

BLACK NAG  
(English)

Black Nag is one of the best known of the English country dances. Choreographically it follows the design of many of the dances of the Elizabethan period--arranged, perhaps, to fit various ballads and instrumental airs of the time. All these dances have three parts, some with distinct melodies and different rhythms in each section. The rhythm may vary even within the section. An introduction precedes the main figure or pattern of each part. The introductions all seem to follow the same order, namely, (1) Forward and Back a Double, (2) Siding, and (3) Arming.

The English had a custom of naming inns, taverns, villages, etc. after important domestic animals, which may be the explanation for the name of this dance.

Black Nag was collected and notated by Cecil Sharp, with the original transcription located in the archives of the Cecil Sharp House, London, England.

Record: Playford Dances 4, 7 E G 8666, side 2, band 1 (45 rpm).

Formation: Three cpls in a longways formation all facing front of room with W on ptrs R. Cpl 1 is nearest front of room.

	1 2 3 (W)	
Top		Bottom
	1 2 3 (M)	

Meter: 6/8

Steps and Figures: Forward a Double and Back: With R hands joined about shldr height, take 4 light running steps fwd (beg R), and 4 steps bkwd. (A variation is done with 2 light running steps, R, L, fwd, then in place one "three," R-L-R; then bkwd L, R, L-R-L.)

Turn Single: Release hands and turn individually to R (CW) in place with 4 running steps beg R.

Siding: Ptrs face, move Forward a Double, exchanging places by passing L shldrs, on the last step make a half-turn, pivoting inward (CCW) to face ptr. Return to places with a Forward and Double, passing R shldrs. It is helpful for ptrs to maintain eye contact on this figure.

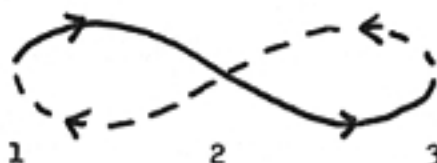
Arming: Arm R - ptrs face, move twd each other with 2 running steps, hook R elbows, and turn CW with 6 steps; move back into orig pos on steps 7 and 8.

Arm L - same action as for Arm R, except ptrs hook L elbows.

Hey For Three: No. 1 face down, No. 2 and 3 up. No. 1 and 2 pass R shldrs while No. 3 pauses slightly to give No. 1 and 2 a chance to move. No. 1 and 3 pass L shldrs while No. 2 continues (see diagram below). No. 2 and 3 pass R shldrs while No. 1 continues. These steps complete the first half

*Continued...*

of the pattern. No. 1 and 3 have changed pos; No. 2 is in orig place. The second half is completed as designated in the diagram; all continue to move in a figure-eight pattern as shown in diagram.

MeasPatternINTRODUCTION

One chord. Acknowledge ptr; face twd the top of the set and join R hands.

FIG I: Forward a Double and Slide

- A 1-4 All move fwd a double. Without turning around, move bwd a double. Use light, springy running steps.  
 5-8 That again: repeat action of A, meas 1-4.
- B<sub>1</sub> 1-2 Cpl 1 face and join both hands. Move with 4 slip steps sdwd to M L, W R. A slip step is a slide step (step to side, close other ft to it with wt and repeat).  
 3-4 Cpl 2 repeat action of No. 1, B<sub>1</sub>, meas 1-2.  
 5-6 Cpl 3 repeat action of No. 1, B<sub>1</sub>, meas 1-2.  
 7-8 All Turn Single.
- B<sub>2</sub> 1-2 Cpl 3 face, join both hands, and with 4 slip steps sdwd (M R, W L) move to orig place.  
 3-4 Cpl 2 repeat action of No. 3, B<sub>2</sub>, meas 1-2.  
 5-6 Cpl 1 repeat action of No. 3, B<sub>2</sub>, meas 1-2.  
 7-8 All Turn Single.

FIG II: Siding and Diagonals

- A 1-4 Ptrs remain facing and "side," using a light running step.  
 5-8 Repeat action of meas 1-4 (Fig II).
- B<sub>1</sub> 1-2 With R shldrs leading and passing back to back, M 1 and W 3 change places with 4 slip steps.  
 3-4 With R shldrs leading, passing back to back, W 1 and M 3 change places with 4 slip steps.  
 5-6 R shldrs leading, passing back to back, M 2 and W 2 change places with 4 slip steps.  
 7-8 All Turn Single.
- B<sub>2</sub> 1-8 Repeat action of B<sub>1</sub>, meas 1-8, all cpls returning to their orig places.

*Continued...*

FIG III: Arm and Hey

- A 1-4 Ptrs remain facing and Arm Right.  
5-8 Ptrs Arm Left.
- B<sub>1</sub> 1-8 All M, using a skipping step, dance the Hey in their line.  
B<sub>2</sub> 1-8 All W, using a skipping step, dance the Hey in their line.  
M Turn Single on the last 4 beats of the music, and all bow to ptr.

Note: When dancers become proficient in dancing the Hey, cpl 3 may begin immediately by turning outward R to make small loop and by having continuous movement.

