

A Song and a Dance

Using folk arts in inclusive settings



Folk Unlimited participants enjoying singing and dancing together. Photo by Brian Slater.

Written by Emmie Ward



JOHN LYON'S CHARITY

English Folk Dance and Song Society

The English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) is the national development organisation for folk music, dance and related arts, championing the folk arts at the heart of England's rich and diverse cultural landscape. It is based at Cecil Sharp House, a dedicated folk arts centre and music venue, in Camden, North London which is also home to EFDSS' Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (VWML) - England's folk music and dance archive, which provides free online access to thousands of searchable folk manuscripts and other materials.

EFDSS creates and delivers creative learning projects for children, young people, adults and families at Cecil Sharp House, across London and around the country, often in partnership with other organisations. Learning programmes draw on the diverse and vibrant folk arts of Britain and beyond, focusing on song, music, dance and related art forms such as storytelling and drama. <https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education>

Where relevant, the songs in this resource have a link to their Roud number entry in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library's online archive. (A Roud number is an individual index number for English folk songs which makes it possible to find versions of songs even if the melody or lyrics are not identical.)

Please be aware that these historical materials held by the VWML may contain content considered offensive by modern standards. Teachers are advised to check these links before sharing with students as materials may need contextualising.

Inclusive Folk is supported by John Lyon's Charity.

Resource credits

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Ceilidh Cards created by Emmie Ward

Photographs - EFDSS, photographer Brian Slater

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Mairi's Wedding: traditional, arranged and performed by Emmie Ward and Nick Goode

A Drop of Nelson's Blood: traditional, arranged and performed by Emmie Ward and Nick Goode

Shepherd's Hey: traditional, arranged and performed by Emmie Ward and Nick Goode

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Contents

About this resource	Page 4
The three songs	Page 5
Ceilidh Cards starter	Page 6
Mairi's Wedding background	Page 8
Mairi's Wedding dance and song activity	Page 9
Mairi's Wedding lyrics	Page 11
Mairi's Wedding score	Page 12
A Drop of Nelson's Blood background	Page 13
A Drop of Nelson's Blood dance and song activity	Page 14
A Drop of Nelson's Blood lyrics	Page 15
A Drop of Nelson's Blood score	Page 16
Shepherd's Hey background	Page 17
Shepherd's Hey dance and song activity	Page 18
Shepherd's Hey score	Page 19
Contributors' biographies	Page 20
Additional material	Page 21
Ceilidh Cards for printing	Page 23

About this resource

This resource is about singing while you're dancing and dancing while you're singing!

It contains a starter ceilidh activity which will get everyone warmed up and learning some dance steps, followed by three songs that involve dancing.

It has been developed for working with young people with special educational needs and disabilities by EFDSS' Inclusive Folk project.

The songs and dances are designed to be inclusive of disabled people, including wheelchair users, those with limited mobility, people with learning disabilities and complex needs and people with sensory impairments.

Singing and dancing together creates a shared focus while moving and singing to the same pulse. Social dancing encourages people to connect with one another and interact more playfully. This can be very useful in helping a group bond.

Singing dance instructions is a useful and inclusive way to help remember steps and moves. Dancing can also help people to act out and understand the meaning of song lyrics. The dances in this resource are all gender free.

Singing for dancing traditions are found all over the UK and the world, from playground games to ceilidh and morris dances. In the past when people had to make their own entertainment there were times that nobody in the group could play or afford an instrument. They had to be resourceful and use what they had i.e., their bodies and their voices.

Children today still dance while singing nursery rhymes and action songs and people of all ages enjoy "doing the Hokey Cokey!"

There is something irresistibly crowd pleasing about the experience of being gathered in a circle, singing and dancing together.

Glossary

Ceilidh (Kay-lee): a Gaelic word which is widely used for social folk dancing that originates from England, Ireland or Scotland.

The Three Songs

Mairi's Wedding

This well-known Scottish song is also used as a ceilidh tune when played instrumentally. The words in the song give instructions for the dance moves and help people remember them.

A Drop of Nelson's Blood

This is a traditional sea shanty. It has been adapted into a dance using signing and movement.

Shepherd's Hey

This is a traditional Cotswold morris dance. It is often accompanied with a song which is included here.

Ceilidh Cards

This starter activity is based on traditional ceilidh or barn dancing. It can be used to warm up and learn a few ceilidh steps that will be used in some of the songs.

Start by positioning everyone in a circle which is a popular formation in ceilidh dance. Use the cards provided in this resource to learn some different ceilidh 'figures' (sequence of movements) which form the basis of many different ceilidh dances.

All figures should use 4, 8 or 16 counts to fit with the music. You can use the music included in this resource or you can find your own traditional music from Britain and beyond, such as jigs, reels or polkas. You could also try some American barn dance music.

Ceilidh dances traditionally have a caller who prompts the dancers by telling them what moves are coming next. This helps to keep the flow with the music.

Once everyone is confident with the figures people can take turns to "call" them.

The caller can decide which order to put the cards in to devise their own ceilidh dance. They can do this in a variety of ways, such as holding up the cards or laying them out in advance.

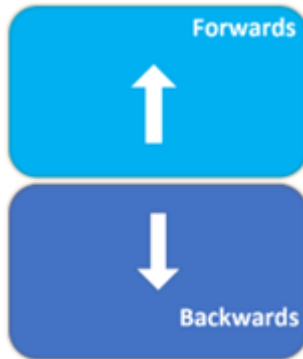


Folk Unlimited participants taking part in a ceilidh. Photo by Brian Slater.

Ceilidh Card Figures

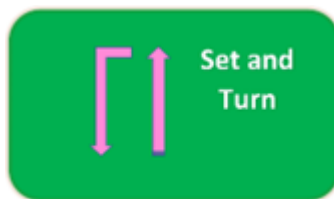
Here are descriptions of the dance figures for each ceilidh card. Everyone starts in a big circle facing each other.

Forward and Backwards



Explore moving forward into the middle of the circle and backwards back to your starting point. Do this for 4 or 8 counts. When you meet in the middle you can experiment with doing something different such as clapping, calling “hey” or even using another card such as “Turn around”.

Set and Turn Single



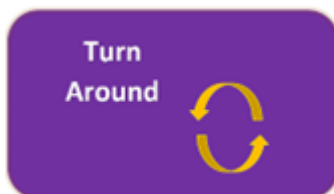
Move forward into the circle, then do a half turn and move back to your starting place. When you arrive, turn to face into the circle again.

Promenade



Everyone moves around the circle to the right or left. The caller shouts out “change” and everyone moves the other way, usually after 8 or 16 counts. Make sure you leave enough time to change direction.

Turn Around



Explore turning around by yourself in the space. How can you use your arms as you turn? You could also join hands or link arms with a partner and turn around together—traditionally called a ‘swing’.

Cross Places



Everyone swaps places with the person opposite them in the circle.

Song 1: Mairi's Wedding

Roud number: 23788

Mairi's wedding is a popular and very catchy Scottish song which is all about the excitement of going to a wedding celebration where Mairi is getting married.

We have added some of the moves from a ceilidh dance of the same name and united them with this song.

Everyone starts off by singing the song in one big circle. There are a few gentle moves to learn which will still allow you to sing at the same time without getting too out of breath!

The next part of the music is instrumental only and dancers can now move more energetically around the circle.

To help people learn the song, it may be useful to try the following:

- Start by sitting down and learning the words, rhythm and tune first.
- Accompany the song with percussion or clapping hands to get a feel for the beat.
- Talk through the words with the moves at a slower pace to give time for learning.
- Gradually put the song and the dance together using the recording as a guide.
- Invite some people to play along with the recording using percussion instruments.
- People can take turns to dance or play.

Singing section

A Part (chorus)	
4 counts	<p><u>Sing “Step we gaily on we go”</u></p> <p>Move arms side to side as if walking briskly</p>
4 counts	<p><u>Sing “Heel by heel and toe by toe”</u></p> <p>Pat top of legs</p>
4 counts	<p><u>Sing “Arm and arm”</u></p> <p>Hold out one arm at a time</p> <p><u>Sing “and round we go”</u></p> <p>Start turning around</p>
4 counts	<p><u>Sing “All for Mairi’s wedding”</u></p> <p>Continue turning until you face into the circle</p>
B Part (verse)	
4 counts	<p><u>Sing “Over hill ways up and down”</u></p> <p>Raise arms and lower arms twice</p>
4 counts	<p><u>Sing “Myrtle green and bracken brown”</u></p> <p>Clap hands on count of 4</p>
4 counts	<p><u>Sing “Past the shielings through the town”</u></p> <p>Move arms side to side twice</p>
4 counts	<p><u>Sing “All for Mairi’s wedding”</u></p> <p>Clap hands on count of 4</p>

Instrumental section

A Part	
8 counts	Promenade to the right starting to change direction on 5,6,7,8
8 counts	Promenade back the other way ready to turn to face the middle on 5,6,7,8
B Part	
8 counts	Move forwards into the middle of the circle
8 counts	Move backwards to return to starting place



Trainee music leader Flora and a Folk Unlimited participant enjoy playing music together. Photo by Brian Slater.

Mairi's Wedding Lyrics

Chorus

Step we gaily, on we go
Heel by heel and toe by toe
Arm and arm and round we go
All for Mairi's wedding

Verse

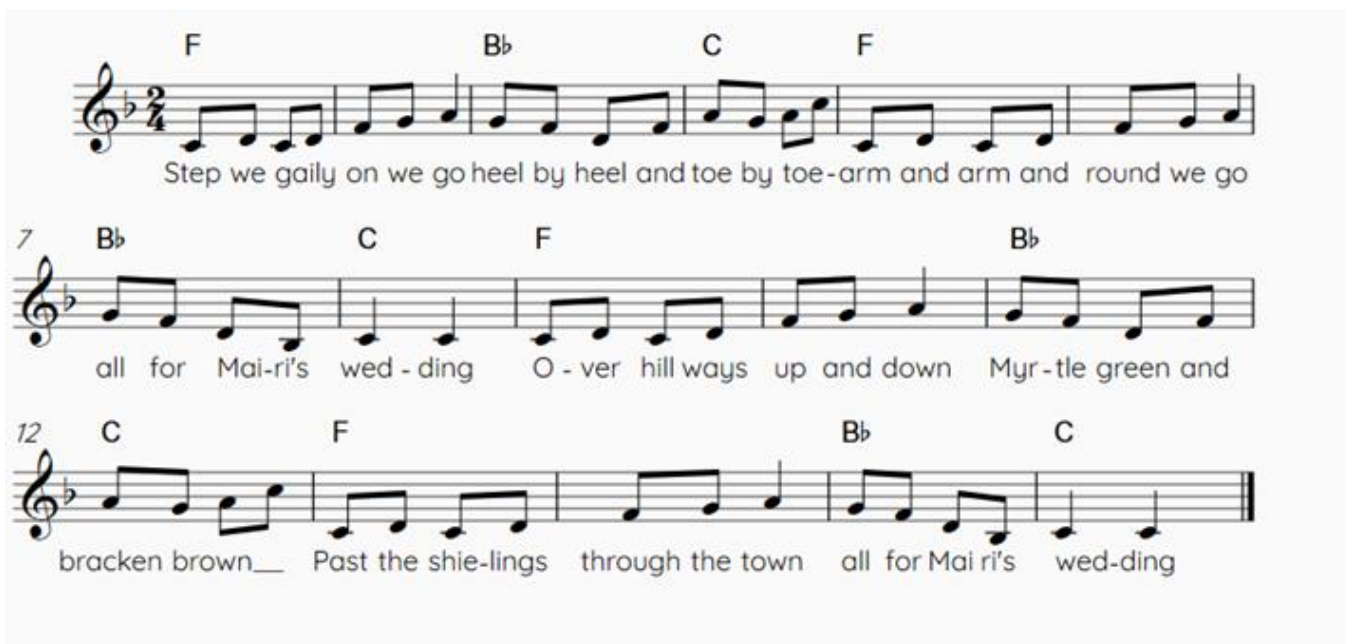
Over hill ways up and down
Myrtle green and bracken brown
Past the shielings through the town
All for Mairi's wedding

Glossary

Shielings: Small huts that herders lived in while looking after their animals.

Myrtle green and bracken brown: Wild plants that grow in Scotland.

Score



F B \flat C F

Step we gaily on we go heel by heel and toe by toe-arm and arm and round we go

7 B \flat C F B \flat

all for Mai-ri's wed - ding O - ver hill ways up and down Myr - tle green and

12 C F B \flat C

bracken brown__ Past the shie-lings through the town all for Mai ri's wed-ding

Song 2: A Drop of Nelson's Blood

Roud no: 3632

This sea shanty is a traditional work song used by sailors in the merchant navy which probably has African American roots.

According to legend, Nelson's body was preserved in a barrel of rum and brought back home. 'Nelson's blood' became a nickname for rum, but it could also stand for Nelson's brave spirit. "Roll the old chariot" is slang for the ship 'rolling' along the ocean.

The song is a humorous account of all the things you might miss at sea that "wouldn't do us any harm". The lyrics have been adapted to reflect aspects of a sailor's life such as eating biscuits and swimming in the sea. These verses have been accompanied with signs and some mimed dance moves to help participants learn the meaning of the lyrics.

Why not add some new lyrics and moves? This song is perfect for writing endless new verses!



Emmie Ward and Nick Goode singing with participants. Photo by Brian Slater.

A Drop of Nelson's Blood

1st verse

A drop of Nelson's blood wouldn't do us any harm x 3

Sign for drink

And we'll all hang on behind.

Mime pulling on ropes

Chorus-sing after every verse

And we'll roll the old chariot along x3

Mime rolling motion

Sign for boat

Additional verses

A wormy old biscuit wouldn't do us any harm

Sign for biscuit

Swimming in the sea wouldn't do us any harm

Sign for swimming

Singing a song wouldn't do us any harm

Sign for sing

Some nice sunshine wouldn't do us any harm

Sign for sun

A little bit of work wouldn't do us any harm

Sign for work

The stars above wouldn't do us any harm

Sign for stars

A Drop of Nelson's Blood

Verse

A drop of Nelson's blood wouldn't do us any harm
A drop of Nelson's blood wouldn't do us any harm
A drop of Nelson's blood wouldn't do us any harm
And we'll all hang on behind

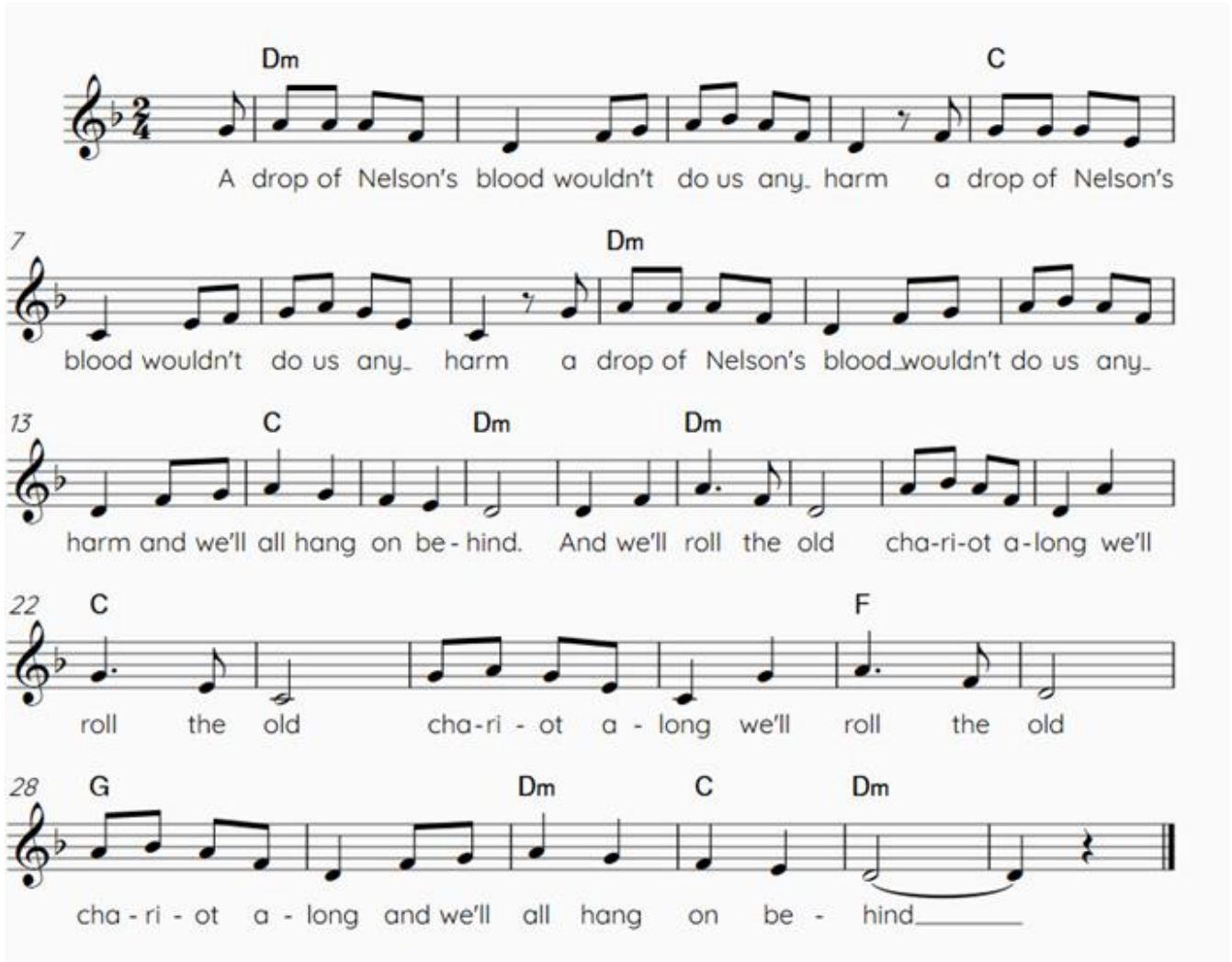
Chorus

And we'll roll the old chariot along
We'll roll the old chariot along
We'll roll the old chariot along
And we'll all hang on behind

Additional verses as follows:

- A wormy old biscuit wouldn't do us any harm
- Swimming in the sea wouldn't do us any harm
- Singing a song wouldn't do us any harm
- Some nice sunshine wouldn't do us any harm
- A little bit of work wouldn't do us any harm
- The stars above wouldn't do us any harm

Score



A drop of Nelson's blood wouldn't do us any harm a drop of Nelson's

7 blood wouldn't do us any harm a drop of Nelson's blood wouldn't do us any

13 harm and we'll all hang on be-hind. And we'll roll the old cha-ri-ot a-long we'll

22 roll the old cha-ri - ot a - long we'll roll the old

28 cha - ri - ot a - long and we'll all hang on be - hind

Song 3: Shepherd's Hey

Morris dancing is a form of English folk dance which is usually accompanied with music. There are several different morris styles, including Cotswold, Border, Molly and North West. Cotswold morris is the most common, named after the part of England where it's thought to have originated.

The Shepherd's Hey is the name of a dance which is popular amongst Cotswold morris teams. There are different variations using props such as sticks and handkerchiefs. This version is an adaptation of the popular 'Clapping' version of this dance. As well as clapping hands, tapping sounds can be made on the body making this a very rhythmic dance!

There are two recordings of the song and one of them has some cues to help you remember what is coming next. "This time" is a traditional morris cue used to indicate that the dance is about to begin. It is used here to cue in the song at the beginning and end of the dance. You will also hear a cue for knees, hips and so on before each part of the dance.

After learning the patterns in the dance why not try adding in some new body percussion sounds such as stamping or clicking fingers?

You can also add different moves such as waving or doing a "thumbs up" sign in between clapping your hands. Try this out with the second recording that does not have the cues.

Shepherd's Hey

Singing	<p>Everyone starts facing each other in a circle. Listen to the intro then promenade around the circle to the beat whilst you sing the following:</p> <p>“We can whistle, we can sing We can do most anything We can sport, we can play We can dance the Shepherd's Hey!”</p>
Instrumental	<p>Dancers turn to face the middle during the next “intro”. They now face each other doing this dance to the same tune.</p>
Knees	<p>Clap hands twice then tap knees once. Do this action 8 times.</p>
Hips	<p>Clap hands twice then tap hips once. Do this action 8 times.</p>
Shoulders	<p>Clap hands twice then tap shoulders once. Do this action 8 times.</p>
Head	<p>Clap hands twice then tap head once. Do this action 8 times.</p>
Arms “hey”	<p>Clap hands twice then reach out arms and say “hey”. Do this action 8 times.</p>
Singing again	<p>Promenade around the circle to the beat singing the same music as you did at the start:</p> <p>“We can whistle, we can sing We can do most anything We can sport, we can play We can dance the Shepherd's Hey!”</p>

Score

Cue



We_ can_ whis- tle we_ can sing

5 C F G C F C G



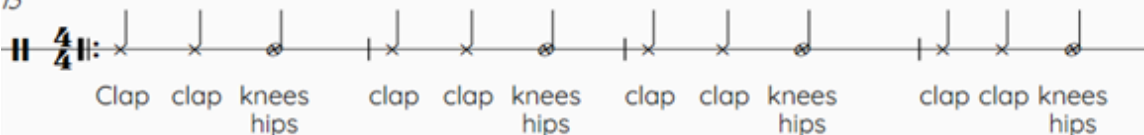
we_ can_ do most any_ thing. We_ can_ sport we_ can play

9 C F G C *Cue*

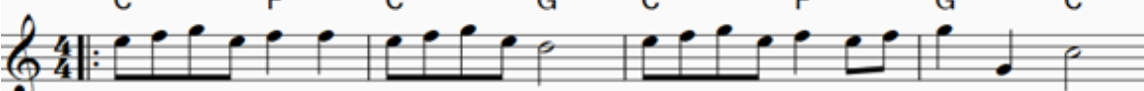


we_ can_ dance the_ Shep herd's Hey.

13

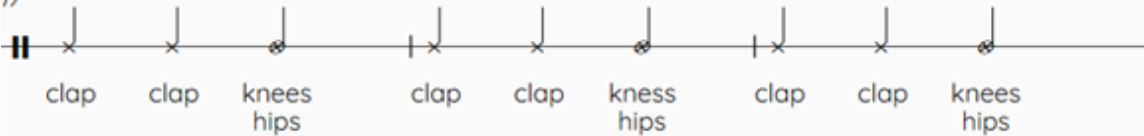


Clap clap knees hips clap clap knees hips clap clap knees hips clap clap knees hips

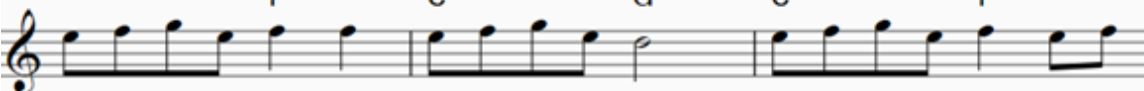


C F C G C F G C

17



clap clap knees hips clap clap kness hips clap clap knees hips



F C G C F

20



clap clap kness hips

Cue



G C

Contributors

Emmie Ward is the Lead Tutor for EFDSS' Inclusive Folk project. Emmie is a musician, SEN teacher and multi-sensory storyteller specialising in heritage and folk arts. She is trained in using Sounds of Intent and has many years' experience of working in colleges, schools and other SEN education settings. Emmie is the author of this resource.

Nicholas Goode is a regular tutor for EFDSS' Inclusive Folk project. He has been a professional musician for over twenty years. He holds a PGCE in SEN/Music from the University of Roehampton, London, and has taught and led workshops across all ages, from early years to adults, and worked with students with a wide range of complex needs. In addition to his work as a musician and educator, Nick works extensively in theatre as a composer/arranger and actor.



Nick Goode and Emmie Ward. Photo by Brian Slater.

Additional material

We hope you enjoy using the songs and dances in this resource. There are many more useful free educational resources in the EFDSS Resource Bank. Below are a few suggestions which relate to inclusive learning, folk dance and sea shanties.

Inclusive Learning

Other EFDSS SEND resources

Songs of May has a range of strategies to use with inclusive learning

<https://www.efdss.org/learning/55-resources/learning-resources/9884-songs-of-may>

If you enjoyed using signing with “A Drop of Nelson’s Blood” this resource has Makaton signed songs.

<https://www.efdss.org/55-resources/learning-resources/4894-songs-of-rural-life>

Songs and activities related to London and life in the city

<https://www.efdss.org/55-resources/learning-resources/10248-songs-of-london-life>

This resource is all about sea shanties and sea themed songs and activities.

<https://www.efdss.org/55-resources/learning-resources/11135-winds-and-the-waves>

Folk Dance

These resources contain more information about folk dance and include a variety of activities and opportunities to learn more about the history and practice of folk dance.

<https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/beginners-guides/37-english-folk-dance/2047-english-folk-dance-introduction>

<https://media.efdss.org/resourcebank/docs/RB320CeilidhBandProject.pdf>

<https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/a-z/55-resources/learning-resources/3324-i-love-english-folk-dance>

<https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/a-z/55-resources/learning-resources/10158-make-a-morris-dancers-hat>

<https://media.efdss.org/resourcebank/docs/RB145CreativeFolkDancePrimary-BarryGoodman.pdf>

<https://media.efdss.org/resourcebank/docs/RB058TraditionAndComposition-KerryFletcher.pdf>

<https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/a-z/55-resources/learning-resources/10153-solo-ceilidh-cardio>

<https://www.efdss.org/63-latest-output/11372-output-morris>

Sea Shanties

More sea shanties to enjoy.

<https://www.efdss.org/55-resources/learning-resources/2499-efdss-resource-bank-sea-songs-and-shanties-pack>

<https://www.efdss.org/55-resources/learning-resources/4968-sea-songs-and-shanties-for-tall-ships>

<https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/resources-listing/55-resources/learning-resources/4866-a-sailors-life-ks1>

<https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/resources-listing/55-resources/learning-resources/4578-a-sailors-life>

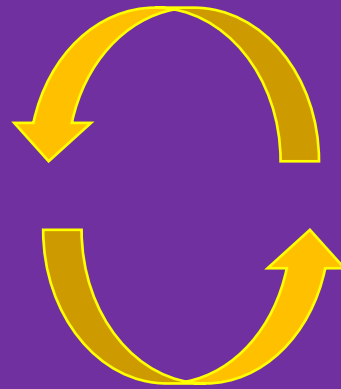
Promenade



Set and Turn



**Turn
Around**



**Cross
Places**

Forwards



Backwards



Resource Bank

Inspire learning with folk

Explore free online materials for using English traditional folk song, music, dance, drama and other arts in your teaching and leading.



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At the English Folk Dance and Song Society, we champion the folk arts at the heart of England's rich and diverse cultural landscape.

Our award-winning Resource Bank contains over 100 resources – incorporating hundreds of audio files, videos and supporting documents, all free to download. They offer endless practical ways to use folk song, music, dance, drama and more in all sorts of community settings, as well as in formal education.

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