



C.

D. E.

F.

1st time. || 2nd time.

G.

1st time. || 2nd time.

- A.  
1—8 Dancers, making a quarter turn to the left, move round in a circle, clockwise, in couples, even numbers on the right of their partners (*i.e.* inside). On the second beat of the last bar they throw both hands up overhead.
- B.  
1—4 Partners face (even numbers with backs to the centre) and go back-to-back passing right, throwing both hands up overhead on the last beat.  
5—8 Repeat, passing left.
- C.  
1—4 Couples move round clockwise as in A 1—4, throwing up both hands on the last beat.  
5—8 Couples move round counter-clockwise (even numbers still on the inside, *i.e.* on the left of their partners), throwing up hands as before.
- D.  
1—2 Partners face and stand still. The right hand is swung round in a big circle in front of the body, counter-clockwise, *i.e.* starting in an outward and upward direction. In the second bar, as the hand is lowered, partners make a slight obeisance to each other. The rhythm of the hand-movement is like that of the Adderbury "Dip-down-and-together," but the circle is a much bigger one.  
3—4 Repeat as above, swinging the left hand round in a clockwise direction.

*E.*

- 1—4 Dancers move round in a very small circle, clockwise (almost a turn single). They throw up both hands overhead on the second beat of the last bar. There are no other hand-movements.
- 5—8 As above, but making a one-and-a-quarter turn, clockwise, so that odd numbers finish facing clockwise and even numbers counter-clockwise.

*F.*

- 1—16 Odd numbers . . . . . counter-clockwise Dancers finish in ring formation, facing the centre, and all throw up both hands on the second beat of the last bar. If possible, they should rejoin their partners, but this will depend upon the number of dancers in the set.

*G.*

- 1—8 All move slowly forward to the centre, and on the second beat of the last bar, dancers throw both hands up overhead.
- 9—16 Dancers fall back from the centre, throwing both hands up as before on the last beat.

The above movements are then all repeated. In the final bar, as the dancers are retiring from the centre, the hands are swung up on the first beat, and on the second beat they are swung with a decisive movement, down and out, to shoulder-level. A slight pause is made whilst the arms are held in this position, which is similar to that of the "wide" position in the Bampton Princess Royal Whole-capers.

There is in Abram a plot of ground, unoccupied and unenclosed, measuring about 21 yards by 14, known as the Morris Dancers' Ground, and it is generally believed that the land was granted to the dancers many years ago on condition that they danced on it once in every twenty-one years. A plain, undecorated Maypole used formerly to stand in the centre of the ground, which is now surrounded on three sides by the works of the Maypole Colliery, so called because the land where the pits are sunk formed part of a farm called Maypole Farm. The Wigan Coal Corporation had wished to acquire the Morris Dancers' Ground, which adjoins the site of the farm, but were unable to do so as there appeared to be no title-deeds in existence.

The dance was last performed in 1901, and previously in 1880. In 1922, the dance failed to take place, and the Abram Urban District Council decided to fix a concrete post at each corner of the site in order to retain it, if possible, for the people of Abram.

The dance was performed by single men, and no married man was allowed to take part. It took place in the month of June (or July, according to some), and the dancers used to go out for two or three days. The first dance had to be performed on the plot of ground in order to "claim" it, and after that the dancers processed through the streets, doing what they called the "Long Morris," which appeared to be a simple form of dance resembling the Winster Processional, and halted at certain places—usually outside the public-houses—to perform the Circle Dance.

The dancers were accompanied by two clowns, who carried long wooden ladles in which they collected money, a King, and a Queen who was impersonated by an unmarried woman.

The King and Queen carried between them a Garland. This was a wooden erection shaped like a bee-hive, borne on top of a pole about six feet in length. It was made

of wooden hoops, and was trimmed with leaves and ribbons, whilst watches and silver ornaments were suspended from it, and a silver tea-pot was placed on top.\*

When dancing through the streets the King and Queen, bearing the Garland, headed the procession, but during the Circle Dance they stood in the centre of the ring whilst the dance was performed around them. The Maypole which stood on the plot of ground was evidently regarded by the dancers as a substitute for the Garland, for they said that they used to dance round the Pole when practising.

The men wore white straw hats, white shirts and white waistcoats, with red, white and blue waistbands and hatbands, and sashes worn crosswise over the shoulder. The Queen wore grand, but ordinary, feminine attire.

The dancers had all their expenses paid and were given in addition so much a day, the remainder of the collection being given to a charity. The dancers had to pay a deposit of 5s. each when the practices started in order "to fasten them," and this was returned when the dancing was over. A high standard of dancing was evidently insisted upon, because "those who didn't step 'gradely' (*i.e.* right) had to step back."

A description of the 1880 celebrations is given in *Memorials of Abram* (J. Heywood, 1882), by J. Leyland, who witnessed the performance of the dance, and this account corresponds in practically all its details with the information that I gathered.

The Garland was described to me by Mr. Porter as being a branch of a tree—"something like a small Christmas tree"—and he called it the "Bush." I could however find no evidence of a branch or bush ever having been used at Abram, and I think Mr. Porter must have confused it with some ceremony which he had heard of or seen elsewhere.