

Constant Billy Trust

Children's Country Dancing Resource Pack



constantbilly.org.uk

CONSTANT BILLY TRUST

The objective of the Trust is **“To advance the education of the Public - especially Schoolchildren, and provide facilities and resources for the promotion of Traditional Folk Arts and Culture”** To find out more about the trust, follow the link: constantbilly.org.uk

The Trust was formed after the successful series of Children’s Festival events organised by East Suffolk Morris Men (ESMM) as part of their Golden Jubilee celebrations in 2008.

We were encouraged to make similar future events sustainable which meant the project needed to broaden out from ESMM and bring onboard more musicians, dancers and singers. Hence the Trust.



Who is Billy?

Billy is the East Suffolk Men’s Hobby Horse. His full name is Constant Billy and he has been dancing in Suffolk since 1935 – almost as long as his rider Des Herring who founded East Suffolk Morris Men over 50 years ago. You can find out more about Billy and Hobby Horses by following links on the East Suffolk Morris Men’s website eastsuffolkmorris.com

Des and his alter ego “Billy” have done so much to promote traditional dancing in Suffolk, we decide to name the Trust after him. May he long continue his good work





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Children's Country Dancing Resource Pack

1. INTRODUCTION

Although on an event day there will be a caller to guide children through the dances, it is our vision that schools will take the opportunity to build teaching some of these dances into their school plan alongside the PE / Dance curriculum

We are providing resources for this venture through this booklet and accompanying CD, and on-line via our website constantbilly.org.uk

This resource pack provides notation and explanation for dances, and an extensive series of help and supporting pages which describe:

- The formation of dance sets
- How the dance figures work
- About the music, rhythm and stepping
- Some tips on timing and calling dances

In addition there is a selection of video clips to be viewed on-line which show some dances and dance figures.

The music accompanying this pack is also available on-line in .mp3 format.

Our thanks go to the musicians, dance authors and all others who have contributed their work to of the Trust. We hope you and the Children all get as much enjoyment from our traditional music and dance heritage as we all have.

2. ANATOMY OF A COUNTRY DANCE

In this resource pack, country dances are presented using the format shown below.

Dance Title (*Notation*)

4 Couple Set <i>(Formation of set)</i>		32 bar Single Jigs <i>(Music, Rhythm & Stepping)</i>	
(Timing) 1 st Phrase (4 bars)		2 nd Phrase (4 bars)	
A1	Circle-left	Circle-right	
A2	Right-hand-star	Left-hand-star	
B1	Top couple dance down the set & back to place		
B2	Back-to-back (Do-si-do) Partner	Top couple Swing to bottom of the set	
(Parts)			

Dance Figures

Each of the major parts shown above are described in the following sections

- Dance notations
- Formation of dance set
- Description of dance figures
- Timing and Phrasing of the dance
- Music, Rhythm and Stepping

Finally, there are some general points on how to make the dances work well for the dancers.

3. DANCE NOTATIONS

Below are dance notations selected to have a mix of dance figures and set formations.

“Tune” refers to the music on the www.constantbilly.org.uk website or accompanying CD. You will also find a matrix of dances and suitable tunes in Section 9 of this pack

Dance 1

Two Couples	YORKSHIRE BUTTERED PEAS	32 bar Polka
A1	In fours, Circle-left ; then Circle-right	
A2	In fours, Right-hand-star ; then Left-hand-star	
B1	With Partner, (Shake-hands x3; & Clap x3) x3; Two-hand-turn x1	
B2	With opposite, (Shake-hands x3; & Clap x3) x3; Two-hand-turn x1 Join hand in circle ready for next time through dance	

Dance 2

4/5/6 Couple Set	CUMBERLAND REEL	32 bar Reel or Double Jig
A1	All, with Partner, Right-hand-turn & Left-hand-turn	
A2	Top couple dance Down-middle of set & Back	
B1	Top couple Cast on own side to bottom of set followed by all others; top couple make an arch at bottom of set & all other Pass-through-arch (progression)	
B2	All Swing Partner.	

Dance 3

Square Set	CUMBERLAND SQUARE EIGHT	64 bar Reels
A1	Head couples, Gallop across set & back	
A2	Side couples, Gallop across set & back	
B1	Head couples, Right-hand-star , then Left-hand-star	
B2	Side couples, Right-hand-star , then Left-hand-star	
C1	Head couples make a Basket	
C2	Side couples make a Basket	
D1	All join hands and Circle-left	
D1	Promenade (walk) with your Partner back home to where you started	

Dance 4

Concentric Circles	CIRCLE HORNPIPE (Dave Hunt)	16 bar Hornpipe
A1	Two hands with Partner, Chassey 4 side-steps to boys left & Back Chassey 2 side-steps to boys left & Back Welsh-clapping	
B1	With Partner, Right-elbow-swing ; Left-elbow-swing person on <u>left</u>	

Dance 5

Sicilian Circle **SHEPHERDS GROVE** **32 bar Jigs**

- A1** 1s **Gallop** (boys left) between 2s around circle, then **Back** to place
- A2** 2s **Gallop** (boys left) between 1s around circle, then **Back** to place
- B1** In fours (1s and 2s), **Right-hand-star**, then **Left-hand-star**
- B2** With Partner **Forward** to opposite & **Back**, then **Forward & Pass-on** (1s over 2s)

Dance 6

Grand Circle **CIRCASSIAN CIRCLE** **32 bar Jigs or Reels**

- A1** All join hands, **Into-middle-&-back** twice
- A2** Girls **into-middle & Clap**; Boys **Into-middle & Clap**
- B1** All **Swing** Partner
- B2** All **Promenade** anti-clockwise round circle

Dance 7

4/5/6 Couple **MARGATE HOY** **32 bar Jigs or Reel**
(Watch video clip via website)

- A1** Hold hands in lines, Top Girl **leads girls** around the boys
- A2** Hold hands in lines, Top Boy **leads boys** around the girls
- B1** Top couple **gallop down** set & **back**
- B2** Top couple **cast** out and go to bottom of set & **swing**
All others **Right-hand-turn & Left-hand-turn**

Dance 8

Single **HEEL & TOE POLKA**

16 bar Polka

Couple **(Watch video clip via website)**

A1 Join hands & with feet pointing in direction of travel:
Step **Heel-then-toe** twice & gallop 4 steps: Repeat **back**

B1 **Clapping** with partner:
Right-hand twice, **Left-hand** twice,
Both-hands twice, **Own-knees** twice
Repeat all clapping

Dance 9

4 Couples **FARMERS JIG**

**32 bar March
or Single Jig**

(Watch video clip via website)

A1 All face up to top (usually towards the band):
March 8 steps up (with or without holding hands) & **back**

A2 Join hands & **gallop 8 steps** up and back

B1 In fours (top 4 and bottom four): **Right-hand-star** then **Left-hand-star**

B2 All face up: Top couple **cast outwards** & lead others down set
Top couple **make an arch** & others **come through the arch.**

Dance 10

Concentric Circle	Oi! March (Heather Bexon)	32 bar March
A1	All Promenade (walk with partner) 16 steps anticlockwise - Turn around and Shout Oi! On the last step	
A2	Turn & repeat back	
B1	All turn Right; & walk in opposite directions (counter march) 8 steps - Shout Oi! on the last step & turn around Repeat back to places - Shout Oi! on the last step	
B2	All Swing Partner	

Dance 11

Square Set	HOLMFIRTH SQUARE	32 bar Reel or Jig
A1	Into Middle-&-Back twice	
A2	1st Couple: join hands & make an arch to go over around the set [R]	
B1	Grand Chain (watch video clip)	
B2	All Swing partner	

Dance 12

4 Couple Set	HILL START (Heather Bexon)	32 bar Reel
A1	Clap (self) x5 (in time with music CC_CCC), then Stamp x5 (SS_SSS) Right-hand-turn halfway round to change sides	
A2	Repeat (keep hold of Right-hand, then...	
B1	Join two hands; All double cast (L) to bottom of set & back to places	
B2	Top couple swing down to bottom of set	

Dance 13

Couples	RON's ROMP (Ron Coxall)	32 bar Reel or Jig
A1	Two-hand-hold: Gallop 4 steps towards Band : Repeat	
A2	Do-si-do (back-to-back) passing Right shoulders: Repeat passing Left	
B1	Clapping: Knees; together Ptnr Right hand Knees, together Ptnr Left hand Knees, together Ptnr Right & Left hands Knees, together Ptnr Both hands	
B2	Swing or skip around room	

Dance 14

4 Couple Set VIRGINIA REEL

48 bar Jig

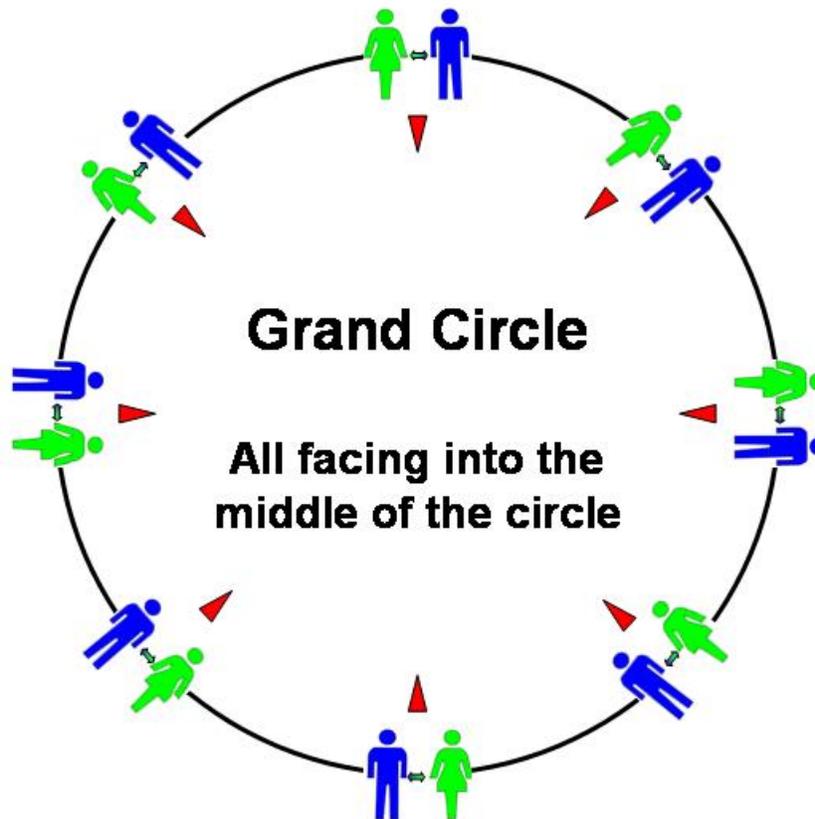
- A1** Join hands in-line; **Forward** to meet Ptnr & **Back** x 2
- A2** With Ptnr: **Right-hand-turn**, then **Left-hand-turn**
- B1** With Ptnr: **Two-hand-turn**, then **Do-si-do** (back-to-back)
- B2** Top Couple; Join hands & **Gallop** to bottom of set & **back**
- C1** Top Couple, **Cast** out & lead other to bottom of set ...
Then top Couple **make an arch** & everyone else go through the arch
- C2** When back to place; **Swing** Ptnr

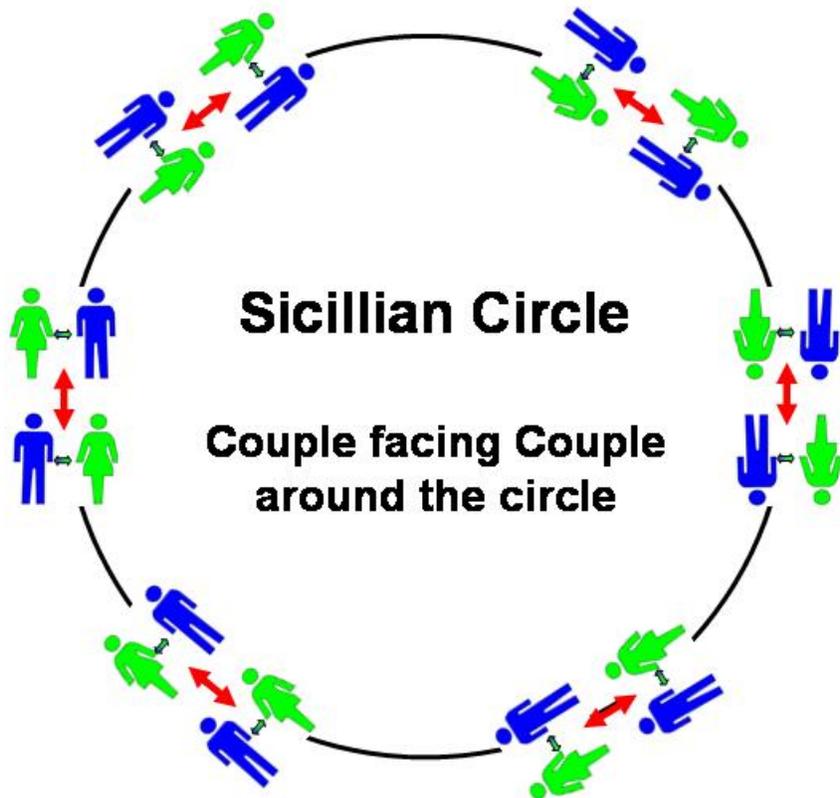
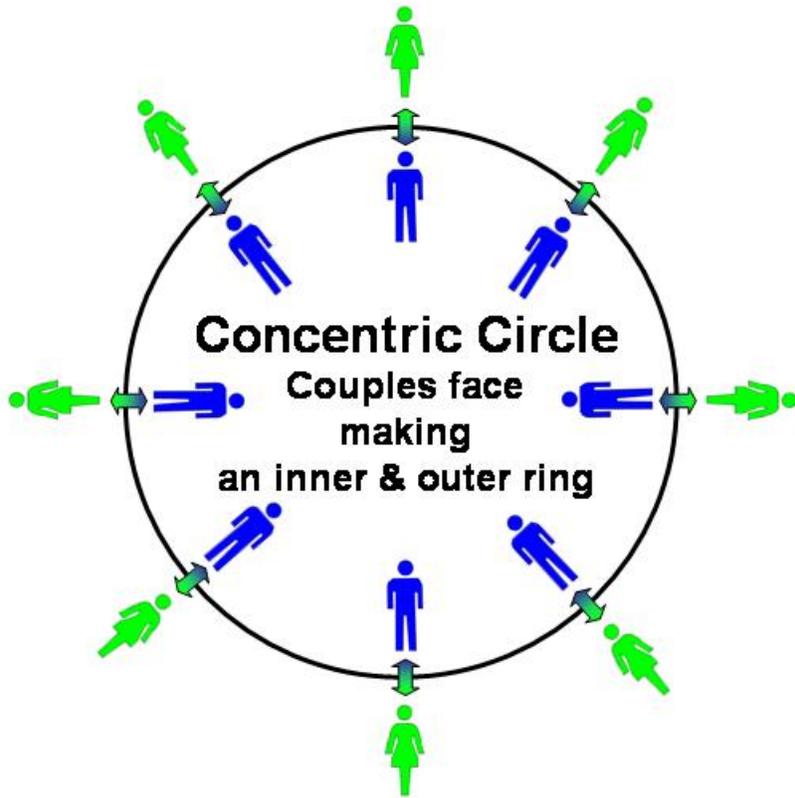
4. FORMATION OF DANCE SET

Below are shown some common formations of country dance sets.

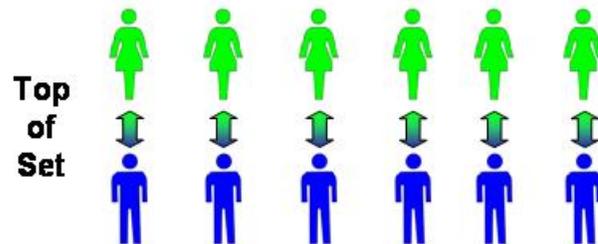
Note: it is an almost invariable rule that in a couple, the girl dances on the boy's right hand side.

Grand Circle	Six Couple Set	Longways Set
Concentric Circle	Square Set	Improper Longways Set
Sicilian Circle		





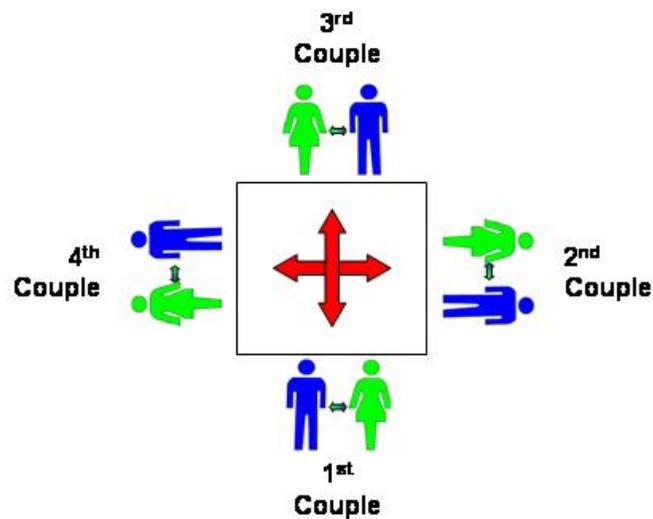
Six Couple Set



Couples facing partner in a line of six couples

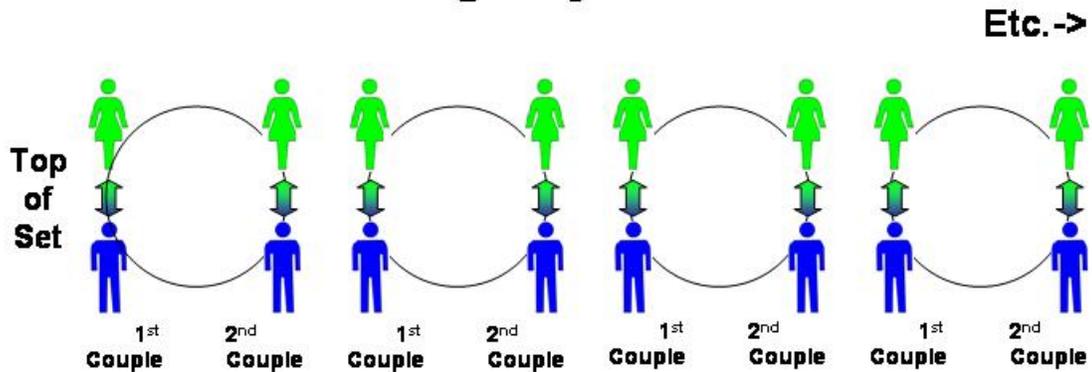
This form can be used for 3,4,5 or 6 couple sets

Square Set



Four Couples each forming the sides of a square

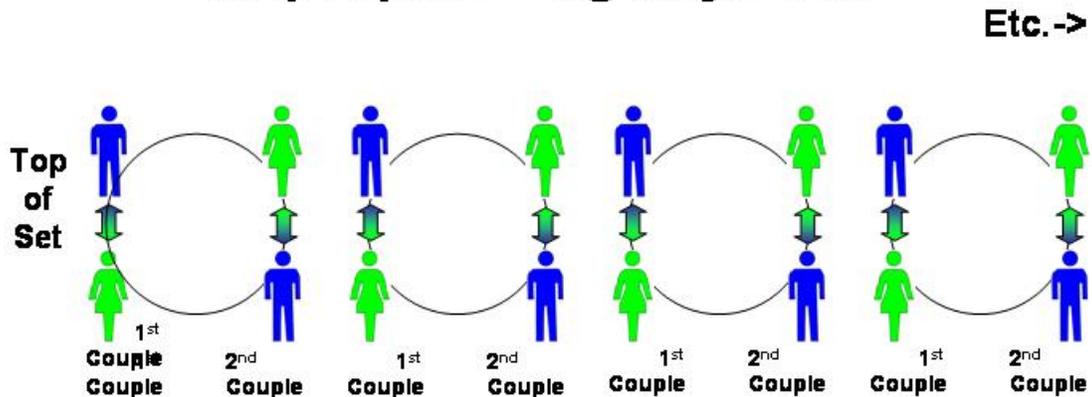
Longways Set



**Couples facing partner in a long line
grouped into pairs of two couples**

**Couples nearest top of set are 1st Couples
Couples furthest away are 2nd Couples**

Improper Longways Set



**Couples facing partner in a long line
grouped into pairs of two couples**

**Couples nearest top of set are 1st Couples
Couples furthest away are 2nd Couples
First couples swap normal sides (improper)**

5. DANCE FIGURES

The table below lists common figures found in Country Dances.

Right-hand-turn	Into-middle (and back)	Right-hand-star
Left-hand-turn	Forward-and-back	Left-hand-star
Two-hand-turn	Forward-and-cross-over	Right-elbow-turn
Back-to-back (Do-si-do)	Promenade	Left-elbow-turn
Circle-left	Circle-right	Chassey
Cast	Basket	Swing
Balance	Grand-chain	Dip-and-Dive
Welsh Clapping	Reel, Hey, and Figure of Eight	Thread-the-needle

Right-hand-turn

Couples join right hands & dance round ending in original place

Left-hand-turn

Couples join left hands & dance round ending in original place

Two-hand-turn

Couples join both hands (crossed or uncrossed) & dance round ending in original place

Back-to-back (Do-si-do)

Couples face each other, then dance forward to pass right shoulders, then return to place passing left shoulders - without turning around.

The figure is sometimes called twice in which case, the second time couples pass left shoulders first & return passing right shoulders

Into-middle (and back)

Usually performed when in a circle form: all join hands & dance forward a few steps & return dancing backwards (i.e. without turning around)

Forward-and-back

Usually performed in Longways or Fixed Couple sets: hands are joined along lines & people dance forward to meet partner then backwards to place. Often performed twice.

In some Sicilian circle dances, couples dance forward to meet the opposite couple then backwards to place.

Forward-and-cross-over

Usually performed in Longways or Fixed Couple sets: hands are joined along lines & people dance forward passing right shoulders then turn around to face partner. Often performed twice passing left shoulders to place. Sometimes one sided makes arches for other side to duck under when crossing.

In some Sicilian circle dances, couples dance forward passing right shoulders then turn to face opposite couple. Often performed twice passing left shoulders to place. Sometimes one sided makes arches for other side to duck under when crossing.

Balance

Couples face each other. Hop onto right foot & swing left foot across right leg, then hop onto left foot swinging right foot across left leg. Often performed twice. Sometimes couples hold right hands whilst doing the balance.

Swing

Couples join together with ballroom style hold or cross-handed (more common with children), then spin around in a clock-wise direction.

If ballroom style is used, the technique for the spin is to pivot on the right foot & use the left foot to “scoot” around.

Promenade

Couples join inside hands facing anticlockwise around circle or square & walk forward. Sometimes (rarely) direction is reversed half way through. Children sometimes use a “coach & horses” style hand hold.

Grand-chain

Couples start by facing each other. Giving right hands, they dance by passing right shoulders; then immediately give left hands to the next person they meet & pass left shoulders; continue around the set passing by with alternate hands until back to place (in square sets) or reaching the required number of people (in circle sets).

Tip: people do not turn around; they keep going in one direction only.

Right-hand-star

(The designated) four people join their right hands together to make a star; then dance around in the direction they are facing (clockwise).

Designated people can be two couples, four men/boys, four women/girls etc.

Left-hand-star

(The designated) four people join their left hands together to make a star; then dance around in the direction they are facing (anti-clockwise).

Designated people can be two couples, four men/boys, four women/girls etc.

Circle-left

Designated people join hands to make a circle & dance in a leftward direction. Can be found in most dance forms.

Designated people can be whole set (all), two couples, four men/boys, four women/girls etc.

Circle-right

Designated people join hands to make a circle & dance in a rightward direction. Can be found in most dance forms.

Designated people can be whole set (all), two couples, four men/boys, four women/girls etc.

Right-elbow-turn

Couples link arms at right elbow joint & dance around in the direction they are facing (clockwise) ending in original place. Most often found in dances with a hornpipe rhythm (step-hop)

Left-elbow-turn

Couples link arms at left elbow joint & dance around in the direction they are facing (anti-clockwise) ending in original place. Most often found in dances with a hornpipe rhythm (step-hop)

Chassey

Couples face each joining hands and side-step in the designated direction.

Cast

All people turn to face up the set (towards the top end). The top couple turn outwards to face down wards & dance down to the bottom of the set. All others follow behind the top couple.

Usually followed by either: top couple making an arch at the bottom of the set & all others passing through the arch then returning to places, or:

couples link up with partner at the bottom of the set & dance back up set to place

Commonly found in fixed couple set dances.

Basket

Figure for four people – usually two couples: all four form a close circle by joining hands behind neighbours' backs. All pivot on right foot & "scoot" around in a clockwise direction with the left foot.

Dip-and-Dive

Figure for two couples facing each other. Each couple takes inside hands with partner; designated leading couple makes an arch (inside hands) & both couples cross sides – over & under arches. Cross back with other couple making arch.

Reel, Hey, and Figure of Eight

Can be for 3, 4, or 6 people. Form is couples facing each other in a line. Couples pass right shoulders (with or without giving hands) & pass left shoulders with next person continuing alternate hands & turning back into line at ends (turn in the direction of the open hand (cf missing person)).

Thread-the-needle

Found in fixed couple sets. All join hands in a circle. Leading person drops hand with partner and dances through the first two people on opposite side – taking all others with them. End in original place.

Welsh Clapping

Facing Partner, each person claps their (own) hands together, then claps with Partners Right Hand, then each person claps their (own) hands together, then claps with Partners Left Hand, then each person claps their (own) hands together, crosses their own chest and leans on their partners outstretched hands. In short.. "Clap together - Right, together - left, together - cross chest & lean on Partner's hands.

6. TIMING, MUSIC, RHYTHM and STEPPING

Timing

The building block of most country dances is the four-bar phrase and all dance figures fit within this phrase - or multiples thereof.

Happily most popular traditional tunes and songs also use the four bar phrase with the commonest form being two x four bar phrases (8 bars) making up what is known as a "part". So we see tunes with 4, 6 or 8 parts making up respectively 32 bar, 48 bar or 64 bar tunes with each part being labeled "A", "B", "C" etc.

These parts can be arranged in many ways. Songs and Jazz tunes often use the form AABA with the "B" known as the "middle 8". Country dance and traditional tunes most often use the forms: AABB (32 bars); AABBC (48 bars); and AABBCDD (64 bars). When musical parts are repeated, they are often labeled A1, A2, B1, B2 etc.

For example, the tune illustrated at the [head](#) of the resource pack is 32 bars in length made up of two parts A and B each repeated to give a sequence of: A1,A2,B1,B2.

Music

Country dances can be performed to a great variety of music – indeed, historically, musicians would often use popular tunes of the day, a tradition carried forward by many contemporary bands.

However, there are two critical aspects of the music essential to make a dance work well – Rhythm and Stepping. There is nothing more enjoyable than dancing the right step to the right rhythm for a dance!

Rhythm

The main rhythms found in country dances are:

Reels, mainly use a walking step (or running if fast) (2/4 or 4/4 timing)

Single Jigs, which use a skipping step c.f. "The Archers" (6/8 timing – 2 beats to a bar).

Double Jigs, which use skipping or fast walking / galloping (6/8 timing – 2 beats to a bar)

Polka, which is a 1,2,3 hop rhythm (4/4 timing)

Hornpipe, which uses a 1 hop, 2 hop rhythm (2/4 or 4/4 timing)

Waltz, which is a traditional 1,2,3; 1,2,3 rhythm (3/4 timing)

There are specialist variants of these steps – for instance the rant step which is similar to a polka, which even has North Country and South Country variants.

Stepping

In the description of figures, the generic term “dance” is used to indicate movement. The style of step used when dancing depends on a combination of the figure, the dance form and the musical rhythm used.

Walk or Promenade

Most commonly used in dances accompanied by March or Reel music either in 2/4 or 4/4 time

Skip

Most commonly used in dances accompanied by Single Jigs or Double Jigs both in 6/8 time

Gallop

This is a side-step skipping motion accompanied by Reels or Jigs

Polka

The polka step is a step-step-step-hop (1 – 2 – 3 hop) sequence and is accompanied by tunes aligned to the polka rhythm in 4/4 time

Hornpipe

The hornpipe step is a step-hop; step-hop sequence (1– hop; 2 – op) accompanied by tunes aligned to the hornpipe rhythm in 4/4 time

7. GENERAL POINTS

Calling Dances

Most country dance events (barn dances, ceilidhs etc.) are led by a "Caller" who explains / teaches the dance up-front then "calls" the dance figures whilst they are being performed. The language used for the call can be just a description of the figures, but it's far better to say something which encourages the dancers to move correctly.

However, the most important skill for a caller is to get the dance timing right and aligned to the music. (it vastly helps if a Caller has musical skills and experience). The "call" needs to be delivered to the dancers just **before the start** of the phrase to be danced.

Gender

On "gender", most dances would normally be danced with man / woman couples, but many will work perfectly well without gender reference. However, some may require some form of couple identity, and it is suggested that the colours **Blue = "Boy"** and **Green = "Girl"** can be used - especially for single sex schools or where there is an imbalance of gender numbers.

One invariable rule though: the **"Boy"** always has his **"Girl"** partner on his right-hand-side

Progression

On "Progression", Some dances include a progression where couples split & move on to a new partner each turn through the dance. For younger children, this can be unsettling until they are familiar with the concept. If this is so, the progression movement can be left out so that couples stick together until confidence is built.

Duration of Dances

"How long is the dance?" There are two answers:

- If the dance is set for a specific number of dance couples (e.g. a square dance or a 4 couple set) , then the music must play for that many times through the tune (or multiples thereof)
- If the dance is for as many dancers as "will dance", then the music can play as many times as the Caller or Band Leader chooses.

8. ABOUT THE MUSIC

The music selected to accompany this resource pack is performed by four Bands all local to Suffolk. We have chosen different styles of music suitable for dancing – but also for listening to in their own right. The four Bands are:

BB “Billy’s Boys” - the musicians of East Suffolk Men

SP “Spit and Polish” - Alan Walters, Jeff Adams & Peter Hughes

SF “Stowfolk” – Heather Bexon, Mike Bexon, Mike Briggs, & Pete Ellis

SG “Sizewell Gap” – Jude Avery, Annie Clark , Martin Clark,
& Mike Fordham

You can contact the bands through the usual channels.

9. MUSIC TRACKS

The table below describes the tracks on the music accompanying this resource pack.

The **TYPE** of tune describes the rhythm and timing. The **LENGTH** indicates how many cycles of the dance notation the tune supports i.e. x6 cycles means 6 times through the dance notation.

TUNE No	TITLES	TYPE	LENGTH
Tune 01	Scotts's Reel (Trad)	32br Reel	N/A
Tune 02	Sick Tune / Buffalo Girls (Trad)	16br Polka	12x cycles
Tune 03	Grande Cosse (Naomi Alexander)	32br March	4x cycles
Tune 04	Rakes of Marlow / Uncle Bernard's Polka (Trad)	32br Reel	6x cycles
Tune 05	My Love She Is But A Lassie Yet / Atholl Highlanders (Trad)	64br Reel	3x cycles
Tune 06	Ballydesmond No 2 / Tralee Gaol (Trad Irish)	32br Reel	8x cycles
Tune 07	Weymouth Quickstep (Trad)	48br S Jig	4x cycles
Tune 08	The Maid and the Palmer (Trad)	16br Hornpipe	9x cycles
Tune 09	The Oyster Girl / Rosin the Beau (Trad)	32br Jig	6x cycles
Tune 10	The Primrose / Heel & Toe Polka (Trad)	32br Polka	6x cycles
Tune 11	The Cook in the Kitchen / Monaghan's Jig (Trad Irish)	48br D Jig	8x cycles
Tune 12	The Hungry Army / Rogue's Wedding (Trad)	32br S Jig	7x cycles
Tune 13	Salmon Tails / Peat Fire Flame / Donkey Riding (Trad)	32br Reel	7x cycles
Tune 14	Newby End / Newby Again (Naomi Alexander)	32br S Jig	5x cycles
Tune 15	Jackson Reel (Trad)	32br Reel	8x cycles
Tune 16	Roaring Jelly / The Perfect Cure (Trad)	32br S Jig	6x cycles
Tune 17	The Plains of the Boyle Trad Irish)	32br Hornpipe	4x cycles
Tune 18	Page's Bottom (Trad) / A Knight to Remember	32br S Jig	9x cycles

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