

THE NEWBIGGIN RAPPER SWORD-DANCE

This notation was written by Marjorie Sinclair and Elsie Whiteman and originally published in 1927.

The Figures given under this heading were taught by Mr. William Clark of Newbiggin (Northumberland) at the E.F.D.S. Staff Conference at Buxton in July, 1927. Mr. Clark, who has kindly given permission for this description to be published, was formerly a member of the traditional Westerhope team-an offshoot of the North Walbottle team (see The Sword Dances of Northern England, Part 1), but he separated from them some years ago and trained teams on his own behalf. He states that he altered the figures performed by the Westerhope team - so as to make a different dance - and has invented new ones.

How far invention plays a part in the figures here described it is difficult to say, but Mr. Clark has no doubt incorporated in the dance, rapper figures from various sources, which he has modified and developed to a greater or lesser degree.

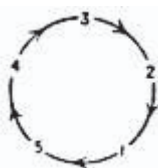
DESCRIPTION OF DANCE

5	4	3	2	1
v	v	v	v	v

Dancers stand in line. The sword is held in front of the body, with hilt in right hand point in left, the arms hanging loosely from the shoulders. Alternatively, the sword may be carried in the right hand, sloped over the right shoulder.

- Bars 1-8, Once to yourself.
9-16, Step starting with the left foot and finishing with the break.
1-8, Step starting with the right foot and break.

Dancers quickly shoulder their swords and form a ring facing clockwise, No. 1 grasping the point of No. 5's sword in the left hand. Each dancer now has his own sword on his right shoulder, his left hand grasping the sword point of the dancer in front of him thus:



All walk round for 8 steps and immediately perform individual Guard (see Part 1, Earsdon Single Guard), swords on inside shoulders and form the Guard Position thus:

	3	
4	v	2
v		v
5		1
v		v

No. 3 holds swords with both arms extended forward Nos. 1, 2, 5 and 4 each carries a sword on the inside shoulder whilst No. 5's sword is held in front by Nos. 1 and 5.

Step for 8 bars in position and then perform any c+ the following figures each of which is concluded by, the Nut which is made as in the Winlaton dance and followed by the Rose (Fig. 2b). The Nut is untied by bringing the swords sharply down, loosening the Nut by bringing the hands together. No. 1 raises both hands, turns outward to his right and moves round clockwise followed by Nos. 2, 3, and 4, all of whom pass under No. 5's sword. As soon as No. 1 meets No. 5, No. 1 begins Individual Guard, which is always used as an introduction to a new figure.

CHANGING THE GUARD

Nos. 1 and 5 raise both hands, turn outward and move down 4 steps, and stand behind Nos. 2 and 4 respectively, No. 1 having made a whole turn counter-clockwise No. 5 a whole turn clockwise, and Nos. 2, 3, and 4 having moved up 2 steps on 3rd and 4th beats. No. 5's sword is now behind No. 3's back. Step to end of phrase (8 bars).

The movement is now repeated, Nos. 2 and 4 doing as Nos. 1 and 5 did, respectively. Step to end of phrase (8 bars).

No. 3 now being in front, raises both hands and moves counterclockwise to the rear and immediately the dancers perform Nut.

REINS

Nos. 2 and 4 step up quickly between Nos. 1 and 5, No. 3 standing behind at arms length (holding the reins). Step for remainder of phrase (8 bars). Raising the reins, all make a half turn counter-clockwise in 4 steps. Step for remainder of phrase with the swords lowered to shoulders (The reins are now crossed behind No. 3) (8 bars).

All raise the swords, Nos. 1, 2, 4, and 5 moving forward into a ring, No. 3 moving backward between No. 2 and 4. All lower the arms and the Nut is made at once, passing hilts under point.

PRINCE OF WALES

The Nut is made in the usual way, raised above the heads, and dancers step to the end of the phrase (8 bars). Still stepping, Nos. 1, 2, 4 and 5 release the Nut and No. 3 slowly turns it over and lowers it to waist level, whereupon each dancer grasps the hilt and point immediately in front of him with right hand above left. On the last 4 beats of the phrase the swords are raised overhead and lowered behind the dancers to waist level (8 bars). The dancers, starting with right foot, now run twice round, clockwise, leaning against the swords, and at the end of the phrase bring the swords quickly overhead and tie the Nut sharply (8 bars). Nos. 1, 2, 4, and 5 release the Nut and No. 3 raises it, holds it horizontally overhead, and turns it over. Each dancer thereupon grasps his hilt in the right hand, crosses his left hand over his neighbour's right and takes the next point, the dancers stepping throughout the phrase (8 bars). The Nut is then lowered sharply and untied in the usual manner.

PRINCESS

No. 5s sword is raised. Nos. 2 and 4 pass forward under it, and in 4 steps change places with Nos. 1 and 5 respectively. No. 3 steps up between Nos. 1 and 5 and the dancers are now standing in a straight line facing up, thus:



The swords are lowered in front of the dancers. Step for remainder of phrase (8 bars).

On the first 2 beats of the phrase all make a quarter turn clockwise placing swords on left shoulders. Step to the end of the phrase (8 bars). On the first two beats of the next phrase all make a half turn counter-clockwise, swords being now on right shoulders, and step to the end of the phrase (8 bars). Nos. 2 and 3 lower their swords in time for Nos. 1 and 5 to jump over them on the first beat of the next phrase, and immediately the Nut is tied, No. 1 making 2 whole turns counter-clockwise, No. 5 one clockwise turn, and Nos. 2, 3, and 4 making a half turn counter-clockwise as usual.

CRAMPER, No. 1

No. 5s sword is raised, well curved, and No. 3 moves forward under the sword and with both hands raised makes a complete counter-clockwise circle round Nos. 1 and 2 and then makes a half turn counter-clockwise and faces down, standing above the other four dancers. As No. 3 makes this half turn counter-clockwise Nos. 2 and 4 move forward under No. 5s sword and then each describes one small circuit, No. 2 counter-clockwise and No. 4 clockwise, to make the Nut. No. 1 follows No. 2 counter-clockwise for a half circuit and makes a counter-clockwise turn on his own axis before tying the Nut. No. 5 follows No. 4 clockwise for a half circuit.

MOVING FIXY

No. 5, raising both hands, moves in to No. 1s place, making a whole turn counter-clockwise in 4 steps, and the other dancers move one position counter-clockwise. All step 2 bars. No. 5s move~ merit is then repeated in turn by Nos. 4, 3, and 2, all stepping 2 bars after each change is made. This movement is then repeated by No. 1 and followed immediately by the Nut, tied in the usual manner (omitting the 2 bars of stepping).

No. 1 RING

For this figure the dancers open out into a ring carrying the swords curved at about shoulder level instead of standing in the usual Guard formation. Step for 16 bars.

No. 5s sword is lowered very quickly and Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4 all jump over in quick succession (if possible on the first 4 beats of the phrase), and move round counter-clockwise, No. 5 then quickly makes a whole turn counter-clockwise, and all tie the Nut.

BACK-TO-BACK GUARD.

In 8 steps, No. 1 raises both hands and moves round counter-clockwise, whilst No. 5 raises both hands and moves round clockwise, and both stand facing down below No. 3. Step for 4 bars.

In 8 steps, No. 2 raises both hands and moves round counter-clockwise and stands facing down in front of No. 1, whilst No. 4 raising both hands moves clockwise and stands facing down in front of No. 5. Step for 4 bars holding swords between Nos. 2, 3, and 4 high. (No. 2 and No. 3s swords.)

In 8 steps, No. 3 moves counter-clockwise and faces down in front of the other four dancers. Step for 4 bars, swords on shoulders.

Return to places along the same track and in the same number of steps, No. 3 starting, then Nos. 2 and 4. Directly Nos. 1 and 5 have returned, the Nut is tied in the usual manner, omitting the 4 bars of stepping.

DOUGHNUTS

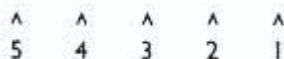
This figure starts with the open ring (see No. 1 Ring). Step 8 bars. On first beat, Nos. 1 and 2 jump over the opposite swords (No. 4s and No. 3s) make a half turn counter-clockwise. Nos. 3 and 4 then make a half turn counter-clockwise and all tie the Nut. Untie the Nut immediately and Step in the ring (8 bars).

On the first beat, Nos. 5 and 4 jump over the opposite swords (No. 1 and No. 2s) and make a half turn counter-clockwise. Nos. 1 and 2 then make a half turn counter-clockwise and all tie the Nut.

FAST FIDDLER OR THE FIGURE OF EIGHT

No. 1, followed by Nos. 2 and 3, makes a circuit counter-clockwise while No. 5, followed by No. 4, makes a circuit clockwise. In the second circuit, Nos. 1 and 2 cross over in front of Nos. 5 and 4 respectively and make three clockwise circuits in succession; while Nos. 5 and 1 cross over behind Nos. 1 and 2 respectively and make three counter-clockwise circuits in succession, No. 3 following No. 4. Nos. 1 and 2 then cross back to the counter-clockwise circuit passing in front of Nos. 5 and 4 respectively, Nos. 5 and 4 crossing back to the clockwise circuit. The Nut is then tied in the usual manner.

To finish the dance, after the final Nut is tied, No. 3 holds it up vertically in the right hand, and the dancers stand in a straight line facing down in the following order:



Step 8 bars in this position. Then all make a half turn clockwise and face up and step another 8 bars, finishing with a caper, thrusting the free leg well forward.

STEPPING

The usual form of stepping used by Mr. Clark was the single shuffle, viz.:

R = right foot bears weight.
tl = tap on ball of (left) foot.



The break which occurred at the end of a phrase was performed thus:



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