

Westaire Court

English country dance, longways, duple minor, proper
Tune, "Westaire Court," by Debbie Jackson

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A1 1-8 Interlocking cross-over Morris heys:

1s

2s

With "new" neighbors:

1-2 cross **down** the center

separate **up** the outside

3-4 cast **up** the outside

cross **down** the center


With "old" neighbors:

5-6 cross **up** the center

separate **down** the outside

7-8 cast **down** the outside

cross **up** the center

- A2 1-2 Set to Neighbor 
3-8 Neighbors handy-hand turn 1_ (1s inside center, 2s separating up outside; W by L, M by R)
- B1 1-8 Rights and Lefts: 4 changes, starting with Partner (leisurely, 2-bars per change)
- B2 1-4 Partner 2-hand turn once around, open facing new Neighbors
5-8 Circle left once around with new Neighbors

Teaching Notes

For teaching purposes, the Morris heys in A1 can also be broken up into two larger pieces instead of four, i.e. two double _-figure 8s, the first in the current minor set and the second in the "old" minor set. The 1s can think of their role as a _-figure 8 down through the 2s, followed by a _-figure 8 up through their "old" 2s. The 2s do the inverse of this, as they would in two double _-figure 8s. At the end of all this, dancers are back home, facing their current neighbor.

Dancers near the top and the bottom of the set will find it helpful to dance with ghost couples. Similarly, those standing out will want to be ready to dance with "old" neighbors as needed.

These heys are not actually as difficult as they sound, and I've been pleasantly surprised by how easily dancers learn them. The difficulty comes when 1s become 2s and vice-versa. Somehow, the inverse role is unintuitive. One astute dancer suggested she had trouble in the new role until she figured out the 1s sequence: down-up-up-down. Until they figure it out, new 1s seem to want to go down the center and then continue going down the outside. I have watched very experienced dancers do this with great confidence, even in the face of oncoming traffic. The same likely happens at the bottom for new 2s.

Though I do not explicitly mention it, it is useful to realize that the path a dancer traces while doing this hey is simply an oval. If this question arises, I respond with a simple "yes."

The transition from the hand turn to the rights and lefts at the end of A2 can be very satisfying for the 1s if the 2s help provide some umph as the 1s turn to face across to their partner.

I like the tune a tempo just a bit quicker than is recorded on Childgrove's CD, "Wanderlust." Let the setting in B1 guide you as you set the tempo.

Background

The dance was inspired by Debbie Jackson's great tune of the same name and by Marge Cramton and Ray Bantle, for whom both the tune and the dance are dedicated. All three are pillars of the Michigan dance community, and are among the nicest people I know. Their shared generousness of spirit is a role model for me.