



Creative Folk Dance for Primary Schools

By Barry Goodman

The Full English

The Full English was a unique nationwide project unlocking hidden treasures of England's cultural heritage by making over 58,000 original source documents from 12 major folk collectors available to the world via a ground-breaking nationwide digital archive and learning project. The project was led by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and in partnership with other cultural partners across England.

The Full English digital archive (www.vwml.org) continues to provide access to thousands of records detailing traditional folk songs, music, dances, customs and traditions that were collected from across the country. Some of these are known widely, others have lain dormant in notebooks and files within archives for decades.

The Full English learning programme worked across the country in 19 different schools including primary, secondary and special educational needs settings. It also worked with a range of cultural partners across England, organising community, family and adult learning events.

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Additional resources: audio recordings of all the tunes used in the resource are available for free download at www.efdss.org/resourcebank

Introduction

1. Warm-up

Sit the children down, each in his/her own space. Play some dance music (jigs tend to work best for this – 6/8 rhythm) and stand the children up. Tell them to mirror your actions: clapping, stamping feet, walking, skipping, waving arms, nodding, jumping, etc, all to the beat of the music and in 4, 8 or 16 beat phrases. This helps the children to identify an eight- or sixteen-bar phrase and practise doing different movements to each phrase. It's also helpful to get the children to listen to the music and see where the tune is repeated and where it changes; most folk dance tunes are structured AABB – that is, the first (8 bar) part of the tune is repeated, then the second part (also 8 bars) is repeated as well. Use this activity to start identifying right and left hands (wave right hand, wave left, etc.).

2. Pairs Choose partners.

- a) Hold right hands and dance around each other (right-hand turn). Do the same with the left hand (left-hand turn). Practise this to some music if possible.
- b) Pass your partner right-shoulder to right-shoulder, step to the right and go backwards to face him/her again (back-to-back, sometimes called do-si-do). Do the same, passing left-shoulders (back-to-back left). Practise to music, then practise 1 and 2 to music.
- c) One person cross hands, the other keep them uncrossed. Hold both hands and dance around each other (swing). Practise to music then put all three movements to music.
- d) With your partner, make up a movement to fit an 8-bar phrase. It could be a clapping sequence, dancing around each other in some way, jumping, dancing towards and away, or almost anything else! Allow children to show their ideas to each other (this often helps those who are short of their own ideas!).

- e) Put the sequence together with (a) and (b) first, then (d) (own movement) and finish with (c) (swing). Try it once to music, then develop so that the children can repeat the sequence a number of times to music.
- f) At this point, you could split the pairs and see if they can fit two “own movements” into the sequence (as parts 2 and three perhaps).

3. Fours *Each pair find another pair to dance with.*

- a) Join hands in a circle – practise dancing to the left for four bars of music (8 steps), then back to the right (circle left, circle right).
- b) Join right hands to make a right-hand star – hold hands with the person diagonally opposite rather than all piling hands one on top the other. Dance round for four bars (8 steps), then the other way with a left-hand star.
- c) Make up a movement to fit an 8-bar phrase as above, but for four people. This could include arching back and forward, clapping with partner and neighbour, dancing into the middle and back, dancing a back-to back with partner and neighbour, and so on. Again, have the children show their ideas in a mini-plenary.
- d) Swing partner as above, then repeat the dance.
- e) Extend by making the dance progressive: choose one of the made-up figures and teach it to the whole group, then practise the dance with that figure included. Dance the whole dance, but in the fourth part, instead of the swing, hold hands with partner, dance forward four steps, backwards four steps, let go hands and dance past opposites to meet a new pair (or have one couple making an arch over the other pair to move on).

4. Development

Introduce some traditional dances (e.g. Caerphilly March, Pat-a-cake Polka, Witch's Reel, Farmer's Jig, Goathland Square Eight). Encourage children to create new dances using figures from these dances as well as own ideas.

5. Stepping

Depending on the age and ability of the children, try to introduce a sense of “dance” into the activity, rather than simply walking the moves. The simplest way to step is to skip, which works well with 6/8 tunes (jigs), but less well with 4/4 tunes (reels or polkas), where a double-step (left-right-left-hop; right-left-right-hop, etc.) is more effective.

Some simple dances suitable for introducing figures and formations:

Caerphilly March

Form: Couple dance

Music: 32-bar jigs or marches. Three jigs are provided here *The Queen's Delight*, *Cock O' the North* and *Kingsbury Jig*.

A1 Hold nearest hand with partner, dance three steps forward, let go hands and turn individually, then four steps backwards, then repeat to original place.

A2 Right-hand turn (4 bars); left-hand turn (4 bars)

B1 Clap: together, right, together, left, together, under right leg, together, under left leg; then repeat.

B2 Swing partner.

Additional resource: audio recordings of *The Queen's Delight*, *Cock O' the North* and *Kingsbury Jig* are available for free download at www.efdss.org/resourcebank. Each tune is provided individually at a slow speed to help learning, and an additional audio recording provides all the tunes played together as a set at a normal speed.

Dance tune set - Jigs

from The Full English digital archive

THE QUEEN'S DELIGHT

Trad. /Arranged by Rob Harbron

Chord symbols: G, C, D, G, C, D, G, G, C, D, G, C, D, G, Am, C, D, G, Am, D, G, C, D, G, C, D, G, D, G, D, G.

COCK O' THE NORTH

Trad. /Arranged by Rob Harbron

Chord symbols: D, G, D, A, D, G, D, A, D, G, D, A, D, G, D, A, D, G, D, A, D, G, D, A, D, G, D, A, D, G, D, A.

KINGSBURY JIG

Trad. /Arranged by Rob Harbron

Chord symbols: G, D, G, D, G, C, D, G, D, G, C, D, G, D, G, C, D, G, D, G, C, D, G, D, G, C, D, G, D, G, C, D.

Patacake Polka

Form: 2 concentric circles, boys inside facing partners.

Music: 16 or 32-bar polkas, such as *New Jenny Lind Polka*.

A Hold both hands with partner; to boy's left: heel, toe, heel, toe, 4 chassays (chassay to the left). Repeat to right.

B 3 claps each to partner's right, to partner's left, to partner's both hands, to own knees. Swing partner. (right, right, right; left, left, left; both, both, both; knees, knees, knees; swing)

(A chassay is a side-step: step and close)

Additional resource: an audio recording of *New Jenny Lind Polka* is available for free download at www.efdss.org/resourcebank.

New Jenny Lind Polka

Collected by Frank Kidson
www.vwml.org/record/FK/6/26

Traditional



The Full English: www.vwml.org
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Witch's Reel

Form: Four couple longways

Music: 32-bar reels, such as *Twin Sisters*, *The Morpeth Rant* and *Country Dance (Henry Cave's)* provided here.

A1 Top couple gallop down (8 steps) and back.

A2 Top couple cast out and all follow; 1s arch at the bottom and all dance up through the arch.

B1 Join hands along lines and old 1s (now at bottom) join hands across the set to make horseshoe. The top girl starts thread the needle under arch made by the two boys at the top.

B2 Top boy starts thread the needle under the girls' arch.

Additional resource: audio recordings of *Twin Sisters*, *The Morpeth Rant* and *Country Dance (Henry Cave's)* are available for free download at www.efdss.org/resourcebank. Each tune is provided individually at a slow speed to help learning, and an additional audio recording provides all the tunes played together as a set at a normal speed.

Dance tune set - Reels from The Full English digital archive

TWIN SISTERS

Trad. /Arranged by Rob Harbron

THE MORPETH RANT

Trad. /Arranged by Rob Harbron

COUNTRY DANCE (Henry Cave's)

Trad. /Arranged by Rob Harbron

Farmer's Jig

Form: Four couple longways

Music: 32-bar jigs, such as *Month of May* and *Maid of the Mill*

A1 All four couples dance up the set (towards the music), turn and dance back to places.

A2 All four couples gallop up the set, and gallop back to places.

B1 Right-hand stars in groups of four (Cps 1&2; Cps 3&4); left-hand stars.

B2 Top couple single cast to bottom of the set, others following; top couple arch at the bottom, others go through the arch – start again by dancing up the set.

Additional resource: audio recordings of both *Month of May* and *Maid of the Mill* are available for free download at www.efdss.org/resourcebank. Each tune is provided individually at a slow speed to help learning, and an additional audio recording provides both tunes played together as a set at the right speed for the dance.

Month of May

Collected from Henry Franklin by Cecil Sharp, Oxford, 7 Jan 1911

www.vwml.org/record/CJS2/10/2567

Trad. arr. Barry Goodman



Goathland Square Eight

Form: Square sets

Music: 32-bar polkas/reels, such as *Square Eight* and *The Sloe*

A1 All join hands in a circle, and circle left and right.

A2 Number three couple makes a single-handed arch, and the ones and threes cross over; number four couple makes an arch, twos and fours cross over; repeat this, but with ones and twos making arches, till all are back to place. (Threes arch, ones under; fours arch twos under; ones arch, threes under, twos arch, fours under)

B1 Grand chain half way round the set, where everyone swings his or her partner.

B2 Continue the grand chain until back to original place, then swing partner again.

Additional resource: audio recordings of both *Square Eight* and *The Sloe* are available for free download at www.efdss.org/resourcebank. Each tune is provided individually at a slow speed to help learning, and an additional audio recording provides both tunes played together as a set at the right speed for the dance.

Square Eight

Collected from Mr Nesswell Pinnock by Cecil Sharp, Goathland, Yorkshire, 15 June 1914
www.vwml.org/record/CJS2/10/2973

Trad. arr. Barry Goodman





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

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

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