

Field Town Stepping & Figures

“Field Town” was the familiar name for Leafield, a small hamlet in the Wychwood Forest. Fifteen traditional Field Town dances were collected by English folklorist Cecil Sharp and published in 1911 in Volume IV of *The Morris Book*.

Sharp writes: “The Sherborne and Field Town dances are the most intricate that I have yet found, and we may take it, I think, that they represent the present-day Morris at its highest development.” Sharp collected the Field Town dances from Mr. Henry Franklin, a retired police officer who was 81 years old at the time. Franklin “left his native village in the late fifties (1850s) at the time when the forest, in the midst of which he was born, was cleared, and shortly after the Morris dancers were disbanded. ... The Field Town Morris comprised no less than fifteen dances and jigs, all of which Mr. Franklin danced and described to me down to the minutest detail, a wonderful achievement for a man of his age; one, indeed, which will seem incredible to those unacquainted with country dancers and their ways. He is not, of course, as lissome as he was, nor can he caper as high as he used to do, but I found little or no difficulty in noting down his steps and movements, elaborate as many of them were.”

Steps

Double Step

The double-step is used to move forward.

The stepping pattern is “1-2-3-hop” or “run-run-run-hop”. Legs are mostly straight and slightly in front of the dancer during the 1-2-3. On the hop, the free leg comes up and kicks (with the toe held up—not pointed) so the bells get a nice ring.

In *hankie dances*, the hankies float down gradually through 1 & 2, raise up gradually on 3 (ending as high as the dancer can reach), and flick upwards on the hop. On the final double step before a hop back or foot-together-jump, the hankies are gathered at the dancer's chest rather than raised all the way up. The entire movement should be gradual, and the hankies should not stop from the time they start down until they reach the top again. In *stick dances*, the stick is pointed with the tip pointed toward the ground, close to vertical but not quite. On the final double step before a hop back or foot-together-jump, the stick and free hand are brought in front of the dancer, with hands ending up at the dancer's chest.

Single Step

The single step is used to move forward.

Field Town does not traditionally use single steps. However, in the unlikely event that a dancer needs to move forward during [hop backs](#), single steps are substituted.

The pattern is “1-hop 2-hop,” like skipping. However, the legs are mostly straight and slightly in front of

the dancer (like with [double steps](#)). As with double steps, on the hop the free leg comes up and kicks (with the toe held up-not pointed) so the bells get a nice ring.

Hankie or stick movements should be the same as for whichever step the single step is replacing.

Hop Back

The hop back is used to move backward.

The pattern is "1-hop 2-hop", like skipping backwards. The free leg is mostly straight and the free foot is turned slightly outward.

In *hankie dances*, the hankies are held out to the sides in "balance position". In *stick dances*, the stick is held vertically. On the first hop back, the hands are held out to the sides. They are brought in to the dancer's chest on the final hop-back before a foot-together-jump.

Hockle Back

The hockle back is used to move backward.

Hockle backs are a little like hop backs. The stepping is 1-hop 2-hop, moving backwards, and the arms are in "balance position". The difference is that in hockle backs, the free leg is swung far out to the side (at least 45° above vertical; closer to 90° is better) and lands behind the (previously) weight-bearing foot.

Foot-Together-Jump

The foot-together-jump is "in place" (not moving in any direction), and is used as an arrival at the end of a stepping sequence or musical phrase.

The pattern is "squat-jump-land". This happens slowly. The squat (not too low so it doesn't look ridiculous) happens through beats 1 & 2. The jump happens somewhere around beat 3, adjusting the timing so the dancer lands exactly on beat 4. Hands are brought in front of the dancer's chest.

In *hankie dances*, the hankies are thrust upwards on beat 4 so that they arrive at their highest point on the "and" (half-beat) after beat 4. In *stick dances*, clash on beat for at the same time as the landing.

Galley

The galley is used to turn any amount from 0° (*i.e.*, not turning at all) to 360°. A galley can be used to move to the side and/or backward, or can happen "in place".

Sharp called these "galley or gallery". The pattern is "step-hop-hop". Step onto the free foot on beats 1 & 2, turning about half of the total amount of turn needed. Then hop on that foot twice (beats 3 & 4) while

the other foot (which is now free) comes up so the leg is parallel to the ground and the foot makes little circles toward the opposite knee, one circle on each hop. Hands are in balance position throughout, for both hankie and stick dances.

Side Step

A side step can be used to move sideways (open side step) or can be done "in place" (closed side step).

The pattern is "1-2-3-hop," but moving sideways. In an *open* side step, the free leg steps away from the dancer's center of mass, and the second leg follows to come back together. In a *closed* side step, the free leg crosses in front of the dancer's center of mass and the second leg does not follow.

In *hankie dances*, the hankie on the same side as the leg that starts the side step flicks out and up (kind of like the Nike "swoosh") on beat 1. In *stick dances*, the hand (either the stick hand or the Teflon¹ hand, depending on which foot you are leading with) moves outward in a sort of Nike "swoosh".

Plain Caper

Plain capers can be used to move forward or can be done in place. In a few instances, plain capers can be used to turn (gradually).

"Slow 1-2." Leap slowly from one foot to the other, landing on beats 2 and 4. The body should be in motion the entire time.

In *hankie dances*, the hankies move exactly like in double steps—down slowly on beats 1 & 2 ending just behind the dancer's back, up on beat 3 and flick at the highest point on beat 4. In stick dances, the tip of the stick is moved down and up with the same timing as with a hankie.

"Beetle Crushers"

"Beetle crusher" capers can be used to move forward or can be done "in place".

Cecil Sharp called these "half capers". They are done to slow music. Tap the free foot on beat 1. Step onto it and leap from it on beat 2. Land with the other foot on beat 3. Fall back onto the original free foot on beat 4. Hankies are in balance position on beat 1, they move briskly upward on beat 2, reaching the apex at beat 3. As soon as the dancer reaches the ground on beat 3, the hankies start floating down slowly and gently, arriving in balance position on beat 4.

Upright Caper

Upright capers can be used to move forward or can be done "in place". Upright capers are also used for leapfrogging, with the leapfrog taking the place of the vertical leap.

Cecil Sharp called these “full capers”. They are done to slow music. Fall back onto one foot on beat 1. Bring the other foot down next to it and leap from both feet on beat 2. Land with both feet on beat 3. Fall back onto the original foot on beat 4. Hankies are in balance position on beat 1, they move briskly upward on beat 2, reaching the apex at beat 3. As soon as the dancer reaches the ground on beat 3, the hankies start floating down slowly and gently in an outward arc, arriving in balance position on beat 4.

Because there are two fall back steps and only one leap (which can propel the dancer forward), the dancer needs to take care not to move too far backward on the fall backs.

Figures

Once to Yourself

Hankie dances: stand in position, trying not to look stupid. Five beats before the end of the tune, bring the hankies up to chest-level and rise onto your toes. Then two [hop backs](#) and a [foot-together-jump](#). *Stick dances:* stand in position, trying not to look stupid. Two beats before the end of the tune, do a [foot-together-jump](#).

Foot Up & Down

Face up. Two [double steps](#) in the “up” direction (one stationary, one in place). [Galley](#) (out from the center). [Foot-together-jump](#) to face down. Face down. Two [double steps](#) in the “down” direction (one stationary, one in place). [Galley](#) (out from the center). [Foot-together-jump](#) $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way around to face across.

Half Gyp

Face across. Two [double steps](#), one to cross to your partner's position (starting on the left foot²) and passing by the right shoulder) and one in place. [Hop backs](#) to return to place. [Foot-together-jump](#). Face across. Two [double steps](#), one to cross to your partner's position (starting on the right foot³) and passing by the left shoulder) and one in place. [Hop backs](#) to return to place. [Foot-together-jump](#).

Back-to-Back

Face across. Two [double steps](#): on the first one cross to your partner's position (starting on the left foot and passing by the right shoulder), and on the second one slide to your right. [Hop backs](#) to return to place, this time passing your partner by the left shoulder. [Foot-together-jump](#). Face across. Two [double steps](#): on the first one cross to your partner's position (starting on the right foot and passing by the left shoulder), and on the second one slide to your left. [Hop backs](#) to return to place, this time passing your partner by the right shoulder. [Foot-together-jump](#).

Rounds

On the catch-step (“and”) before the downbeat, hop into a circle and face clockwise. Middles will need to move outwards (“bulge”). One **double step** around the circle (clockwise). On the second **double step** spiral into a clump, ending halfway around the circle but closer to the center. **Hop backs** to your corner's place (halfway around the circle). **Foot-together-jump**. On the catch-step (“and”) before the downbeat, all dancers turn a little more than 180° over their left shoulders (“hard turn”) and go back the way they came (counter-clockwise). Again, on the second **double step** spiral into a clump, ending halfway around the circle but closer to the center. **Hop backs** to your original place. **Foot-together-jump**.

Half Hey

Each side of the set dances half of a figure eight.

- Dancers #1 and #2 (who start at the top) cast out from the center, pass through the middle position and end up at the bottom. #1 and #2 have priority over #5 and #6 as they pass through the middle spot.
- Dancers #5 and #6 (who start at the bottom) do the same, ending up at the top. #5 and #6 have to yield to #1 and #2 as they pass through the middle spot.
- Dancers #3 and #4 (who start in the middle) do the top half of the figure eight, going up the center, casting out, and hopping back to their original positions.

Stepping is two **side steps**, two **hop backs**, and **foot-together-jump**.

If there is a second half hey, the dancers who were originally in positions #1 and #2 still have priority, even if they start the hey from the bottom.

1)

non-stick

2)

this will be the *outside* foot as you pass

3)

this will again be the *outside* foot as you pass

From:

<https://wiki.banburycross.org/> - **Banbury Cross Morris & Sword Wiki**

Permanent link:

<https://wiki.banburycross.org/doku.php?id=dances:fieldtown:figures:start>

Last update: **2020/10/11 18:11**

