



Somerset Schools' Folk Dance Festival

Dance Instructions



The Dances

The order of dances in the Pack is not necessarily the same as the order of dances at the Festival.

Blaydon Races

Music: Blaydon Races

Formation: A large circle made up of any number of couples

- A.1 All join hands round the circle and dance in towards the middle of the circle and out again twice.
- A.2 Talk both hands with your partner so that you are sideways on to the middle of the circle. Chassay (side-step) two steps towards the middle of the circle then two steps out again and swing with your partner in a cross-hand hold.
- B.1 Still in a cross-hand hold, and standing side by side with your partner, face anti-clockwise round the circle and promenade (ie dance forward round the circle, following the couple in front of you. **
- B.2 Let go with your hands and balance four times with your partner (ie step and hope on your left foot while kicking your right foot across - do this four times on alternate feet) then take both hands and swing your partner.
- A.1 All join hands round the circle and start again.

**** VARIATION**

As an alternative to B.1, above, towards the end of the promenade the left hand partner in each couple moves on to the next person in front so that you change partners. The Balance and Swing in B.2 will be with this new partner.

Virginia Reel

Music: 48-bar jig - Hot Punch/John of Paris

Formation: A longways dance for four, five or six couples

- A.1 Each side of the set forms a line, holding hands and facing the other line. Dance forward towards the other line, then back, then forward and back again.
- A.2 Right hand turn with your partner, then a left hand turn.
- B.1 Two hand turn with your partner, then dance a back to back (do-si-do) with your partner (move forwards passing by the right shoulder, sideways to the right then backwards to place passing by the left shoulder).
- B.2 Top couple take both hands and gallop down the middle of the set (eight steps) and back again.
- C.1 Cast out - top couple separate and lead lines down the outsides of the set. When the leading couple get to the bottom they stay there and hold both hands with their partner to make an arch. Everyone else go up the set passing under the arch with their partner.
- C.2 All swing with your partner.
- A.1 Start the dance again. **

**** NOTE**

When you start the dance again, remember that you will have a new couple at the top of the set.

Farmer's Jig

Music: 32 bar jig - The Nipper/The Old Favourite

Formation: Longways set for four couples

- A.1 All face up the set, holding inside hands with your partner, and dance forward (4-bars/eight steps) and back again (4-bars/eight steps).
- A.2 All face across the set, taking both hands with your partner, and everyone gallop up the set (4-bars/eight steps) and back again (4-bars/eight steps).
- B.1 Right and left hand starts - Top two couples and bottom two couples each put their right hands together into right hand starts and dance clockwise (4-bars/eight steps), then change to the left hands and dance anti-clockwise (4-bars/eight steps) so that everyone returns to the point where they started the stars.
- B.2 Cast out - top couple separate and lead limes down the outsides of the set. When the leading couple get to the bottom they stay there and hold both hands with their partner to make an arch. Everyone else go up the set passing under the arch with their partner.
- A.1 Start the dance again. **

**** NOTE**

When you start the dance again, you will have a new couple at the top of the set (as in the Virginia Reel). This means that everyone will have changed positions in the set, so when you do the right and left hand starts (B.1) you will do so with a different partner.

Pat-a-cake Polka

Music: 16 or 32 bar polka - MacGillycuddy's/Ballyhoura Mountain

Formation: A couple dance, with couples forming a circle (one partner facing in towards the centre of the circle, the other facing out)

A.1 Heel and toe and gallop - talk both hands with your partner, and, moving anti-clockwise round the circle, dance heel, toe, heel, toe with your leading foot while hopping on your trailing foot, then gallop four steps. Then move clockwise to return to your original position, dancing heel, toe, heel, toe with the foot which is now leading while hopping on the other foot, then gallop four steps. ❖

B.1 Clap and dance round - with your partner clap:

right, right, right,
left, left, left,
both, both, both,

then clap your own knees three times;

and swing with your partner. **

A.1 Start the dance again.

❖ HEEL and TOE

Move your leading leg sideways and touch the ground with the heel, then close your feet again, touching the ground with the toe close to the trailing foot. Then do this again. Hop on the trailing foot for each heel or toe movement.

** VARIATION

You can change partners by moving one place to your left round the circle as you finish swinging, then be ready to start the Heel and Toe and Gallop with this new partner.

Buttered Peas

Music: 32 bar polka - Bourton Six/The Lancashire Tune

Formation: Sicilian Circle - couple facing couple in circles of four, as part of a larger circle

- A.1 Take hands in a circle of four and dance to the left (four bars) and to the right (four bars).
- A.2 In these same groups of four people, dance a right and left hand star (see Farmer's Jig, page 6).
- B.1 Bars 1-4 Shake hands and clap with your neighbour (ie the person who is next to you and who is not your partner):
- shake right, right, right;
clap your own hands together three times;
shake left, left, left;
clap, clap, clap, then
- Bars 5-8 Swing that person.
- B.2 Do the same as B.1, but this time with your partner. **
- A.1 Start the dance again.

**** VARIATION**

While you swing in B.2 move past the couple with whom you have been dancing and move on in order to start the dance again in the next A.1 phrase with a new couple.

Lucky Seven

Music: 32 bar reel - Bownhams/Chomping the Barley

Formation: A large circle made up of any number of couples

- A.1 All join hands round the circle and dance to the left.
- A.2 All dance in towards the middle of the circle and back again. Do this twice.
- B.1 Grand chain - face your partner so that everyone is facing the opposite way to their partner round the perimeter of the circle and dance a grand chain until you meet the seventh person. ❖
- B.2 Swing this seventh person, who becomes your new partner.
- A.1 Join up the circle and start the dance again.

❖ GRAND CHAIN

Give right hand to your partner and move past them by the right shoulder, left to the next person and move past them by the left shoulder. Keep moving forward like this - right, left, right, left - counting as you go, and stop when you meet person number 7. This is the person you swing, and who becomes your new partner.

Down in the Valley

Music: 32 bar reel - Bob Tailed 'Oss/Whinham's Reel

Formation: Square set of four couples (see notes on page 4)

- A.1 Bars 1-4 1st and 3rd couples take your partner's nearest hand and dance in towards the middle of the set and back again.
- Bars 5-8 2nd and 4th couples do the same.
- A.2 All join hands round the set and dance inwards the middle of the set and back again. Do this twice.
- B.1 Bars 1-4 All circle to the left.
- Bars 5-8 Let go with your hands, turn to the right and follow each other dancing in single file anti-clockwise and round the circle.
- B.2 The "trailing" partner in each couple move forward to rejoin your partner, take both hands and promenade round the set to where you started. ❖
- A.1 Start the dance again with the 1st and 3rd couples going into the middle and out again (as above).

❖ PROMENADE

Stand next to your partner, shoulder to shoulder, holding both hands in a cross-hand hold, and dance forwards (anti-clockwise) round the edge of the set.

Bridge of Athlone

Music: 48 bar jig

Formation: Longways set for five or six couples

- A.1 Join hands along your own side of the set. The two lines dance forward to meet, back again, then forward and cross over to the other side (one line make arches while you do this, and the other side let go hands to go under the arches).
- A.2 Do the same again, but the other side make the arches this time.
- B.1 Top couple take both hands with your partner and gallop down the middle of the set and back again.
- B.2 Cast out- top couple separate the lead lines down the outsides of the set. When the leading couple get to the bottom they stay there and hold both hands with their partner to make an arch. Everyone else go up the set passing under the arch with their partner.
- C.1 The top four (or five) couples all make a two handed arch with your partner, while the bottom couple move up the set and back again - one person dancing up the set under the line of arches and back down the outside, while their partner dances up the outside and then down through the arches.
- C.2 All swing with your partner.
- A.1 Start the dance again. (Remember that there is a new couple at the top).

The Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo

Music: 32 bar jig - Cumberland Reel/St George's Day

Formation: Square set of four couples (see notes on page 3)

- A.1 1st and 3rd couples dance to the middle and back, then all four join hands and circle once round to the left.
- A.2 The same two couples dance a right and left hand start (see Farmer's Jig, page 6).
- B.1 All face your partner and dance a back to back (see Virginia Reel, page 5), then swing your partner.
- B.2 All promenade your partner round the edge of the set (see Down in the Valley, page 11).
- A.1 Start the dance again, but see the note in the box below. **

**** NOTE**

2nd time through the dance, A.1 and A.2 are danced by the 2nd and 4th couples.

3rd time through the dance, A.1 and A.2 are danced by the right hand partner in each couple.

4th time through the dance, A.1 and A.2 are danced by the left hand partner in each couple.

I Want to be Near You

Music: I want to be near you

Formation: Square set for four couples (see notes on page 4)

Bars 1-8 1st couple separate and dance round the outside of the set, passing your partner when you are half way round.

Bars 9-12 As you reach home, move past your partner and bow to the next person, then turn round and bow to your partner.

Bars 13-20 Promenade with your partner anti-clockwise round the set. ❖

Bars 1-8 Start the dance again, as above, but see Note in the box below. **

** NOTE

Bars 1-8 are danced by different people as the dance progresses:

2nd time through it is danced by the 2nd couple;
3rd time by the 3rd couple;
4th time by the 4th couple;
5th time by the 1st and 3rd couple together;
6th time by the 2nd and 4th couples together;
and 7th time by everyone at the same time!

❖ CHORUS

As you promenade you could sing the chorus:

I want to be near you,
You're the one, the one, the one.
I want to be near you,
You're the one for me.

Cheltenham Flyer

Music: 32 bar jig - **Piss on the Grass/Shanes Fancy**

Formation: Longways set for three or four couples

- A.1 The line of dancers on the right hand side of the set stand still, while the other line follow their leader and thread their way in and out of that opposite line all the way through until they get back to where they started.
- A.2 The same again, but the line which has just danced now stand still while the other line threads its way through them.
- B.1 Top couple take both hands with your partner and gallop sideways down the middle of the set and back, **but not as far as the top - stay at the bottom of the set.**
- B.2 All take both hands with your partner and gallop down and back again.
- A.1 Start the dance again, but remember that you now have a new person at the top to lead the first weaving figure.

Oxo Reel

Music: 32 bar reel - Farewell to Whisky/The Road to Boston

Formation: Longways set for six couples

- A.1 Join hands along your line, facing the other line. Dance forward and back, then cross over - one line making arches while the other line let go their hands and go under the arches.
- A.2 That again, but the other line make the arches.
- B.1 OXO - Top two couples and bottom two couples both take hands and circle left and right in circles of four, while the middle two couples dance a right and left hand star.
- B.2 Top couple take both hands with your partner and gallop sideways to the bottom of the set. That couple stays at the bottom of the set and everyone swing your partner.
- A.1 Join hands in lines and start the dance again. Remember that everyone has changed position in the set, so each couple will now be in a different position for the OXO figure.

Circassian Circle

Music: 32 bar jig - Greenholm/Sunday Morning

Formation: A large circle made up of any number of couples

- A.1 All join hands round the circle and dance in towards the middle and back again. Do this twice.
- A.2 Bars 1-4 The right hand partner in each couple dance in towards the middle, clap your hands once, and then dance back to your place.
Bars 5-8 The left hand partner in each couple does the same.
- B.1 All take both hands with your partner in a cross-hand hold and swing.
- B.2 Keep holding hands and promenade round the perimeter of the circle in an anti-clockwise direction (see Down in the Valley, page 10).
- A.1 Join up the circle and start the dance again.

New Dance

Music: 32 bar rant/polks - The Nevada/Ranting Lass

Formation: Whatever you choose

As you will have read in the Introduction to this pack, each school group is asked to devise its own new dance for this year's Festival. So that all the dances can be performed at the same time on the Cathedral Green in Wells, we would ask that you all use the same music - *Whatever it might be* - in devising your dance.

The following notes are intended as a guide to one approach you might adopt in devising your dance. We hope you will approach this as a participative activity, so that the ideas for the dance come from your school group.

When working with children to devise new dances, the points to bear in mind are:

- figures should fit to the eight-bar phrases of the music;
- there will probably be just four figures in the dance, the same sequence of figures being repeated until the music stops;
- the dances should be made up of lively, rhythmic movements, not acrobatics, and should be danced with a partner, not solo;
- encourage children to work in small groups to devise their own figures, rather than just copy figures from another dance - it would be good for each school's dance to contain at least one brand new figure (children don't have as many preconceptions as adults in this respect, and can be highly inventive and innovative);
- clapping sequences are very much within the English folk tradition, though children sometimes try to devise elaborate sets of clapping which are too complicated to fit the rhythm;
- encourage children to try to devise their own formations;
- try to make sure that each part of the dance flows from the preceding figure;
- make sure the figures for the dance, and their sequence, are noted down.

A dance needs a name, perhaps incorporating the same of the school and possibly something to celebrate the landscape and environment. Encourage group discussion to produce ideas and make a final choice.

Try and remember that it is possible to work on social dance without requiring children to work in mixed boy-girl couples.

Flamborough Sword Dance

Note - School groups will need to have access to a set of wooden swords in order to practice and participate in this dance.

The following is Brian J Heaton's practical interpretation of a traditional sword dance. The dance was originally collected (noted down) by the celebrated folklorist Cecil Sharp.

The dance is performed by eight dancers, each holding their sword in the **left hand**. The step used is a light walking step. Use this step whether you are moving or making time on the spot. The **left foot** should go down on the **first beat** of each bar. Each movement of the dance should coincide with a new 8-bar phrase of music.

Music: 32 bar reel

Once to yourself	Step on the spot (the swords should be held in the left hand and "sloped" on the left shoulder.	Phrase 1
Entry	Lead into the dance area in a line, led by the "leader", 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1 > > and turn right to lead into a circle. (the circle should continue to rotate in a clockwise direction for each figure from now until FILES).	Phrase 2
Elephants	Dancers push their own swords back over the left shoulder and take the tip of the one in front with the right hand. You will now be holding two swords - the handle of your own sword in your left hand and the tip of your neighbour's sword in your right.	Phrase 3
Lock	Each dancer raises the left hand over their head while turning right to face the centre. Cross the two swords in front of your (left will be on top). Now fix the swords together in the Lock - the left hand sword is pushed under the sword on your right, and the right hand sword is pushed over the sword on the left - push all the swords home simultaneously when the leader calls "Lock".	Phrase 4
Show	At the beginning of the phrase the leader holds up the lock vertically above their head. Keep the lock their while you all dance round the circle.	Phrase 5
Draw	Lower the lock to a horizontal position at shoulder height. Each dancer takes the handle of their own sword in the left hand, and, when the leader calls "Draw" in the last bar of the phrase of music, draw your own sword out and downwards.	Phrase 6
Clash	Hold the swords up in the air in a "wigwam" and clash the swords in time with your feet, still rotating the set.	Phrase 7

Ring	Lower your own sword and pass the tip towards your left. Take the tip of your neighbour's sword in your right hand. All circle to the left.	Phrase 8
8 over	Numbers 1 and 8 lower number 8's sword, and number 8 leads the team over the sword and turns left, each dancer placing their neighbour's sword on the right shoulder as they go over. The set circles anti-clockwise to the end of the phrase of music with swords on shoulders.	Phrase 9
Undo	Number 8 leads number 1's sword and turns right to reform the open ring.	Phrase 10
8 under	Same as '8 over', but passing under number 8's sword.	Phrase 11
	<i>It will avoid confusion for inexperienced dancers if an extra circle for one phrase of music is danced after each of the last three movements.</i>	
Undo	As before, finishing with two files, number 1 facing number 2 at the top, etc. Shoulder swords as in Phrase 1. <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: left;"><i>Left</i></div> <div style="text-align: center;"><i>Top</i></div> <div style="text-align: right;"><i>Right</i></div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-top: 5px;"> <div style="text-align: left;">1</div> <div style="text-align: center;">2.....couple 1</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-top: 5px;"> <div style="text-align: left;">8</div> <div style="text-align: center;">3.....couple 2</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-top: 5px;"> <div style="text-align: left;">7</div> <div style="text-align: center;">4.....couple 3</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center; margin-top: 5px;"> <div style="text-align: left;">6</div> <div style="text-align: center;">5.....couple 4</div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"><i>Bottom</i></div>	Phrase 12
Files	Number 1 dance down the outside of the set and back up the middle, while number 2 goes down the middle and back up the other side to place. That couple join both swords and spin <u>twice</u> to the bottom (stay there when you get there), others stepping on the spot.	Phrase 13
	Couples 2, 3 and 4 each take turns to do the same.	Phrases 14-16
Arches	All link swords with your partner. Couples 2, 3 and 4 make arches while couple 1 spin twice under arches to the bottom of the set (four bars of music). Couples 2, 3 and 4 each take a turn to do the same. <i>Open up the set a little.</i>	Phrases 17 & 18
Half Pousette	1st and 3rd couples, with linked swords, move towards the right (see diagram in 'Undo', Phrase 12, above) and down one place, while 2nd and 4th couples move towards the left and up one place (four bars of music). Continue this progression until you get back to your original position in the set. Whenever you attain the top or the bottom of the set stay there for four bars of music and spin twice away from the set. Shoulder swords as in Phrase 1.	Phrases 19-22

Straight line	<p>All form a straight line (spread out a little). Number 1 dances out and turns to face everyone else, thus:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 8 ^ 7 ^ 6 ^ 5 ^ 4 ^ 3 ^ 2 ^</p>	
Hey	<p>At the beginning of the phrase of music number 1 passes by the right shoulder with number 8, left with number 7 etc. Each dancer joins in as number 1 meets them. Turn left when you come out of the set at the ends and return into the set passing right shoulders.</p> <p>Number 1 dances to the bottom of the set, back to the top, and right down to the bottom again, then out to the right to reform the circle as in Phrase 2.</p>	Phrases 23-27
Elephants	As before.	Phrase 28
Lock	As before.	Phrase 29
Show	<p>Number 1 holds the lock up as before. To finish the dance, either:</p> <p>Number 2 stands in the middle of the circle while the other dancers dance round the outside; or</p> <p>Number 1 leads the other dancers in a line away from the performance area.</p>	Phrase 30