

# Jabberwocky

Two-person dance

Tradition: Havering-Over-Brunswick

Style: Brackleberry Morris side

Notes written by Eleanor Sampson, 27 May 2020

Notes about how this document is organized:

- I tried my best to break the numbers up by “**bit**”. Note: I am not a musician. In this case, think of each number as the time it takes to do either two double steps, or two singles steps, a jump, and land. So **four beats per “bit”**, I think? All verses and the chorus consist of the time it takes to do **two footing “sequences”**, which is what I call the classic two double steps, two single steps, step-jump (or jump-land more accurately).
- I will write “you” a lot, because both dancers are doing the **exact same thing** but **mirrored** for the entire dance.
- I tried to put notes about how you specifically style things in the **bullet points**. The **numbers** are supposed to be a bit more succinct for easier access when you’ve got the style and just need to know what to do when. I bolded things that I hope you can use to remember the sequence of moves more easily once you’ve more-or-less got it. Hope that helps. :)

Notes about the style:

- This is a **right-footed** dance the way we do it. Footedness does not really matter for this dance, though.
- Basic **footing** sequence is two double steps forward, fall back with two single steps, jump, land - much like some other traditions (particularly Fieldtown).
- **Sticks** should be held in the middle, tip up, arm loose by the side. When doing double steps the stick **swings** forward and back like in Fieldtown, except the **tip stays up**. (Brackleberry calls this “jenky hold” because it is not quite like any of the other traditions we practice.) When falling back, arms go **out** away from the body/**over** the imaginary circles on either side of you, then **down/under** the imaginary circles, **up**, and **clash**.

Figure 1: X’s

- Dancers start **back to back**, any orientation to the musician/audience.
- I tend to think of this figure as being on an **x-axis** and a **y-axis**.

1. Two double steps to move **forward** away from one another (or in a more confined space, one double step forward and one in place) on your “x-axis”.
2. **Rotate** slightly (about 45 degrees) pulling your right shoulder back, **fall back diagonally** with two single steps, end up on your “y-axis” so that the two dancers **face one another** with some space between them, **jump** and **clash**.
3. Go **forward** by taking one double step to **pass** right shoulder, and one to go past to where your partner was. This is your “y-axis”.
4. **Rotate**/pull your right shoulder back again, about 45 degrees, and **fall back diagonally** using two single steps to get back to your original **home**, then **jump** and **clash** when you land.

## Chorus

- It’s fast. The sticking especially is **faster than you think**.
  - Start out by taking left hands with your partner in a **hands round** position, facing opposite directions so you are in a line from one dancer’s right hand to the other dancer’s. Arms are completely outstretched - keep energy in the arms and chest up! (That is just the styling I tell Brackleberry to do, it looks nice.) Stick is completely **vertical** in outstretched hand, hand in the middle.
  - **Rather than a jump and land** on the typical footwork sequence at the end of the first half of the chorus, you take three **stomps** (right, left, right foot) to get your balance, your feet planted, facing your partner. (It goes really well with music and is incredibly satisfying.) Brackleberry calls the stomps out as “**I. AM. GROOT!**” because it fits well with the timing and reminds you to really plant yourself and square off. Make sure to **shift your grip** down towards the bottom of the stick during the three stomps so you can more easily achieve the sticking.
  - The **sticking** happens mostly by moving the **wrist**, though you will need to lower yourself to hit the ground, most likely.
  - Remember that you have the **same amount of time** to get your stick from the head position to the body position as you do to get it from the feet position to the head position, which is twice as much space to cover.
  - All **7 strikes** happen in only **4 beats!** There is just a moment (about a half beat) of **hang time** you can roll into your fall back.
  - At the end of the chorus, fudge to get your **grip** back to the middle of the stick.
1. One double step to get around 180 degrees to your **partner's place**. One double step **in place**.
  2. Two single steps to get 180 degrees around back to **home**. Drop hands and **I. AM. GROOT!** to square off, dancers **face** one another.
  3. MARVELOUS STICKING! **Head-body-feet-head-body-feet-head!**
    - a. **Head:** Strike high, forehand.
    - b. **Body:** Strike middle, continuing your forehand momentum, so your thumb will be pointed to the ground. Remember to angle your stick towards your partner so that your sticks actually meet.

- c. **Feet:** Strike the ground to your personal left.
  - d. **Head:** Strike high, backhand.
  - e. **Body:** Strike middle, continuing your backhand momentum, so again your thumb will end up pointed as close to down as you can reasonably get it, so realistically your thumb will probably point to your right.
  - f. **Feet:** Strike the ground to your personal right.
  - g. **Head:** Strike high, forehand.
4. **Fall back** with two single steps, **jump**, land with a **clash**.

## Figure 2: Circles

- Now you are back to that **jenky hold**, with your stick swinging by your side, tip up.
  - **Fudge** as much as you need to on this one. :) The second half you kind of have to book it.
  - You should start **facing each other** with some space between you, enough that you could easily clash.
  - **Rather than** a step-jump in the middle, **strike the ground**, then lift up and “**whoop**” - do a half-beat celebration! I usually swing my stick in a circle (stick is vertical, so the tip makes a circle to the sky) like in South Australia.
  - **Rather than** a step-jump at the end, do another **double step**. There is **no clash** with your partner at any point in this figure, as you will be facing opposite directions at the end of the first half and trying to book it to where you need to be at the end.
1. **Hard turn** over **right** shoulder, both dancers going clockwise as viewed from above around the circle in two double steps to get to their **partner’s place**.
  2. Two single steps **in place** (dancers will be facing opposite directions). Hit the **ground** and **whoop!**
  3. **Hard turn** over **left** shoulder, both dancers going counter-clockwise as viewed from above around the circle in two double steps to get **home**.
  4. Continue counter-clockwise with two single steps and a **double step** to your **partner’s place**. No clash! Keep facing the way you are (opposite direction from your partner) since you are now in place for the chorus.

## Chorus

### Figure 3: LGBTs (or RTBs and LTBs)

- We just call it LGBTs because it is a bit faster than saying “RTBs and LTBs” and we are a queer team. :) Even though that figure call starts with an L, don’t forget it is a right-toe-back first.
- What I call “**hot stovetop**” is a specific fudging move to get your weight on the correct foot for the upcoming LTB. It is where you have weight on your right foot, **tap** the left foot down, **hop** on your right foot, and **tap** your left foot down again. You

should end “hot stovetop” with your weight on your right foot so you can go into a left-toe-back. It takes up and 1-and-2 so you can prep for your LTB on the “and” before the 3.

- The music is **slow** for the first half but is not for the second half. I think it is that way simply because it works better musically. Timing for all of the RTBs and LTBs is **the same**.
1. On the first double step (which is **in place** facing one another), **sticks shoot up** above your heads, horizontally (parallel to the ground, your grip is in the middle of the stick) and your left hand also shoots up at the same time. Thus both your arms are straight, angled just slightly forward of straight up to the sky. **Take hold** with your left hand your partner’s stick. On the second double step, both of you **slowly lower** your arms down so both of your sticks are resting on both of your shoulders.
  2. In this connected position (stare deeply into each other’s eyes, why not?) do your slows: **right-toe-back** (for the time it takes to do two single steps), **left-toe-back** (for the time it takes to do a step-jump). **Hot stovetop**.
  3. **Left-toe-back**, then **right-toe-back**, the same amount of time as you did them before.
  4. On a single step your **stick shoots up** again (parallel to the ground), **let go** of your partner’s stick. Swing **stick down** (tip up) on the second single step. **Jump** and land with a **clash**.

## End: Non capella

- This is just weird and hard. If you want, make up your own version! It was very hard to tell what the original version of this was from the video that we stole this dance from. This is our approximation.
- Originally this was done with no accompaniment, a capella. The musician who first learned this for us added a **little bit of accompaniment** that helps the dancers keep the beat and thus remember what on earth we are doing. Hence, non capella.
- **Notation:** Anything notated as **head**, **body**, or **feet** is the same as in the chorus. “**Head forehand**” refers to “head” from the chorus (striking high like most Morris stick strikes), done with a forehand. Likewise, “**head backhand**” is striking high with a backhand. “**Body left**” means “body” from the chorus (striking near waist level with your hand staying roughly in place in space, so your thumb will point down) with the tip swinging to the left of your own body. Likewise “**body right**” swings the tip towards your right side. “**Feet left**” means striking the ground with the tip of your stick to the left of your own feet. Likewise, “**feet right**” is striking the ground to the right of your own feet.
- **Notation:** Similarly, “**butt ground left**” means striking the butt of your stick on the ground to the left of your own feet. Likewise, “**butt ground right**” is the same to the right of your feet. “**Butt ground middle**” means to strike the butt of your stick on the ground more-or-less in between your feet. “**Butts strike**” is where both dancers strike sticks in front of them with the butts of their sticks. Your sticks will be angled

somewhat with the butts closer to one another, and as you look at it your tip should be further right of you, and the butt should be more-or-less in front of your body.

- I broke up the numbers kind of arbitrarily by the chunks in which I remember them.
- Here anything between commas is happening simultaneously.
- Honestly the best way I can describe it is with sounds? Here, **x** is some kind of strike (to your partner's stick or the ground, and once it is a stomp), and **\*** is a pause.

**x x x x x \* x \* x x \* x \* x x \* x x x \* x \* x \* single, single, strike your pose**

1. Head forehand, body left, feet left, head backhand, body right, **pause**, head forehand, **pause**.
2. Butt ground left, head backhand, **pause**, butts strike, **pause**, butts strike, head forehand, **pause**.
3. Butt ground left, butt ground middle, head backhand, **pause**, then **stomp** and **take stick with two hands** start pulling the tip of the stick down and back behind you to make a big **wind-up** for a strike.
4. Finish your wind up and **strike** high, use **two single steps** to turn around so you end up **back-to-back**, use the time you would normally step-jump to **flourish** your stick (I usually swing in a circle from the wrist/elbow, starting down, to the left, up, to the right, like a classic Broadway cane), and let the tip of the stick land on the ground as you cross one foot over the other for a **jaunty pose** to end. So stylish!