

Schorsch Lusky's Strathspey

A 32-bar strathspey for two couples in a four-couple longwise set

BARS	DESCRIPTION
1–4	1st and 2nd couples set, then cross over giving right hands.
5–8	1st and 2nd couples set and link.
9–16	2nd and 1st couples dance »four hands round with crossing turns« as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9–10 2nd and 1st couples join hands and dance two steps to the left for $\frac{3}{8}$ of a circle, then drop hands and face clockwise. 11–12 1st man and 2nd woman, giving right hands, turn almost completely round ($\frac{7}{8}$) to change places while 1st woman and 2nd man continue for another $\frac{3}{8}$ of a circle (Fig. 1). [1st and 2nd couples are now back in second and first places, respectively, but on own sides.] 13–14 1st woman and 2nd man, giving right hands, turn almost completely round ($\frac{7}{8}$) to change places while 1st man and 2nd woman continue for another $\frac{3}{8}$ of a circle (Fig. 2). 15–16 Both couples join hands again and dance two steps to the left for another $\frac{3}{8}$ of a circle. 2nd and 1st couples finish in the center with nearer hands joined, 2nd couple facing down and 1st couple facing up.
17–20	2nd and 1st couples set to the person they are facing, then change places with that person giving right hands.
21–24	1st couple (facing down) and 2nd couple (facing up) set and link to finish in the sidelines in original places.
25–32	1st and 2nd couples dance the knot.

Repeat, having passed a couple.

For Hans-Georg »Schorsch« (pronounced »shorsh«) Lusky, on the occasion of his »significant« birthday in March, 2011. Where would the Frankfurt Scottish Country Dance Club be without him? – The »four hands round with crossing turns« formation in bars 9–16 is adapted from Heinz Duewell's dance, Farewell to Miller's Forest, published in Tighes Hill Dances.

Devised by Anselm Lingnau, Frankfurt Scottish Country Dance Club, March 2011.

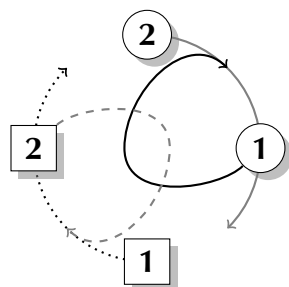


Fig. 1: Bars 11–12

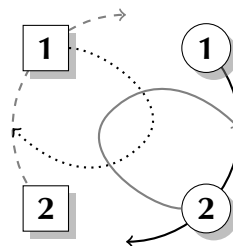


Fig. 2: Bars 13–14



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Teaching Notes

The »four hands round with crossing turns« formation may seem daunting at first sight but it is really not that difficult once people have got the hang of it. I usually explain it in terms of alternating between a »square« (dancers are in 1st and 2nd places in the set) and a »diamond« (dancers are either in the middle between 1st and 2nd place in the sidelines or else in the center of the set in 1st or 2nd place, as in Fig. 1).

First, with 1st and 2nd couples starting from opposite sides and having swapped places, practice dancing four hands round in a circle such that dancers progress $\frac{3}{8}$ of a circle in two bars. In effect, the set changes from a »square« formation (at the start of bar 1 of the phrase) to a »diamond« formation (at the end of bar 2), all dancers having progressed by $1\frac{1}{2}$ places around the circle. During the next two bars, the set moves back to a »square« formation, all dancers having progressed another $1\frac{1}{2}$ places etc. At the end, after 8 bars, dancers are back in a »square« formation, having progressed half-way round the set (this does not happen in the dance but it is still good practice). It is very important to hit these positions with precision every two bars, »square« to »diamond« to »square« to »diamond« to »square«.

Once the class has mastered this, it is time to put the turns in. After two bars, 1st man and 2nd woman are on the points of the »diamond«, in their own sidelines, and it is they who dance the first turn while the other two dancers continue on their circle. Without confusing dancers about the $\frac{7}{8}$ turns, the important observation is that it is the leading man and woman in the circle who turn and join the circle again *behind* the other man or woman.

Similarly, on bars 5–6 of the phrase, the other two dancers (who are now the leading man and woman) turn – starting from diagonally opposite corners of the »square« – and again slot in *behind* the following man or woman, respectively. (This is why in the dance, the circle goes only once round: Every dancer dances $\frac{3}{8}$ of a circle during the first two bars and another $\frac{3}{8}$ of a circle during the final two bars, while either doing a $\frac{7}{8}$ turn on bars 3–4 and a $\frac{3}{8}$ progression round the circle on 5–6 or vice versa, for a total of $\frac{16}{8}$ or 2 – but you don't tend to notice the turn as a second lap round the circle and therefore it seems that the circle goes only once round. You could also consider doing the $\frac{7}{8}$ turn as »losing« $\frac{1}{8}$ of a turn, which would bring the total to $3 \times \frac{3}{8} - \frac{1}{8} = \frac{8}{8} = 1$.)

At the very end, ensure that dancers come out of the last two bars with nearer hands joined facing the other couple up and down the dance.

Incidentally, bars 17–24 are essentially bars 1–8 turned 90 degrees on the side.