THE FSC UNTRY DANCING MANUAL



- 1. Heel & toe OR Serpent
- 2. Alunelul OR Flying Scotsman
- 3. Bridge of Athlone OR Riverside Jig
- 1. Oxo Reel OR Old Swan Gallop
- 5. N. Eggardon Reel OR Waves of Tory Island
- 6. Circassian Circle

Contents	Page
Dance & tunes summary table	2
Introduction	3
Notes for callers	4
Notes for musicians and bands	5
Dances & tunes themselves	6
1. Serpent	8
2. Heel & Toe	10
3. Alunelul	12
4. Flying Scotsman	14
5. Circassian Circle	16
6. I Want to be Near You	18
7. Gay Gordons	20
8. Riverside Jig	22
9. Oh Honey Oh	24
10. Bridge of Athlone	26
11. Oxo Reel	28
12. Cumberland Sq 8	30
13. Old Swan Gallop	32
14. Dashing White Sergeant	34
15. Lucky Seven	36
16. Hole in the Wall	38
17. North Eggardon Reel	40
18. Ducking for Oysters	42
19. Waves of Tory Island	44
20. Black Nag	46
Glossary of terms	48
English traditional country dancing	51
Country dancing music - counts & beats	52
Country dancing music - listening & playing	53
Endnotes & credits	54

Dances & tunes summary table

# Dance name	Page	Difficulty	Formation	Tune type	Name of recorded tune
1 Serpent	8	Easy	Long line	32 bar jig	Lady Bandinscoth's Reel
2 Heel & Toe (clapping)	10	Easy	Couples	16 bar polka	Pat-a-cake Polka
3 Alunelul (stamping)	12	Easy	Circle, no partners	16 bar tune	Alunelul (own tune)
4 Flying Scotsman (train)	14	Easy	Longways sets	32 bar reel	Shropshire Lass
5 Circassian Circle (last dance)	16	Easy	Couples in big circle	32 bar reel	Off She Goes
6 I want to be near you (sung)	18	Moderate	Square sets	Sung	I Want to be Near You (own tune)
7 Gay Gordons	20	Moderate	Couples in a circle	16 bar march	Scotland the Brave
8 Riverside Jig (charging)	22	Moderate	Longways sets	32 bar jig	Seven Stars
9 Oh Honey Oh (sung)	24	Moderate	Square sets	Sung	Oh Honey Oh (own tune)
10 Bridge of Athlone	26	Moderate	Longways sets	48 bar jig	Morgan Rattler
11 Oxo Reel	28	Moderate	Longways sets	32 bar reel	Bonny Kate
12 Cumberland Sq 8 (basket)	30	Moderate	Square sets	64 bar jig	Monaghan Jig
13 Old Swan Gallop	32	Moderate	Sicilian Circle	32 bar reel	La Russe
14 Dashing White Sergeant	34	Moderate	Groups of 3	32 bar march	Dashing White Sergeant
15 Lucky Seven	36	Moderate	Couples in a circle	32 bars	Old Joe Clarke
16 Hole in the Wall (walking)	38	Trickier	Longways sets	16 bar triple hornpipe	Hornpipe No.8 (own tune)
17 N. Eggardon Reel (strip willow)	40	Trickier	Longways sets	32 bar jig	Enrico
18 Ducking for Oysters	42	Trickier	Sicilian circle	32 bar reel	Cuckold Come Out of the Amrey
19 Waves of Tory Island	44	Trickier	Longways sets	48 bar jig	Random Jig
20 Black Nag (walking)	46	Trickier	Sets of 3 couples	24 bar Playford	Black Nag

Difficulty indicator is for children in a field rather than experienced ceilidh dancers on a hard floor. Tune indicates instrumental music, song is sung. Own tune indicates that the tune & dance go together and tunes are not interchangeable.



Introduction

September 2025

In 2025, we have updated FSC's Country Dancing Manual so Country Dancing on camp can be better: more callers, more bands, more people knowing the dances by heart. We've shortened the manual, made it easier for beginner callers, and included sheet music for musicians. Dances should be accompanied by a live band or by recorded music on the FSC website.

We love scratch bands and want to make live music easier to play on FSC. We've included one tune per dance, approx grades 3-5, so FSC musicians can all have have a similar basic repertoire. We'd love to see more instrument variety - we hope pianists can bring melodicas, wind players can bring tin whistles, and that we get more clarinets and brass on camp (look online for the musican's edition including harmony, bass, AND Bb)

We also want to help more people to learn to call: this manual is designed so someone who has never called before can pick it up. We've generally put it in increasing order of difficulty, so you can start with dance 1 and move through dance 20 if you want to do so.

We've gone gender neutral on calling, opting for "reds" and "blues" so that dancers can dress up in their chosen colour or wear coloured ribbons. **R**eds will normally be on the **R**ight of the blues.

We really recommend dancing several times on camp: it's a lot more fun to do a camp ceilidh towards the end if dancers know the dances. You can do a couple of impromptu dances before lunch or dinner, as a vertical activity in clans, or as a 'how to call' workshop. Some camp dancing will suit recorded tunes (often the short sessions), some will suit live music (end of camp ceilidh). When dancers know songs well, there's no need for a caller at all this used to be standard on FSC. And of course it's great if people bring more tunes and dances to camp than just those in this book.

More sheet music, instrument advice, videos and recordings are available on www.fsc.org.uk/glee. Good luck, and enjoy dancing.

The Glee Collective



Notes for callers

The 'caller' directs other people in how to learn a country dance. Clear instructions are helpful, as is creating a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. To call well on FSC, a caller should probably have at least two of these three skills: able to herd people, know the dance, and able to keep in time with the music.

It is helpful and energising (though not compulsory!) to keep the dance in sync with the music. And it's really satisfying for dancers to complete one round of a dance at the right moment in the music. Dancers can miss out a figure so that they can catch up with the music.

Tips for FSC callers:

- Shout out simplified instructions e.g. 'forward and back' just before the dancers get to the relevant bit of the music
- If the dance involves a complex movement, get dancers to practice it on its own first or teach it at Rally as a 'dance move of the day'
- Count movements in the first couple of rounds to help keep inexperienced dancers in time to the music e.g. "forward, 2, 3, 4...."
- Teach dances several times on camp
- Knowing the dance and the tune is helpful practice a specific dance first with a small group before calling it for the whole camp
- Remember to get everyone to thank the band at the end.

How the dances are written

Most country dancing movements are 8 counts long, which translates to 4 bars of music e.g. "RH star, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8"

Most dances are divided into sections, each indicated by a letter & number. The most common is 32 bars, split into A1, A2; B1, B2. These sections line up with the "musical phrases" of the dance tunes. For a 32 bar dance, there's 8 bars or 16 counts of musical phrase A (A1), repeated (A2). Then there's phrase B (B1) which generally repeats (B2). Sometimes the music for B1 & B2 will be a single, long musical phrase rather than a repeated short phrase.

At the end of B2, A1 starts again; and the whole dance repeats, or starts again with a new couple leading. Often it will be played 5-7 times through.



Notes for bands / musicians

It's so much nicer having a live band! We've included sheet music and chords here so FSC musicians can learn the recorded tunes.

A **junk percussion station** next to the band works well: upturned A10 tins & metal tent pegs; lentils in jam jars.

The music

We have chosen specific tunes to go with specific dances. But they're mostly interchangeable with other tunes of the same length.

FSC standard is to have a 4 bar intro by one player, and then other musicians join in at the moment when the actual dancing should start.

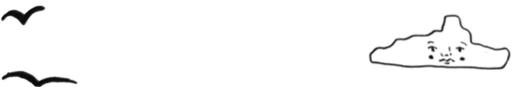
Tips for FSC bands:

- Most dances work best at about 110 beats per minute (BPM). If you
 have a watch, take the pulse of a second, double it, then slow it down a
 little bit. If not, it's the speed of "Another One Bites The Dust"
- It is often good to start a bit slower and gradually speed up, ideally getting faster when the tune comes back round to A1
- The one thing the band must *really* try to avoid is slowing down.
 Strummed guitars and percussion often do this as they are physically more demanding
- FSC callers are likely to be less experienced than in the outside world,
 so they'll need your help more watch the dancers & keep them in time
- It can be helpful to have one of the players in charge of the band to keep time and communicate with the caller, e.g. on delaying or repeating a few bars until everyone's ready to start again
- Band rehearsal at Peafair followed by end-of-camp Ceilidh has worked well for us (kids occupied, music at Peafair, everyone festive)
- It's helpful if musicians can also learn to call
- It can be frustrating to be quiet during the calling rather than rehearsing or discussing the next tune. But it's really important.



More ideas for FSC callers & bands

- Learning to call on FSC is different to the real world: you don't need to be able to read sheet music and being able to herd a group of people may be more important than musicality
- It takes about 10-15 mins to teach each dance and then dance it. So 1 dance if killing time, 2-3 dances before dinner, 6-7 dances for a Ceilidh
- It is helpful to get dancers to clarify they know who they are by putting up hands "couple no.1 raise your hands" or "red lines raise your hands"
- It's easier to flex no. of couples in longways sets when there's a live band as they can adjust the number of times they play the tune. However, it's helpful to have the same number in each set (e.g. a 5-5, not a 4-6)
- It can be fun to just shout out country dancing steps and get people to do them freestyle to the music - as well as a good way to practice & learn. Also works well to funktry dancing music
- Recorded music can be easier in some scenarios (learning to call workshop, doing just one or two quick dances), and it takes fewer staff - so you might do several sessions with recorded and then have a live band for ceilidh
- Callers usually direct the band how many more rounds of the dance to do, if they need to stop, if they need to speed up etc - but this can be particularly hard for new callers (& kids) to do, so band might need to step in
- Kids calling is brilliant but probably good if they can call a dance which has already been done so some adults know it
- A sawn off milk bottle / oil bottle can make a serviceable megaphone
- It's good to mix up dance formations when planning a ceilidh & probably not too many dances which require a specific number of couples in a set
- It's often helpful to do a setlist in advance (which can change) so caller and band know what's planned. There's a sample on the inside front cover
- Ending a Ceilidh with the band surrounded by a circle of dancers for the Circassian Circle is ideal
- As with the songbook the ultimate aim is that this manual should become unnecessary because dancers and musicians will memorise these 20 dances and tunes. It's more fun that way



THE DANCES THEMSELVES





SERPENT

Formation: Holding hands in a line, one leader

Tune: Lady Bandinscoth's Reel

Length: 32 bars

Dance difficulty: Very Easy

Set up: Hold hands in a long line. Leader can change after a few bars.

"A very simple dance, good to start off a ceilidh"

Instructions:

Hold hands in a long line. Step right foot forward, then left foot forward. That's it! Lead the serpent around in a line, going under arches, or into spirals, or just dance around the field in time to the music.

Variations:

- Grapevine: Take two steps forward to the music, then turn and still holding hands, take two steps in the same direction but backwards this time. Repeat.
- Stamping: Dance the serpent, but add an extra stamp in time to the music (the tune we have selected has an obvious stamp space).
- Spiral: Start facing in a large circle, ideally adults and kids alternating (to keep the tension manageable). Leader creates a slow spiral to the centre, where they turn out - at this point everyone starts being face to face as the spiral ravels and then unravels into a large circle with everyone now facing out.



One of the oldest dances in the world, depicted in Egyptian and Greek temples. Now part of Cornwall's modern "Nos Lowen" movement, which emphasises simple dances which don't need a caller.



Lady Bandinscoth's Reel

For 'Serpent' dance









Formation: Partners anywhere on the field

Tune: Pat-a-cake Polka / Sung

Length: 16 bars

Dance difficulty: Easy

Set up: Get a partner, start anywhere in the field.

"A great dance to kick off and get everyone in the mood"

Song lyrics

Heel and toe, heel and toe, gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop Heel and toe, heel and toe, gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop Right right, left left, both both both, knees knees knees And swing! And change partners!

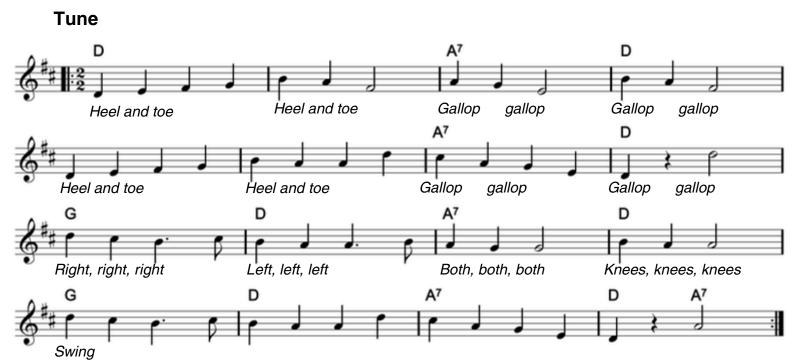
A	Take partner in ballroom hold (ideally) and tap the same side heel and toe on the ground at the same time, twice. Then sideways step four steps together in the same direction. Repeat back in the other direction
В	Clap right hands together 3 times, then left hands together 3 times, then both hands 3 times, then slap your knees 3 times, then swing your partner and change partners

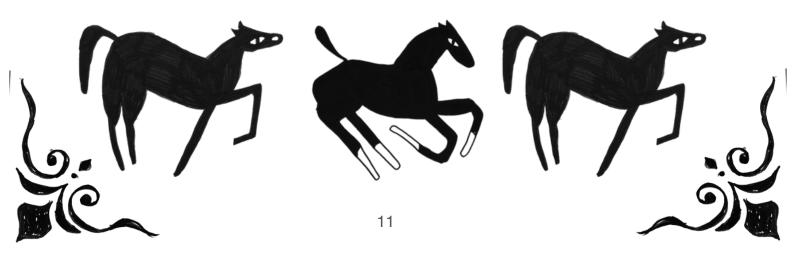
















Formation: Large circle holding hands

Tune: Alunelul Length: 16 bars

Dance difficulty: Easy

Set up: get into a large circle, holding hands. Drop hands before the dance

starts.

"Shows how fun it can be to dance in time with the music"

A1	3 side steps to R, stamp L foot twice 3 side steps to L, stamp R foot twice
A2	Repeat A1
B1	2 steps R, stamp L foot once, 2 steps to L, stamp R once 2 steps R, stamp L foot once, 2 steps to L, stamp R once
B2	1 step R, stamp L, 1 step L, stamp R, 1 step R, stamp L twice 1 step L, stamp R, 1 step R, stamp L, 1 step L, stamp R twice

A Romanian folksong which is taught as part of the school curriculum in the country. The accompanying dance is part of a family of similar dances from the South West Danube Plain of the country. The dance name is pronounced ah-loo-NEH-loo, with a silent L at the end of the word.



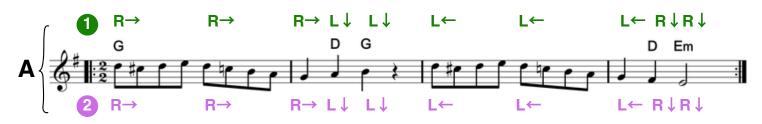


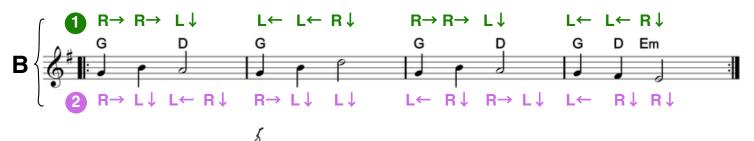


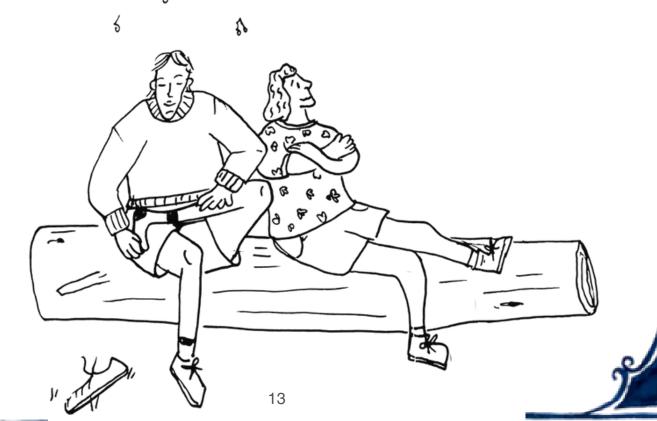


Note: speeds up each time it gets back around to A

Tune









Formation: Longways set (4 couples ideally)

Tune: Shropshire Lass

Length: 32 bars

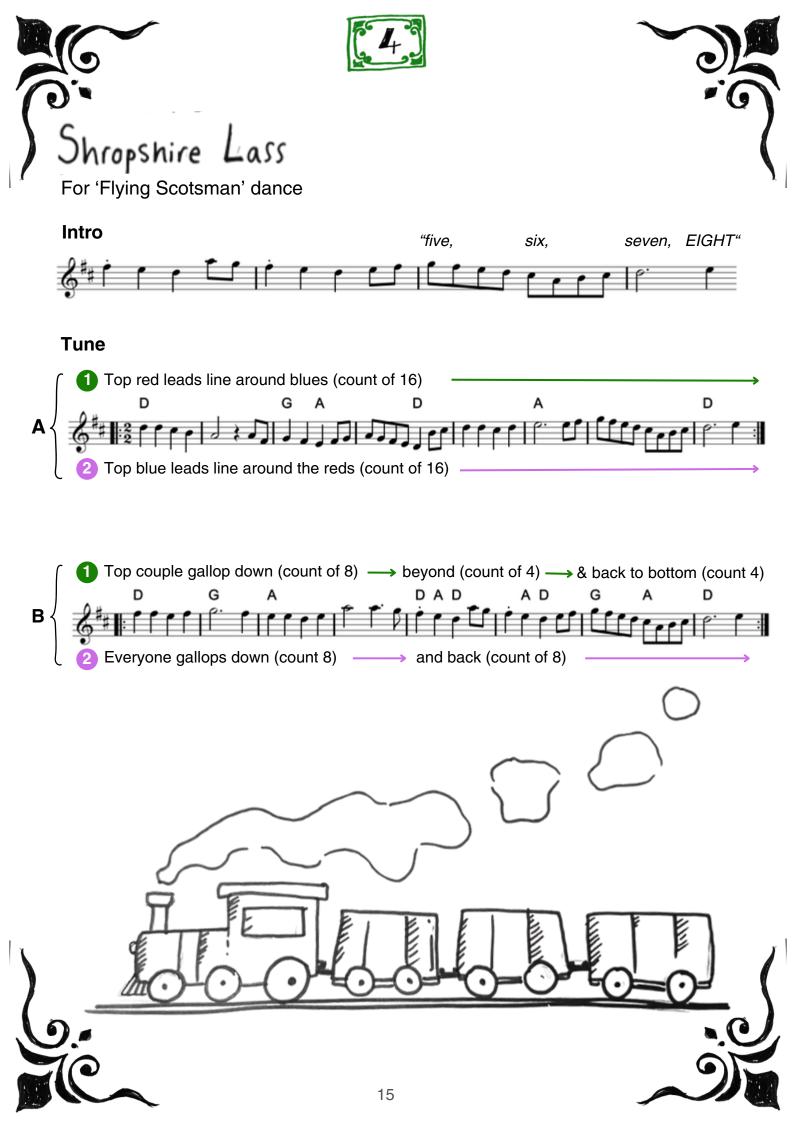
Dance Difficulty: Easy

Set-up: Approx. 4 couples, holding hands along the line, reds facing blues.

"A great dance where everyone can pretend to be a train"

A1	Top red leads the reds around the blues line (count 16) (The train journeys through the hills from Edinburgh to London)
A2	Top blue leads the blues around the red line (count 16) (The train goes from London back to Edinburgh)
B1	First couple holds two hands and gallops down the set and beyond (count 8), then back to bottom of set (count 8) (The train chugs along the tracks)
B2	All couples hold two hands and gallop down (count 8) and back (count 8) (Trees flash past the windows)
(5)	The dance repeats with a new top couple

The Flying Scotsman is a famous express passenger steam locomotive dating from 1863 which ran between Edinburgh and London. The dance was inspired by the train and published in the 1950s - the train inspiration makes it easy to remember and a popular dance.





Formation: Couples in a big circle

Tune: Off She Goes Length: 32 bars

Dance difficulty: Easy

Set up: Everyone facing the centre holding hands, blues with reds on their right (note - being blue is harder than being red).

"This is traditionally the last dance. And, if you've got a band, it's fun to put them in the middle"

A 1	Everyone takes 4 steps forward to the centre (count 4), and back (count 4). Repeat
A2	Reds to the centre, clap (count 4), back to place (count 4). Blues to the centre (count 4), clap, back to next-door-place place (count 4) Blues have switched partners by returning to the place one to their left (or clockwise) i.e. they are now partnered with the red who was previously on their left
B1	Everyone swing new partners (count 16)
B2	Promenade anti-clockwise around circle, (blues on the inside, reds on the outside), reform circle with reds on the right of their new partnership, ready to start again (count 16)

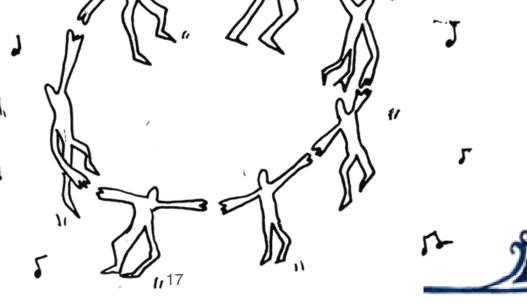
This dance likely appeared in England in the 1800s, when it was popular to use exotic (if unrelated) place names. Circassia is an area between modern day Georgia and Russia and, whilst it did have circle dances, so did many ancient cultures.













I WANT TO BE NEAR YOU (Sing the dance)

Formation: Square set (4 couples)

Tune: Sung

Length: 20 bars

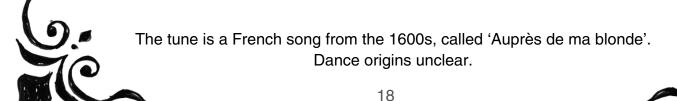
Dance difficulty: Easy

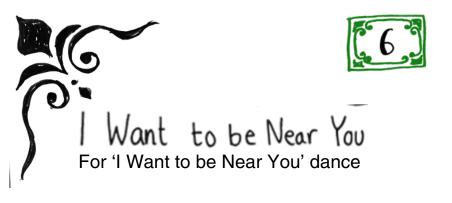
"A good one to do if you've not got a band"

Song lyrics:

First couple separate, go out around the ring
You pass your partner going out
You pass them coming in
You bow to your corner, promenade your own
Singing "I want to be near you
You're the one, the one
I want to be near you, you're the one for me"

A	First couple separate, and each dance around the outside of the set until they get back to place
В	Bow to your corner, then everyone promenades their partner round the ring and back to place
(5)	Dance and song repeat with 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th couples separating, then top couples (1&3), then side couples (2&4) then finally everyone separating. Music needs to go 7x through















Formation: Couples in a circle

Tune: Scotland the Brave

Length: 16 bars

Dance difficulty: Medium

Set up: Couples face anti-clockwise in a large circle, reds on the outside (right), blues on the inside. You have two choices of hold - helpful if the caller just decides.

Traditional hold: Helpful if blues are taller, and they hold L hand with partner's L hand across the front of their body, Blue R hand goes over the back of the Red and holds the Red's R hand on the Red's shoulder.

Crossed arms hold: Cross arms in front of body as if promenading (i.e. hold right to right, and left to left). This hold can be more comfortable for kids and adults, and it allows either person to lead when you switch directions (with trad. hold you rely on the taller person to direct the smaller)

"Relatively slow so good for a break, and lots of people know this tune"

A 1	All walk four steps forward (4 counts), then pivot without letting go of hands so now the blue's left arm is over the red's back and then walk four steps backwards proceeding in the same direction. (4 counts). Repeat back to place (8 counts)
B1	Blue holds red's right hand above their head and walks forward (16 counts) as red spins round under blue's arm, walking forward at the same time – can progress / switch partners here, with red moving forward to the next blue before the dance starts again

The title refers to the Gordon Highlanders, a Scottish unit in the British army, and gay referring to their handsome formal dress. The dance likely dates from the early 20th Century.

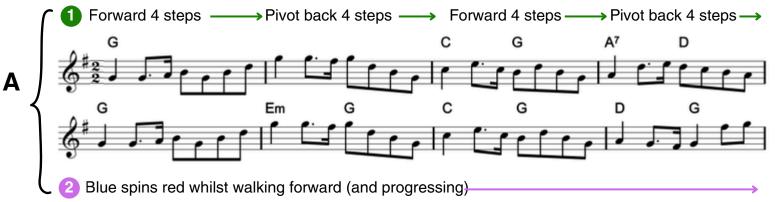


Scotland the Brave

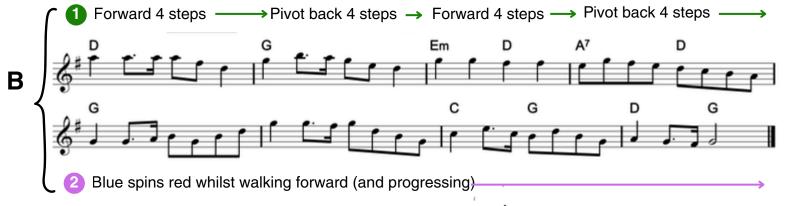
For 'Gay Gordons' dance

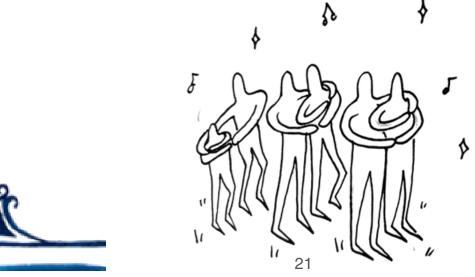


Tune



< Dance repeats >







RIVERSIDE JIG(charge down the rows)

Formation: Longways sets, as many as will

Tune: The Seven Stars

Length: 32 bars

Dance difficulty: Medium

Set up: Long lines facing each other. Dance will be done in sets of two

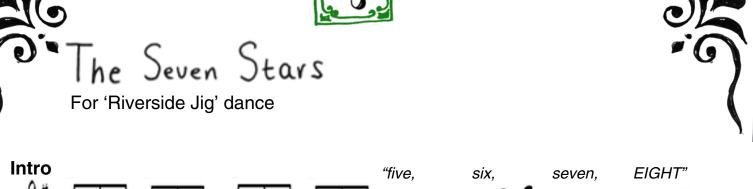
couples, starting at the top.

"A really fun dance as it involves charging and ducking"

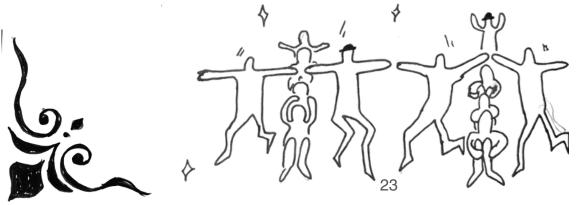
A 1	Forwards (count 4) and back (count 4). Repeat (8 counts)
A2	In each set of two couples, make a RH star (count 8). Then a LH star (count 8)
B1	Do-si-do side in your set along your line (count 8) Do-si-do partner across the set (count 8)
B2	Couple 1 (backs to the band) hold hands and then also each holds one hand of the other couple, to make a line of four people holding hands. This line of four then charges down all the other dancers in the longways set, who have to duck under their arms as they charge (count 16) The top 2 couples then end up at the bottom of the set. You may have time to swing your partner or dance on the spot for a bit if people charge quickly Dance repeats

Devised by two women in the 1980s, this dance is named after Glasgow's Riverside Club, which has a long, narrow dancefloor - hence the full long set.















OH HONEY OH

Formation: 4 couples in a square set

Tune: Sung tune Length: 16 bars

Dance difficulty: Easy



Song lyrics:

You all join hands and you circle the ring
Stop where you are give your partner a swing
Swing your corner behind you
Swing your own if they can come look and find you
Turn by the left with the corner you know
Do-si-do your own
Now you all promenade with the new friend you've made
Singing "Oh honey oh honey oh!"

Set up: 4 couples in a square set, start facing the middle, blues with reds on the right.

A	Circle left 8 steps
В	Swing your partner
С	Swing your corner
D	Swing your partner again
E	Turn your corner with left hand
F	Do-si-do your partner
G	Promenade anti clockwise with your corner, aka your new partner

A popular American self-calling square dance, based on a 1917 song 'Oh Johnny Oh'.











BRIDGE OF ATHLONE

Formation: Longways sets of 5 (or any other number, music goes 5x)

Tune: Morgan Rattler

Length: 48 bars

Dance difficulty: Medium

Set up: Get a partner and get into a longways set of about 5 or 6 couples i.e. two lines facing each other. Each set should be approx same length. One line is reds and one lines is blues in each set, call out "reds are the lines with their backs up the hill" or whatever. Ask reds to put their hands up, and then blues to put their hands up so everyone's clear.

A1	Lines forward (count 4) & back (count 4). Forward (count 4) with blues making arches. Reds pass under and the lines swap places turning around to face each other again (count 4)
A2	Lines forward (count 4) & back (count 4) again, this time reds make arches and blues pass underneath so everyone back to place (count 8)
B1	Couple One hold two hands and gallop down the set (count 8) and back (count 8)
B2	Ones cast off and lead down to the bottom of the set, everyone follows (8 counts). Ones make an arch and everyone else leads their partners up through the arch and back to place (8 counts)
C1	All arch with partners, except Ones. Red One goes up the middle and back down the outside, whilst Blue One goes up the outside and back down the middle (16 counts).
C2	Everyone swing (16 counts)

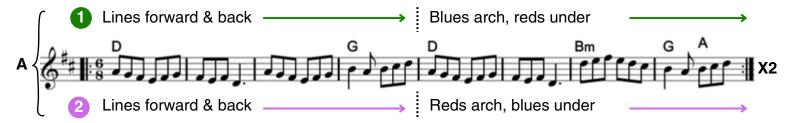


Morgan Rattler

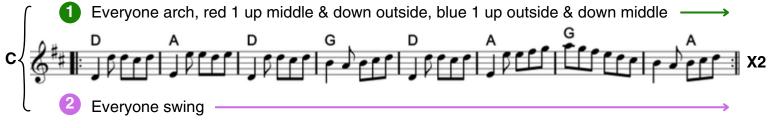
For 'Bridge of Athlone' dance



Tune









The bridge itself was first built in the 11th Century and crosses Ireland's wide River Shannon near the town of Athlone. The dance presumably commemorates this bridge, as the dancers form arches like those on the bridge.



OKO OKO OKO

Formation: Longways 6 couple set (needs to be 6)

Tune: Bonny Kate Length: 32 bars

Dance difficulty: Moderate

Set up: Get a partner and get into longways sets of 6 couples i.e. twelve people in total, in two lines of six each, facing partners across the set.

"Surprisingly satisfying to see the OXO appear when you dance"

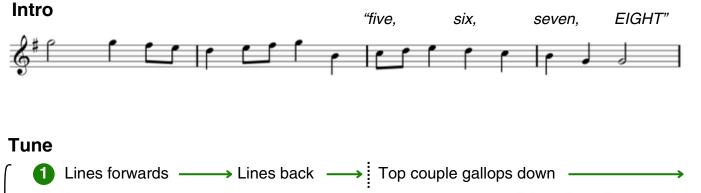
A1	Lines forward (count 4) and back (count 4) Top couple gallop to bottom of set (count 8)
A2	Lines forward (count 4) and back (count 4) New top couple gallop to bottom of set (count 8)
B1	Top 2 couples join hands and circle L&R (making an O) Middle 2 couples star R&L (making an X) Bottom 2 couples circle L&R (making an O) (All 8 counts for each movement in given direction; 16 counts total)
B2	Bottom couple (original 2s) gallop back to top (count 8) All swing (count 8)
(5)	Dance repeats with new top couple (and so different 2 couple sets for OXO)

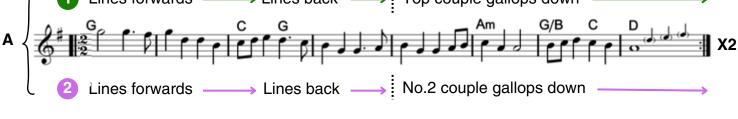
Around since at least the 1960s, this song is so named because the patterns the dancers make form an "O X O" shape. There are many variants.

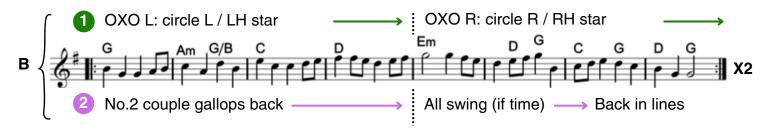


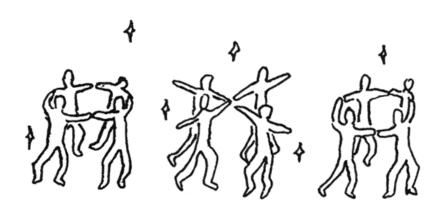


















CUMBERLAND SQUARE EIGHT (Basket)

Formation: Square sets of 4 couples, ideally one big and one small member

Tune: Monaghan Jig

Length: 64 bars

Dance difficulty: Moderate

Set up: Reds on the right of blues. In order to best do the basket, make reds small (ideally kids) and blues large. Start with ballroom hold.

Basket: In groups of four, blues (big) put their arms around the reds waists, and reds put their hands on the blues shoulders. Circle to the left, pivoting on your right foot.

A 1	Ballroom hold. Top couples gallop across (8 counts) and back (8 counts)
A2	Side couples gallop across (8 counts) and back (8 counts)
B1	Top couples RH star (8 counts), LH star (8 counts)
B2	Side couples RH star (8 counts), LH star (8 counts)
C1	Top couples basket left (clockwise) (16 counts)
C2	Side couples basket left (clockwise) (16 counts)
D1	All join hands and circle left (8 counts), circle right (8 counts)
D2	Promenade as couples anti-clockwise back to place (16 counts)







3

Formation: Sicilian Circle (2 couple sets in circle formation)

Tune: New Rigged Ship

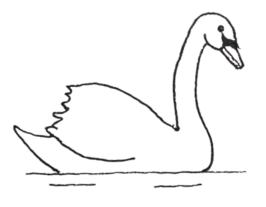
Length: 32 bars

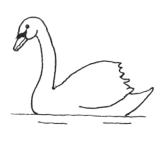
Dance difficulty: Moderate

Set up: Couple facing couple around the room, in a circle. Ones are facing

anti-clockwise, twos are facing clockwise.

A 1	Ones take a ballroom hold, with the "pointy end" towards the twos Twos take a step apart from your partner to make a space! Ones gallop anticlockwise around the circle between all the twos (count 8), then back (count 8)
A2	Ones take a step apart and the twos take a ballroom hold – gallop clockwise around the circle (count 8) and back (count 8)
B1	Right hand star (count 8) and LH star (count 8) in original groups of four (occasionally people don't gallop back far enough and get mixed up)
B2	Face the other couple and join closest hand with partner. Walk forward 4 steps (count 4) and back (count 4), then twos arch and ones go under and get ready to start again (count 8)
(,5)	Dance repeats with new 2 couple sets



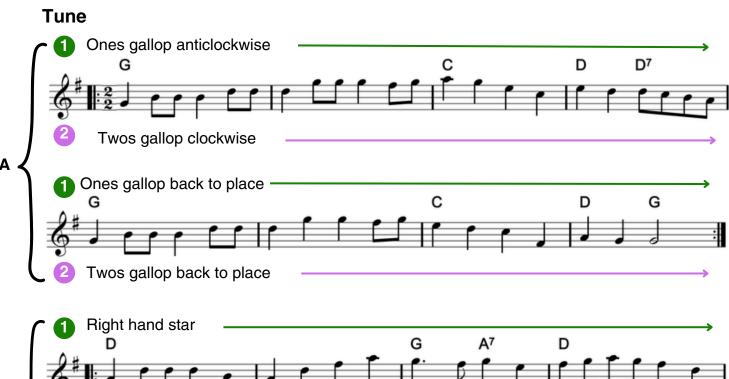


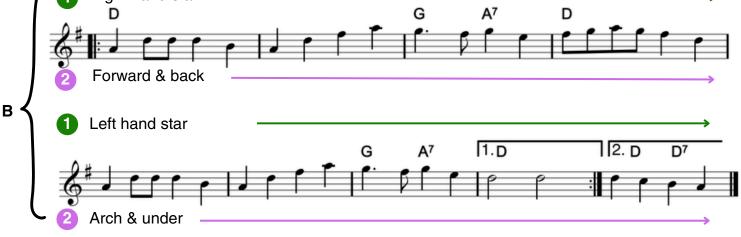


La Russe

For 'Old Swan Gallop' dance













DASHING WHITE SERGEANT

Formation: Groups of 3, two groups in a circle of 6

Tune: Dashing White Sergeant

Length: 32 bars

Dance difficulty: Moderate

Set up: Get into a line of three, and find another group of 3 so you are in a set of six. Then these sets get into a line or into a bigger circle.

"Extremely satisfying for kids to get the 'reel of 3' correct, and the clapping and the stamping is fun too"

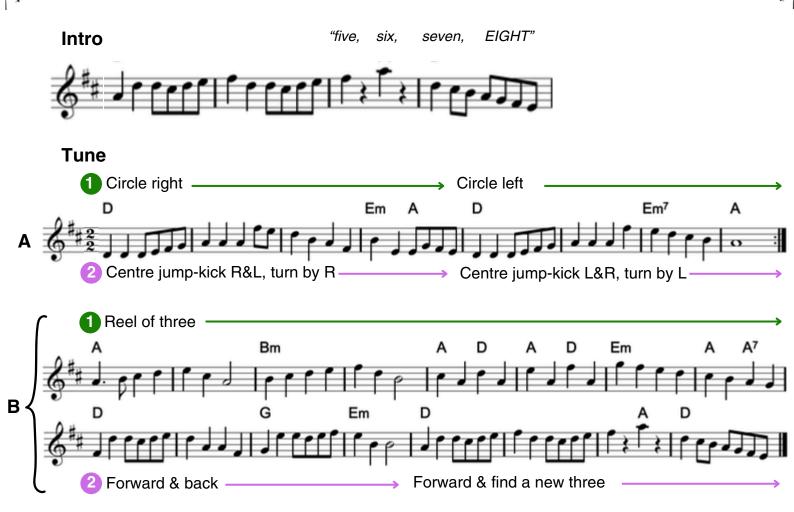
Reel of 3 (see glossary): Each person walks in a figure of 8 in their group of three. Centre person starts, passing right shoulder to right shoulder with the first person they set with (i.e. R partner). See glossary for more detail, it's less complicated to do than to explain!

A1	Circle R (8 steps), circle L (8 steps)
A2	Middle person, face R partner, jump kick R & L then right arm to right arm circle once around (8 counts) Middle person, face L partner, jump-kick R & L then left arm to left arm circle once around (8 counts)
B1	Reel of three: initiated by middle person, who passes R hand partner by the R to start the reel (16 counts)
B2	Hold hands in lines of three. Walk forward 2 steps: clap, clap, walk backwards 2 steps: stamp, stamp, stamp (8 counts) Forward 8 steps to change places, one threesome making arches Find another threesome (8 counts)



Dashing White Sergeant

For 'Dashing White Sergeant' dance



There's an optional song to this tune:

- A1 Now we're here let us all begin So step it out and step it in To the music of the violin We'll dance the hours away
- A2 Pluck the banjo, beat the drum
 We'll dance and sing the whole day long
 Dance it right or dance it wrong
 But dance it anyway
- B1 Katie, Peggy, Sam and Paul Sally, Peter, Jack and all Dance, dance, dance Dance away the hours together
- B2 Dance till dawn is in the sky
 What care you and what care I?
 Hearts a-beating, spirits high
 We'll dance, dance, dance

This dance comes from the tradition of Swedish circle dancing which was popular during Victorian times, and the music dates from 1826. These lyrics were published in 1929 by Hugh Roberton, who also wrote Mairi's Wedding.



Formation: Large circle, in partners, reds on the right

Tune: Old Joe Clark

Length: 32 bars

Dance difficulty: Moderate

Grand Chain (see glossary): Face your partner. Take their right hand and gently pull them towards you, whilst reaching your left hand for the next person. Reds will go one way around the circle, and blues will go the other. You stop on the seventh person you meet (your partner is the first person).

A1	Circle left (8 counts), then circle right (8 counts).
A2	Everyone into the centre and back (8 counts). Repeat (8 counts)
B1	Face your partners and Grand Chain! Start with right hand to your partner, left to the next. (16 counts)
B2	Swing your new partner until the end of the music. (16 counts)

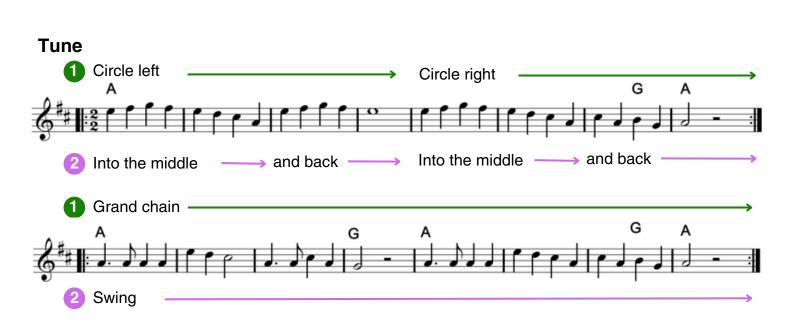
This dance is done to the tune of Old Joe Clarke. If you're singing it, you need to sing two verses and then two choruses to fit with the steps.

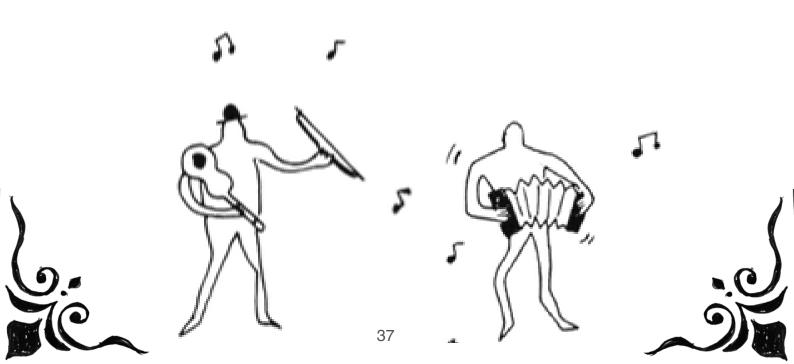














HOLE IN THE WALL

Formation: Longways sets (or in a big circle) for as many as will **Tune:** Hole in the Wall 3:2 Hornpipe (N.B. count of three per bar)

Length: 16 bars

Dance difficulty: Trickier

Set up: Line of reds facing a line of blues; couples in sets of two.

"A lovely walking dance dating from the 1600s which may be suitable for those who are older or who have limited mobility"

A 1	First couple casts off down around the second couple (6 counts), and leads up the centre back to place (6 counts)
A2	Second couple casts off up around the first couple (6 counts), and leads down the centre back to place (6 counts)
B1	First blue and second red change places, facing each other as they do (6 counts). Second blue and first red change places (6 counts)
B2	Everyone holds hands in a circle and circles half way back to places (6 counts) First couple casts down (as second couple takes a step sideways up into their place) and immediately starts again with a new second couple (6 counts)

Notes:

- Count 3 beats to the bar. Figures are for a count of 6.
- Couples sit out a round at the top or bottom and then the second couple will become a new first couple. As with other longways progressions, with an even number of couples this can be danced continually in a circle.

Dating from the 1698 edition of Playford, with the tune, Hornpipe no.8 by Henry Purcell, adapted and published alongside the dance. The 'hole in the wall' refers to the figure where couples cast off up and down. This romantic dance features at the ball in the screenplay "Becoming Jane" about the life of Jane Austen.



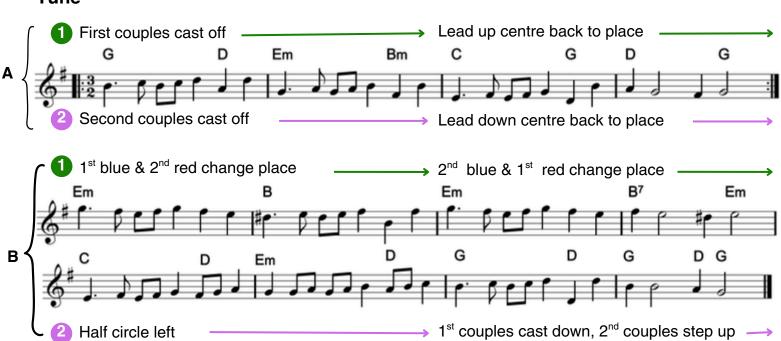




Intro



Tune









NORTH EGGARDON REEL (strip the Willow)

Formation: Longways sets, 4 couples approx

Tune: Enrico Length: 32 bars

Dance difficulty: Trickier

Right to your Partner, Left to the Line!

Set up: Find a partner, get into longways sets, reds facing blues.

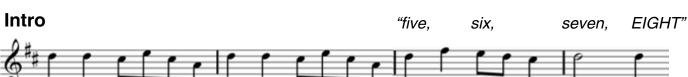
Strip the Willow: ONLY give right arm to partner, left for anyone else. Use an elbowhold. Couple no.1 starts by doing a turn and a half with right arm, then left hand to opposite for a full turn around. Right arm back to partner.. and so on down the set.

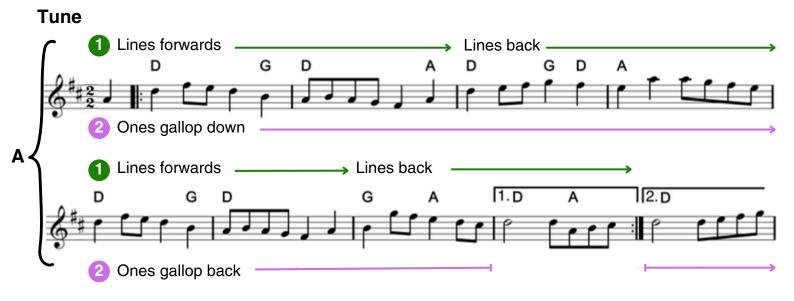
Tell dancers to look carefully at the line of dancers opposite them as they will only be stripping the willow with their partner and their opposites (i.e. not dancing with anyone in their own line). Sets can be more than 4 couples, but it's helpful to have them all the same length esp if using recorded music.

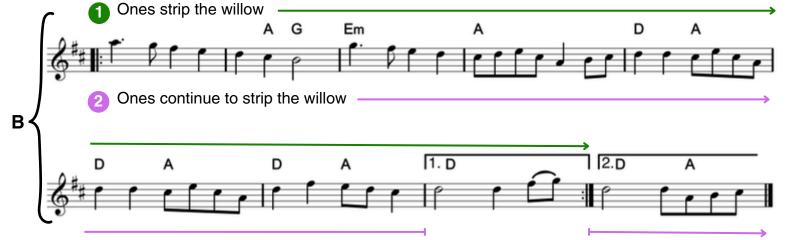
If the willow-stripping (B1&B2) lasts longer than the 32 counts allocated it can carry on through into A1, but the couples higher up the set should recommence the forward-and-back lines in sync with the music. Couples lower down the set can join in at A2 having completed stripping the willow.

A 1	Lines forward (4 counts) and back (4 counts). Repeat.
A2	Ones gallop down (8 counts), ones gallop back (8 counts)
B1	Ones strip the willow. Start by turning partner a round and a half with right hand, and then left hand to opposite for a full turn around, then right hand back to partner and a full circle in the middle of the lines, left hand to opposite and so on down the set. (16 counts)
B2	Ones continue to strip the willow until they get to bottom of the set (an additional 16 counts)









First published in 1734 as a dance called 'Drops of Brandy', this figure is named after the spring tradition of 'stripping the willow', which removed the bark and left the white willow underneath suitable for basket-making and domestic use. The bark could only be stripped when the sap was rising, and this only lasted until the weather warmed up. It was so important that children were given time off school to help.



DUCKING FOR OYSTERS

Formation: 2 couples in a set, sets in a long line or a circle

Tune: Cuckold Come Out of the Amrey

Length: 32 bars

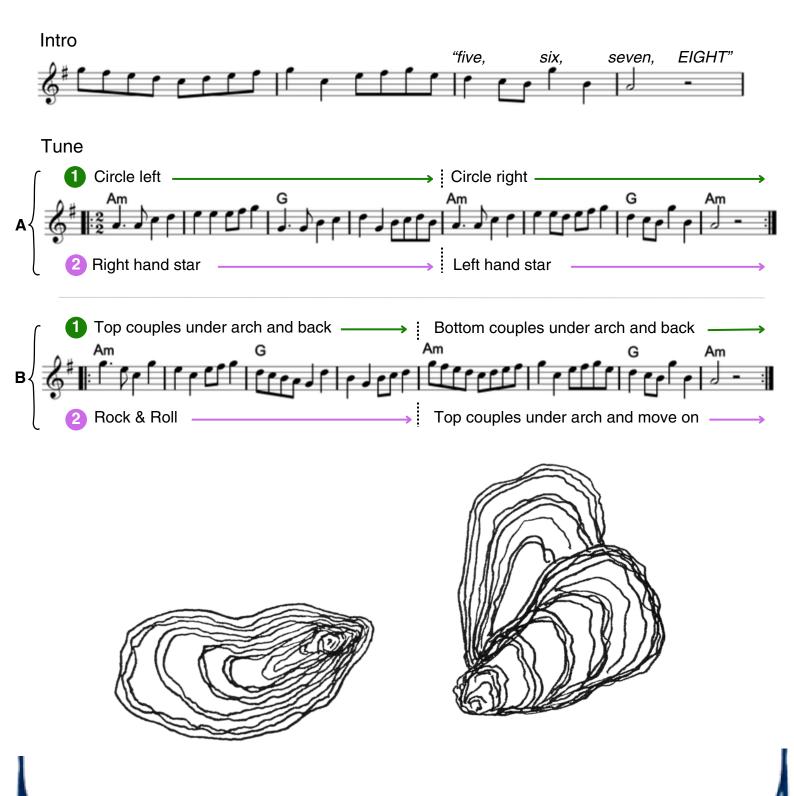
Dance difficulty: Trickier

Set up: Get into sets of 2 couples, if there's enough people do it in a circle - if not, just a longways set will do.

Rock & roll: Top Couple (TC) go under bottom couple's arch, TC turn back to back, lift partner's arm over heads, pull BC through. Once BC are through TC arch (not before) BC turn back to back and pull arms over heads.

A1	Circle left (8 counts), Circle right (8 counts)
A2	Right hand star (8 counts), Left hand star (8 counts)
B1	Holding hands in sets throughout, TC under BC's arch and back (8 counts), then BC under TC's arch and back (8 counts)
B2	Rock and Roll movement (see above) Then BC forms an arch and TC go under arch, let go hands from BC and move on to meet a new couple (16 counts)
(5)	Dance repeats with new 2 couple sets







WAVES OF TORY ISLAND (WAVES)

Formation: Longways sets, 5 couples exactly

Tune: Random Jig Length: 48 bars

Dance difficulty: Trickier

Making the waves: From C1, the top couple (working couple) is at the bottom of the set and face up towards the band. The other four couples face down towards the working couple. Everyone holds hands with their partner. The working couple go up the set by dipping under the first couple they come to, who make an arch with their hand, then the working couple lift their hands to go over the second couple they come to - they progress up the set like this and everyone does the same. Each time a couple gets to the end of a set, they turn around, hold their partner's other hand, and start progressing the other way by dipping (going underneath) the first couple they come to. This whole figure ends with the working couple back at the bottom.

A1	Lines forward (4 counts) & back (4 counts), then Right hand stars (1's with 2's, 3's with 4's) while 5's turn by the R (8 counts)
A2	As A1 with L hand star and L hand turn (16 counts total)
B1	1's gallop down the set and back (16 counts)
B2	1's cast R and L, all others follow (8 counts); top couple form an arch at the bottom of the set and the others lead though to progressed place and face down the set (8 counts)
C1 & C2	Make the waves! Working couple (the old top couple, who are now at bottom of set) face up holding hands, other four couples face down also holding hands. Working couple start a progressive under and over dip and dive. When they get to the top, they turn and go back the other way. Remember: all couples start by dipping underneath from the ends. Reform lines, ready to start again, working couple back at the bottom (32 counts total)





An Irish Ceilidh dance. The waves in this dance represent the waves so frequently seen around the island of Tory off the north coast of Donegal. First published in 'Dances of Donegal' in 1931, it's thought likely to be centuries older.



BLACK NAG (walking dance)

Formation: 3 couple set

Tune: Black Nag

Dance difficulty: Difficult



Note: Each section I, II, III is a full play of the 24 bar music.

Reel of 3 (see glossary): Each person walks in a figure of 8 in their group of three. Centre person starts, turning right to address their right partner, and then passing right shoulder to right shoulder with them.

Turn single: Turn around on your own, 360 degrees.

Section I (first round of the music)

A1 A2	All take partners hand, then take 4 steps forward towards the band (stamp), and back (stamp). Repeat for A2
B1	Face partners: 1's do 4 sideways steps up, then 2's, then 3's. All turn single (i.e. turn around on your own)
B2	3's do 4 sideways steps back, then 2's then 1's, all turn single

Section II (second round of the music)

A 1	All face partners, walk forward to (nearly) touch right shoulders and back
A2	Repeat with left shoulders
B1	Red 1 and Blue 3 change places; then Blue 1 and Red 3 change places; 2's change places; all turn single
B2	Repeat above but so everyone goes back to their original places, all turn single



Section III (third round of the music)

A 1	Partners arm right once round,
A2	Partners arm left once round
B1	Blue hey (reel of 3); as blues finish the reds turn single
B2	Red hey (reel of 3); as reds finish the blues turn single

Black Nag

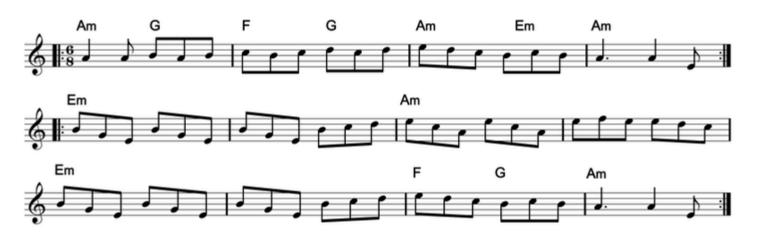
For Black Nag dance



Intro



Tune



Published in the first edition of Playford's seminal 1651 "English Dancing Master", this beautiful stately dance has its own accompanying music. It's a courtly dance, which evokes 17th Century costume dramas.





Glossary (1/2)

Ceilidh

A gaelic word meaning a traditional Scottish or Irish social gathering. Now usually involving dancing. On FSC, it refers to a country dancing party.

Country Dancing

What you do at a Ceilidh. And what this book is all about.

Cast, Cast off, Cast out

Normally: turn out, away from your partner, and go down the outside of the set on your own side.

Corner

The person you're dancing next to who isn't your partner.

Do-si-do or Back-to-back

Pass partner by the right shoulders, cross back to back and return backwards to places passing left shoulders.

Double Cast

Same as the cast above, except you cast off just one side in couples and everyone follows you in couples.

Longways Sets

Two lines, reds and blues, facing partners. Top couple are the one closest the band. Dance will specify how many couples in the set.

Promenade

Couple hold cross hands in front and walk together around the set or circle.

Progression

When one member of the couple moves on to repeat the dance with someone else. This also applies when a couple progresses.



Glossary (2/2)

Reel of 3

An intertwining figure where 3 dancers follow a figure of 8 on the ground. Easier to dance than it looks to watch or to learn from a book. We've found the easiest way to teach it is to find someone who knows it and put them in the no.2 position, then explain to everyone they are walking figure 8s, and that it starts right shoulders passing.

Is also helpful for no. 2s to hold out right hand in front of them (then left hand) to show the others where they are going. We'd recommend demonstration at Rally, and teaching people in slightly smaller groups at some point before dancing the dance.

Sicilian Circle

Essentially a circle of sets of two couples, or to put it another way, a longways set for as many as will, but all bent around into a circle.

Square set for 4 couples

Four couples stand one each on the sides of a square, numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4, anticlockwise from the top of the set (backs to the band). 1's and 3's are top couples, 2's and 4's are side couples.

Star: Right Hand Star or Left Hand Star

Four people (usually) all holding the specified hands to form a star. Lots of holds possible - we recommend hands into middle and grab OR hold the wrist of the person next to you. Walk once around in a circle.

Turn by the R or L

Do a full turn with someone else just R hands holding (or R elbow)

光本光 多米本 非 本兴





English Traditional Country Dancing

History & Context

The first printed description of country dancing was in 1651, John Playford's "The English Dancing Master", featured more than 100 dances each with its own music. These are very similar to the dances we do today, with figures and formations, and names like "Black Nag", and "The Hole in the Wall". They would largely have been created by "dancing masters", itinerant musicians who would travel from village to village teaching and collecting dances.

But many elements involved in courtly dances dated from much earlier, we just lack written evidence. It is believed that folk dances done in local villages started to influence the aristocracy during the 1400s, and we know that Elizabeth I (1558-1603) enjoyed Country Dancing - with its sets, formations, and music - in her court, and that it was also popular across Europe at a similar time. Beethoven and Mozart wrote dances in the folk style, and they eventually crossed the Atlantic to become American line dances: still informal dances with a social purpose, but danced to different music.

Today, English Country Dancing is a social folk dance, with a focus on both individual and group structured movements and formations. Whilst it is usual these days to have a "caller" to explain and remind dancers of the figures, it is not needed if you practice the dances often enough. Historically on FSC dances were done every day before dinner, and callers were often superfluous.

The dances we do on FSC can be hundreds of years old or designed in the last decade - and we encourage you to make up your own! For example, we made up North Eggardon Reel at the farm of that name after testing a slightly different version which didn't work as well.

We just suggest you make sure it fits in time to the counts of the music and give it a go! The easiest way to do this will be to do something to a standard 32 bar tune of A1, A2, B1, B2 form.



Country Dancing Music

Beats and counting

The subdivision of rhythms within each bar (or "time signature") is what defines the different types of tunes are called: reel (2:2), jig (6:8), hornpipe (2:2), triple hornpipe (3:2), march (2:4), waltz (3:4), polka (2:2) etc. These are often interchangeable for dancing purposes (apart from waltz tunes which only work with waltzes). The most important thing is that the number of bars match the dance. So a dance requiring a 32 bar reel can also be danced to a 32 bar jig, but not to a 48 bar reel.

Counting numbers of bars can be confusing because of the different subdivisions of the bars in different types of tunes. Generally it is more natural to count in beats. There are generally two instinctive beats to each bar, which means there are 16 instinctive beats to each section of the dance. So A1 will be 16 beats, A2 /, B1 / B2 also each 16 beats.

For calling purposes it is clearer to call in counts of 8, so the 16 beats of each section are made up of two figures of eight counts each For example:

"Circle Left, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and Circle Right, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8"

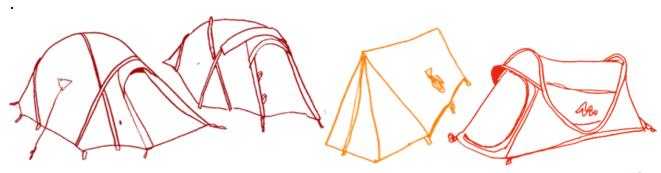
Often you will need to call the next figure in place of the number 8. For example:

"Right hand

Star, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, left hand Star, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, now do si

Do, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and swing your

Partner, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8"





Country Dancing Music (& our recordings)

Notes for listening & playing

Country dancing music is intentionally repetitive, because the same melody is played for each "repetition" of the dance elements, often as each new couple starts the dance. So in a given 3-5 minute dance, you might have 5-7 repetitions of the same melody.

To keep it interesting and help the dancers, musicians often vary the detail of what they are playing on each repetition.

Some of our recordings illustrate examples of this:

- > Tunes might speed up (Alunelul, Monaghan's Jig)
- > Some add different musical instruments, building the sound up gradually (Hole in the Wall) or play the same instrument in different ways (Alunelul)
- > Musicians might add a harmony line above or below to the melody, or vary the tune through improvisation (Random Jig, I Want to be Near You)
- > Some switch into a completely different tune (Circassian Circle, which starts with *Off She Goes*, and then goes into *New Rigged Ship*, before returning to *Off She Goes*)

Other suggestions for how musicians can mix it up:

- > On the 5th or 6th time round it can be fun to drop down a bit in intensity so you can build up (*crescendo*) back into playing really loud when you get back round to the A part for the final rounds
- > Percussion and guitars can start with a single hit or strummed chord at the start of every second bar (count of four) for the first time round the tune, and then become progressively more complex on each repetition
- > Playing the same tune and switching to a higher key can really lift the dancers this is quite tricky though!



Endword & Credits

In Spring 2025, we got given a box of FSC archive Glee papers from the 1960s. As we read through the documents and spoke to elders in our organisation, it became obvious that Country Dancing used to be a much bigger part of Glee, with live musicians and daily dancing on most camps, and children knowing the dances without the need for a caller.

We spoke to others who agreed that improving Country Dancing on camp could bring fun and energy to FSC, and that we could treat it as a skill which could be acquired. Our purpose in creating this updated manual, which we tested in the field, is to make it easier for people to call, dance and play on camp. We hope that children can learn how fun it is to dance in time with the music, and that we get more callers, more bands, and more people who know the dances by heart.

We hope you enjoy this guide and the music, and have hours of happy dancing.

Jon Boden & Emily Kerr, with the 2025 Glee Collective

Credits:

Dances: Emily Kerr, Jon Boden (2025), Lorna Kennedy (2005). With thanks to contributions from Pippa Sandford, Joe Buirski, Sophie Meekings, William Raichura, and Adam Price

Illustrations: Sylvie Hosking, Amelia Mazet **Arrangements and scores**: Jon Boden

Text and typesetting: Emily Kerr

2025 Glee Collective: Amelia Mazet, Esther Weisselberg, Jude Costley, Lois Feld, Niamh

McQuail, Sylvie Hosking

Music:

Track 15, 2025. Jo (Woodling, fiddle), Alice (Woodling, fiddle), Jess (Trailseeker, cello), Joe Buirski (banjo), Simon Glenister (percussion), Alex Hurt (banjo), Emily Kerr (clarinet), Jon Boden (fiddle)

Tracks 6, 9, recorded by Carlos Val Mas, 2025. Anna Moore (fiddle), Joe Martin (fiddle), Sam Astley (guitar), Ben Donaldson (guitar, fiddle)

Track 11, 2025. Jackie Boden (melodeon), Jon Boden (guitar), Will Bridge (fiddle)

Track 12, 16, 2025. Jon Boden (all instruments)

Tracks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20 recorded by Jack Sloan, 2005. Tim van Eyken (melodeon), Lindsey Kennedy (harmonium), Benji Kirkpatrick (guitar, bouzouki), Jon Boden (fiddle, concertina, guitar)

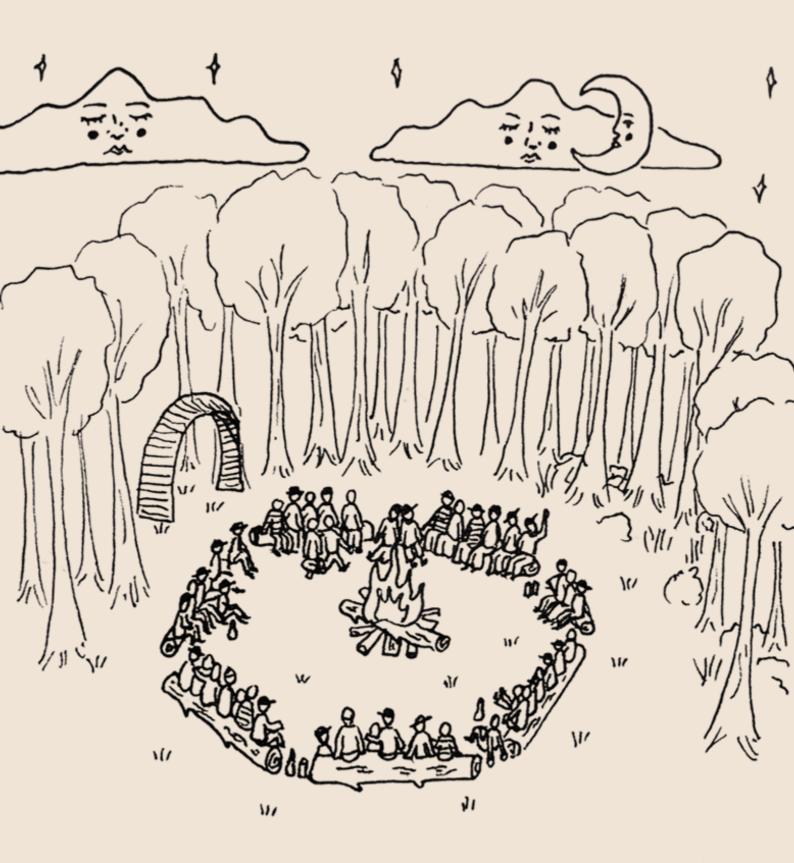




Band in the middle of Circassian Circle to close the ceilidh at Craft Camp 2025



scores, and how-to videos



BLUE SKIES!