

2.7 Furry Dances in North Cornwall

Sources

Archives

Boscastle Archive, Village Hall, Boscastle.

Publications (Book / Album)

John Burton, "Bygone Days in Bodmin", The Cornish Guardian, 24th March 1905,
Pat Munn, Bodmin Riding and other similar Celtic Customs, (Bodmin, Bodmin Books
Ltd, 1975)

Alison and Merv Davey, eds. Corollyn: Cornish Dances,. (Perranporth: Cam Kernewek
/ Plymouth University, 1992), Book / CD / Video.

Alison Davey, et al, Scoots, Troyls and Tea Treats , (London, Francis Boutle, 2009).

Observation

First Saturday in July 2005 - 2010 the North Cornwall Furry observed danced through
Bodmin as part of the Bodmin Riding Celebrations.

5th March / St Piran's day 2005 - 2010 North Cornwall Furry observed danced through
Bodmin as part of St Pirans day celebrations.

Notes

North Cornwall Furry in Bodmin (Alison Davey, et al, Scoots, Troyls and Tea Treats)

Sheila Buse remembered doing this dance as a child in the 1930s in Bude,
She commented that it was still a progressive dance when she was a child
but has since lost this feature. Mary Davey also remembered doing this
dance at school between the wars and there is film footage of this dance
being done in Looe in the 1920s. This dance is an integral part of Bodmin's
Riding Day celebrations which now take place on the first Saturday in July
and it has also become a tradition to dance it through the towns streets on
St Piran's Day, March 5th.

Bodmin Riding is the tune used for the North Cornwall Furry when danced
as part of the Riding Day procession. Historically variations on the Helston
Furry were also used in North Cornwall.

North Cornwall Furry in Launceston

Letter from Mike Hartland 5th October 2010

MIKE HARTLAND
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5-10-10

MY RECOLLECTIONS OF
DANCING IN LAUNCESTON.
1953-1957

AS A PUPIL (BOARDER) AT LAUNCESTON COLLEGE BETWEEN 1953 AND 1957 I HAVE MANY MEMORIES OF THE VARIOUS MUSICAL AND MUSIC ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE COLLEGE AND THE TOWN.

THE COLLEGE ACTIVELY ENCOURAGED MUSIC AND WE HAD A 90 PIECE SCHOOL ORCHESTRA. THE HEADMASTER AT THE TIME WAS HENRY TOY AND THE MUSIC HEAD SAM SELF. ALL OF THE TEACHERS WERE ALSO EXPECTED TO PLAY! THE ORCHESTRA ITSELF PLAYED (PREDOMINATELY CLASSICAL MUSIC, SOME OF US WERE LUCKY ENOUGH TO BE SECONDED TO THE TYWARDREATH YOUTH ORCHESTRA FOR A TRIP TO WOLFSBURG, WEST GERMANY.

ALSO ENCOURAGED WAS 'COUNTRY DANCING', WHERE WE WOULD GO TO THE GIRLS SCHOOL IN DUNHEVED ROAD FOR COUNTRY DANCING LESSONS. ALSO SATURDAY EVENINGS WE WOULD GO TO A HALL IN ST. STEPHENS AND GET TOGETHER WITH THE GIRLS IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL. THE 'BAND' ON THESE OCCASIONS WERE PUPILS FROM THE SCHOOL ORCHESTRA.

ONCE A YEAR (CANT REMEMBER WHEN), THOSE OF US WHO WANTED TO WOULD DANCE THE 'NORTH CORNWALL FURRY' THROUGH LAUNCESTON'S STREETS, AT ONE POINT ENTERING THE 'WHITE HART' HOTEL THROUGH THE KITCHEN ENTRANCE AND EXITING THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR, FINALLY AROUND THE SQUARE TO FINISH. I AM FAIRLY SURE (90%) THE MUSIC WAS THE 'NORTH CORNWALL FURRY' AND WAS PLAYED BY THE TOWN'S SILVER BAND.

Mike Hartland

Furry / Flora Dance at Boscastle

Photographs courtesy of Boscastle Archive

11th August 1949

Outside the Wellington.



Down the main street

On the way to the Cobwebs pub



Furry / Flora Dance at Newquay (Alison Davey, et al, *Scoots, Troyls and Tea Treats*)

During the inter-war period a furry dance was used in Newquay to celebrate the midsummer Golowan festival and the authors family recall a children's dance leading from the school in Crantock Street to Pentire Headland where the bonfires were lit. The version of the dance used was that now called North Cornwall Furry. After the war in 1946, the tradition was re-introduced and became one of the of the summer season tourist



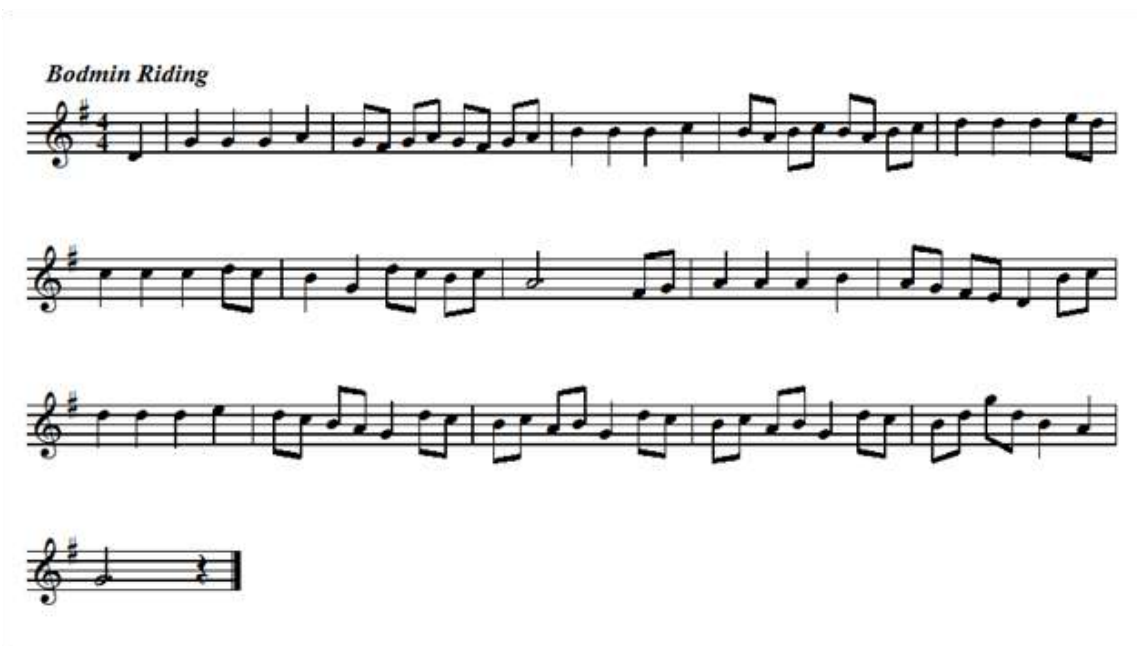
attractions. In 1961 the organisers of the event felt that Newquay should have its own furry dance and song. Mr H Whipps of St



Mawgan was commissioned to write the music along traditional lines. Nigel Tangye of Glendorgal, Porth, composed the words using local memories of older traditions in Newquay. Miss Rowland's class of nine year olds at Crantock Street School composed the dance using elements of traditional choreography.

North Cornwall Furry: music and dance description

See contents page – appendix 2.7 – for a link to an audio clip of this tune.



Formation:

Processional dance for two couples in a line and as many sets as will.

Step:

The step is a 'One, two, three, hop'.

Bars

1–8 Couples take eight steps forward all moving in same direction.

9–12 All right hand star.

13– 16 All left hand star.

Repeat as often as wished.

Newquay Heva: music and dance description

See contents page – appendix 2.7 – for a link to an audio clip of this tune.



Formation: Couples in a processional formation (two couples to each set).

Hold: Gentleman reaches behind the lady to hold her right hand in his right hand at shoulder

height. At the same time he holds her left hand in his left hand in front at waist height.

Step: 'One, two, three hop' step throughout.

Bars

1–4 All moving in the same direction take four steps forward. All turn to face in the opposite direction (without letting go of hands) on the final hop.

5–8 Continue to travel in the same direction taking four steps backwards. On the final hop face the other couple in the set (i.e. second couple in each set will turn).

9–12 Let go of hands. Take one step into the centre, clap, one step back and repeat.

13–16 Swing partners with arms crossed, right arms over left. By swinging in this way, it is possible for the man simply to lift his right hand over the lady's head, Again without couples needing to let go of hands.

Repeat as often as wished.