

(Funked-(Up)-ton on Severn Stick Dance

Maroon Bells learned this dance June 15, 1984, from John Watson, visiting from Albany, Western Australia, formerly with Perth and Albany Morris. After we began showing it in the Midwest, Ed Stern wrote an article in the American Morris Newsletter where noted that it has some distinct differences from the published versions of the Upton-on-Severn Stick Dance. While acknowledging Ed's scholarship, we have always preferred the version we learned from our guest. We believe it to be superior to the original in both showmanship and fun. We are including it in the mass dances this year because we believe it will be easily accessible to the visiting border teams.

Basic stepping:

The double step in Upton differs from a standard Cotswold double step in that on the hop, the free leg crosses in front of the weight bearing leg. Stick rests on R shoulder when traveling.

There is no separate step for backing up into position at the end of the figure.

All figures begin with a double step on the left foot, and the first step is often in place or backing up. Each figure includes seven double steps, followed by three stamps: R-L-R.

Figures:

Rounds:

All take one double step backwards along a diagonal to form a round set. Hold your stick horizontal, facing it towards your corner. Turn a full circle round in the remaining 6 double steps. R-L-R.

Cross-overs:

These are J-shaped cross-overs, passing R shoulders with partners on both halves of the figure. Begin moving on the first double step and clash on the count of one. Use the first double step to reach the opposite line. Use the 2nd and 3rd double steps to turn over your R shoulder. Hold in place for the 4th double step.

Cross again on the 5th double step, clashing on the first step of the double step and reaching the opposite line at the end of the 5th double step. Use the 6th and 7th double steps to turn over your R shoulder. R-L-R facing across.

Threes top:

This figure results in two different parallel heys for three.

Number 3 heads up to the top and initiates a hey for three by passing R shoulders with number 2. After completing the hey, #3 heads back to position in the set. (Note: on the first double step, dancers 1 and 2 move backwards to make more room for the hey).

Simultaneously, number 4 heads to the bottom and initiates a hey for three by crossing R shoulders with number 5. After completing the hey, #4 heads back to position in the set. (Note: on the first double step, dancers 5 and 6 move backwards to make more room for the hey).

Threes bottom:

This figure results in two different parallel heys for three, which are mirror opposites for they heys in 3 tops..

Number 3 heads down to the bottom and initiates a hey for three by passing L shoulders with number 6. After completing the hey, #3 heads back to position in the set. R-L-R. (Note: on the first double step, dancers 5 and 6 move backwards to make more room for the hey).

Simultaneously, number 4 heads to the top and initiates a hey for three by crossing L shoulders with number 2. After completing the hey, #4 heads back to position in the set. R-L-R. (Note: on the first double step, dancers 1 and 2 move backwards to make more room for the hey).

Hey on the Side:

This is a “dog-bone” hey, where the couple passing through the middle position moves close together so that they “split” the couple on the end who is passing toward them from the outside. When a couple reaches the end, they turn away from their partner and head back in the opposite direction. The hey begins with 1 and 2 facing down and 3, 4, 5, and 6 facing up. 5 and 6 do not move on the first double step—they wait until 1 and 2 come towards them.

The pattern repeats until all are back home at the end of the 7th double step. R-L-R.

Rounds:

All take one double step backwards along a diagonal to form a round set. Hold your stick horizontal, facing it towards your corner. Turn a full circle round in the remaining 6 double steps. R-L-R.

Choruses:

The general chorus pattern is

8 counts of sticking with partner

Turn single over L shoulder for 4 double steps

8 counts of sticking with partner

Turn single over L shoulder for 3 double steps. R-L-R.

There are three different sticking patterns, each of which happens twice (similar to the recurring sticking patterns in Adderbury Lads a Bunchum).

1st pattern = Singles.

High clashes, alternating forehand and backhand clashes.

2nd pattern = Doubles.

Place both hands near either end of the stick. Clash in an X (or multiplication sign), beginning with RH high.

3rd pattern = Windmills

Alternate high and low clashes, beginning with a high clash, all forehand.

Putting the figure and choruses together, the pattern is:

Rounds

Singles

Cross Overs

Doubles

Three Tops

Windmills

Three Bottoms

Singles

Hey on the Sides

Doubles

Rounds

Windmills (Going out, as described below)

Going out:

After the last turn single, all turn towards the center of the set. All stamp R and L. Before the last count, Middles swing their sticks from the bottom and ends swing their sticks from above. All clash in the center on the final beat.