

# SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING

A Few Facts and "Figures" by Marianne Taylor

BASIC STEPS - All done with feet (and knees) turned out, and weight on the balls of the feet.

## QUICKTIME (reels, jigs, hornpipes)

1. Skip-change-of-step (for traveling and one-hand turns)  
Like an elongated polka step: Hop L, step fwd R, close L to R (L instep closes to R heel), step fwd again R. Repeat with opp ftwk.

Timing: Reel: hop (ct &); step (ct 1); close (ct 2); step (ct 3); pause (ct 4).

Jig: hop (ct 6); step (ct 1); close (ct 3); step (ct 4).

2. Pas-de-bas (or pas-de-basque) (for setting and two-hand turns)

Spring onto R in place, step L (L heel at R instep), step R again in place, pause, with free ft extended low, diag fwd. Repeat with opp ftwk.

Timing: As in skip-change, but omit hop.

3. Slipping step (for circles)

Step side L, close R heel to L heel; repeat in same direction, two to a bar of music. Usually done 4 bars to left, closing on last step, and then repeated to right.

## STRATHSPEY TIME

1. Traveling strathspey (traveling and all turns)  
With L knee bent, step fwd R (ct 1); close L instep to R heel (ct 2); step fwd again R (ct 3); hop slightly on R, bringing L slowly fwd past R leg (ct 4). Repeat with opp ftwk.

2. Setting step - common schottische (for setting)

Same as traveling step, except: move directly to R or L side, closing behind on ct 2, and lifting free ft low in back of standing (hopping) leg on ct 4.

## ARMS/HANDS

Arms are relaxed at sides except when "handing," when they are taken at shldr height. One-hand turns are done with "hand-shake" grip, not thumb grip, and with firm arms!

## STYLE NOTES

Carriage is straight, tall; extensions of the leg show straight knees, extended feet and toes. There is a lot of eye contact, and courtesy and helpfulness are essential. Good phrasing - being in the right place at the right time - is more important than personal style. Most of all, this is social dancing - and the people in your set are more important than the dance you're doing! Please be kind!

SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING (cont'd)NOW FOR THE FIGURES

ALLEMANDE: A figure of progression. Two (or more) couples begin in center of set, facing up, hands held in promenade position. Just before the phrase begins, joined right hands are raised over woman's head to above her right shoulder.

Bar 1: 1st couple dance forward diagonally to right; 2nd couple does the same.

Bar 2: 1st couple turns  $1/4$  left, moving just a little toward men's side of the dance; 2nd couple moves forward to stay behind them.

Bar 3: 1st couple dance across to men's side and turn to face down; 2nd couple follow.

Bar 4: 1st couple dance down the men's side to 2nd place, still facing down; 2nd couple turn to face down in 1st place.

Bar 5: Both couples turn  $1/4$  left to face the center of the set.

Bar 6: Both couples dance to center of the set, men turning their partners under both hands to the left to face them till close together.

Bars 7 and 8: Releasing hands, both couples retire two steps to own sides of the dance, having changed places.

CAST: This is a movement up or down the set on the outside: to cast down the dancer turns toward the music to begin; to cast up, the turn begins away from the music - in other words, always the long way. The dance directions will specify up or down, how far, and for how many bars.

CORNER FIGURES: Note that for the dancing couple, having moved into 2nd place, first corners are right diagonal opposites, 2nd corners are left diagonal opposites.

CORNER, PARTNER TURNS: Dancing couple turn first corners by R hands, partner in the center by the L hands  $1\ 1/4$ , second corners by R hands and (usually) cross to own sides, giving L hands to partner. (8 bars, 2 bars to each hand).

SET AND TURN CORNERS, AND REELS FOR THREE: Dancing couple, back to back in the center, set to first corners and turn with two hands (4 bars); to end back to back again in center; they set to second corners and turn with two hands (4 bars) - this is only a  $3/4$  turn, so that they end between corners, facing first corner again. They then dance a reel for three with their corners, giving L shoulder to first corner to begin. At the end of 6 bars, corners are back in places (no long turns) and on Bars 7-8 the dancing couple cross to their own sides, giving R hand in passing.

HANDS ACROSS (wheels): Four dancers give R hands in center (to diagonal opposite person) as they dance 4 traveling steps CW, turning in on 4th step; they give L hands across to return CCW, releasing hands to dance into place. Variations in timing and numbers can occur; dance directions will specify.

SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING (cont'd)

LADIES' CHAIN: (Each man begins with a woman on his right). Two women pass by R hands (2 bars) while men move to right, beginning to describe a small CCW circle; each man turns the woman coming toward him by L hands 1/2 turn (2 bars); on bars 5-8 repeat to original places, men continuing their CCW circles.

POUSSETTE: (quicktime) A figure of progression. Two couples face partners in center of the set, both hands joined, elbows bent and firm. With 8 pas-de-bas steps they change places with the other couple, moving in this pattern: 1. Away from the center; 2. 1/4 turn CW; 3. Up or down the set; 4. 1/4 turn CW; 5. Into the center; 6. 1/2 turn CW; 7,8. Releasing hands, fall back to own sides of the dance.

PROMENADE: Two or more couples begin in center, facing up the dance, hands joined R in R, L in L with partner. All begin by dancing forward right diagonal, then first couple turns left to lead across and down the men's side of the dance (4 bars); on Bar 5 the first couple turns left again to center to lead up into original places, all separating from partners on Bar 8 to dance out to the sides. This ending may vary according to the dance, the directions will specify.

REELS FOR FOUR: On the sides, across or diagonally across the dance, 4 in line. Center dancers usually face the ends and begin by giving R shoulders, passing L shoulders in the middle. (Usually 8 bars, or 4 for half reel).

REELS FOR THREE: On the sides or across the dance, a figure of 8 for three people simultaneously, in 6 or 8 bars. The dancing couple usually begin by giving L shoulder to first corner, or R shoulder to second corner. Dance directions will specify!

RIGHTS AND LEFTS: In 8 bars, each dancer moves around a square formed by two couples, giving R hand to opposite, L to neighbor, R again to opposite and L to neighbor. Each passing usually takes two traveling steps, and the last passing requires a "long turn" (continue facing the last person passed until back in original place).