

SNAKES AND LADDERS

A 32 bar Strathspey for 4 couples in a longwise set.

1-4 All take hands and advance and retire.

5-8 1C and 2C, 3C and 4C set and link. 1M and 4W finish facing out.

9-12 All dance a modified LS snake pass (perhaps "Python Pass"). To wit, describing for first and second couples, the other couples are analogous, but dance up the ladies side. 2C follow the track of 1C (keeping it square-ish to define the figure although it makes sense for the trailing couples to dance more inside of the set), and 1L following 1M, 1M dances down the men's side, outside of the 3C and 4C, across below 4th place, across to 4th ladies position, up one place on the ladies side and then across to 3M's place and face out. At the end of bar 12 1C will be in 3rd place and 2C in 4th; with 3C in first place and 4C in second nd.

13-16 Repeat the modified snake pass but with the right shoulder, and this time 1C dance up.

17-24 Reels of four in the sides, 1C giving RS to 2C, and 4C right shoulder to 3C.

25-28 1C, 4C turn LH $1\frac{1}{2}$ times.

29-32 1C, 3C turn RH once.

Notes Devised 8/4/2020, whilst at home in Lockdown for Covid-19, and following a long discussion on the Snake Pass movement on the Strathspey mailing list. Recommended tune is Donald Maclean's Farewell to Oban by Archibald McNiell and a good recording is for the lead tune of "Leaving Benbecula" in the "Craigievar Dances" by Nicol McLaren and The Glencraig Scottish Dance Band. Acceptable alternative tune is Miss Janet Laing's Strathspey by Nan Main, and David's Cunningham's recording for Book 22 is a good recording. Else choose a traditional Strathspey which is steady and has well-defined 4 bar phrases.

Teaching Notes Having now taught this dance I moved it from the beginning of the book to late in the book. The central figure seems hard for people

to visualize, and requires strong steps. This makes the dance quite fragile. Fortunately, the can “catch up” in the reels. I would practice the figures for all couples. Also the dancers must ensure that they finish the reels by the end of bar 24 before the $1\frac{1}{2}$ turns.