tops start the figure by passing right shoulder with middles then passing left shoulder with bottoms. In general, loop right at the top and loop left at the bottom.

### ***Morris Hey***



### ***Adderbury Hey***



## ***Further reading and Reference***

Lionel Bacon “A Handbook of Morris Dancing”, a cryptic *aide memoire*, from The Morris Shop.

There are lots of sources linked from [www.cambridgemorrismen.org/links.htm](http://www.cambridgemorrismen.org/links.htm)

## ***Cambridge MM costume***

You will need white (not cream!) trousers and shirts, white socks and hankies, black shoes and a red belt. The bagman will give you a kit of material for your crossed baldricks and arm ribbons; the kit consists of various braids and a prefabricated sun or sunflower emblem known as the totem.

The bagman will supply you with crotal bells for which you will need a pair of leather bell pads.

The kit should include a Panama straw hat decorated with ribbons and/or flowers, preferably not with badges. Some men prefer to go bare-headed.

Trainers give better support than do ordinary shoes so your feet suffer less damage. Refer to the Morris Shop for bell pads. Alexander Workwear Ltd. are recommended for whites by mail order.