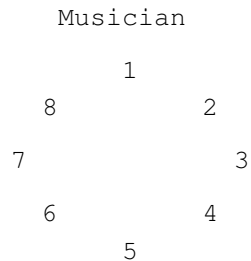


# Hereburgh "Bull Ring" Dance

## Introduction

This is the second dance in the Hereburgh "tradition" for Hereburgh Morris from the village of Harbury, Warwickshire (the first being the Hereburgh Windmill Dance, April 1990). It is a handkerchief dance for 8 dancers in a circle formation:



- 1, 3, 5 and 7 are known as "Odds"; 2, 4, 6 and 8 are "Evens".
- The tune is the "Hereburgh Bull Ring Dance", sequence **A.(AB)<sup>6</sup>**, metronome around 84 bpm.
- This dance has a similar stepping pattern to the Hereburgh Windmill Dance but none of the figures is exactly the same.
- The basic stepping pattern for most movements is 2 double steps (*ds*), 2 single steps (*ss*), feet together jump and "show" (*ftj+s*).
- Left foot start *everywhere*.
- The double stepping should be similar to the style of Ascott under Wychwood ("1, 2, 3, hop") with the arms swinging down then up.
- The single stepping should be in a simple style (e.g. no "cycling", no shuffle-backs) whether moving forwards or backwards. The arms swing down on the first *ss* and up on the second (also on the plain capers).
- The arms should be kept fairly straight (but not rigid) and should swing no higher than eye-level except in the "show" and the side steps.
- For the *ftj+s*, the arms swing out and down to "gather" for the jump, and up to chin level (elbows out, hands in front of chin) on the jump, with a final thrust straight up (vertically) on landing.
- In movements where the Odds and Evens move in opposite directions around the circle, the Odds *always* travel clockwise and the Evens anti-clockwise.
- A potential problem with a circle dance is that, when facing in, the dancers all appear to have their backs to the audience. To overcome this impression, during the chorus, all dancers turn to face *out* in order to make eye contact with the audience.

The sequence is:

1. Lead on, Chorus
2. Foot in/Foot out, Chorus
3. Face-to-face/Circles, Chorus
4. Reel of 8, Chorus
5. Rounds, Chorus
6. Lead off.

Please note -

*The name "Bull Ring" was chosen because the set is circular and the Bull Ring is a historic part of Harbury - not because the dance has anything to do with bulls or bullfighting. However, as an afterthought, I imagined the dancers as trainee bullfighters who display some bravado but are finally scared off by an imaginary bull!*

## Chorus

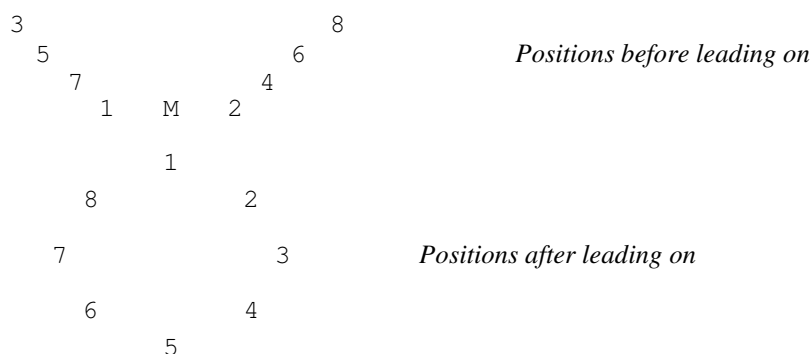
1. Everyone faces into the circle in basic positions.
2. Everyone dances one open side step left (*ssl*), flicking left hanky vertically up and down on first step, with right hanky by the side, then one open side step right (*ssr*), flicking right hanky vertically up and down on first step, with left hanky by the side.
3. 2 plain capers facing in.
4. While doing 2 more plain capers, the Odds make a quarter turn to the left (to face clockwise round the circle) while the Evens make a quarter turn to the right (to face anti-clockwise round the circle).
5. In 2 *ds* and 2 *ss*, everyone travels half way round the circle, weaving rights and lefts with those coming the other way. Each dancer should meet four others before getting to the opposite place.
6. On the *ftj+s*, face *out* and give the audience a smile!
7. Still facing out, repeat the *ssl*, *ssr* and 2 plain capers.
8. For the remaining 2 capers, make a quarter turn to resume the direction that you were travelling round the circle (i.e. Odds turn right, Evens left).
9. Return to original positions by repeating the rights and lefts.
10. On the last *ftj+s*, turn to face *in*.

*The Bull Ring analogy: The dancers initially face the bull but keep their distance as they flick their hankies and move around the outside of the ring. Then, in an act of foolish bravado (or possibly sheer terror), they turn their backs on the bull and dance to the audience.*

See "Leading Off" for details of the last chorus.

## Leading on

The Odds stand in a line to the musician's right, in the order 1753, while the Evens stand to the musician's left in the order 2468. The Odds dance on and take up their positions in the first 4 bars of the 'A' music then the Evens join them in the second 4 bars.



1. After the OTY, the Odds dance in front of the musician in the direction shown by the angles of the lines above. As they get to the centre of where the circle will be, they dance

round in a small circle around to the right (clockwise) and "peel off" to their position in the set by turning *left* and facing in on the *ftj+s* (the last one in the line won't get a chance to join the circle). The Odds continue with the stepping pattern on the spot, while:

2. The Evens follow a similar pattern, turning their small circle anti-clockwise then turning *right* into place.

Because each group has only 4 bars to dance on and get to their positions, it is important to start off beside the musician (not in the pub) and to cover as much ground as possible on the double steps.

*The Bull Ring analogy: The dancers dash into the ring in two groups and take the bull by surprise as they spin round in two different directions, before retreating to the edge of the ring.*

### **Foot In/Out**

In this figure, the stepping pattern is performed facing the centre of the circle. The Odds dance forwards while the Evens dance backwards, and vice versa.

1. The Odds dance *2ds* in (towards the centre) while the Evens dance *2ds* out.
2. The Odds dance *2ss* out while the Evens dance *2ss* in so that everyone is back to their starting positions for the *ftj+s*.
3. Then the figure is reversed so that the Odds move out/in while the Evens move in/out.

*The Bull Ring analogy: The dancers can't resist having a close look at the bull and test his reactions. The Odds try this first while the Evens retire to safety, then they change over.*

### **Face-to-face/Circles**

In this figure, the Odds move to their opposite positions in half a face-to-face and return by half a circle movement, while the Evens do these movements in the reverse order.

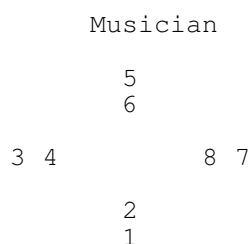
1. In *2ds*, the Odds dance towards and half way round each other, passing right shoulders and facing into the centre as they turn.
2. In *2ss*, they dance straight backwards into the position opposite their starting position, then *ftj+s* facing in.
3. While the Odds are dancing this face-to-face, the Evens dance half a circle anti-clockwise in *2ds* and *2ss*, finishing in their opposite positions with a *ftj+s* facing in.
4. To complete the figure, the Odds return to place with a half circle clockwise, while the Evens do a half face-to-face, passing left shoulders.

*The Bull Ring analogy: Now the dancers get a little braver. The Odds try moving closer and round the bull (but keeping their eyes firmly fixed on him) while the Evens are more circumspect and watch from the edge of the ring. However, inspired by their example, the Evens decide to have a go at dancing round the bull while the Odds move round the edge.*

## Reel of 8

This figure consists of two reels of 4 crossing in the centre - i.e. 1, 2, 5 & 6 dance a reel of 4 across the set and intersect with the 3, 4, 7 & 8 who are doing the same. Collisions in the middle are avoided by creating a small circle and turning it half a turn anti-clockwise. (This figure closely resembles the Reel in the Windmill Dance, with the Odds following the movements of the Outers and the Evens following the Inners.)

1. On the balance step, the Odds turn left and the Evens right so that each dancer is facing a "partner".
2. On the 1st *ds*, each dancer passes right shoulders with their partner then the Odds turn right towards the centre, while the Evens loop to the right round the spot where their partner started from, to face towards the centre.
3. On the 2nd *ds*, the Odds pass left shoulders in the middle by forming a small circle and turning it round half a turn anti-clockwise to face out, while the Evens head in towards the centre.
4. In 2*ss*, the Odds reach the opposite side and turn to face in while the Evens (now facing into the centre) pass left shoulders as above to face their partners, making a cross shape like this:



At this halfway point, 1 should be facing 2, 3 facing 4, etc.

5. Everyone does a *ftj+s* with their partner.
6. Repeat the figure to return to original places, ending with a *ftj+s* facing in. The Evens pass left shoulders but don't complete their half circle because they have to get back to the outside of the circle, turning *right* to face in.

*The Bull Ring analogy: Now the dancers are braver still with everyone dashing past and round the bull in an attempt to confuse it (although there is a real risk that the dancers are more confused than the bull!).*

## Rounds

In this figure, Odds and Evens dance the same figure at the same time.

1. Turn left, to face clockwise, and dance 1 *ds* round the circle, then turn in and dance 1 *ds* towards the centre.
2. Dance 2 *ss* straight backwards to form a circle of the original size, then *ftj+s* facing in.

3. Turn right, to face anti-clockwise, dance 1 *ds* round, 1 *ds* in, 2 *ss* back to original places and *ftj+s*.

For best effect, the double step in, and the single steps out should be danced crisply to emphasize sudden changes of direction, creating distinctive changes in the shape of the set.

*The Bull Ring analogy: On the principal of safety in numbers, the dancers twice approach the bull all together in a flourish of hankies but make a hasty retreat on both occasions.*

## **Leading off**

On the final chorus, everyone faces *out* on the last *ftj+s* and smiles at the audience again!  
Then:

1. For the 'A' music (8 bars), everyone stands still to take a brief rest and to enjoy the initial bout of applause. For the first 4 bars, the hankies are held high in the show position then dropped to the sides for the second 4 bars.
2. To the 'B' music, everyone turns to their right, to face clockwise, and dances around the circle using the sequence *2ds*, *2ss* and *ftj+s*. They follow the circle until one revolution has been completed then the caller breaks out of the circle and leads the others off, maintaining the stepping sequence until the whole set disappears from view (to more applause).

*The Bull Ring analogy: The bull has triumphed in this battle of nerves. Initially the dancers are terrified and stay rooted to the spot but then the brave caller sees a way out and leads them all to safety.*

**Peter McDonald**  
**February 1992**  
*(updated September 1992)*

# The Bull Ring

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$\text{♩} = 84$

**A**

G D G C G/b D/a D

G D G C G D G

**B**

G G/b D/a D G G/b D/a D

G G/b D/a D G G/b D G

*'X/y' means that bass note 'y' should be played with chord 'X' if possible*