**Upton-On-Severn Stick Dance Tune**

I first heard this tune on an early recording of the **Albion Band**, and fell in love with it; what power!! Albion Band having the fame it had back then, that was the name it circulated under, in England and among English music enthusiasts (including but not limited to Morris Dancers and spectators thereof.) Nobody quibbled that the actual name of the little (3000 folks in yr 2005) Worcestershire town from which the tune got its name was actually Upton-*Upon*-Severn. Who would quibble the Albion Band?

As **Salmonberry** in the 1980's was rife with Morris dancers, Morris musicians, and "camp followers" like myself, and in particular had as many as three English-style squeezebox (melodeon and/or concertina) players, the punchy box-powered style of the Albion rendition found fertile ground. We played it, off and on, right on up to our 1991 recording (cassette tape, later a CD on Voyager). We played a medley

Upton on Severn/Tripping Upstairs

The second of these was again a "box-powered" version, this one from a recording by the legendary Norfolk, England player Tony Hall, independently a fave of both melodeon/concertina player/caller Derek Booth, and myself.

Already at that time, other versions by other names became visible to us. **Russell's Jig**, from the mid 19th

century tune collection of NH fiddler **John Taggart**, had been recorded by **The NH Fiddler's Union**, including

**Rod Miller, Randy Miller, and Skip Gorman, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.** (Randy later published Russell's Jig in one of his

superb tunebooks.) Salmonberry chose to include both verions in our recording. The tunes differed sufficiently,

however, to the point that we made a conscious decision to transition cleanly from one to the other, as

would have been done with two unrelated tunes.

Since that time there have been other discoveries relating to the tune's name; I list them with no attempt at documenting their chronology.

Historians and documenters of Morris have discovered that the actual Morris side from Upton-Upon-Severn doesn't dance its stick dance to a jig at all, but in fact has used a variety of common polka-reels.

A nearby town's side, at Chingford, does seem to have used the tune for their stick dance. If one has watched or danced much much Morris, one can certainly "hear" the stick clashing in the "B" part. And well, no offense to the other fine town, but "Chingford Stick Dance" hasn't quite the same ring to it. At least one very distinguished US contra/English musician, **Laurie Andres**, has taken to calling it simply "Stick Jig" at the monthly session he and the other Rhythm Rollers lead.

But wait; there's more . . . **Maud Karpeles** was a noted English collector of tunes of English origin in North America.

I have one of her tune books. One finds, on many Morris-related sites today, that she collected the tune from an 85 yr old fiddler named Hamilton in Vermont in the 1930's, and that it was actually called "**Twin Sisters**"; this fact seems to approach being "received wisdom" today. This seemed fascinating, and I was determined to learn more. I was lucky enough to come upon a link

https://www.vwml.org/search?q=maud%20karpeles%20vermont&is=1.

which displays relevant pages in her tune-collecting books; if you work at it you can actually flip through them at good enough magnification that you can read them. From those pages it looks to me that she was mainly collecting dances, and writing down tunes below them asplayed by this old fiddler below them. She writes "Twin Sisters (country dance) and then writes a tune below it which is plainly a version of the tune we're discussing here. No name is given to the tune. On other pages she lists the descriptions of dances (sequences of moves); for example Chorus Jig, Lady Walpole's Reel, Bricklayer's Hornpipe, Six-Hand Reel, and right in with those, the dance Twin Sisters, which Karpeles compares to another dance: "As in Nancy's Fancy, but chasee joining hands down center and cast. Right and Left". In *my reading* of her notes, at that place and time Karpeles thought of "Twin Sisters" as a dance. If and how it got to be, in her mind, also the name for the tune she collected there with it, is not clear to me.

One does know that although some US dances (eg Chorus Jig) are associated with a "home tune" of the same name, most do not. And from my ECD experience, I believe that closely associating a dance with a tune of the same name remains more common in ECD than in the US. One can speculate that Karpeles, hearing no separate name for the tune, followed (to her) a standard convention and took the tune to have the same name. Or not. I personally remain unconvinced that "Twin Sisters" is a definitive tune name

At this point I see no need to follow the "definitive name" issue further, much less resolve it. You are welcome to Google the name(s) of the tune, Karpeles, Albion Band in any combinations. You can follow my link, above, and look at the pages yourself. Give yourself several hours.

**It is, however, one fine tune, imo.** It is still in my fingers and bellows the way I heard it from Albion Band recording(s) decades ago, so personally I'll go on calling it what they called it when I learned the tune. In any case it would be far from the first great tune to be floating arund with multiple names. I recommend learning the tune and carrying it forward, under whichever name (or none) you choose.

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