

## REEAGHYN DY VANNIN

A Dirk dance collected by Mona Douglas. Solo.

Reeaghyn dy Vannin, the Sword Dance of the Kings of Mann, has a unique place in the Manx dance tradition, for it is said to have been originally part of the ancient Celtic Tanist Ceremony in which the heir to the Manx Throne took arms and was recognised before the people. The tradition is that when the Norse rulers came in they were athletes but not dancers, and so instead of the Crown Prince performing the ceremonial dance himself a Celtic chieftain was appointed to perform it on his behalf, and the clan so honoured were designated King's Dancers. This was the family of Mac Diarmid, the later Manx form having become Kermode, and Jack Kermode of Purt Mooar, from whom the dance was first noted, claimed that it had been handed down in his family from Norse times. The Manx Gaelic names used by Kermode for the various parts of the dance were Cur Arrym (Giving honour), Curteish (Saluting), Combaasal (Encircling), Prowal y Cliwe (Testing the Sword), Giaraghyn (Slashes), Gymmyrkey ayns Oasle (Bearing in honour) and Casherickey (Dedication). The purt y beayll to which it was traditionally performed should by tradition be sung by a close female relative of the dancer, and when first noted it was sung by Jack Kermode's wife after she had offered him a ceremonial beaker of whisky, a little of the drink being poured on the ground.

The principal performer of the dance at present is a descendant of the Kermode family.

Purt y beayll.

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|------------|---|
| A1 Music — | O hi-o y varriaght — O<br>O hi-o, my skian gial! (repeated)                                   |
| B Music —  | She mish cur ooashley, oashley diu<br>O hi-o, my skian gial! (repeated)                       |
| C Music —  | Hi-o, y varriaght O!<br>Hi-o my skian gial!<br>Reeaghyn dy Vannin-O<br>O hi-o, my skian gial! |
| A2 Music — | O hi-o y varriaght O<br>O hi-o my skian gial!<br>Reeaghyn dy Vannin-O<br>O hi-o, O hi O ho!   |

♩ = 69

### Music Movements

The Dirk is carried, vertically, with both hands, at arms length, point upwards.

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|-------------|---|
| A1 Bars 1-8 | 7 M.r.s. in a circle clockwise; on 8th bar 2 low springs with feet crossed (R in front, then L in front) and crouch to place the dirk lengthwise on the ground, the dancer finishing by standing behind the hilt, with feet together and arms folded. |
| B1 Bars 1-8 | Facing the Dirk the whole time, 15 cross back steps round it clockwise, finishing with a 'salute' on the last note.   |

- C1 Bar 1 Spring sideways to the R on to the R foot (1st beat), change with a spring on to the left foot, bringing the L foot slightly behind the R (2nd beat), spring again landing on both feet together (beats 3 and 4).  
 2 Two springs sideways to the left allowing the left foot to take the ground just ahead of the right.  
 3-4 The same as in Bars 1 and 2 reversing the direction and footing.  
 5-8 Repeat bars 1-4 picking up the dirk at the end of the phrase, and holding it as in A1.
- B2 Bars 1-8 The same as in A1. On the last note the dirk is held forward at arms' length and head height, the hilt in the R hand and the point in the L.
- C2 Bar 1 Same as in C1 Bar 1.  
 2 Spring with feet together, then hop left kicking the dirk with right toe; spring with feet together, and hop right kicking the dirk with left toe.  
 3-4 The same as in Bars 1 and 2 reversing the direction and footing.  
 5-8 Repeat bars 1-4. On the last note the dirk is placed on ground as in A1.
- B3 Bars 1-4 8 cross back steps facing the dirk and dancing once round it clockwise.  
 5-8 4 slow 'salutes' picking up the dirk on the last note and holding in the R hand.
- C3 Bar 1 Brandish the dirk above the head with the R hand, at the same time twirling round clockwise.  
 2 Spring with the feet together, then hop on the left foot raising the right knee, and pass the dirk under knee from the right hand to the left.  
 3 The same as in bar 1 but brandish the dirk with the left hand and twirl counter-clockwise.  
 4 The same as in bar 2 but raising the left knee and passing the dirk under it from left hand to right.  
 5-6 The same as in Bars 1 and 2.  
 7-8 The same as in Bars 3 and 4.
- A2 Bars 1-6 The same as in A1.  
 7-8 Moving forwards, spring with feet crossed (right foot in front), then with feet apart, again with feet crossed (R in front), and finally to a kneeling position on the left knee - holding the dirk well forward as in the first step. The music quickens to about double speed on these last two bars.