

Morris

Contemporary

Dance Resource



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Benjamin Dunks and Laurel Swift



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english folk dance
and song society

Acknowledgements and Credits

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Filmed at: Pavilion Dance, Bournemouth, April 2011

With Thanks to:

Ian Abbott, Programme Manager, and Kirsty Biggenden, Children and Young People's Dance Lead, Pavilion Dance/Dance South West (2011)
Kerry Fletcher for additional editing (2014)

Published by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (along with accompanying film clips and music files) www.efdss.org

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Resource partner: Pavilion Dance

Cover photo: So We Boys Dance performing *Spring Force* at the Royal Albert Hall, September 2010

Photographer: Photos2U

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Introduction

The overall purpose of the resource is to introduce a creative, contemporary approach to using morris dance within the secondary curriculum.

It is designed for teachers involved in teaching dance within secondary education with young people 11 plus years of age, at key stages 3, 4 and 5. Although the film clips feature predominantly male dancers, the resource is suitable for both genders.

In the longer term we hope that this resource will encourage more teachers to include morris, and other forms of English traditional folk dance within their dance schemes of work.

The resource is based on Cotswold morris, one of the most widely known forms of traditional English folk dance. Cotswold morris is buoyant, energetic and athletic. It is usually danced by teams, *sides*, of 6 dancers and is accompanied by live music played by one or more musicians. Dancers usually perform with handkerchiefs or sticks. It originally took root in rural communities in the South Midlands (Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Northamptonshire – the areas which include the Cotswold hills), with distinct *traditions* developing in different villages. Sides can now be found across England and beyond, especially in North America. Cotswold morris is danced by men and women, in both single and mixed-gender sides.

Background to the development of the resource

The resource has been created to share working methods developed during ***Spring Force morris / contemporary youth dance project***, produced in 2010 by the English Folk Dance and Song Society in partnership with Pavilion Dance / Dance South West. *Spring Force* was led by choreographers Benjamin Dunks and Laurel Swift, with musician Robert Harbron, working with So We Boys Dance, the all-male youth dance group for South West England. The project resulted in the creation of a 4 ½ minute dance work fusing Cotswold morris with contemporary dance which was performed at the Queen Elizabeth Hall foyer (at London's South Bank Centre), the Royal Albert Hall, and the Pavilion Theatre, Bournemouth.

For more information about *Spring Force*, see page 47

Contents of the resource

This resource comprises freely downloadable film clips, music files and teachers' notes accessible via the website of the English Folk Dance and Song Society www.efdss.org

- **Written notes** – two 6-six week units of work, with detailed explanation of the components that make up morris dances, background information on morris and suggestions on how the material could be used as a creative project within a contemporary dance context.
- **Film clips** – to demonstrate the elements of morris that were used in the creation of *Spring Force* including morris stepping, arm movements, sticking and figures. They are shot from different angles to make them as easy to follow and user-friendly as possible.
- **Music files** – a number of different morris tunes for practising the morris components and for the creative work. The music files are presented in a variety of useful length formats for groupwork and performance / classroom sharing.

Approach taken in creating the resource

Laurel Swift (morris dancer, choreographer and co-author)

'We made this resource for many reasons. One of them is that morris is an engaging, vibrant and exciting form of dance, and far more complex than usually perceived. To dance it well, that is, to a point where it is both fun and the dancer looks competent, takes time, skill and good teaching. Morris requires simultaneous detailed attention to individual movement, group choreography and teamwork. That is to say, a reasonably complex pattern of both arm work and footwork is danced, whilst travelling in specific floor patterns, and keeping in formation with the other 5 dancers, any of whom you could be looking to line up with at any moment.'

Cotswold morris dancing has been evolved by ordinary people over several hundred years and every year is successfully taught to many people with no previous dance experience. The traditional method is to place beginners in a set of experienced dancers, let them get the feel of the dance and find their way through 'where to go', then take them aside for the details of 'how to go'. The most exciting dynamics of height, speed and tight teamwork are added once the steps and patterns are mastered. For obvious reasons, this isn't a very practical classroom method! The nuances of the style take longer than the curriculum space available for dance, so we have designed this resource to give students the feel and sense of Cotswold morris. The resource introduces the rich wealth of ideas, approaches and material that morris has to offer dance as a wider genre. We hope that it will give students a feel for the excitement and the creative possibilities such a form offers, and some sense of ownership of tradition that folk dance invokes.'

Rather than solely focusing on 'what can this resource teach your students about morris,' the resource also considers 'what can morris teach your students about dance?'

Benjamin Dunks (contemporary dancer, choreographer and co-author)

'My background in dance is contemporary dance, with a smattering of classical ballet in there for good measure. I have been involved with many creations of pure dance, dance theatre, and physical theatre, all either short pieces or full evening works, but in my dancing had never experienced morris. The learning and repeated action of the simplest of movements, the ceaseless jumping, the patterns, the sticks, the hankies, all of it was a revelation. I was experienced in this contemporary dance tradition of ever evolving form and expression and a constant looking for the new and what I found the morris dancing did was draw me into the same looking and evolution, but with a history, tradition and weight of culture that was palpable when dancing it.

To then add my contemporary based creative process to this tradition was a wonderful exercise in balance. What process would result in movement that pushed the morris movement in new ways, but still kept the core morris structure and recognisability of the tradition? Throughout this process we worked with 14 very talented and creative boys who also challenged our notion of the possibilities inherent within the fusing of these two styles. They were also quite shocked to experience how challenging the morris tradition was to their mainly contemporary and hip hop movement experiences.

As Laurel writes in her intro, this resource aims to explore what morris can teach your students about dance. Morris has taught me a great deal about dance and I hope it does the same for you.'

How to use the Resource

This resource is designed for both non-specialist and specialist dance and PE teachers. It provides a comprehensive and creative method for allowing teachers and students to understand and explore morris dance.

This resource contains three elements: notes, music files and film clips which are interlinked and designed to be used with students.

The resource is essentially a set of building blocks. The combined aspects of morris have been separated out into these building blocks: the steps, the arm movements, the floor patterns, (known as *figures*), and the use of sticks. These components can be tackled in any order.

Each component part is explained in detail, the notes written exactly as movements that can be described to students, with accompanying film clips labelled in the text (for use when copying is the most useful learning method). Wherever group tasks are set in the text, the music files to use for this task are also labelled.

The tunes are included in 3 formats: 1) in their entirety for final performance of the whole dance, 2) a section of the tune repeated numerous times for use during group work and 3) a single section of the tune to use when performing single sections of dance in class.

Each component section is developed to the point where it is ready to be explored creatively or combined with other components to begin to build an authentic morris dance. If all four sections are completed, students will then be able to assemble their own morris dance. The more sections completed in preparation for the contemporary work, the more material students will have to draw on.

Students will create a performance combining both the material they have learned and the material they have created.

The resource can be used in two different ways. Either, it gives you everything needed to structure your own classes, or it suggests two contrasting 6-week units of work for you to follow. There is a 'traditional morris' and a 'contemporary morris route' route. Both routes have plenty of creative tasks, and teach authentic morris steps and figures; it is the end product and the details of the creative process that differ.

You will need to either acquire sticks or ask students to be creative with interpreting the stick movements as hand clapping and/or body percussion routines. Alternatively you can miss out that section (although it is often one of the most exciting parts for many students!)

There is an extension section which introduces students to more complex morris steps and structures, extending the work they have already completed; this is a useful extension for both routes as it gives students more material to draw from for their own work.

Finally, the appreciation questions which students can use first to discuss the original *Spring Force* piece and then, to analyse and develop their own work.

The resource also connects with various aspects of the curriculum.

This resource can be used in relation to:

- Cultural dance styles
- Creating dance from new stimuli
- Creating dance by selecting different dance styles
- Cross curricula: Sense of place, tradition and community, music, history, drama, maths

For example:

- History / Geography – When and from where did morris dance possibly first arrive in England and where has it travelled since?
- Literacy / Creative Writing - Imagine you are a morris stick. Write your life story, how does it feel to be part of the dance, what is your impression of the dance from within it?
- Design / Art – Design a *kit* (costume) for a side of contemporary morris dancers, suitable for, and accentuating all the movements performed by the dancers.

Using this resource will give you:

- A wide range of skills and techniques, which you can quickly apply and adapt
- New vocabulary to create dance for a range of purposes and in response to different stimuli
- The knowledge to analyse, evaluate and appreciate morris dance

Aims of this resource:

- To introduce students to the actions, space, dynamics and relationships, styles and conventions of morris dance
- To devise movement, phrases and pathways, using morris dance as a stimuli
- To watch demonstrations (Film Clips) to inform students of vocabulary, styles, music.

Learning outcomes of this resource:

- Introduction to Cotswold morris dancing technique and formations
- Exploring the traditional vocabulary within a contemporary dance context
- Reflecting on the learning, including asking if it is challenging a perception of folk dance / music.

By the end of this Unit of Work students will be able to:

- Perform basic morris steps, including arm movements and a range of actions and dynamics
- Recognise different dance steps, arm movements and figures
- Identify stylistic characteristics of morris
- Be aware of and be able to use choreographic devices, such as motifs, to choreograph new movement

Warm Up

Introduction and approach to warm up

Traditionally, the warm up for a session of dancing involves a series of exercises that isolate, strengthen and physiologically warm up the body. In this resource, we have made the dancing exercises and games the actual warm up itself. It is assumed that the teacher will ensure a suitable cool down will finish every session.

It is likely that many young people using this resource will not have previously experienced morris, so their bodies will not be used to the patterns of movement specific to this kind of dancing. Therefore, to warm the body up using those patterns of movement is, in our minds, the safest for the body and the most effective for the learning of the co-ordination and movement patterns. They will still need to stretch the relevant muscle groups (see below) at the end of the session and during any extended sessions.

Morris dancing is especially challenging on the ankle joint, the calf muscles, achilles tendons, quadriceps, and gluteus muscles. These warm-up games and exercises focus on the basic movement of the morris steps while taking into consideration a stepped increase in the loading of these muscles and in particular preparing the body for the direction changes required of the ankle and achilles tendon. If anyone in your group suffers from ankle and achilles problems, or have recurring shin splints or knee issues, they must be diligent with their warm-up to make sure that they fully commit to these games for the preparation of the dancing.

Finally, when dancing morris, the legs and torso need to be in a neutral, parallel alignment, where the feet are always pointing forward of the body when standing, jumping and landing. When taking off and landing, the knee must bend over the point on the foot that is between the 2nd and 3rd toe. This is the correct anatomical position for the alignment of the knee, and the safest way to jump and land. Many young people are unaware that their feet often turn out while their knee points forwards. This mistake stresses the joints of the lower limbs and generally leads to injury of the knee and ankle, so please be aware of anyone in your sessions who do this and correct it.

Morris Warm Up Games

1) Forcefield

- a) Dancers are in pairs and facing each other. They start slowly / gently and build speed / intensity as they move around the space trying to mirror each other, randomly changing direction to test their partner whilst also being aware that their partner may change direction on them. This begins to warm the ankles, knees and pelvis, specifically targeting the ankle for preparation for a quick direction change. (Film 1)

- b) This game develops with the dancers swapping positions by jumping across the space to where their partner previously was (Film 2). This does not need to be a large or dramatic jump, as the dancers will not be warm enough for that yet, but will be a little more than a step. As your dancers begin to get warm from this, they will increase the size of the jump. This game will get your dancers warm very quickly.
- c) Leading on from this, your dancers will add a spin to their jump, once again not too high or dramatic, but enough to be in control and to get off the floor to spin safely. Finally, you can add a jump at the end where both dancers jump together to end the movement.

2) **Tramlines Game**

- a) The second game to play for your warm up is the Tramline game, where you are also testing and perfecting spatial awareness and lines, whilst adding something more physical as the game develops.
- b) In fours, two facing two. Imagine a giant intersecting grid. You can only move in straight lines: forwards, backwards or sideways. You must stick equidistance from your neighbour. Travel around the space. (Film 3)
- c) When crossing the middle line (i.e. in a line of 4), develop a physical acknowledgment. This is repeated every time neighbours arrive in a line of 4. (Film 4)
- d) Dancers can travel anywhere (in a straight line), but must arrive back at the end of 16 counts. (Film 5)

3) **Morris Race**

- a) The last warm up game (as the dancers will be very warm by now) will use the beginning of the stepping exercise (Film 7), progressing to (Film 6) in later weeks.
- b) Begin by practising *single steps* (step, hop, on alternate legs, keeping the working leg relaxed and close to the supporting leg). (See Morris Dance Vocabulary part 1, page 11)
- c) Practise travelling on the single steps, covering as much distance as possible on the hop, whilst still remaining upright. When you can cover a good distance, line up along a line. Everyone takes four single steps simultaneously to see who can travel the furthest.

Make sure that when jumping, the torso is still upright and not leaning forwards or backwards. The torso needs to be vertical when landing to make sure the shock is distributed evenly through the body and not forced into the lower back and knees. (Film 9)

Morris Dance Vocabulary

The basics of traditional morris stepping and arm movements through a variety of creative tasks

Stepping

1) Single step

a) Hop repeatedly on one leg, keeping the other leg in front, close to and relaxed, torso upright and relaxed. Do the same thing on the other leg.

b) Hop 4 times on each leg (Left, Left, Left, Left | Right Right, Right, Right). The rhythm is 8 even beats, there is no pause in the beat to change legs! Students should change legs with the same kind of spring they are using for the hops. Repeat this action until the change to the other foot at the start of every 4 counts feels the same as the hops.

Technically, this is a spring change followed by 3 hops however we use this method of calling it 4 'hops' as we have found students respond effectively to this and are better able to obtain the correct style and spring demanded by morris, not least because it keeps their legs in front on them and encourages them to lift from the abdominal muscles.

c) Once students are accurately hopping 4 times on each leg, challenge them to see how high they can hop each time they push off the floor. Continue by asking them to push more forcefully (to make them hop higher) on hop 1 of four (the change to the other foot). Next, hop higher on 1 and 3 of four. This turns the pattern to an uneven rhythm:

| 1 a 2 a | 3 a 4 a |

Ask students to observe how to land effectively ready to push up again. This will give them the understanding of the variation between a hop that is elevated and the recovery hop that follows it.

d) Decrease the number of hops on each leg to 3 'hops', then finally to 2 'hops' (Left Left, Right, Right = change, hop, change hop). This is a *single step*. Allow the legs to remain relaxed in front of the body.

Some people will prefer to describe the single step as a step then a hop on each leg, or a spring and a bounce on each foot. Some students will find it most helpful to copy the film. We have found these 'decreasing hops' are an effective way to teach single steps, especially for students who are unconfident with dance.

e) Single steps always come in pairs (Step L, Hop L, Step R, Hop R) and fit with the music in a 6/8 rhythm.

1x 6/8 bar of music | 1 & a 2 & a | = 2 pulses in a 6/8 bar. The step hits the ground on the main beat, the hop on the 'a', so the single step is counted as 1 a 2 a (the '&' being silent with no step).

Students should be able to give a good push upwards from every step on the beat, using the hop (on the 'a') to recover. Single steps can be used stationary and to travel forwards, backwards and around curves. (Film 7) (Music File 11 or 6)

f) Ask students to explain the key difference between single steps and skipping, encouraging them to demonstrate. Hopefully the answer lies in emphasis, rhythm and control. Skipping is a push off to land on the other foot. The higher you skip, the less controlled the movement. Single step is a step and a push off the same foot, the emphasis is on going up, in skipping it is on coming down. Single steps remain equally controlled whatever the elevation.

2) Double step

- a) As in 1a) above, hop four times on each leg, progressing to three hops on each leg, then two hops on each leg, then finally just one hop on each leg, so that students are changing feet on every beat but with the same spring as when hopping. The emphasis is on going up and down, not from side to side.
- b) The group are now ready to attempt a *double step*. Different students will absorb this in different ways. Traditionally it is described 1,2,3 hop. The rhythm is the same as for single step, | 1 a 2 a |. A contemporary dancer might say |change, change, change hop|. In the 'hopping method' described in 1a above, it is a single 'hop' on each leg followed by a double 'hop' on one leg. Which is: | Left, Right, Left, Left | (or | Right, Left, Right, Right |). Other students will find it easiest to copy the film (Film 8). (Music File 1 or 6)
- c) When the basic pattern for the double step has been achieved, try travelling. When students have achieved this, try travelling down the room, experimenting with both the height of the hop and distance travelled. The students should practice double steps travelling, gaining height on the first beat, and turning corners, as it is the principal building block of morris sequences.

3) Feet Together Jump

- a) The jump is made up of the preparation (feet together with bent knees), take off and the land, on two feet).
- b) Prepare and take off on beat 1, land on 2. The rhythm is |1 (& a) 2 | dancers are airborne on (& a).
- c) Gathering hands whilst jumping will help elevation (out and up). (Film 9). See Arm Movements, section 4 for details.
- d) A jump is often preceded by two single steps.
- e) Jumping can happen on the spot, sideways, or turning: 90, 180 or 360 degrees.
- f) Make sure that when jumping, the torso is still upright and not leaning forwards or backwards. The torso needs to be vertical when landing to make sure the shock is distributed evenly through the body and not forced into the lower back and knees, so remember to bend the knees on landing.
- g) If you are going to continue dancing after the jump, you need to add a *feint* step after it to create a bridge to the start of the next sequence. A feint step is simply a hop that maintains the momentum and rhythm of the sequence and puts you on the correct foot ready to set off. For example: to start the sequence after the jump on the right foot, you need to hop left immediately after the jump. The rhythm is | 1 a 2 a |, take off on 1, land on 2, feint step left on 'a'. Then immediately set off with a right step. Watch the films 19 or 26 and try to count the number of feint steps the dancers perform, and where in the sequence they happen. (Films 19 & 26)

Creating a stepping sequence

- a) Working with a partner, and always performing the same movement together whether in parallel or mirror image, ask students to create their own 8 or 16-count sequence using single and double steps and *feet together jumps*. Students creating 8-count sequences should practice performing it twice in a row without stopping.
- b) At no point in the sequence should the bouncing rhythm | 1 a 2 a | cease. On landing from a jump there is a rebound into the next step, unless the jump is at the end of the sequence. See 3g above (feint steps), if necessary, to practise joining jumps to other steps.
- c) Once this sequence has been created, students can decide where to travel, turn and explore variation in height, for example, jumping higher on some movements and not so high on others.
- d) If students haven't already, encourage them to explore what happens to the sequence when you turn on the jump or during the sequence.
- e) Perform the sequences to each other and discuss, for example, what movements flow well, create contrast, use space?

Students will need to use the 8 or 16-count stepping sequences they create later in the programme, when we introduce figures. (Film 12).

The following tracks can be used: 2, 3, 7, 8 for practise and 4, 5, 9, 10 for performance.

Please note on these music files, each 8-bar (16-count) phrase has a 2-bar (4 counts) introduction.

Arm movements

Arm movements in morris have more distinctions between traditions than basic stepping does. There is no single universal arm movement! We have isolated arm movements from two traditions, which will assist students with their stepping and help them find the overall feel of morris.

1) Wheatley Arms

Start with your hands in fists by your hips (palms up) with elbows bent behind you. Keeping your arms in the same position, rotate from the shoulder, bringing your fists to nose level (elbows still bent). Then return to the original position. The effect is rather like a plastic toy action man. There is a clean, powerful intention to the action. Up on beat one, down on beat two. (Film 11)

2) Bampton Arms

Start with your hands gathered in front of your belly button, palms in. Raise both arms up and out quickly, palms open and forward (like the Y of YMCA). This is a showy, instant movement. Hands return to the start position more slowly, with a pulling action (as though pulling in a kite) to arrive back at your belly button on beat two. Out on beat one, in on beat two. (Film 10)

Both of these arms movements fit with single steps as in films 10 & 11. Up or out on the first step, hop, in or down on the second step, hop. Try them out, and see how they affect your ability to travel. Experiment with their impact on speed and elevation. Compare and contrast how the two different arms movements affect the stepping, and where each might be more useful. (Films 10 & 11)

3) **Backsteps and Backstep Arms**

Hold your arms almost straight out to each side, angled slightly downwards (hands lower than shoulders), palms forward and rotated upwards, elbows heavy and relaxed. Hold your arms balanced in this position whilst dancing a single step backwards. This is a *backstep*. Backsteps usually come in pairs. (Film 9)

4) **Feet Together Jump Arms**

Start from the backstep arm position (as above). As you prepare to jump, turn your hands, palms down, then as you bend your knees, sweep the arms down and together, in front of your belly button as you take off. Keeping your palms together, throw the arms straight up in front of you as you jump, then allow them to sweep back down to the start position as you land. (Film 9)

Using arms in the stepping sequence

Allied to the task of creating your own stepping sequences from singles and doubles, begin to explore the various different ways the morris arms can help or hinder your dancing. Can you create arm movements that perform different functions to the ones given, for example give lift in a different part of the step, or help you travel sideways, diagonally or backwards?

Revise the stepping sequences and add arm movements where it will aid your travel, elevation, or the visual impact of your sequence.

Perform your sequences (try them with and without stepping) and discuss the results of these experiments, especially comparing the difference between what feels dynamic in an arm movement to the dancer, and what looks dynamic to the audience.

Morris Structure

The basics of traditional morris dance structure through a variety of creative tasks

Dance structure

A morris dance is structured like a song: verse | chorus | verse | chorus | etc. The correct term for the verses is figures. The *chorus* is the same throughout the dance and goes in between each figure. In any one tradition a dance is identifiable by its tune and its chorus. Different dances in the same tradition share more or less the same figures, however the choruses are different. In some dances there may be slight development of the chorus as the dance progresses, for example replacing one step with a progressively impressive movement each time the chorus comes around. The figures are usually danced to the A part of the music and the choruses to the B part.

Figures

Each of the common figures are demonstrated in the film clips. (Films 13-19). Watching these with your students is recommended, especially the *Hey!* Walk the patterns until everyone is confident with their path. In figures with a partner, pass your partner right shoulders the first time and left shoulders the second time.

Foot Up | 1 a 2 a |

Everyone face *Up*, towards the musician/s. Travel forward for the 1st bar of music (1 a 2 a), stay on the spot for the 2nd bar (3 a 4 a), then go backwards to place on the final 2 bars. (5 a 6 a | 7 a 8 a)

Foot Down

Everyone face *Down* and repeat Foot Up. Travel forward (away from the musician) for the 1st bar of music, stay on the spot for the 2nd, then go backwards to place on the final 2 bars of music.

Into Line (Film 16)

Face your partner. Everyone go forward until you are alongside your partner, right shoulder to right shoulder, forming one line along the centre of the set. Go back to place. Repeat on the other side, i.e. meeting left shoulders.

Back to Back (Film 17)

Face your partner. You are going to keep facing this direction for the entire figure! Go forwards, passing right shoulders until you are slightly past your partner. Move a little

way to your right (ending up the other side of your partner), then go backwards to place. Repeat passing left shoulders and moving to the left behind your partner.

Whole Gyp (also known as Face To Face) (Film 18)

Face your partner. You are going to keep facing them throughout this figure! Go forwards to meet them and before you collide, start circling around each other (to your left, or clockwise). Imagine your shoulders are connected to theirs with steel rods and keep as close together as you can, without touching. Stay the same distance apart, as you did in the forcefield warm up. Circle the whole way around each other, and once you arrive back on the side you started, go backwards into place. Repeat the figure the other way (circling anti-clockwise or to your right).

Rounds (Film 19)

Face your partner. Middles move backwards. We now have a circle. Everyone face clockwise around the circle (turn to your left). Travel around the circle, this will be till the end of the musical phrase. With a jump (on beats 7 & 8), turn the long way round (to your left) to face the other direction. Go back around the circle into your place. Once everyone knows the pattern, you can form the circle immediately – remembering that the middles have the responsibility of moving out as well as forwards!

Whole Hey (Film 14 &15)

You can see how to walk the Hey in stages from film 14. Below are some extra tips as it can be quite tricky. (Film 14)

- This is different from every position, so it's best to walk one pair at a time.
- You will be the mirror image of your partner throughout.
- Always stay on your own side of the set!
- You can also practise in lines of 3, along the side of the set.

Tops (everyone else stand still in position)

Walk forward and away from your partner, turning to travel down the outside of the set. Go through the gap in the side of the set (between the middles and the bottoms). Meet your partner and go between the bottoms. Separate to go around the bottoms. Come back through the gap in the sides and meet your partner before going back to place.

Middles (everyone else stand still in position)

Walk forward and together, coming up between the tops. Turn away from your partner to travel around the outside of the tops. Pass back through your place to meet your partner in the middle, then go down between the bottoms. Separate to go around the outside of the bottoms and then straight back to place.

Bottoms (everyone else stand still in position)

Come together and turn to face down (away from everyone else). Turn your back on your partner and travel away from them, up the outside of the set. Go through the gap in the side of the set (between the middles and tops). Meet your partner and go between the tops. Separate to go around the tops. Come back through the gap in the sides and slot back into place.

Every pathway traces a big number 8 on the floor, with each pair starting from a different part of the 8. Once everyone is confident with their pathway, the next step is for everybody to move simultaneously. Once everyone's moving it's less important to see the individual figures of 8, and more important to stick with your partner. The key rules are:

- Bottoms must let tops pass in front of them.
- Middles must let bottoms pass in front of them.
- Tops are first at the start and must let middles in front of them in the middle!

Extra tips:

- Almost brush shoulders every time you come together with your partner.
- Make as wide a loop as possible whenever you loop around at the ends.
- Always keep level with your partner so that you appear together at the ends of the set.
- See Film 15

Half Hey

A Half Hey is a useful figure that inverts the set, often found between the halves of a chorus. Start walking a Hey but stop halfway around; the tops will be at the bottom of the set, the middles will be in their own place (but only half-way through their path) and the bottoms will be at the top. The half Hey takes 8 counts, 4 bars. To do the second Half Hey, continue the walking from the point you paused, returning everyone to their home position

Not Got Six Dancers?

Heys can easily be adapted where there aren't 6 people in a set. For example, with 8 dancers, have 2 sets of middles (one pair following the tops, one pair following the bottoms), the bottom middles pass last. Or, simply get the 8th pair to travel side by side up the very centre of the set to the top. You can find other ways to add 2 or 4 pairs or lose a pair.

Putting the steps into the figures

The progression for all of the figures is to now add steps! Work in pairs, choose a figure, and adding the 16 beat (or 2 x 8-beat) stepping sequence created during the vocabulary section.

Once you can successfully combine the two, apply the same stepping sequence to a different figure and explore what can remain the same and what needs to change to make the figure work. You can begin to experiment with your own creative steps within the figures, or keep it safe and stick to mastering the single and double steps. (Film 13).

Once students are comfortable combining their steps with their chosen figure, they can move on to start teaching their sequence to other pairs, and perform their figures in sets of 6 dancers. The set should all be doing the same movement at the same time for any figure. If the group is not a multiple of 6, any other even number will work well, and there are huge creative possibilities when adapting the figures for odd numbers of dancers - allow the students to find solutions.

Once settled in their sets of approximately 6 dancers, students can begin to explore the figures further. With all of these figures, where a turn is needed, explore which direction is best to turn in: what looks good and what feels good? Are straight lines or curved lines more satisfying for travel within the figure? Experiment with the best position for jumps in the figures, what does the music suggest to you? Can you successfully work across the music? Adapt the sequence to better fit the figure, and then continue to explore the dynamics of the figure by varying the sense of momentum, speed, elevation or space coverage.

Another key idea in morris is to create a straight line along or across the set wherever possible. This makes the dance clearer and easier to follow. In your set, pay attention to where in the figures lines form along the set, and make a feature of these brief moments.

Students can also begin to extend the movements within the figures and develop their steps, whether based on the following Morris Meets Contemporary tasks, or their own interpretation of more advanced morris steps, for which films 25 - 27 provide material. (Films 25 – 27)

Sticking Choruses

Dances can be done with hankies, sticks, or bare hands. We have chosen to focus on sticks in this resource, as they are exciting and less physically demanding than hanky dances. However, all the sticking patterns can be adapted to hand clapping dances if sticks cannot be sourced.

Sticks should be held in the right hand, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way down. Don't grip the stick tightly, instead hold it firmly but allowing for movement, this minimizes the impact of the strike. The top end of the stick must always be within the dancers' peripheral vision, especially when preparing for a strike. For some movements, the grip is shifted to the centre of the stick. Strikes should be controlled on both the preparation and the rebound.

Strikes should happen midair, exactly halfway between the two striking dancers. Timid stick-users should be reminded to use the stick away from their face! Practise sticking movements alone or in lines before joining up into pairs.

For each sticking pattern first watch the films, as listed below.

1) **Ring O'Bells** (Film 20)

In Your Set	
Beat One	Clash forehand with the person to your opposite diagonal left.
Beat Two	Clash backhand with your partner.
Beat Three	Clash backhand with the person to your opposite diagonal right.
Beat Four	Clash forehand with your partner.

Perform this pattern four times.

2) **Bobbing Joan** (Film 21)

Refer to the set layout on page 34. Odds are positions 1,3,5. Evens are 2, 4,6.

In Your Set	
Beat One	<p>The <i>evens</i> present, which in this case, means turn to face out, leading with the right shoulder (the hand holding the stick), swinging your stick across and up as you turn, and swinging your free hand up to hold the other end of the stick. Finish holding your stick with both hands high up behind your head.</p> <p>The <i>odds</i> prepare by bringing your hand up, to hold the stick upright, hand level with your eyes. (Make sure you are holding this stick $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way down, no lower). If students are struggling to control their sticks, use both hands, right above left</p>
Beat Two	Odds strike the middle of the even's stick.
Beat Three	<p>Transition</p> <p>The odds present, turn to face out, leading with the right shoulder (the hand holding the stick), swinging your stick across and up as you turn, and swinging your free hand up to hold the other end of the stick. Finish holding your stick with both hands high up behind your head.</p> <p>Evens turn back on the same track to face in and as you do so let go of the stick with your left hand and swing your arm back on the same track to hold the stick upright, hand level with your eyes. (Make sure you are holding this stick $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way down, no lower). If students are struggling to control their sticks, use both hands, right above left.</p>
Beat Four	Evens strike the middle of the odds' sticks.

Perform this pattern four times.

Students need to keep their sticks well clear of their heads, and pay attention when hitting that the presenting stick is well supported. If unsure, don't hit!

3) Upton on Severn / Chris Taylor's (Film 22)

This sticking combines two basic sticking patterns. You could separate them, or just use one half.

a) Part One – Upton on Severn

In Your Set	
Beat One	Facing your partner, clash forehand. Allow the stick to continue through the movement, so that it sweeps down to the left, the top of the stick leading, although the stick is a giant pencil and you are drawing tracing a massive circle in front of you
Beat Two	At the bottom of the trajectory clash backhand. Allow the stick to continue up through to the top of the arc ready to repeat.
Beat Three	Clash forehand at the top of the arc.
Beat Four	At the bottom of the trajectory clash backhand. Allow the stick Clash backhand at the bottom of the arc.

b) Part Two – Strike Sticking (written by Chris Taylor)

In Your Set	
Beat Five	Step back with the right foot and swing the stick backwards so that the tip of the stick strikes the floor.
Beat Six	Pause.
Beat Seven	Return the right foot to the starting position and clash <i>butts</i> backhand. (The butt is the part of the stick below your hand).
Beat Eight	Clash forehand.

Perform the whole thing twice: part one, part two, part one, part two.

4) Balance the Straw (also known as Balancey Straw) (Film 23)

In Your Set	
Beat One	Step back with the right foot and, keeping the stick upright, hit the bottom of the stick on the ground a little further out than your foot.
Beat Two	Hit the bottom of the stick on the floor parallel to your front foot.
Beat Three	Bring the right foot back in. Clash forehand with your partner.
Beat Four	Clash backhand with your partner.

Perform this pattern four times.

The simplest choruses repeat any one of these sticking patterns to fill 16 beats, or whatever length music is available.

More complex choruses repeat the sticking pattern to fill 8 counts, followed by a Half Hey figure, which inverts the set. Together, this takes one B part of the music. In traditional dances, a 2nd B part is played and the whole of this is repeated; another set of sticking and a Half Hey to return everyone home.

Creating a dance

Most traditional dances are structured with alternating figures and choruses, the chorus remaining the same through the dance and the figures changing. Generally the figures build up in complexity throughout the dance, but there are no hard and fast rules.

Students can choose which figures they will perform and in what order, using the material they created when 'putting steps into the figures'. Remind students to intersperse a chorus between each figure. They can repeat a figure if they feel it makes particular impact, or has different functions at different points in the dance. The suggested music files for this exercise (Bobbing Joe, Swaggering Boney or Idbury Hill) are all 5 x AB, so 5 figures will be required.

Once To Yourself

At the beginning of the dance, the dancer stands still, listening to the music and preparing to dance, this is called *Once To Yourself*. At the end of the *Once To Yourself*, it is common for all dancers to lead into the first figure with a preparatory movement such as two backsteps and a feet together jump. To keep things simple the music files always give a 2-bar lead in, the same length as 2 backsteps and a jump. Students could try adding this to the start of their stepping sequences. However on music files 17 and 21, longer introductions are given, for those that would like to include a *Once To Yourself*.

Morris Meets Contemporary

Building on the basics to explore morris in a contemporary context

Creating movement task

Once you have begun to get the patterns of movement and how the dancers relate to each other in pairs, fours or sixes, you can begin to explore the creative potential of the fusing of morris and other dance forms, in particular contemporary dance. These creative tasks can be created either as solos or in pairs. There is a great deal of scope to this area and you can take a lot of license to experiment with what can be created using morris as the basis.

Steps

The first creative task has to do with putting steps together in your own way. Having become comfortable with single steps, double steps, and feet together jump, put them together in your own configuration for 8 counts. This can then be shared with partners and the group.

Figures

The second creative task has to do with putting your own stepping configurations into figures. Revisit the morris figures and consider how you can improve them – either by adding turns, twists, jumps and facing different directions at specific points, or by simplifying what you first created to give it more impact and definition!

Extending movement

In the next paragraph we talk about using stick material as the basis for developing creative movement sequences, but to do so you need to know about extending movement and how the extension of movement is an incredibly strong basis for the creation of new movement material. If you take any one movement that you have learnt in this resource, slow it down a little bit, and then extend the movement beyond where it would normally finish, you will begin to find another way of moving and you will begin finding unusual ways of exploring morris.

When you are extending through the morris movement in this way, allow the movement to take you in a specific direction, and see what happens to the rest of your body. For example, if your right arm normally stops in a position when it moves to the left of the body, what happens to you if you continue that movement? Does it induce a turn or a drop in the torso? Does it distort the way your upper body is compared with your lower body? There are many different choices you can make when creatively exploring the possibilities inherent within one movement.

Once you have a number of these extended movements, put them together to create a sequence. Below is a specific example of how to do this with the sticking sequence.

Sticking without the sticks

When you have explored the sticking sequences, put the sticks down, choose one sequence, and dance it without the sticks. This will feel a little strange to be swinging your arm in the air in this manner, so slow down your movement and extend your body as a response to the movement to see what happens. If you would normally have swung your stick in a forehand strike in front of you, you might do the same movement, extending your arm away from you. Your body's response to this might be to turn to the left, to concave the torso and to suspend yourself off your toes, for example.

Once you have this first movement, do the same exercise with a back hand strike, or with bringing the stick into both hands and above the head, or any of the other strikes on the films. You can also explore how many different movements can be obtained from using the same starting point (the forehand strike).

Once you have developed these individually, put the movements together to create a sequence. We would recommend that you keep to 4, 8 or 16 movements to be able to link in to the musical phrasing, as any variation on this could become quite confusing.

To see some different variations of this exercise, look at films 24 and 25. In these films the boys demonstrate their own interpretation of a task that was 'use the sticking movements we have learnt to create a movement phrase'. As you can see both interpretations are very different, but still remain true to the task. (Films 24 and 25)

6-Week Unit of Work

Plan 1: Traditional route – to create a morris dance with a traditional structure

Week	Warm up	Steps	Figures	Creative Task	Music Files
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forcefield Tramlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn single steps Learn feet together jump Consolidate steps using Morris Race with single steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn Into Line Learn Back to Back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In pairs, put together your own 8 or 16 count sequence of single steps and feet together jumps See how far you can travel, push the height of the jumps. Look for subtlety in your jumps Explore turning during the sequence 	Creative task: 2 or 7
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forcefield Tramlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise single steps Revise feet together jump Learn double steps Morris Race with single and double steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise Into Line and Back to Back Learn Whole Gyp In pairs apply your 8 / 16 count sequence to one of these figures: 8 counts will be repeated for the 2nd half of the figure, 16 counts will flow through the whole figure Once confident, apply the same sequence to other figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the 8 or 16 count phrase created in session 1 Alter to include double steps Explore travel, changes in height and turning the sequence. Discuss the difference that adding the double step makes 	Figures: 2, 7 or 12
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forcefield Tramlines Begin to add single and double stepping and feet together jumps into these games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise single steps, double steps and feet together jumps Learn arm movements Combine steps and arm movements. Morris race single step, adding arms to explore how this affects the ability to travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn the Hey Revise the figures from the previous session Add arms into the sequence Apply the same creative combination to different figures until you have a complete set <p>Sticking sequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn Ring O'Bells Learn Bobbing Joan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the 8 count phrase explored in Session 1 and 2 Create arm movements that enhance the sequence Explore how these arm movements affect travel, elevation and turning the sequence 	Figures: 2, 7 or 12 Sticking: 3, 8 or 14

Week	Warm up	Steps	Figures	Creative Task	Music Files
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forcefield • Tramlines • Both games with morris stepping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morris race with arm movements. Try putting together short combinations of steps / arms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the previous partner work including sticking sequences • Revise the Hey and dance it with single steps • Learn Rounds • Work in sets of 6 (previous partners should be opposite each other in the set). Walk through the Hey and Rounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dance the Hey with each pair using their own stepping sequence, as created in weeks 1-3 • In these sets, decide which of the 3 sequences fits the Hey best, and everyone in the set learn that sequence • If you haven't already, add arms • Repeat the same process for Rounds 	<p>Figures: 2, 7 or 12</p> <p>Sticking: 3, 8 or 14</p>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forcefield • Tramlines • Morris Race with arms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident groups can learn new steps from Films 26-28 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise Hey and Rounds with stepping and arms in sets from previous session • Decide if there are any single stick clashes during the figures and where they go • Any groups that have finished their dance can extend themselves by exploring examples of other choruses that are in the Practical Extension Work section • Choose which sticking pattern your set will use, or create your own 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be doing the figures together in your groups of 6 so you need to decide on which 5 figures to perform. There are 2 ways of doing this: Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in your groups choose which of each other's work will be danced by everybody for each figure Or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In your groups, put your work together to make an entirely new set of figures using the best bits of everyone's movements. Remember you have a stick in your hand! 	<p>Figures: 2, 7 or 12</p> <p>Sticking: 3, 8 or 14</p> <p>Dance: 1, 6, 11</p>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forcefield • Tramlines • Morris Race with arms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the basic principles of stepping from week one. Watch Films 10, 11, 26. Does your stepping look natural, relaxed and controlled? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assemble your whole dance; 5 figures, with choruses in between • For confident groups working quickly, they can create their own 'tradition' by writing new choruses. The same set of figures with a different chorus and tune makes a different dance (see Practical Extension Work section) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide what order the figures go in, based on aesthetic grounds. Do they gradually get more complex, simpler, and more open towards the audience? • Rehearse your final dance and all sets can perform to the group 	<p>Dance: 1, 6, 11</p>

Plan 2: Contemporary Route – to create a piece of contemporary dance influenced by morris

Week	Warm up	Steps	Figures	Creative Task	Music Files
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forcefield • Tramlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn single steps • Learn feet together jump • Consolidate steps using Morris Race with single steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn Into Line • Learn Back to Back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In pairs, put together your own 8 or 16 count sequence of single steps and feet together jumps • See how far you can travel, push the height of the jumps. Look for subtlety in your jumps • Explore turning during the sequence 	Creative task: 2 or 7
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forcefield • Tramlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise single steps • Revise feet together jump • Learn double steps • Morris Race with single and double steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise Into Line and Back to Back • Learn Whole Gyp • In pairs apply your 8 / 16 count sequence to Whole Gyp • Adapt either the figure or the sequence so that they work well together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the 8 or 16 count phrase created in session 1 and alter to include double steps • Explore travel, changes in height and turning the sequence • Discuss the impact that the travel, elevation and turning make 	Figures: 2, 7 or 12
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forcefield • Tramlines • Progressively add single and double stepping and feet together jumps in to these games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit single steps, double steps and feet together jumps • Learn arm movements • Combine steps and arm movements • Morris Race single step, adding arms to explore how this affects the ability to travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise Whole Gyp with stepping • Learn Rounds • Learn the Hey in sets of 6 • Try dancing the Hey with single steps and Wheatley arm movements <p>Sticking sequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn Ring O'Bells 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add arm movements to the Whole Gyp • Explore how these arm movements affect travel, elevation and turning the sequence • Adapt the arm movements to better fit your sequence 	Figures: 2, 7 or 12 Sticking: 3, 8 or 14

Week	Warm up	Steps	Figures	Creative Task	Music Files
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forcefield • Tramlines Both games with morris stepping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morris Race with arm movements. Put together short combinations of steps / arms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefly revise the Whole Gyp partner work • Revise Rounds and the Hey, first walking, then with single steps and Wheatley arm movements Sticking sequences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise Ring O'Bells • Learn Bobbing Joan, Upton on Severn, Strike Sticking and Balance the Straw <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The movements from the sticking sequences will inform the creative task in the next section. It is not imperative that students can do these perfectly by the end of Week 4, as they will continue to be revised, but it is important that they understand the different movement patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in sets of 6, you will be dancing Whole Gyp and need to decide what the stepping will be. There are 2 ways of doing this: Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in your groups, use the best components of each other's work to create the stepping together Or: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In your groups put your work together to make an entirely new stepping sequence for the figure using elements of everyone's movements 	Figures: 2, 7 or 12 Sticking: 3, 8 or 14
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forcefield • Tramlines Both games with morris stepping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morris Race, putting together short combinations of steps and jumps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefly revise the Whole Gyp work in sets of 6 from Week 4 Sticking sequences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise Ring O'Bells ,Bobbing Joan, Upton on Severn, Strike Sticking and Balance the Straw 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in threes (the lines of the set), develop a movement phrase that uses the sticking movement as the beginning point of its movement. See page 24, 'Sticking without the sticks' for details • Choose one other figure (Back to Back, Into Line, Hey, Rounds) • Develop this phrase into the movement from the figure • Confident groups can also look at the <i>Spring Force</i> film for movement ideas 	Figures: Any A music – be aware that some are different lengths. See table on page 40. Music Files 17 and 21 may be interesting for advanced groups

Week	Warm up	Steps	Figures	Creative Task	Music Files
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forcefield • Tramlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the basic principles of stepping from week one. Watch the Films 10, 11, 26. Does your stepping look natural, relaxed and controlled? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefly revise Whole Hey and Rounds with stepping • Briefly revise all sticking sequences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at all the material explored, then put together the whole dance <p>This will use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the line of 3 combinations created in week 5, • the Whole Gyp in sets from week 4, • the sticking that formed the basis for the creative task in week 5 • Whole Hey or Rounds <p>This task connects these pieces together to make the dance into a logical pattern that someone else can understand and reproduce with their own figures and stepping. The traditional sequence is figure chorus figure chorus etc., building from simple figures (Into Line), towards progressively more complex ones (Rounds or Hey). You don't need to follow this structure, however when building the piece explore the structural remit that morris always simultaneously combines: stepping and arm sequences, floor patterns/pathways and teamwork, with symmetry or unity constantly being achieved along the line or across the pair or the <i>corner</i>. This outcome is not a traditional morris dance but is a contemporised version that includes all of the elements of morris</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform your work to the group! 	<p>Dances:</p> <p>Any whole tune music – be aware that some are different lengths. See table on page 40</p>

Practical Extension Work

More detailed morris material

For longer projects and those with more able / experienced dancers there is a vast wealth of more demanding morris material to explore. Students easily mastering the basic steps and using them fluently can be challenged by learning the more complex steps, arm movements and chorus patterns.

The style of, and emphasis within, single and double steps, the choice of which additional steps to include - particularly at the ends of phrases - and the type of arm movements form the main distinction between different morris traditions. Film 26 demonstrates the usual stepping sequence from three different traditions. (Film 26)

Sidesteps are like double steps but involve either crossing a leg (and arm) across the body, when dancing on the spot or travelling sideways. *Capers*, *galleys*, *hooks* or a combination can replace or join jumps at the ends of phrases. Film 27 demonstrates sidesteps from three different traditions. (Film 27)

Slows are composed of 3, 4 or 5 one-beat movements, centred on a large jump of some kind. Slows send the music into half time for emphasis. Film 28 demonstrates slows from three different traditions. (Film 28)

Learning More Complex Steps and Arms

Students should watch all three film clips 26 - 28 and then decide which dancer to focus on, and which element, steps, arms or floor pattern/pathway, to learn first. Watch the chosen film clip, pausing every bar if needs be, until they are confident they can name the step, describe the accompanying arms in each bar, and pick out any elements they have yet to learn. (Films 26 - 28)

Students may need to be reminded that there are usually 8 bars in a sequence and all steps last one bar. The exceptions to this rule are single steps (lasting half a bar each, but invariably found in pairs) and slows (lasting the equivalent of 2 bars, although in practice the music is stretched to make a bar last twice as long, so 8 bars of music will take longer to get through, the exact length depending on how many slows and normal speed steps are contained within it). Some of the music files have different length phrases and include slows.

Once students understand the structure of the phrase, they can learn any new movements from the film and then re-assemble the sequence themselves. Analysing and counting through the structure of the music for the slows, and comparing it to the normal speed music, is a good exercise in itself.

Exploring More Complex Choruses

Students should consider the descriptions below of Corner, Column and Half Hey dances. They should then map out, either in groups or on paper, what is the pathway through these figures for each position in the set, and what position each end up in at the end of the move / phrase, and the different choices there are for getting back to place.

Usually choruses are repeated identically between each figure. The most common chorus structure contains a 4-bar 'distinctive figure' such as sticking or sidesteps, followed by a 4-bar figure - usually half of a Hey - which inverts dancers' positions in the set. Generally, both the distinctive figure and Half Hey will then be repeated to get everyone back to place for the next figure. To dance a Half Hey, start exactly like a Whole Hey, but stop at the halfway point (leaving 1 & 2 at the bottom of the set, 5 & 6 at the top and 3 & 4 in the middle).

Sometimes choruses contain an element that changes in each chorus, developing in complexity and showmanship over the course of the dance (e.g. a bow or salute in the 1st chorus is replaced by a galley in 2nd, capers or slows in the 3rd, and slows or a leapfrog in the 4th).

Choruses also offer an opportunity to explore different ways of aligning the set's formation. Examples include:

- **Column Dances** which display each pair in the set in turn. (1&2 dance 1-4 bars, then move to the back of the set while 3&4 repeated the movement, stepping out of the way as 5&6 repeat it).
- **Corner Dances** which display pairs across the diagonal of the set – corner pairs dance together and may swap places in the process. (1 & 6 dance 1-4 bars, which are repeated by 2 & 5, then by 3 & 4).
- **Dances with Circular Choruses** in which the dancers walk around the circle of the set, each dancer taking a turn to dance 1 bar solo on reaching the top position.

Dance Appreciation Tasks

Questions related to the interpretation and performance of *Spring Force*

There are a number of exercises you can do with your students when looking at the performance of *Spring Force* at the Royal Albert Hall. While the performance is quite short, there are a number of elements of composition and analysis that would be very useful for your students to look at. There are interviews with the dancers, choreographers and musician on films 29-31, which may help with some of these questions. These correlate both with the GCSE dance paper and with the ability to recognise the creative movement work created by the dancers and therefore the possibilities for their own work. (Films 29-31)

- 1) What elements of composition can be found in the piece? There were moments of Unison, Canon, Repetition, Complementary and Contrasting movements. Sometimes the contrasting movement isn't happening at the same time but happens after each other to create a contrast in time as well as space. Can you see that happening?
- 2) Can you see where the dancers have creatively developed the morris material to be something new? In which areas of the dance does this happen and what effect does it have on your interpretation of the dance? When you put together your own creative interpretations of the morris material, can you see elements of the *Spring Force* dance in your own choreography?
- 3) How have you used the compositional elements you have seen in *Spring Force* in your own choreographic piece? Do you see similarities in the effect these compositional elements make to the *Spring Force* dance in your own dances?
- 4) What are the dancers wearing and why? What effect does this have on the dance, the dancing and the patterns?
- 5) What is the musician playing? What is happening with the rhythm during the dance? With the musician accompanying the movement, who is leading who? What is the effect of the sound change in the slower section. How does this slower section effect the end section?
- 6) Describe a moment of climax in *Spring Force*. How was this achieved and what do you think was the effect on the audience?
- 7) *Spring Force* was performed in the round at the Royal Albert Hall. This meant that a very different version of the dance was seen by everyone in the auditorium as they all had different views. What would the effect be of performing your composition piece in the round? Are there elements of your piece that would work better if you changed their angle and the viewer's angle?
- 8) What elements of the title *Spring Force* were evident to you in the performance of this dance work?

The project was called *Spring Force* for a few reasons:

- *Spring Force* is a term used in physics for the potential of a coiled spring.
 - Cotswold morris was traditionally danced in the spring.
 - The movement language uses springing – it is buoyant, energetic and athletic.
 - To make a good sound, sticks must be struck with carefully controlled force!
- 9) There is a great deal of jumping in *Spring Force*. What is the effect of this jumping, both in the solo form and in the full unison section? In rehearsing this piece, what elements of dancing do you think you would focus on for maximum effect?
- 10) Many of the figures, steps and sticking explored in this unit of work are performed in *Spring Force*. Can you name at least one element of every 8 bar phrase throughout the performance?
- 11) Listen to music file 17, Bonnets So Blue. What information is the musician giving the dancer in the way that the music is performed? What musical devices are being employed that might also be used in the accompanying dance? (Music File 17)

Glossary

Set	<p>A set is the <i>home position</i> layout for a morris dance, usually 6 people, two lines of three, numbered as follows:</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Front (referred to as Up)</p> <p>Musician/s</p> <p>1 2 Tops</p> <p>3 4 Middles</p> <p>5 6 Bottoms</p> </div>
Set Orientation	<p>Based on everyone standing in their home position, facing front (side by side with their opposite partner).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Up</i> - towards the top of the set, ahead of you, this is where the musician stands, facing the dancers. • <i>Down</i> - towards the bottom of the set, behind you, away from the music. • <i>In</i> - facing, turning or travelling into the centre of the set. • <i>Out</i> – facing, turning or travelling away from the centre of the set.
Partner / opposite	The person across from you in the set, when you face in, or next to you when you face up.
Corner	<p>Your corner is diagonally opposite:</p> <p>1 & 6 2 & 5 3 & 4</p>
Line	The people each side of you.
Steps	Steps are the name for the footwork.
Single Step	<p>Step, Hop (1 a)</p> <p>Usually come in pairs.</p> <p>Left, Left Right, Right (1 a 2 a)</p>
Double Step	<p>Step, Step, Step, Hop (1 a 2 a)</p> <p>Usually come in pairs.</p> <p>Left, Right, Left, Left Right, Left, Right, Right (1 a 2 a 3 a 4 a)</p>
Sidesteps	<p>The same stepping as double steps, but facing or travelling sideways (usually with the working foot crossing slightly behind).</p> <p>Open sidesteps will travel sideways, closed sidesteps are stationary, bringing the arms and working leg across the body.</p> <p>Long sidesteps take 2 bars: 1 a 2 a 3 a 4 a </p> <p>Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Left</p>

Backsteps	<p>Essentially a single step travelling backwards, sometimes with the non-weight bearing foot trailing in front and slightly turned out.</p> <p>Backsteps are an interesting subtlety of morris dancing and are different between traditions.</p> <p>Two backsteps are often the preparation for an end-of-phrase jump. Some traditions replace backsteps with crossbacks, shufflebacks, hockles, or simply single steps.</p>
Jump	<p>Two footed jump comes at the end of most phrases, landing on the beat. It is rarely a travelling movement. In some traditions it is a step jump rather than a feet together jump, and in some the jump is replaced by capers, or a galley and hook.</p>
Caper	<p>A spring from one foot to the other. The working leg propels the dancer upwards with a small kick forwards from the knee and often tucking the leg underneath the body in the process of changing from one foot to the other.</p> <p>Capers are named differently in different traditions. Plain capers are usually a spring from foot to foot, a different foot landing on each beat. In half capers there is a bounce after the land, so the same foot lands on two consecutive beats (R, R L, L). Capers can be stationary or travelling.</p>
Galley	<p>One step and two hops.</p> <p>For each hop the working leg makes an inwards circle in the air from the knee; thigh at 90°.</p> <p>Left, Left, Left (1 2 a)</p> <p>Often a turning step, towards the supporting leg.</p> <p>A hook is like a galley with the circles replaced by a forward and back movement.</p>
Feint Steps	<p>Feint steps are preparatory bounces in between named steps, to maintain the flow of momentum, and quickly become intuitive.</p> <p>Although not discussed in detail in this resource, and are not often mentioned in traditional morris notation, feint steps are a defining feature of morris dancing.</p>
Slows	<p>Slows are more elaborate, complex steps, usually with the music changing temporarily into half time. A slow is often comprised of 4 elements, with a fancy caper or jump as its key feature. Slows can also have 3 or 5 beats, going across the music. Common slows include split capers, upright capers, kick capers, RTBs (a sequence starting right toe back), LTBs (left toe back) and leapfrogs.</p>

Figure	<p>A floor pattern/pathway with a set sequence of steps to a phrase of music.</p> <p>Figures are danced in between the choruses; they are equivalent to verses of a song.</p> <p>There are a stock set of figures, although not all appear in every tradition, or even in every dance in a tradition. Foot Up or Foot Down, Into Line (or Half Gyp), Back to Back, Whole Gyp, Whole Hey and Rounds are common figures.</p>
Chorus	<p>This is also a figure but is repeated in between the other figures of the dance; equivalent to the chorus of a song.</p> <p>Choruses are 8, 12 or 16 bars. Usually they are repeated exactly. Sometimes they contain a developmental element (e.g. bow or salute in 1st chorus, galley in 2nd, capers or slows in 3rd, slows or leapfrog in 4th).</p> <p>Often a chorus will contain a 4 bar <i>distinctive figure</i> such as sidesteps or sticking, followed by a 4 bar set inversion, usually a Half Hey or Half Rounds. Usually, the distinctive figure and inversion sequence will be repeated to get the set back to its home position for the next figure.</p> <p>Other chorus formations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • column dances - 1&2 dance the distinctive figure then move to the back, followed by 3&4, then 5&6 • corner dances - corners dance together, sometimes swapping places. 1&6 dance the distinctive figure, followed by 2&5, then 3&4 • dances with circular choruses - dancers walk around the set, each one taking a turn to dance the distinctive figure at the top of the set.
Hey	<p>A set-inverting figure in which dancers weave between each other. The pathway is different from each position.</p> <p>The Hey varies hugely between traditions. Commonly, the 3 dancers on each side of the set make the pathway of a figure of 8. Dancers almost always remain on their own side of the set and usually mirror their partner, occasionally working in parallel.</p> <p>The Whole Hey returns dancers to their start position. The Half Hey will invert the set.</p>

Tradition

In Cotswold morris, *tradition* is the name given to a specific set of dances originating from a particular village or team.

A single tradition will contain something between 1 and 35 dances. There are over 30 traditions, as *collected* (notated from source dancers) in the early 20th century, and many more have been invented by teams in the last 40 years.

A tradition is identifiable by its combination of arm movements, steps, figures and choruses. All dances in any one tradition will usually have the same vocabulary of arm movements, unique to that tradition. All traditions take single steps and/or double steps as the building block of their sequences. Additional steps such as galleys, capers or jumps punctuate the sequence, providing another key distinction between traditions. Traditions can also be identified by their slows.

Several dances, if not all dances, in a tradition will be identical in terms of their figures, the dances being distinguished by different choruses and different music.

Figures and choruses are transferable between traditions, with details such as, which way to turn during or after a figure, how close to pass your partner and whether to travel to their place or beyond, are unique to a tradition.

Most traditions have both stick and hanky dances, with some having only one or the other and one tradition calls for both simultaneously! Some traditions place the emphasis on covering as much distance as possible, while others focus on achieving maximum elevation or clarity of movement.

Resources and Further Information

List of film clips

Clip	Title
1	Forcefield Game
2	Forcefield Game – Stage 2
3	Tramlines Game
4	Tramlines Game – Stage 2
5	Tramlines Game - Stage 3
6	Morris Race – Single Steps
7	Single Step – For Copying (front, close up and side views -16 counts of each)
8	Double Step – For Copying (close up and side views - 8 steps or 16 counts of each)
9	Feet Together Jump, without and with Backsteps. (front and side views)
10	Bampton Arms
11	Wheatley Arms (front and side views)
12	Workshopping Stepping Sequences (group)
13	Workshopping Stepping Sequences: Back to Back, Whole Gyp
14	Hey - walking –tops, middles, bottoms, everyone
15	Hey - dancing with single steps (aerial, side and end views)
16	Into Line - Walking - Whole set (aerial, side and end views)
17	Back to Back - Walking - Whole set (aerial, side and end views)
18	Face to Face - Walking - Whole set (aerial, side and end views)
19	Rounds - Walking, then dance Rounds
20	Ring O'Bells Sticking (end and side view)
21	Bobbing Joe Sticking (end and side view)
22	Upton / Strike Sticking (end and side view)

23	Balance The Straw Sticking (end and side view)
24	Creative Tasks: Workshopping Extended Movement - solos
25	Creative Tasks: Extended Movement From Sticking
26	Extended Morris Material: Foot Up
27	Extended Morris Material: Sidesteps (Chorus)
28	Extended Morris Material: Slows
29	Interview – Dancers
30	Interview – Composer / Musician
31	Interview – Choreographers

List of music files

Morris tunes are usually constructed in two parts. The A part of the tune is 8 bars long (sometimes a repeated 4-bar phrase). The B part of the tune is a fresh, but connected melody and is usually also 8 bars long. It may alternatively be 4, 12, 14 or 16 bars long. Often the last 4 bars of the B are the same melody as the last 4 bars of the A.

As a general rule:

A part = figure

B part = chorus

This resource comes with 6 traditional morris tunes. Each tune is presented in a variety of formats, suitable for use during lessons. Every music file has a 2, 4 or 6 bar introduction. Provided the A and B phrases are the correct length for the exercise you are planning, any tune should work.

In showier dances, the music goes into half time to allow the dancers to perform slows, specific steps made from higher jumps. A slow is usually 4 beats long. Occasionally slows are 3 or 5 beats long. They are sometimes performed to normal tempo music. Bonnets So Blue (music files 17 - 20) has an example of slows.

Name	Time Sig	Key	Intro	A length	B length	Total length
Bobbing Joe	6/8	Major	2 bars	8 bars (4 bars repeated)	8 bars (4 bars repeated)	Intro 5 x AB
Swaggering Boney	6/8	Major	2 bars	8 bars	8 bars	Intro 5 x AB
Idbury Hill	4/4	Minor	2 bars	8 bars (4 bars repeated)	8 bars Please note: the last 4 bars of the B sound like the A	Intro 5 x ABB
Bonnets So Blue	6/8	Minor / Major	4 bars	8 bars (4 bars repeated)	8 bars Please note: the last 4 bars of the B sound like the A	intro 2 x ABB 2 x AB ^S B ^S (B ^S = B with 3 x 4-beat slows)
Black Joak	6/8	Major	6 bars	6 bars	10 bars	Intro 4 x AABB
Glorishears	6/8	Major	2 bars	8 bars	8 bars	Intro 4 x AAB

Traditional morris tunes arranged and performed by Robert Harbron on concertina

Ref	Title	Description	Time
1	Bobbing Joe	Whole tune with 2 bar intro	2.14
2	Bobbing Joe	2 bar intro + A many times	3.15
3	Bobbing Joe	2 bar intro + B many times	2.42
4	Bobbing Joe	2 bar intro + one A	0.18
5	Bobbing Joe	2 bar intro + one B	0.18
6	Swaggering Boney	Whole tune with 2 bar intro	2.12
7	Swaggering Boney	2 bar intro + A many times	3.08
8	Swaggering Boney	2 bar intro + B many times	3.03
9	Swaggering Boney	2 bar intro + one A	0.16
10	Swaggering Boney	2 bar intro + one B	0.16
11	Ildbury Hill	Whole tune with 2 bar intro	3.36
12	Ildbury Hill	2 bar intro + A many times	2.22
13	Ildbury Hill	2 bar intro short B (4 bars) many times	1.59
14	Ildbury Hill	2 bar intro + full length B (8 bars) many times	2.43
15	Ildbury Hill	2 bar intro + one A	0.21
16	Ildbury Hill	2 bar intro + one B	0.33
17	Bonnets So Blue	Whole tune with 4 bar intro	3.17
18	Bonnets So Blue	Single sequence of 3 slows	0.12
19	Bonnets So Blue	2 bar intro + 3 slows many times	2.53
20	Bonnets So Blue	2 bar intro + B with slows many times	2.38
21	Black Joak	Whole tune with 6 bar intro	3.25
22	Black Joak	2 bar intro + A many times	1.39
23	Black Joak	2 bar intro + short B (4 bars) many times	1.35
24	Black Joak	2 bar intro+ full length B (8 bars) many times	2.12
25	Glorishears	Whole tune with 2 bar intro	2.39

Discography

Below is a list of commercially available music suitable for warm up, creative tasks and choreography.

Morris based recordings at good speeds for dancing to:

- **Andy Cutting** – Cuckoo's Nest / Old Molly Oxford – Andy Cutting
Lane Records LANECD01 (2010)
- **Saul Rose** – Tom O Vickers / The Knife Edge – The Mother of All Morris Albums
Talking Elephant TECD118 (2007)
- **Show of Hands** – 8th of July / Glory of The West - The Mother of All Morris Albums
Talking Elephant TECD118 (2007)
- **Ashley Hutchings** – Pint Pots Dance – Morris on the Road
Talking Elephant TECD083 (2005)
- **Ashley Hutchings** – Shepherds' Hey / Orange In Bloom / The Quaker - Morris on the Road
Talking Elephant TECD083 (2005)
- **Chris Leslie** – Old Marlborough – Dancing Days
Talking Elephant Records TECD058 (2004)
- **Chris Leslie** – Bumpus O'Stretton – Dancing Days
Talking Elephant Records TECD058 (2004)
- **William Kimber** - Absolutely Classic - The Music of William Kimber (EFDSS)
Talking Elephant Records TECD161 (2010)

A variety of recordings available from the Morris Ring Shop:

www.themorrisring.org/pdf/Shop.pdf

Or from individual teams, for example: www.pecsaetan.co.uk

Other folk music with good rhythm, emphasis and speed for morris with irregular phrase lengths!

- **Chris Wood** – Cold, Hailey, Rainy Night – The Imagined Village
Real World Records CDRWDJ147 (2007)
- **Faustus** – The Green Willow Tree
Navigator Records NAVIGATOR5 (2008)
- **Bellowhead** – I Drew My Ship Across the Harbour – Matachin
Navigator Records Navigator 17 (2008)
- **Bellowhead** – Roll Her Down the Bay – Matachin
Navigator Records Navigator 17 (2008)

- **Bellowhead** – Kafoozalum / The Priest's Miss - Matachin
Navigator Records Navigator 17 (2008)
- **Bellowhead** – Hopkinson's Favourite – Burlesque
Westpark Music 87132 (2006)

Many other genres of music are also suitable, see what you can find that has a good rhythm and lift for morris

For example we found this was good to morris dance to:

- **David Jordan** - Sun Goes Down <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOt6zVvs1qI>

Useful links and publications

- Warm Up exercises for morris dancing by Sue Graham published by The Morris Federation. <http://www.morrisfed.org/reform.cgi?file=shopuk.html>
- The Morris Shop for supplies of hankies: www.themorrisshop.com
- [History and the Morris Dance: A Look at Morris Dancing from its Earliest Days Until 1850](#) by Dr John Cutting
- [A Handbook of Morris Dances](#) by Lionel Bacon
- [Morris Booklets and Notes](#) by Roy Dommet
- [Absolutely Classic - The Music of William Kimber \[CD with extensive notes\]](#) published by EFDSS
- [Way of the Morris \[DVD\]](#) by Tim Plester
- Discovering English Folk Dance, Hugh Rippon, Shire Publications Ltd, 1975, 1993, 2008

Examples of morris sides and on-line film clips

There are lots of good teams across the country; this list includes ones that have reasonable footage easily available online.

Cotswold morris

- **Hammersmith Morris Men:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SdtrXvJY0Is>
- **Pecsaetan Morris:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1xrEfTbSZw>
- **Windsor Morris:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LT0ula1i7Lg&feature=related>
- **Great Western Morris:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eukwitOZFGM&feature=related>
- **Fool's Gambit Morris:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wqjo293In1Y#t=66>
- **Moulton Morris:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqJxHhn384>

Contemporary Cotswold morris for stage

- **Morris Offspring:** <http://www.youtube.com/moffspring#p/u/1/hwVEp09dUfc>
- **The Bo Diddlers:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zqBmNMRVpM8#t=104>

Traditional Cotswold teams

- **Bampton Morris:** <http://www.bamptonmorris.co.uk> and <http://www.traditionalbamptonmorris.org.uk>
- **Chipping Camden Morris:** <http://www.chippingcampdenmorrismen.org.uk>
- **Abingdon Morris:** <http://www.abingdonmorris.org.uk/mababout1.htm> and <http://mrhemmings.org.uk>
- **Headington Quarry Morris:** <https://sites.google.com/site/headingtonquarrymorrisdancers/home>

There are other related styles of traditional English dance, also part of the morris family, but with their own traditions and distinct from Cotswold. This includes Molly Dance (e.g. Seven Champions), Border Morris (e.g. Shropshire Bedlams), North West Morris (e.g. Earlsdon Morris Men, Rumworth Morris of Bolton, Rivington Morris and Chiltern Hundreds). The sword dances and clog and step dance traditions are different again. A *Beginners' Guide to English Folk Dance* is available for free at www.efdss.org/resourcebank

How to obtain hankies and sticks

The simplest way to obtain hankies is buy white material (cotton or polycotton) and cut into squares approx 45cm square.

Morris sticks are usually made of strong, light wood, exact size varying between traditions. Full length sticks are around 3 ft / 90 cm long, with a diameter of 1 – 1 ¼ inch / 3-4cm.

Purchasable Ideas

- Sticks are usually made rather than purchased. However cheap, this is time consuming as the wood needs a season to dry!
- Sledgehammer handles are a purchasable option. They make a good sound!
- Some teams use pickaxe helms in times of need, though these have a tendency to splinter into shards when broken.
- Broom handles are not recommended as they splinter, are too thin, and do not make a great sound. They don't easily divide into suitable lengths
- Various coppice products may prove suitable, or indeed coppicers may be able to make to order. We've not yet tested these ideas, however spar gads (for thatching) are almost the correct length. Willow rods, hurdle material or hay rakes may also be tailored. See the list below for suitable woods, size given above. <http://coppice-products.co.uk/> has searchable lists of contacts for coppicers. Alternatively try a local woodland trust group.

Alternative suggestions

- Maculelê sticks may be a good, easily commercially available alternative to morris sticks. Maculelê is an Afro-Brazilian dance related to Capoeira. The sticks are generally shorter and lighter than morris sticks, however as with morris sticks are designed to be struck against one another.
- Another alternative is Escrima sticks, used in Filipino Martial Arts. These sticks are made from rattan (bamboo). They are much harder wearing than morris sticks so they will last for years. They come in 2ft or 6ft lengths. The suggested method is to cut and sand the 6ft sticks into 3ft lengths. <http://ensomartialarts.com/shop>

Suitable Woods for Making Morris Sticks

Ash and willow are traditional favourites. Holly, apparently, is also a winner if you can find branches that are long enough. Hazel and sycamore are also commonly used. It depends on plentiful local availability of long enough branches of correct diameter.

- Ash dries hard and is resistant to chipping gives a good 'ring'.
- Willow takes a lot of bashing but it retains springiness when dry which give a duller 'click' (cricket bat wood). It's very hardwearing and pretty light. They tend to split down the length rather than break in chunks.
- Sycamore is most commonly used, which, being a species of Maple is good and hard. It grows into long fine trunks in most woods/coppices and works well.
- Holly would be seriously good but it's hard to get in quantity.
- Hazel is the wood of choice although can break off in chunks, dangerous in vigorous dances! They dry out and are prone to breaking if you don't keep them oiled.
- Apple apparently has been used and worked well. To be honest any good strong hard wood should do it. Don't on any account use poplar, its only commercial use is matchsticks (you'll see why if you try it!).

Further information on morris

There are currently three main umbrella organisations representing morris sides in the UK:

- **The Morris Federation** www.morrisfed.org
- **Open Morris** www.open-morris.org
- **The Morris Ring** www.themorrisring.org

From the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) are Beginners' Guides and a Resource Bank of free online materials for using English traditional folk song, music, dance, drama and other arts

Resource Bank

- <http://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank>

Beginners' Guide to English Folk Dance

- <http://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/beginners-guide/english-folk-dance#english-folk-dance-introduction>

Beginners' Guide to English Folk Costume

- <http://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/beginners-guide/costume#efdss-folk-costume-introduction>

Tradition and Composition: GCSE Unit of Work for Cotswold Morris Dance

- <http://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank>

The English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) is the national development organisation for English traditional folk music, dance and other arts.

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 national folk music and dance archive which provides free online access to thousands of searchable folk manuscripts and other materials.

EFDSS creates and deliver folk arts education projects for children, young people, adults and families at Cecil Sharp House, as well as in formal education and community settings across London and around the country, often in partnership with other organisations. Our learning programmes draw on the diverse and vibrant traditional folk arts of England, the British Isles and beyond, and focus on song, music, dance, and related art forms such as storytelling, drama, and arts and crafts.

For more information please visit the following sites:

www.efdss.org | www.cecilsharpshouse.org | www.vwml.org

Background to Spring Force project

Spring Force was the English Folk Dance and Song Society's (EFDSS) morris / contemporary youth dance project, developed in 2010 in partnership with Pavilion Dance / Dance South West and performed by So We Boys Dance, the all male youth dance group for South West England. The dancers aged 13 -19 spent two intensive weekends in May and August working with their own contemporary choreographer Benjamin Dunks and morris dancer, teacher and choreographer Laurel Swift, to create a new 4½ minute dance work fusing movements and figures of traditional Cotswold morris with contemporary dance. The live musical score for the piece was created and performed by concertina player and composer Robert Harbron, based on the traditional morris tunes Bonnets So Blue (Bledington) and Ring O'Bells (Lichfield).

In autumn 2010 So We Boys Dance performed *Spring Force* at 3 high profile venues: the Queen Elizabeth Hall foyer as part of David Owen's 5000 Morris Dancers weekend at the Southbank Centre early in September; at the Royal Albert Hall at the end of September, as part of On Show, the Sport and Recreation Alliance's 75th Anniversary performance featuring over 30 groups and 900 performers from all over the country; and finally at the Pavilion Dance Gala, the Pavilion Theatre, Bournemouth on 7 November, in a show alongside dancers from the Royal Ballet, Paco Peña Flamenco Dance Company, Seeta Patel and Avant Garde Dance Company.

Eckhard Thiemann, Artistic Programme Consultant for Dance South West / Pavilion Dance, and the Gala's producer said:

'The inclusion of Spring Force in the Pavilion Dance Gala aimed to include a dance form which is popular and widely practiced in the South West, but rarely shown on stage. We wanted to highlight how the interaction between progressive professional artists and local dancers can achieve an artistically strong work for the theatrical stage. I feel that Spring Force stood up to the test and presented a convincing example of young people being inspired and challenged by this interaction. Our audiences equally were inspired and emotionally moved by a work which employed complex choreography and a real sense of collective and individual identity. We also commissioned a large-scale hip-hop production for Pavilion Dance Gala, and it was interesting to see how Spring Force displayed just as much contemporary relevance and inspirational engagement for the participants and audience.'

Spring Force was designed as part of EFDSS work to create new and positive links between traditional dance and the wider world of dance, and to raise the profile of the folk arts in the UK. It aims to demonstrate that morris is a dynamic, challenging and creative dance form with value for young dancers, whilst contributing to the development of the form and widening the contexts in which it takes place. Working methods developed through this project are being shared within the folk and dance education worlds.

Author Biographies

Benjamin Dunks has worked in dance for around 20 years. Starting in Australia he trained at Queensland University of Technology then the Australian Ballet School before working with Expressions, Leigh Warren and Dancers, Dance North and Meryl Tankard Australian Dance Theatre. He then moved to the UK and Ireland where he worked with Coisceim Dance Theatre, Protein Dance, Attik Dance, Bare Bones and Wildworks Theatre.

For the past decade Benjamin has worked primarily in Education and Community dance, completing a Masters in Research at the University of Plymouth, focusing on boys and the beginnings of the dance experience. He also is currently the Artistic Director of Attik Dance, an education and community based dance company in Plymouth.

Laurel Swift is a performer and workshop leader. She plays fiddle and sings in a duo with Ben Moss (another morris dancer), plays fiddle with The Glowworms, and double bass with Gadarene, who blend obscure 18th century manuscript tunes with modern beats. Laurel also works with the performance storyteller, Debs Newbold. Their show, Under Her Skin combines story, dance, music and song into an epic theatrical tale. Performing both step clog and morris, Laurel is the founder and choreographer of Morris Offspring.

She has led projects with and performed under a variety of contemporary dance artists including Freddie Opoku-Addaie, Benjamin Dunks and Kate Flatt and has taught morris for both theatre and film. Laurel spent 12 years as the Artistic Director of Shooting Roots, who run creative folk arts projects for and by young people, and is an Associate Artist of the English Folk Dance and Song Society.



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