

6. Children of the Briton

A Strathspey for 3 couple longwise sets, 3x32 bars

Clann na Breattanich - Ken Martlew

The image shows three staves of musical notation for a Strathspey. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are: C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. Chords below are: Emin, G, D, Emin, Bmin, G, D. The second staff has notes: C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. Chords below are: Emin, Bmin, Amin, Emin, B7, Emin, Emin, G, C, G. There are repeat signs at measures 8 and 24. The third staff has notes: C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. Chords below are: G, D, G, C, Amin, B7, Amin, Emin/G, B7, Emin. There are repeat signs at measures 16 and 32.

- 1-8 "Pairs Meet":** 1st couple face down, 2nd up, 3rd across.
 1-4 Pairs set, half-turn giving right hands, and face again.
 5-8 *Repeat* giving left hands; but 2nd couple end still facing down, a little to the right of their own places: 1st couple end facing in, 3rd couple facing up (1st and 3rd men make polite turns).
- 9-16 Snowball Chain**, begun by 1st couple, 1 step to each hand (8 steps and hands for 1st couple).
 9 1st couple cross giving right hands, while 2nd couple loop left into their own places facing up.
 10 1st couple (improper) and 2nd couple pass giving left hands.
 11 2nd couple cross, while 1st couple (improper) and 3rd couple pass, all giving right hands.
 12 2nd couple (improper) and 3rd couple pass, while 1st couple cross, all giving left hands.
 13-16 The chain continues (near the end, 1st and 2nd couples pass through their starting places). At the end, 2nd and 1st men face out. (1st couple are now between their corners).
- 17-24 Ladies' Chain** for 2nd and 1st couples.
 17-22 Women cross giving right hands, while men cast left into the women's places. Partners turn with left hands. Women cross back giving right hands, while men cast left into the women's places.
 23-24 3rd couple turn with right hands half-way, while 2nd and 1st women turn their cross partners with left hands. 1st couple end the turn immediately above 3rd couple, facing their 1st corners. (1st woman turns 2nd man and faces him; 1st man turns 2nd woman and faces 3rd woman).
- 25-32 "Briton's Reels" and half hands-across**
 25-30 "Briton's Reels" - see opposite page. 3rd couple end with right hands joined, 1st couple above them.
 31-32 1st and 3rd couples right hands-across half-way.

Finish 2,3,1, ready to repeat from new positions.

“Briton's Reels” (Bars 25-30):

This figure is odd in four ways and needs to be tackled first, by walking it four times, adding an oddity each time. It is a version of six-bar reels of three with corners, so 1st couple begin between their corners (in 2nd place improper), facing their 1st corners

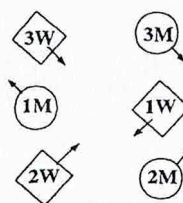
(A) *Parallel reels.* 1st woman and 2nd man begin passing left shoulders, 1st man and 3rd woman right shoulders. (At the top and bottom of each reel, dancers face the men's side of the room.) - *Fig 1*

(B) *Evenly-spaced reels:* In (A) 1st couple began by following their 1st corners, 2nd corners by following 1st couple, each a quarter of the figure-eight track behind. 1st corners began by following 2nd corners, half the track behind. In *Briton's Reels*, the dancers are evenly spaced, a third of the track apart, from beginning to end. 1st couple are already in position, on the centre points of their reels. 1st corners: think of the quarter track, one-and-a-half steps, which will lead them to the centre point, and advance along the track half a step. 2nd corners: retire along the track half a step. The three dancers are now evenly spaced, two steps apart. Two points along the track are then empty: one a step behind 1st corner, the other a step in front of 2nd corner.

This gives a symmetrical pattern of five points, and each dancer will reach a new point on every step. Partners cannot keep level. - *Fig. 2 (1st man's steps)*

(C) *Overlapping reels:* The two reels are brought so close together that they overlap. First, corners return to the sidelines, as for (A). Now the dancers are brought into position, in much the same way as this happens in the dance. 3rd couple turn by the right half-way (they should divide the width of the set into thirds). 1st couple advance towards each other until they are directly above 3rd couple. Ignoring the other reel, the three dancers in each reel are in the same relative positions as in (B). The spacing and timing prevent any possibility of collisions. Dancers are paired between the reels, the members of a pair crossing into the loops of each other's reels, alternately at the top and the bottom. The pairs are: 3rd couple; 1st & 2nd women; and 1st & 2nd men.

(D) *Hands between reels:* As they pass, each pair gives nearer hands: left in the top half of the reels, right in the bottom half. 3rd couple begin and end with right hands joined. - *Fig. 3 (dots show the empty points, dotted lines the sidelines of the set)*



Top
Fig. 1

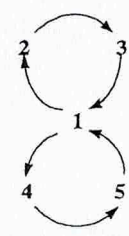


Fig. 2

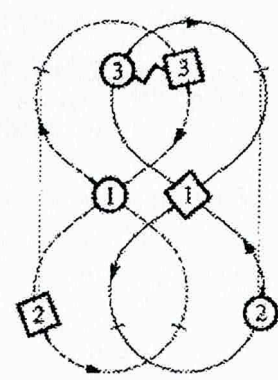


Fig.3

Stages (A) to (C) can now be forgotten!

The Children of the Briton, Clann na Breattanich, are the Clan Galbraith, who originated in the Lennox, the fertile lands around Loch Lomond.

The Dance was devised by Ian C J Galbraith in 1972.

Tune: “Clann na Breattanich” by Ken Martlew.