



52

Hunt the Wren [Dance]



This dance and song is associated with the widespread custom of hunting the wren on St. Stephen's Day [26th Dec]. The dead wren would be suspended on a pole decorated with ribbons and evergreen leaves. Although no wrens are harmed anymore, this dance and song are still performed in the Isle of Man each year.

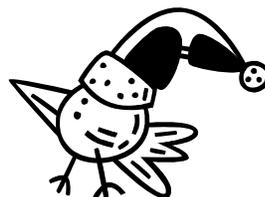
- Compound time signature 6/8
- Major tonality
- Up beat/ Anacrusis
- Structure ABA = *D.C. al fine* - return to the beginning until reaching *Fine*
- Occasion
- Moving to music - dance

Music	Bars	Dance Instructions - Adapted from Rinkaghyn Vannin
Intro		Form a large circle of couples. If possible, an extra person holds a wren pole/bush in the middle. Wait for Intro...
A	1-4	Hands joined in a ring, girls on right of boys, all swing right foot over left and stamp it on the first beat, then continue in <i>running step</i> round clockwise for 8 beats.
	5-8	All swing L foot over R and stamp it, then continue in <i>running step</i> round counter-clockwise for the next 8 beats.
B	9-12	Girls dance 2 <i>reel steps</i> forward to centre and shake their fists at the 'wren bush'. Simultaneously, boys dance 1 <i>reel step</i> backward and 1 forward.
	13-16	Girls face outwards and dance 1 <i>reel step</i> back towards original places, and a second one turning right again so that they are back in position facing inward, as at the start of the dance. Simultaneously, boys dance one <i>reel step</i> forward, honour the 'bush', turn right, and dance one <i>reel step</i> outward, finishing with backs to the centre and facing their partners. In this movement, partners pass each other by the right shoulder.
A	1-4	All couples <i>Reel spin</i> .
	5-8	Boys cross their partners handing right, move on to the next girl, take her L hand in their right and make one complete turn with her, so that she is in position on their right to start the next round as a new partner. REPEAT DANCE (Played 4 times on CD52)

Hunt the Wren [Song]

Perform these lyrics to the dance melody (overleaf)

* Sung lower than written music - voice starts on F.



1. "We'll hunt the wren," says Robin the Bobbin,
 "We'll hunt the wren," says Richard the Robin,
 "We'll hunt the wren," says Jack o' the land,
 "We'll hunt the wren," says everyone.

*"Where oh where?" says Robin the Bobbin,
 "O Where oh where?" says Richard the Robin,
 "Where oh where?" says Jack o' the land,
 "O Where oh where?" says everyone.*

"In yonder green bush," says Robin the Bobbin,
 "In yonder green bush," says Richard the Robin,
 "In yonder green bush," says Jack o' the land,
 "In yonder green bush," says everyone.

2. "How'll we eat him?" says Robin the Bobbin,
 "How'll we eat him?" says Richard the Robin,
 "How'll we eat him?" says Jack o' the land,
 "How'll we eat him?" says everyone.

*"With knives and forks," says Robin the Bobbin,
 "With knives and forks," says Richard the Robin,
 "With knives and forks," says Jack o' the land,
 "With knives and forks," says everyone.*

"Who'll come to the dinner?" says Robin the Bobbin,
 "Who'll come to the dinner?" says Richard the Robin,
 "Who'll come to the dinner?" says Jack o' the land,
 "Who'll come to the dinner?" says everyone.

3. "The King and the Queen," says Robin the Bobbin,
 "The King and the Queen," says Richard the Robin,
 "The King and the Queen," says Jack o' the land,
 "The King and the Queen," says everyone.

*"Eyes to the blind," says Robin the Bobbin,
 "Legs to the lame," says Richard the Robin,
 "Luck to the poor," says Jack o' the land,
 "Bones to the dogs," says everyone.*

The wren, the wren, the king of all birds,
 St. Stephen's Day was caught in the furze [gorse],
 Although he is little, his family's great,
 We pray you, good people to give us a treat.

This is a condensed version of the traditional song.
 The song is often performed to accompany the dance.

Activity Ideas:

1. As it is a very fast song, divide the lines between different groups of singers
 e.g. *Group One* could sing the first two lines and *Group Two* sings the last two lines. Everyone could sing the final verse.
2. Add untuned percussion to accentuate the beat
3. Try accompanying the Hunt the Wren dance with the song. NB. The written key for the instrumental version is at higher pitch than the vocal version on CD53.