Hertfordshire Folk Association Summer Festival

MAYPOLE DANCING

1. **Lead On and Barber’s Pole**
   - promenade round pole into place (choose “good” pair to start this)
   - “boy” picks up 2 ribbons (decided beforehand which ribbon), hands one to girl
   - boys step in towards pole 3 paces, right turn
   - girls turn left
   - when music begins girls skip round while boys stand still
   - when girls have been round once, boys skip in opposite direction
   - continue skipping alternately till braid is woven round pole – suggestion 3 times each
   - stop

2. **Unwind Barber’s Pole** (all face opposite direction, with person who danced last with winding up starting the unwinding)

3. **Single Plait**
   - partners face each other – boys turn to right, girls turn to left
   - girls hold ribbons high, boys go under
   - when they meet next person, do opposite (over, under, over, under)
   - arm holding ribbon - held high to go over, low to go under
   - both boys and girls step - out a little when going over, in a little when going under
   - walk first without music – do one move first, stop, then 2nd move
   - arm movement should be rhythmical to achieve an even plait
   - keep rhythm of 2 beats for each move – 1,2 over, 1,2 under etc
   - similar movement to grand chain
   - stop (when back with partner)

4. **Unwind Single Plait** (all face opposite direction, watch ribbons carefully)

5. **Spider’s Web**
   - all stand in circle facing pole
   - boys walk in 2 paces, turn to face partners with backs to pole, hold braid taut over right shoulder, spare length of braid looped loosely in left hand, boys remain stationary
   - each girl walks round back of partner passing right shoulder, round front of partner moving to her left, to face next boy
   - girls walk round new partner in same way
   - always walk forwards, **not like** a doh-si-doh
   - movement not a skip but a bouncy walk in time with music
   - whole move round one partner takes 16 beats (1,2,3,4 to be level with partner’s right shoulder, 1 to 8 to be level with partner again, 1 to 4 to move on to next partner)
   - as girls face new partner, pause for 1 beat and acknowledge this person before starting again
   - girls continue until they have been round each boy, if there is enough braid
6. **Unwind Spider’s Web** – girls turn round and unwind (boys stay in position)

7. **Double Plait**
   - same as for single plait but children in pairs, facing found circle, both holding 2 braids
   - pair 1 faces pair 2 etc

8. **Dancing Off**
   - Leave double plait wound up, drop ribbons
   - dance round pole twice, then dance off (chosen pair first)

**Notes to Remember**
- on festival day music will continue till all dancers are in place, other dancers will wait (winding and unwinding)
- “boys” is only a way of differentiating, which will be used at the festival – call them As and Bs if you prefer
- tension in ribbon very important – not too tight, but not loose, control ribbons by moving hands up and down
- children should look beyond the pole to the person at the other side of the circle, try to keep in position where they are opposite (work this out according to the colour of the ribbons)
- when facing round the circle, hold ribbon with hand nearest pole and gather ribbon in other hand or loop it round hand
- try to keep an even space between dancers – some children skip faster or take bigger steps
- keep close eye on ribbons particularly when unwinding – avoid tangles
- some maypoles need weights to keep them stable (children sitting on them!)