

Virtual Lesson 1/4/2020

Warm up: A fun one here **The Happy Warmup** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRCYJzIm5go>

See the same sequence repeated 4 times facing a different direction each time. In bars 9-16 You can practice your step cross step from the stepping up we did last week.

Start the first time very gently, then increase intensity until you're really marching out the last time.

I think we should do this when we next meet together!

Skip change practice.

- Basic rhythm – two on the right, two on the left gallop
- Try to start each step with a hop – alternate left and right
- Start in 1st position – heels together, toes turned out
- Try to feel 3rd position – back instep closes to front heel
- Now look up ahead, not at your feet.

This week, practice dancing down for 4 bars then changing direction to come back. If you're with someone in your household, take RH in RH for lead down and back.

Then practice the same, but turning the other way to come back. You use one shoulder to lead down the middle and back, but you will use the other shoulder to cast for 4 bars and back (or when you dance as the other sex). So it's important to be able to do both, as in this next dance.

Formation practice: rights and lefts

This is the "round the square" formation, 8 bars to get back to where you came from, dancing 2 bars to each side of the square.

Easy to do if you put down markers, maybe a shoe at each corner of the square, then walk the track in time to the music. Please don't fall over the shoes! Then in skip change. Then thinking about whether you would have to curve out or in to pass a dancer coming the other way (1^M and 2L will have to curve out to start the movement). Practice bringing the hands up as you pass the imaginary other person, and smile at them! Hands back at your sides in each corner.

Probably best to do this exercise when you think you're alone in the house. Or you can watch <https://www.rscds.org/learn/steps-techniques/formations>

The Highland Fair <https://my.strathspey.org/dd/dance/2910/>

Starts with an opportunity to show off your skip change in the cast. In the Louisville video you can see the first couple keeping level with each other as they cast. Some good covering in the turns as well.

Then the lead down – note that 2c has to dance up the sides to follow the 1s down – again covering. And 2s lead back to 1st place and that's your progression.

The dance finishes with R&L as we've practiced.

Note this is a 2 couple dance, and in the video you can see the progression, 1s will dance it 3 times in total to get to the bottom (we often shorten the sets in class)

Step practice – strathspey

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykCf1wmYETk> Here's some strathspey travelling and setting for you, nice strong yet elegant steps, watch how they make the transition from travelling to setting and vice versa. When they are shown from behind you see how at the hop in the setting the other foot points to the floor before beginning the next step. Have a go in front of the mirror.

There is strathspey step retiring in the dance we're going to do, so think about a good straight stretch behind when practicing.

Formation: Turn corners and partner (corner, partner, corner, partner)

We haven't done this at Richmond this year, so will be new to some of you.

We know that if 1c is in second place, facing the opposite side, then 1st corner is diagonally to the R, 2nd corner diagonally to the L.

Now imagine you're 1L or 1m, back to back facing 1st corner in a diagonal line. Turn 1st corner RH all the way round, partner LH 1 ¼ time with the LH, turn 2nd corner RH all round for 2 bars then partner LH to your own side. Better still, practice with someone in your household, if you can find a suitable victim.

Each turn is 2 bars long. So the LH turn between the corners needs strong steps and tension in the arm to turn, while the last LH turn is much gentler. It's easier to learn this move in strathspey time first.

Dance: Strathglass House<https://my.strathspey.org/dd/dance/6349/>

I like the Zoltan Graff video, mainly because it's a mixed set so easier to follow.

Dance starts with 1,2,3c set and circle half way to the L. See how 1M and 3L anticipate the circle in their second set. And again to complete the movement (we're conditioned to circle R after L, but this is to the L both times.

1c have a long way to go in bars 9-16, with strong steps in a huge set. Interestingly they cast into 2nd place and advance to each other before turning their backs to face 1st corner.

The CPCP is almost as you practiced it. You'll have spotted that the last turn is a full turn, with 1s curving into 2nd place on opposite sides.

All 3 couples advance for 2 retire for 2 (you practiced this above) then a lovely 4 bar turn for the 1s, 2 hands, held quite wide, 1 ½ times to curve into 2nd place ready to start again.

Pretty dance, hope you like it.

So we're going to face CPCP in reel time now. Play the video below or other reel time music and imagine doing those turns in your skip change (and if you have a partner, have a go for real). It's quite fast, but the important thing is to know where you're going so you don't waste bars working it out. Thinking ahead really helps with this

Dance Maids of Currie <https://my.strathspey.org/dd/dance/4092/>

I'm really pleased to see a beginners class featuring as a video, after the demonstration videos we've been looking at. All abilities can enjoy the dance.

The dance starts with 1c dancing a fig8 on their own sides, passing 2c by the R to start. So they are parallel with each other, 1L dancing behind 2L to start.

1s with 2s advance and retire (we looked at that in last week's lesson) and 4 hand across all the way round. Lovely shake hand hold on the diagonal but I'd like to see the hands anchored together in the middle by the thumb of the lower hands.

We have a reminder of Highland Fair in the lead down and back which brings the 2s to 1st place, but this time 1L passes in front of her partner and they finish back to back facing 1st corner for CPCP to finish the dance. 2nd Man has to get back to 1st place and be ready to turn RH as 1st corner.

You can see that it's a bit of a scramble to get round, especially as 1c have to be ready to start the fig8 from 2nd place straight afterwards. Having more tension in the upper arm and keeping the hands up would help this.

Something to finish How about Loch Ness Monster <https://my.strathspey.org/dd/dance/3870/>

You know this well. Enjoy, then have a hot cross bun. Well done!