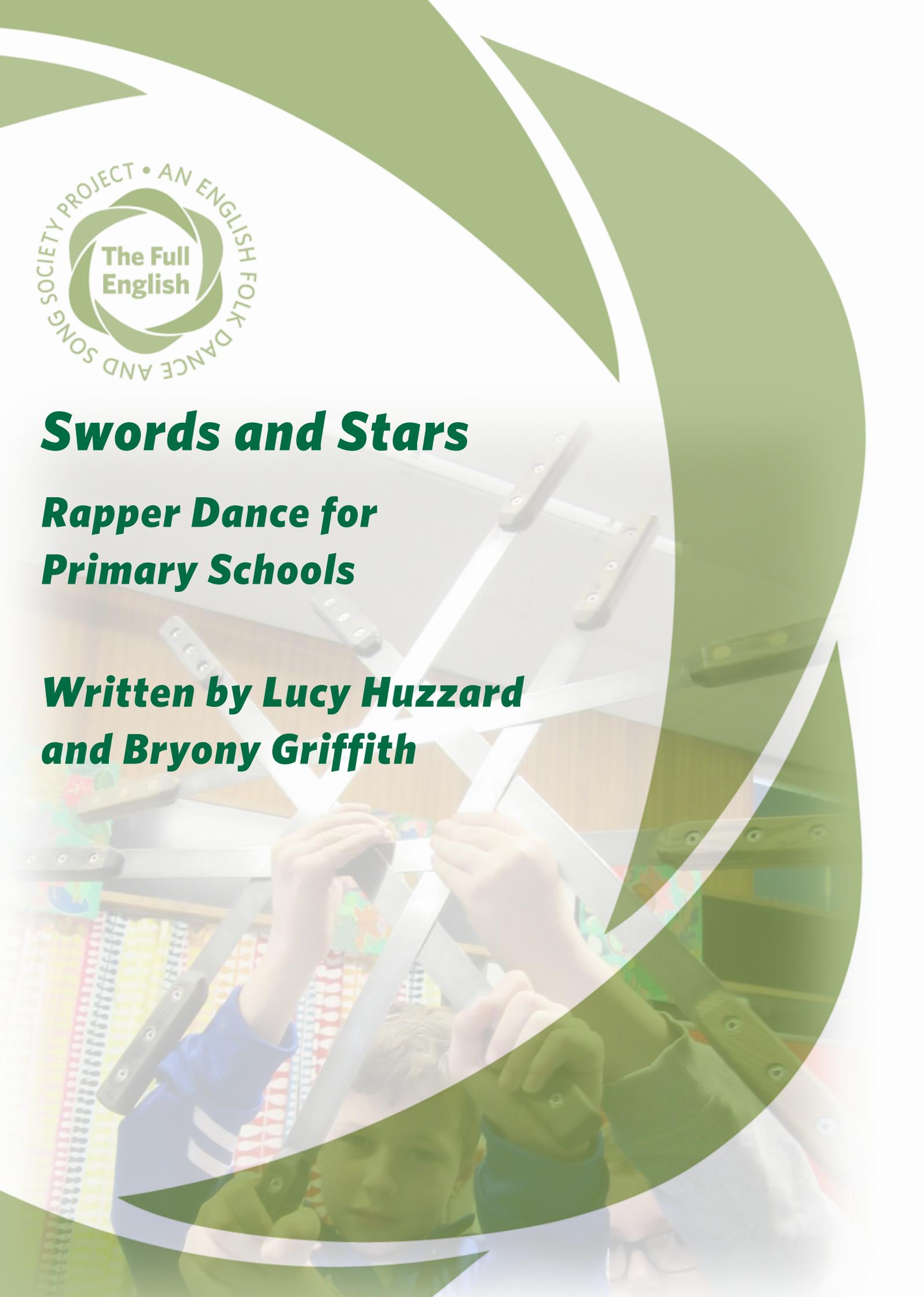




Swords and Stars

***Rapper Dance for
Primary Schools***

***Written by Lucy Huzzard
and Bryony Griffith***





The Full English Extra

The Full English Extra was an initiative to preserve and promote the folk arts, building on the success of EFDSS' flagship project The Full English, which created the world's largest digital archive of folk songs, dances, tunes and customs, and a nationwide learning programme that reached more than 16,000 people. The project was led by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Full English Extra saw the collections of Mary Neal, suffragette, radical arts practitioner and founder of the Esperance Girls Club, and folk dance educator Daisy Caroline Daking added to the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library online archive (www.vwml.org), alongside its collection of 19th century broadside ballads and songsters.

The Full English learning programme worked with three national museums – the Museum of English Rural Life at the University of Reading, the National Coal Mining Museum for England near Wakefield in West Yorkshire and the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, London – combining folk arts and museum education to provide powerful new learning experiences for schools and music hubs.

Supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund



Produced by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), May 2016

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With thanks to: Will Hampson for the diagrams.

Edited by: Frances Watt

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Swords and Stars

Rapper Dance for Primary School

Written by Lucy Huzzard and Bryony Griffith

A resource for teachers and dance artists working with primary school age pupils. It includes written notes, audio files, and links to various YouTube clips.

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Music for this resource

- Bryony Griffith has recorded a set of tunes that can be used with this resource. You can download these audio tracks for free, from the EFDSS Resource Bank www.efdss.org/resourcebank.
- There is a set at medium speed, and the same set recorded at full speed.
- Another tune set is also available as an arrangement for KS2 instruments.
- Another set of tunes is also available, arranged for a brass band of around ABRSM grade 3 to 4.

Background and Context

Rapper sword dance is from North East England, originating in the region's mining communities. Five dancers are linked by Rapper swords – short, flexible metal strips with wooden handles on both ends. This dance is traditionally performed indoors on wooden floors.



Photos of Earsdon Rapper Team, 1912, demonstrating 'Rose and 'Fixy' moves. (Photo credit: Vaughan Williams Memorial Library)

The dance is fast and compact; each dancer linked to the sword which they hold in each hand, forming patterns and shapes above the dancers' heads. These patterns and shapes are called 'figures', and are believed to represent aspects of mining.

During the dance the swords are interlinked and displayed to the audience before the furious whirling and weaving movement resumes. The rapid movements are punctuated by percussive footwork – stepping. The stepping is usually done on the spot (see p34 for links to video clips of some dances). The stepping can take a while to learn and perfect, and it isn't essential for beginners, and can be missed out without affecting the dances and figures.



Maltby Phoenix Rapper Dancers (Photo credit: U.Dance)

Gaorsach Rapper (photo credit: Derek Schofield)



The costumes are simple shorts called hoggers, or short skirts, shirts and hard-soled shoes so that you can hear the stepping.

Periodically, and especially at the end, a star or lock is made by interlinking the swords, which are then held high to demonstrate its symmetry and strength.

Jumps and flips are often executed whilst maintaining the link to the other dancers.

There is often a Tommy, who wears top hat and tail, and a Betty - traditionally it is a man in women's clothing, but nowadays it can be any character, often in flamboyant dress and costume which makes them look and feel theatrical when they introduce the dances, and entertain the audience.

Thrales Rapper (photo credit: Derek Schofield)



Originally, Rapper dance was danced in the winter months, when the mines would have been shut for the winter. Performing the dances would have provided extra money for the dancers and their families. The teams were a focus for community pride, some pit owners would even give the dancers days off work so that they could perform.

The swords used for Rapper dance are now made especially for dancing, however it is likely that in the past a range of suitable items were used from mining tools to steel bed slats (which supported the mattress). It is often said that the Rapper swords were used to wipe the sweat and grime off the back of the pit ponies.

Sometimes the dance is preceded by a short calling on song introducing the performers.



Stone Monkey Rapper (Photo credit: Sue Swift)



St Godric's and St Mary's Junior Schools Tommy, Betty and dancers performing at The Full English Showcase Conference 2014

(Photo credit: EFDSS/Roswitha Chesher)

*Star and Shadow
(Photo credit: Derek Schofield)*



Safe Practice and Warm Ups

Staffing

As Rapper figures are complex and prone to a bit of tangling up in the learning stages, it can be hard for one teacher to command a class of multiple sets. A reasonable ratio would be one teacher to two sets, and then the pupils can try things out while the teacher goes round and helps each group individually. The more helping hands the better!

Safe Swords!

Before using swords, we recommend that everyone begins with something safe. The cheapest and most effective alternative is lengths of garden hosepipe, cut to the length of the swords (usually 45-70cm/18-28 inches). The hosepipe is flexible and holds its shape, giving the impression of using swords. Large hankies can also work for learning figures but of course don't hold their shape. If you get a chance to use real Rapper swords, you must, of course, discuss safety *before* anyone gets to use them. The Number One rule is 'don't let go'.

- Explain/demonstrate that the swords aren't sharp so it's ok to touch the blade, but explain that they are made out of bendy steel and are capable of giving someone a nasty knock if people aren't responsible and listening closely to instructions.
- Demonstrate how the swords can ping backwards if someone lets go of one end whilst the swords are bent.
- Before allowing any group to use the swords, make them tell you what the Number One rule is (again)!
- As a rule, with younger pupils, you are advised to let ONE team try the swords at one time and supervise them closely. If they become tangled, you can intervene before there are any trapped fingers!
- Wherever possible, the swords are in the safest place if the dancers keep them 'up' either with their arms and hands way above their heads, and away from everyone's faces, or resting on everyone's shoulders as it isn't possible to keep them up in the air at all times.
- Rule Number Two is that if anyone feels like they are going to trap someone's fingers, or their own, they must say STOP and the dancers *must* stop very still. This allows everyone to work out any tangles, and for a teacher or adult to help everyone so that the tangling doesn't get worse.
- Other helpful rules include:
 - Don't swap hands.

- Don't hold 2 ends in one hand.
- Keep hands as high as possible when moving in figures.
- Keep all fingers and thumbs wrapped around the sword handle. Don't let any fingers or thumbs stick up (or they might get bent backwards).

What to wear

Anything comfortable is fine and there is no necessity to change into P.E kit for Rapper unless you want to. Although active, there is more walking and thinking than anything else during the learning stage!

If practising stepping, the dancers will need to wear shoes that make a sound, this can be done in trainers or shoes. It is not recommended that some dancers wear shoes and others don't due to the compact nature of the dance. There may be squashed toes!

If dancers are wearing school ties, necklaces, earrings or dangly jewellery, it is advised that they remove them to avoid anything being caught and yanked out during the dance.

Physical Warm Ups

It is always advised to do physical warm ups before dancing. These are specific exercises to help prepare for Rapper dance – especially the exercises for ankles and legs.

Relating to the music

The premise of Rapper in relation to the music, is that figures last for so many counts, and in between there is stepping for 4, 8, 12, or 16 counts. This can be boiled down to 'move for so many counts', 'stop for so many counts'. If possible it would be good to do this exercise to some Rapper music, such as the recordings provided with this resource, to get the class listening and moving in time.

- Ask everyone to move for 8 beats (this could be walking on every beat which is traditional with Rapper, or something more active like running or a silly walk)
- Then stop for 8 beats. This could be clapping in time to match the walking pace, or again something silly on the spot.

- You can change the number of beats (move for 4, stop for 4), change combinations (move for 12, stop for 8 etc.) or speed up the tempo if you have a live musician.

Relating to the space

Another key part of Rapper is getting used to dancing close together.

In addition to the exercise above, you could make the dancing space smaller and smaller like fish in a crowded pond so they have to be more aware and careful of each other, and get more comfortable moving quickly in a tight spot.

Warming up the ankles and legs

Rapper dancing is a fast dance which is based on a walking step. Although it is relatively low-impact at beginner level, warming up the legs for fast walking and ankles for stepping is important.

- Get everyone in a circle and describe a swimming pool in the middle. We need to test the water.
- Begin by dipping your toes in to extend the ankle, then 'ouch!' it's a bit cold so point your toes up to the sky. Repeat a few times with both feet.
- Then plunge a whole foot in as if stepping into a bucket. Repeat with both feet.
- It feels warm enough for a splash now, invite everyone to jump both feet in on the count of three and splash about, raising the knees and getting a good warm up.

Warming up the arms

The majority of physical movement in Rapper comes from the arms and upper body as they guide the swords over the heads of the dancers. It is therefore important to do some thorough arm stretches beforehand, even for beginners.

- A few big stretchy yawns with sound effects
- Who can stretch up to the sky? Reaching towards the ceiling.
- Who can touch their toes? Reaching towards the floor.
- Windmill arms, one arm at a time going forwards and then backwards. Can anyone do one forwards and one backwards at the same time? Always a good challenge.

- Floppy arms down by your sides and twist from side to side, allowing the arms to fly outwards. Always fun and a really good warm up, just make sure there is plenty of space between everyone for this one!

Warm Up Game

The following exercise can be played as a game as you shout the different commands at random. Go through them all to begin with. This is a great way to warm up the class while relating back to mining words and jobs they may have discussed in class. The actions are open to your interpretation and of course feel free to add your own.

- **Down the lift shaft!** Time to get to work! Climb in the cage and descend into the darkness for the day's work...Go from standing to crouching on the floor.
- **Crawl along the coal seam.** Stay low as you crawl along the tiny coal seam
- **Work the coal face.** Use your trusty pick to hack away the coal seam. Can you gather more coal than your neighbour?
- **Push the coal tubs.** Work with a fellow miner to push and pull the coal tubs all the way back to the lift. It's a long way! Get into pairs and push an imaginary heavy coal tub around. Can they remember the names for the pusher (thruster) and the puller (hurrier)?
- **Brush down the pit pony.** It's dirty work down here, that pony needs a good scrub! Who has the smartest pony?



*Photo credit: Open
Government
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Introducing the figures

Teaching Figures

The safest and easiest way to teach new figures is to choose one set of dancers to stand in the middle of the room, whilst everyone else watches - seated or gathered round the dancing set. It helps to point things out and ask questions 'which way did s/he turn then?' etc.

Apart from the Walk On at the start and The Lock at the end, the figures in this resource can be done in any order as all start and finish in either a circle, walk round, or coach and horses. All these figures are variations on an open circle.

We used only figures which could be interchanged for more or less dancers. Use 5 dancers as a minimum (the star won't work otherwise!) but all of the following figures could accommodate 6 or 7 dancers.

It will be helpful if the dancers are numbered (see the diagrams with each figure), and keep their number throughout the dance.

Don't be afraid to be basic. Primary school pupils at this age don't always co-ordinate their movements well. Lefts and rights can be easily confused, so use different approaches to allow everyone to process the directions and actions they need to remember.

Working with the music

In the early stages (and perhaps you won't get beyond these with a short project), don't worry too much about getting these figures to fit the music exactly. The enjoyment comes from making shapes and working together, no matter how long it takes. However, the more confident the dancers are, the more you can introduce the idea of doing these movements in time with the music. For example, in Single Guard, each dancer might be given 8/12 counts to walk around and come back to place. As this develops, you can add stepping for 8 counts at the end of each figure (see section p29 for stepping guidance). It doesn't matter too much if the figures are danced across the phrasing of the music, although try and keep to the 8 bar phrases if at all possible.

Naming Figures

It is helpful to give names to the figures as soon as you've learnt them so it's quicker to refer to them next time. We got our dancers to name the figures and their teams which worked really well. Prompt the dancers by asking what the figures look like/ remind them of e.g. in Featherstone they named the figure 'Single Guard' 'The Big Wheel', which helped them remember the shape of the figure.

Traditionally, all Rapper figures have names, often relating to places in the North East, or the teams who invented them. You can use these names if you wish, but it is common for Rapper teams to make up their own names for figures, sometimes funny, or helpful to remind dancers of the figure in some way.

Have a go at getting the dancers to come up with their own names for each new figure learned. To keep it simple, agree on one name for each figure which all the teams in the class can use in case people need to swap over. Some of the names created in the Featherstone schools were:

- Pit Wheel
- The Shaft
- Pit Props
- The Bus

Team Names

In the Featherstone schools, we encouraged the different Rapper teams to create their own name. Some of the names created included:

- The Ochre Watters
- The Collier Collective
- The Shooting Stars
- The Coal Busters

Orientation of the Figures

On the next pages there are diagrams representing each of the figures. Please note that the bottom of each diagram is the 'front' of the set (known as 'up'). The front of the set should face the audience.

Timetabling

We found that it took about an hour to take a class of 5 dancing teams through a warm up, watch a demonstration of a new figure, and then learn and perform that figure. We did about 3 hours Rapper dancing with each of our groups, and learnt most of the figures presented here (apart from Curly).

If there is spare time, as they progress, the dancers can start to fit the figures together. They don't seem to tire of practising what they've done and getting it right! They are usually very keen to show that they can do it, so a short performance at the end of each session is great for keeping enthusiasm.

Walk On

'Walking on' is the beginning of the dance, where the dancers enter the stage and link up their swords in the right order for the rest of the dance. There are a few different ways to do this, but we have chosen the simplest here.

1. All the dancers line up offstage with number 1 at the front and number 5 (or the last number if you are using extra dancers) at the back, as in a queue. Everyone has one sword, held in their right hand and pointing down to the floor at their side.
2. Number 1 leads the line of dancers into the stage area snaking round clockwise. This should mean that number 1 can link up to the tail end of number 5 (or the highest number) as they come into a circle.
3. When numbers 1 and 5 are nearest to the audience, everyone comes to a stop (as in figure 2A for Single Guard, see p16). This has now established which way is 'up' or where the front of the set is. In all the diagrams, 'up' is the bottom of the diagram.
4. Everyone puts their sword (still held in their right hand) backwards over their own right shoulder and with their left hand, takes the sword in front (see also figure 2A for Single Guard, p16).

From here you can of course go straight into single guard but it is also very easy to get into coach and horses or open ring from this starting point if the dancers take a step out and face each other.

Coach and Horses

Most of these figures are shown as starting with a formation called 'coach and horses'. This is where all the dancers face the front with 1+5 side by side at the front, 2+4 behind them and 3 in the middle at the back as shown in the figure below.

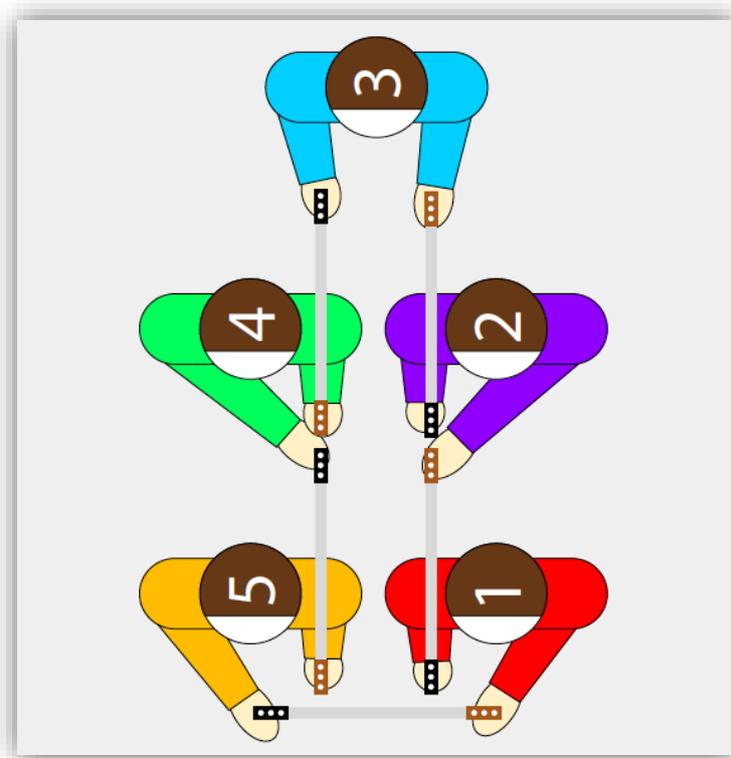


Figure 1 Coach and Horses

The figure is so called as it resembles 4 'horses' at the front and the coach driver at the back, as number 3.

This figure can be treated as the 'chorus' to the dance, as the dancers return to this position between most figures.

Traditionally you would step here for 4 or 8 beats, but it is perhaps best to leave stepping out until the figures and movements are confident.

Teaching Tips

As the *Coach and Horses* formation comes round again and again, it would be nice to get the dancers familiar with it by naming it, or asking them to think of a name for it. An easy example would be to call it 'The Bus', with 2 seats in the front, middle and one naughty seat at the back. This also comes in handy when explaining another figure, the Moving Fixy (see p18).

Note: this move can accommodate extra dancers, which you can see in the photo below. This is one of the reasons that these figures were chosen for the project.



North Featherstone pupils working on 'The Bus'

© Bryony Griffith

Single Guard

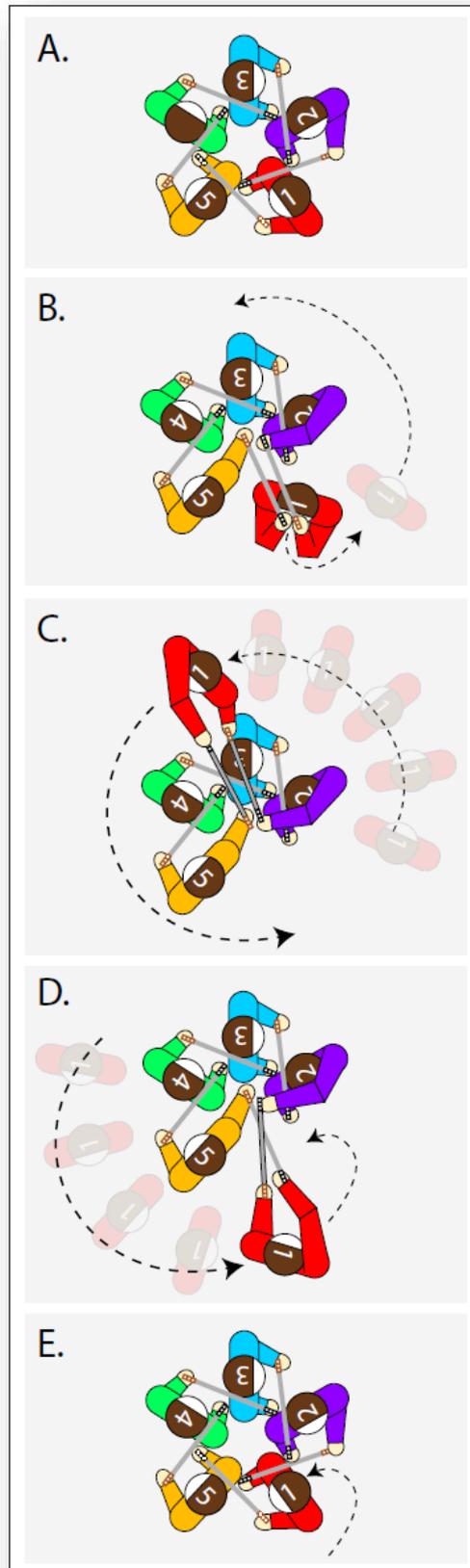


Figure 2 Single Guard

Single Guard Narrative

The figure shows one complete circuit of the set for the dancer labelled number '1'. This figure should be repeated for each dancer in order of 1,2,3,4 and 5, coming back to a circle each time. This ensures each dancer gets a chance to quickly WALK round the outside. This is a nice way to start the dance, as the team can enter the stage and walk straight into this position, number 1 leading them clockwise in a circle.

1. To begin, position the dancers in a clockwise facing circle, tightly huddled with each dancer's right hand sword over their own right shoulder, and their left hand sword over the shoulder of the person in front (as shown in figure 2A).
2. The first dancer to 'take a turn' is number 1, who, with both hands up in the air, turns left shoulder back and walks anti-clockwise round the other dancers all the way back to place. While this happens, the other 4 must huddle in closely as the smaller the set, the easier it is for number 1 to get their sword over everyone's heads! All the swords are down on shoulders, except for both of the swords held by the person moving, and the people holding the other ends of these swords (in figure 2B-C, this shows 1 moving and 2 and 5 guiding the swords overhead).

Teaching Tips

You can explain that from above, they look like the spokes of a wheel or flower petals to help them to visualise. To help keep the static dancers huddled together, you can refer to them being penguins.

Another useful analogy to apply to the whole figure is that of peeling an apple, the dancers in the middle are the fruit, and the moving person is the peel, coming off as they walk all the way round back to place.

If the moving dancer is unsure where to go, it can be useful to have them follow you as you go around the set and back to place.

Moving Fixy

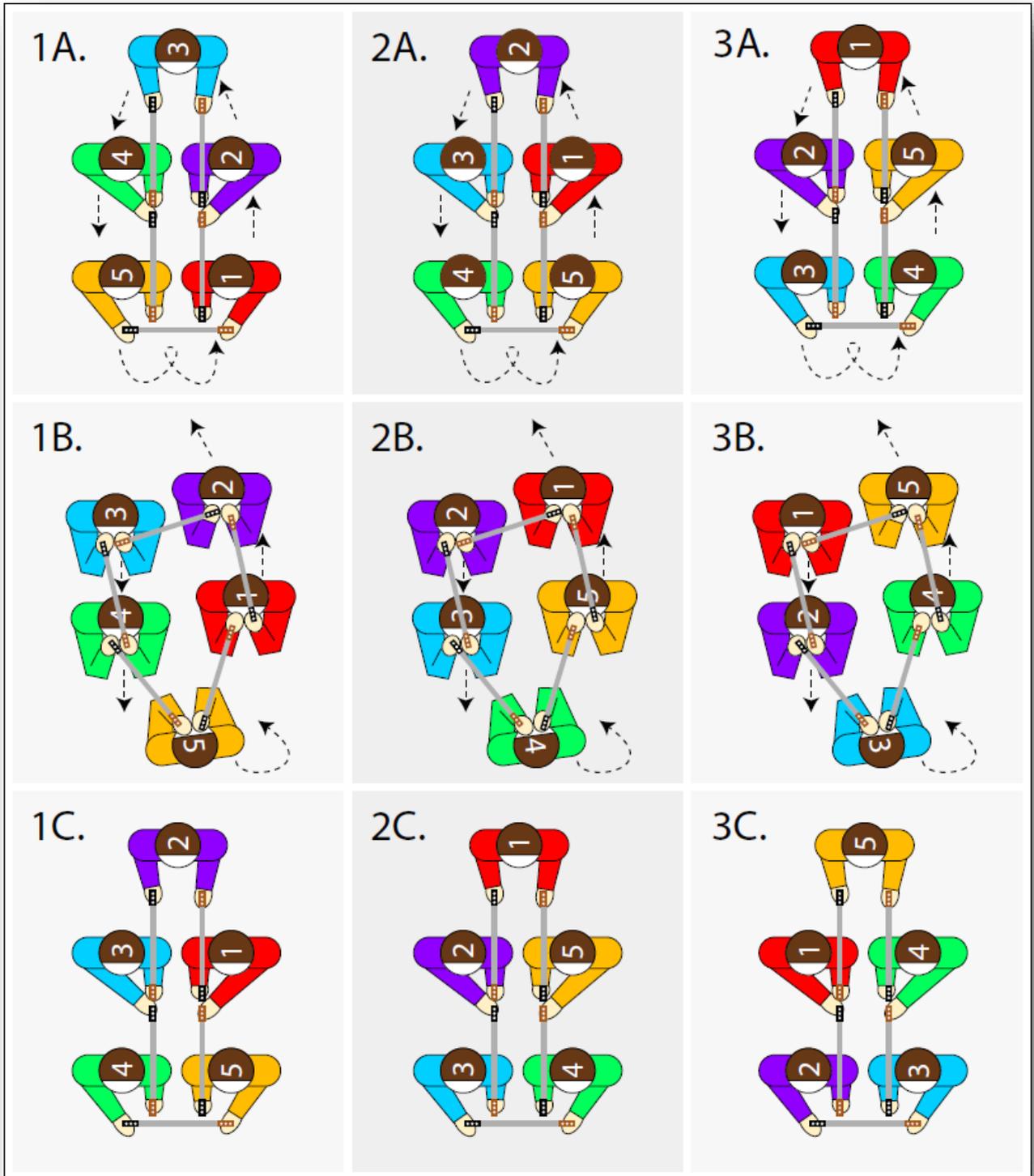


Figure 3 Moving Fixy

Moving Fixy cont.

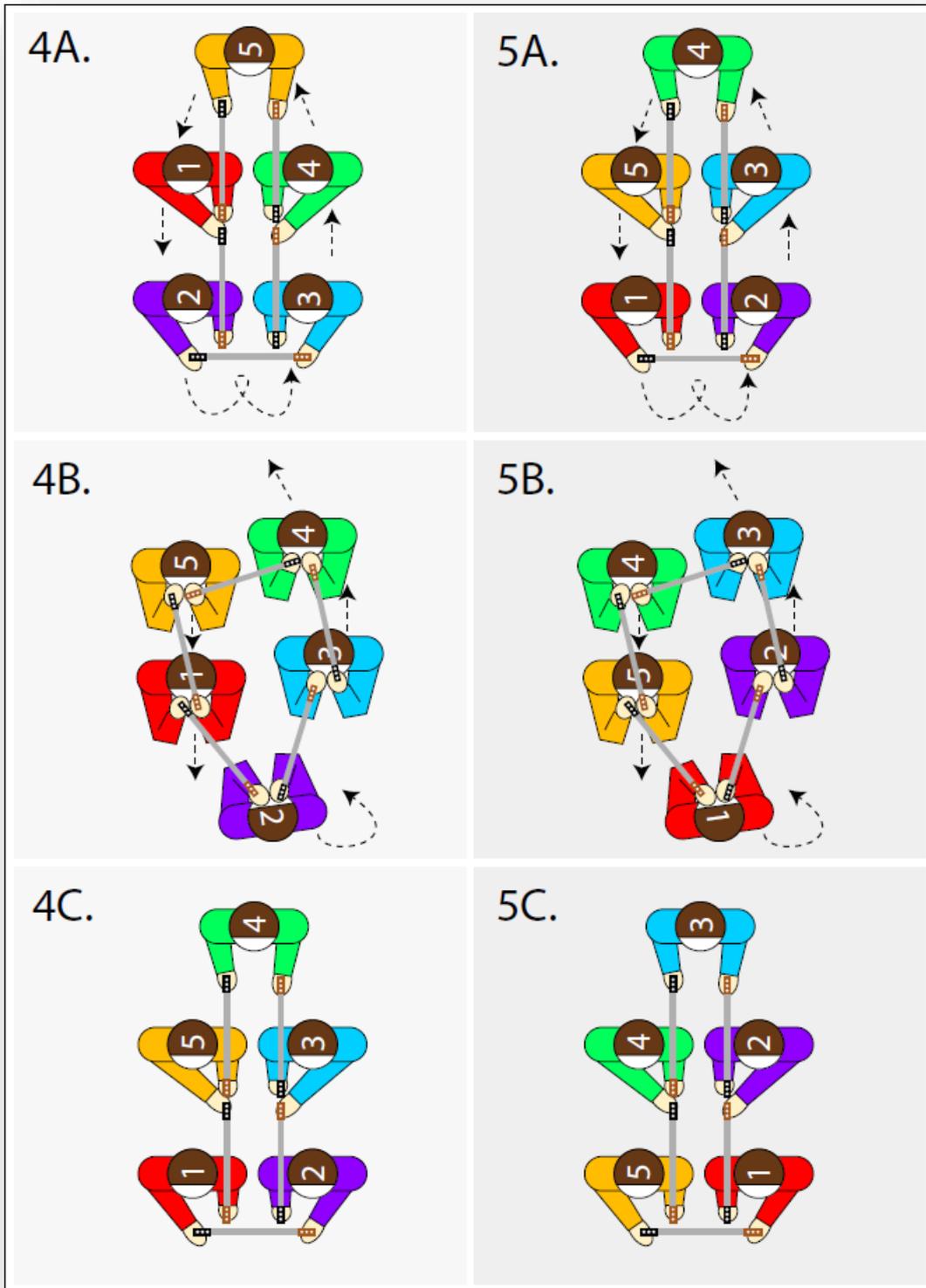


Figure 4 Moving Fixy cont.

Moving Fixy Narrative

The diagram shows this figure in 5 sections, all of which are in fact identical, but the dancers start in a different position in the set each time. In essence, this figure is 5 combinations of *Coach and Horses*.

- Begin with the set in *Coach and Horses* (Figure 3, 1A: all facing forward, 1+5 at the front, 2+4 in the middle, 3 at the back in the middle).
- Everyone moves round ONE place anti-clockwise whilst always facing the front, as shown. All swords should be up in the air while everyone moves and then sit back on the shoulders as everyone stops in their new position. All swords go up again with each change of place and back down on the shoulders before moving again.
- Each dancer does this by taking the easiest route (walk one step backwards/forwards/to the side) as shown by the arrows. The only dancer who does something different is the person at the front right, who turns anti-clockwise (left shoulder back) across the set to front left.
- This motion is repeated 4 more times until everyone is back to their original place (shown from Figure 3: 1A through to Figure 4: 5C).

Teaching Tips

A helpful analogy for this figure is to imagine the set as a bus. 2 seats in the front, 2 in the middle and a naughty seat at the back. This helps to keep the set in shape before the next move. It also helps because the 'bus driver' (front right) is always the person who spins across and you could call this figure 'changing the bus driver' or something similar.

While learning this, ask each dancer where they think they are moving before they go, to make sure no one will set off in the wrong direction. Everyone must move at the same time and with all the swords in the air to keep it safe.

When the team are more confident with this figure, either the teacher, or the dancer at number 1 can be given the responsibility to shout 'go!' when all the dancers are to move. Traditionally they will step for 4 beats between each movement but this can be as long as the dancers need to get ready to go again.



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Curly

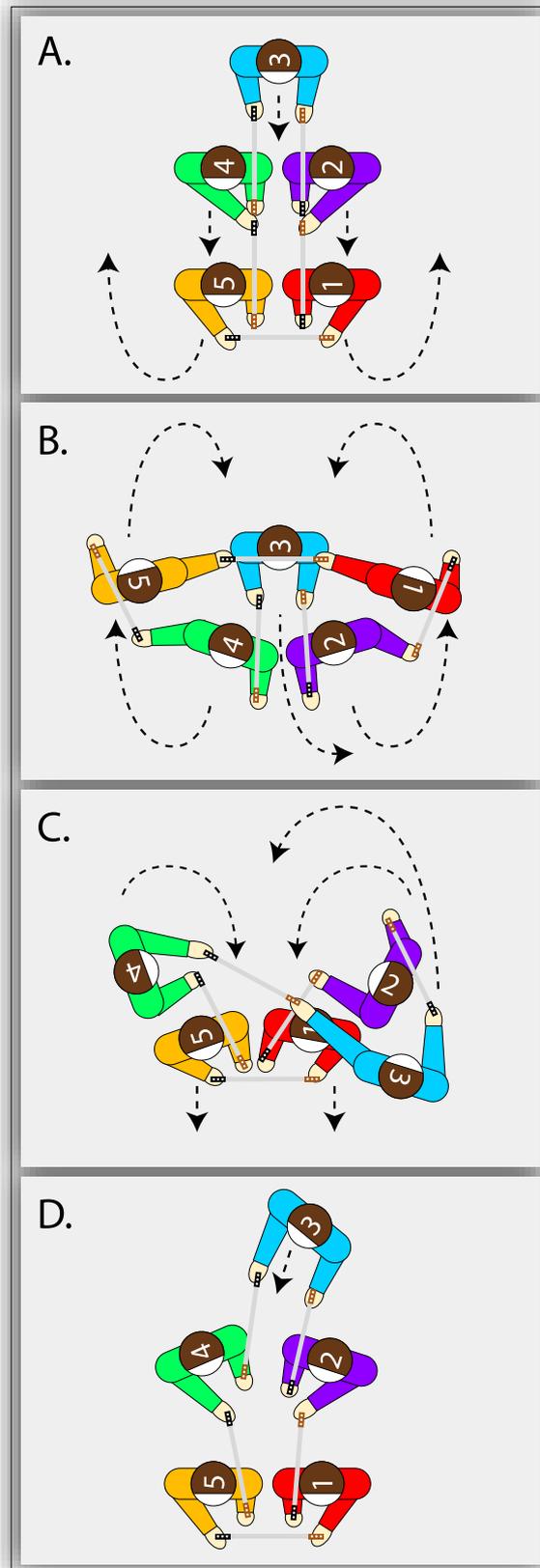


Figure 5 Curly

Curly Narrative

In essence this figure is very simple once it is going. It can continue for as long as the dancers like, usually until number 1 shouts the next figure (or simply 'stop!' if it is easier to remember) so they can all end up where they started.

1. Beginning with *Coach and Horses* formation (Figure 5A: all facing forward, 1+5 at the front, 2+4 in the middle, 3 at the back in the middle), 2 follows 1 in a loop to the left, and end up back where they started.
2. 4 follows 5 in the same way round the right hand side of the set. As Figure 5B shows, these two pairs mirror each other (this is very similar to 'casting out' for anyone who has done ceilidh dancing).
3. Number 3 follows number 2 round to the left and is the last back into place. The figure is danced as a continuous movement and can be repeated from Figure 5 A-D as many times as you like.

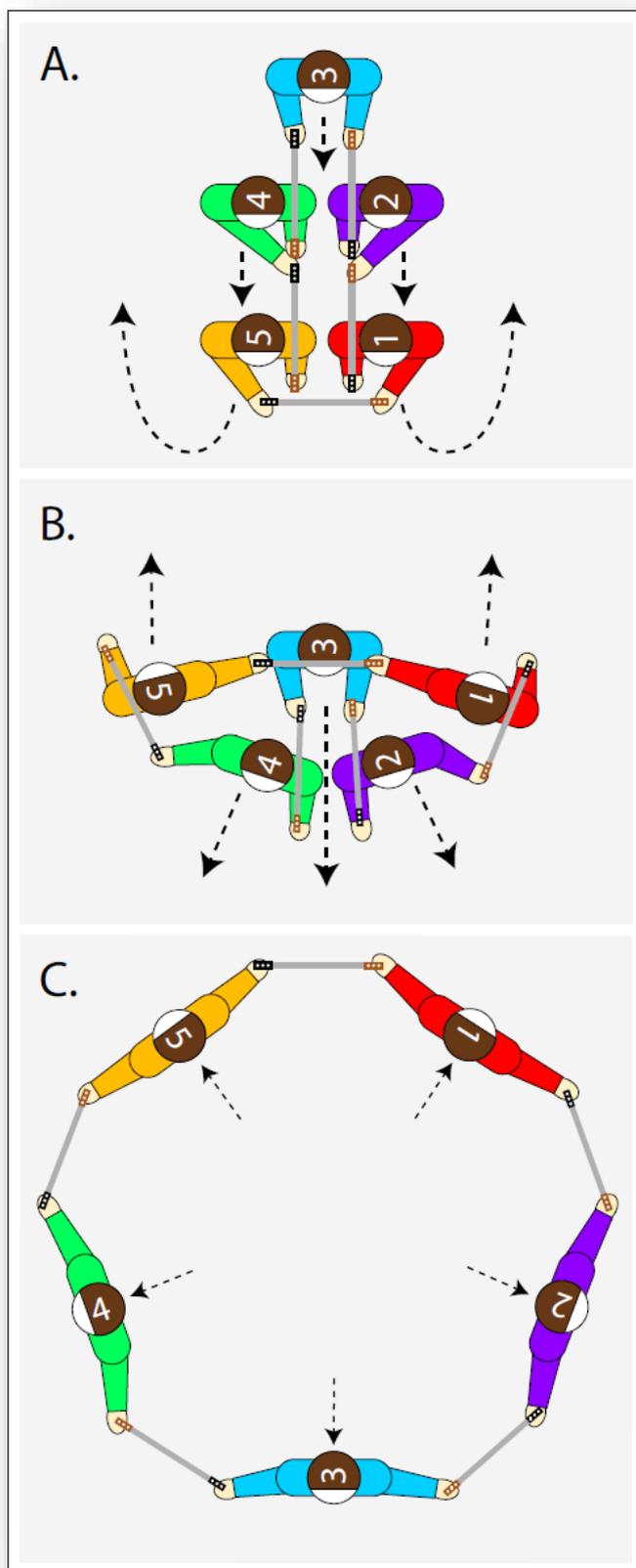
Teaching Tips

It may be helpful for all the dancers to walk the figure without using swords to make it very clear where they are going and understand their path on the floor.

Encourage the pairs 1+5 and 2+4 to 'meet at the back' shoulder to shoulder (2+4 are about to do this in Figure 5C). This helps to keep the set mirrored and is fun for the dancers to do.

The challenge of this figure is avoiding a pulling feeling of the swords as the dancers cast out (the sword between 1+5 in Figure 5B). To avoid this, encourage the dancers to dance close together, and to keep their swords as high as possible.

Outward Facing Circle



Outward Facing Circle

Narrative

This begins in a similar way to *Curly* (see p22). It's a very quick and simple movement but looks impressive to completely change the shape of the set in a few steps.

1. Figure 6A: 1+5 turn out to the back, but once there, they stay put, facing to the back.
2. Figure 6B: 2+4 step forwards.
3. Figure 6C: 3 dives through the middle of 2+4, as all dancers face out.

Teaching Tips

It might be hard to envisage what shape they are aiming for in this figure, so practise a few times walking without swords, or describe as an 'inside-out circle'.

There are also a few other ways to get into an outward facing circle, by subtly changing the order of movements and which involve jumping over swords. Perhaps this could be a challenge to teams who have cracked this method, to see if they can come up with any other way of getting from coach and horses into an outward facing circle.

The Lock

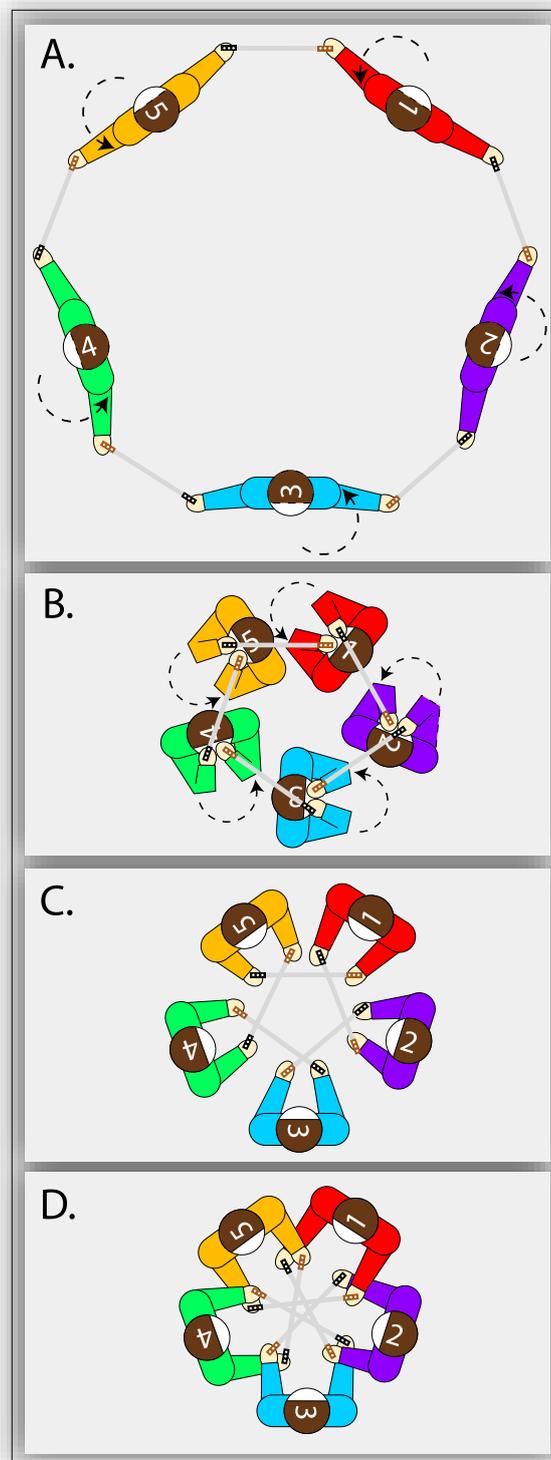


Figure 5 Lock

The Lock Narrative

The lock or 'star' is the part of this dance everyone is excited to learn, especially if they have seen a video or live performance. Once the lock is securely made it can be held up and shown to the audience to mark the end of the dance. The diagram shows how to get into a lock from the outward facing circle, so bear in mind if you are in a coach and horses formation, you will need to get into outward facing circle before tying a lock. These instructions take you from outward facing circle into the lock:

1. Everyone in outward facing circle, put their own hands together and straight up above their own heads.
2. Keeping hands up, everyone turn to the left (or 'left shoulder back' if they find it easier to picture) so they are all facing each other again (remind them of what this means from the previous circle). The arrows in Figures 7A and B show the direction for this turn.
3. Bring hands down and keep them together. You should see the swords make a pretty pentagon shape in the middle, which is always worth pointing out. All hands should be side by side (Figure 7C).
4. Check the swords are correct by tapping the blades over each other (Figure 7C). The one in your right hand should be on top of the one in your left hand! This is the time for the teacher to check and do some adjustments if swords or hands are crossed.
5. Everyone slowly and carefully move their hands apart at the same time, right hand down under the sword to your right, left hand over the sword to your left.
6. The star should now be locked in the middle of the circle. Ask number 1 to hold it by grabbing two points of the star where the swords cross (you can pick up a lock holding just one point, but this is a safer method as they can be quite heavy and wobbly).



Teaching Tips

This is definitely the most popular part of the dance and dancers can be eager to make the lock. Remind them that they have to work as a team and move together when pushing the lock together. If one person really goes for it or doesn't wait for the others, you will have a squashed star. Try it and see what happens!

If using real swords this should be carefully supervised in case of nipped fingers and the teacher can push the swords into place/adjust them before the display.

Take as long as you need at step 4 and 5 (Figure 7C-D) to make sure everything is where it should be, the check at step 4 is foolproof.

It's always good to encourage all the dancers to display the lock at the end. A nice way to finish is to open out into a line facing the audience and pass the lock along so each has a turn.



Newcastle Kingsmen (Photo credit: Derek Schofield)

Pupils from St Thomas, All Saints and Streethouse Junior Schools (Photo credit: Bryony Griffith)

Advanced Activities

Stepping

As mentioned in the Introduction, the rapid movements and figures in Rapper dance are punctuated by percussive footwork – stepping. The stepping is usually done on the spot (see p34 for links to video clips of some dances). The stepping can take a while to learn and perfect, and it isn't essential for beginners or very young pupils, and can be missed out without affecting the dances and figures – but if your group are ready for challenge – then it will be good to tackle it.

Any dancers who are going to do some stepping are advised to wear hard-soled shoes so that you can hear the rhythm.

Music for stepping: Bryony Griffith has recorded some audio tracks to help practise the stepping. These are available as free downloads from the EFDSS resource bank: www.efdss.org/resourcebank. There are multiple tracks:

- Two full sets, one medium, one fast
- Two slow stepping, one saying 'step shuffle' throughout
- Two medium stepping, again, one saying 'step shuffle' throughout
- One fast stepping.

Stepping Practice

- First of all – start slowly, and gradually ramp up the speed as pupils get used to it. Start by walking in time to the music, and use the walking pace as a respite between stepping practice. Also, if some of the pupils find the stepping a challenge, they can resume walking in time without it adversely affecting the dance and group work.

- Starting slowly, walk on the main beats of the music:

L(step) R(step) L(step) R(step) repeated

- Note: you need to start very slowly to allow the introduction of shuffle beats.
- Imagine there is something on the ball of your shoe (e.g. dog poo, chewing gum etc.) and that you want to scuff it off.
- Introduce the outward beat of the shuffle as a 'scuff' as your foot goes forward:

L(step) R(scuff) R(step) L(scuff) L(step) repeated

-
- Now imagine you still can't get the chewing gum off, so you need another scuff to knock it off – and it turns into a shuff-le. You are going to introduce the third beat on the backwards part of the shuffle, as your foot comes back:
L(step) R(shuff-le) **R(step)** L(shuff-le) **L(step)** *repeated*
 - The most important thing is to get everyone to keep in time together – so take it gently!

Creating your own figures

- Encourage the groups you have to make up your own figures.
- Challenge them to write the movements down, and draw their own diagrams.
- Remember to give the figures new names.
- Get in touch with other Rapper dancers and teach them your moves!

Tommying

The *Tommy* is the traditional character figure who accompanies the dancers during a performance. They are the ones who introduce the dance at the start (traditionally with the 'calling on song') and who will introduce the dancers, crack jokes and engage the audience throughout.

Playing the Tommy is a great role, and can be a fantastic way to engage pupils who otherwise would not be able to participate. In one of the schools in Featherstone, one child had an arm injury and really enjoyed Tommying as a way to get involved. Tommies also have the fun of wearing a flamboyant costume if they so wish; think about top hats, waistcoats, colourful ties or absolutely anything theatrical (pirates, robots, fairies, anything goes here!).

Here are some set ideas to try during the dance, but get creative and encourage the dancers to come up with other things to do.

Introduce the team

This can be done during the *Moving Fixy* figure (see p18). Each new dancer to take the front right (or driver's seat) can be introduced by the Tommy. This can be their names, Rapper themed names, characters from TV, anything they like! It's great to encourage the audience to cheer for each new dancer.

Entering the set (see photo on p5)

There are a couple of moments when the Tommy can walk through the set. The first is to follow number 3 during *Curly* (see p22) and pop out at the front. This can be a little tricky! Perhaps easier is when the dancers are in outward facing circle, the Tommy can slip under the sword between two dancers into the middle and out the other side.



Tommy from St Godric's and St Mary's Primary Schools.
(Photo credit: EFDSS/Roswitha Chesher)

Naming the Figures

If the figures have names, it can be nice for the Tommy to draw attention to these as well. 'We call this figure The Lift Shaft!' etc.

The Calling On Song

This has a traditional tune, but can be recited just as words. Have a go at writing a new calling on song. It might include the team's name, and where they are from.

Good people give ear to me story,
It happens we've called here by chance
Five (or however many you have!) heroes I bring blythe and bonny
Intending to give you a dance

For '*Featherstone*' (or wherever you are from!) is our habitation
It's where we were all born and bred
There's no finer gang in the nation
And none are more gallantly led

Calling On Song notation

Resources

Music: audio recordings and notation

- Bryony Griffith has recorded a set of tunes to accompany this resource. There is a set recorded at a medium speed, and then recorded again at a full speed. These audio recordings are available for free download from <http://www.efdss.org/resourcebank>.
- The notation for this set of tunes is provided on pages 35-37.
- The EFDSS Resource bank also has alternative arrangements of tunes for Rapper dancing arranged for KS2 instruments and brass ensemble. These can be freely downloaded from www.efdss.org/resourcebank.
- There are also some lovely jigs within the Anne-Gilchrist collection in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library online archive which you can browse and download online. www.vwml.org

Printed sources

Here are some great collections of Northern tunes which you can find to buy online:

- **A Northern Lass** – traditional dance music of North-West England compiled by Jamie Knowles
- **The Charlton Memorial Tune Book** – Northumbrian Piper's society
- **The Joshua Jackson Manuscript**, volume 1 – North Yorkshire Cornmill and Musician, by Bowen and Shepherd + Volume 2 by Robin & Ros Shepherd
- **The Joseph Kershaw Manuscript** – 19th century Saddleworth Fiddle Player. INWAC publishing
- **Lawrence Leadley – The Fiddler of Helperby**, by James Merryweather & Matt Seattle
- **The Great Northern Tune Book** – William Vickers' collection of Dance Tunes. Edited by Matt Seattle

Equipment

Hosepipe can be used creatively! Pick lengths of it at DIY stores and garden centres. Choose the cheapest – it doesn't need to be particularly good quality. Please make sure a responsible adult cuts it up to the right lengths approx. 45-70cm/18 to 28 inches.

Swords: The Rapper sword is a strip of spring steel, around one inch (2.5cm) wide and 45-70cm/18 to 28 inches in length. There are handles at both ends of the sword, one usually fixed and one with a swivel-attachment. [Ref: Rapper Online - www.Rapper.org.uk].

Both EFDSS (www.efdss.org.uk) and the Sword Dance Union (www.sworddanceunion.org.uk) have some Rapper swords which can be hired out.

Rapper Online have details of where swords can be purchased.

Online Links

- The Demon Barbers: <https://youtu.be/NVluRu3i99Y>
- Newcastle Kingsmen Sword Dancers: www.kingsmen.co.uk/Rapper
- Tower Raven Rapper:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VmO2Jp8mAAE>
- Rapper Online: www.Rapper.org.uk
- Sword Dance Union: www.sworddanceunion.org.uk
- Dancing England Rapper Tournament:
www.sworddanceunion.org.uk/events/dert

The Lads of Danse

Trad./Arr. Bryony Griffith



4

8

12

15

Yorkshire Ned

Trad. Yorkshire/Arr. Bryony Griffith



1

5

9

13

Wakefield Hunt

Trad. Yorkshire/Arr. Bryony Griffith



1

5

9

13

17

21

Biographies

Bryony Griffith



Photo credit: Kristen Goodall

Bryony Griffith is a musician and singer with over 20 years of experience researching folk material, and devising innovative ways of presenting it for use in performance and education work with children, young people and adults. Bryony's skills and enthusiasm encompass solo performance, duo and band work, and also extensive experience of playing for folk dancing. Her solo album, *Nightshade*, was released in 2014.

Bryony is an experienced folk educator in school settings, including education work linked with the National Coal Mining Museum. Bryony is in much demand by festival organisers to lead music and singing workshops, including the Folkworks Summer Schools, Shepley and Whitby folk festivals.

As a performer, Bryony works as a solo artist, and also in a duo with melodeon player and dancer Will Hampson. Over the last 15 years, they have both been key members of the award-winning [Demon Barbers](#). Their partnership started in the acclaimed ceilidh band [Bedlam](#) in their early teens which took them all over the UK festivals and gave rise to the formation of the young Cotswold side, Dogrose. They later joined the celebrated [Newcastle Kingsmen](#). Bryony was also a member of the *a cappella* group The Witches of Elswick.

www.bryonygriffith.com

Lucy Huzzard



Lucy Huzzard has been participating in folk music and dance her whole life. She graduated from the Folk and Traditional Music degree in Newcastle in 2011 and since then has been gaining experience as a teacher and performer.

She recently spent a year studying folk dance in Sweden at the Eric Sahlström institute and is now teaching workshops and classes in traditional Swedish dance in the UK. In the past she

has run a regular clog dance class in Berwick, taught melodeon at Folkworks Tuesdays (The Sage Gateshead) and Cecil Sharp House, alongside years of teaching one to one melodeon to adult students.

In 2016 she worked alongside Bryony Griffith as a trainee educator on The Full English project in the ex-mining town of Featherstone. It was here she gained better experience in teaching rapper to children and where she and Bryony devised some of the tips and tricks in this resource.

As a performer, Lucy has years of experience as a rapper dancer with Star and Shadow and Four Corner Rapper and is joining the [Demon Barbers XL](#) as a clog dancer. She also judged at Dance England Rapper Tournament (DERT) this year and is excited to be involved in folk dance and education for the foreseeable future.



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www.vwml.org/thefullenglishproject

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