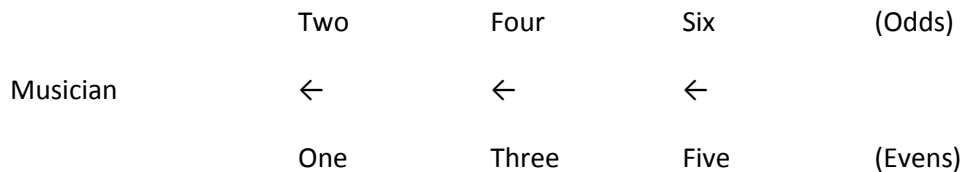


Cotswold Morris dancing a beginners' guide

The set

A set consists of six (less commonly eight) dancers arranged in two lines. The dances are usually performed to a solo musician. That person stands at the head of the set except when he wants to be awkward. The set is numbered from one to six as below: -



and you will see that, with impeccable logic the two sides of the set are named after the numbers. For the hard of understanding, the arrows show which way the dancers are facing.

Various other words will crop up when instructions are given at practice. Here is a brief glossary of the more common terms.

Up	Towards the musician
Down	Away from the musician
In (or front)	Towards the midline of the set
Out	Away from the midline of the set
Inside foot	The foot nearer to the centre of the movement
Outside foot	The foot further from the centre of the movement
First corners	Numbers one and six
Second corners	Numbers two and five
Third corners	Numbers three and four
Top couple (or tops)	Numbers one and two
Middle couple (or middles)	Numbers three and four
Bottom couple (or bottoms)	Numbers five and six

Number one in a set will be the person responsible for calling the dance (shouting incomprehensible instructions).

The steps

Most Cotswold morris dancing consists of a selection of two basic steps. They are called the double step and the single step. The double step is one two three hop and the single step is one hop two hop. In Lionel Bacon's "A Handbook of Morris Dances" the double step is shown as 4 when setting

out a sequence of movements and the single step as 2. Thus two bars of double step followed by two bars of single step would be shown as follows: -

| 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 |

This would equate to | 1,2,3 hop | 1,2,3 hop | 1 hop 2 hop | 1 hop 2 hop |

The tunes tend to come in eight bar chunks each of which can be broken down to two sets of four bars. The second four bars of the music tend to have the same steps as the first four.

The above is the basic pattern for all cotswold morris dancing. Once you have this sequence as second nature you have mastered maybe seventy per cent of the dance. However it is the final thirty per cent that is important.

There are, of course variations. The final bar may be step jump where you step onto your left foot, take off from it and land on your right or feet together jump where you take off from and land on both feet. Some traditions use single step almost exclusively. Just to be difficult, White Rose dance Headington with a cross-backstep, which is a whole different ball game. I am not even going to talk about heel and toe dances yet.