

# Manx Notes 409 (2019)

HELG YN DREEAN

From P. Kelly,  
Baldrine

Helg yn Dreean.  
Round for any number, usually 8.

Said to have been formerly danced by the Wren Boys before the Wren was buried by torchlight, half the boys being dressed as women. Now danced by men & women together, generally without an actual “bush” or an odd woman but is much better fun with both.

(1) All take hands in ring, swing right foot over left, stamp it, do six running steps clockwise, hop on right foot, swing left over, stamp it, do six running steps counter-clockwise, & bring feet together.

(2) Women run forward to centre, honour the “bush,” turn right & come back, passing men by right shoulders. As women turn away from centre, men go forward, honour, turn left, come back, & take partners for spin.

(3) Reel spin all couples, odd woman fooling around.

(4) Changing to reel step, partners cross each other holding right hands. Then ~~woman go on round circle to right~~ & men ‘pass’ to right, taking hands right & left alternatively with the person next to them. At end of the tune, if more than four couples are dancing, then the ring is formed again & the dancers go straight on from where they are, taking new partners. The odd woman tries to oust another woman, & if she succeeds, the new odd one fools around in the spin next time. Last time through the odd woman seizes the “bush” for the spin, & often this they lead off in reel step, the other couples following.

Mona Douglas, “Folklore Notebook. | Dances. | Tunes, descriptions & notes”. MNHL, MS 09545, Mona Douglas Papers, Box 9.

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It is said that Christmas comes earlier every year and it seems that as regards Hunt the Wren in Port St Mary that too is the case with a post on Facebook dated 19 November about the upcoming event.... Here is the description of the dance as collected by Mona Douglas from John James Kelly of Baldrine.

STEPHEN MILLER, 2019

