

Emerging from Loch Down

A 32 bar strathspey for three couples in a four couple longwise set.

Loch Down, which features naturally rising bubbles due to geothermal activity, was little known until recently due to its very self-isolated, but airy and well ventilated location. A dip in the water can present challenges as there are strong cross and side currents, known to swimmers as lateral flow tests. It is best visited alone or in small numbers, avoiding too much face to face contact, as mixing of large numbers of men and women in Loch Down can provoke polygamous chain reactions (PCRs)!

This dance is dedicated to Martina Mueller-Franz who inspired the title (and consequently the dance) with a serendipitous typo ("lockdown" to "lochdown") in an email she sent me as the pandemic restrictions were being eased. We owe her many thanks. Firstly for regularly providing information to complete and correct the strathspey database. And secondly for the large number of Scottish Country Dance videos she has made over the years at many events and uploaded to her youtube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/c/strathspey64/videos>).

Bars Description

- 1-8 **Polygamous Chain.** This is a Ladies' Chain but with mixed couples. 1st woman and 2nd man turn three quarters right hand to opposite sides as their partners dance up or down the sides. Then they half turn left hand on the sides. Repeat from new places to end in the original order.
- 9-16 **Cross and Side Currents.** All three couples dance set and link for three couples twice ending on opposite sides in the order 3,2,1.
- 17-20 **Avoiding Contact.** All dance back to back with their partner.
- 21-24 **Bubbles.** 3rd couple, at the top, cast off two places and then half turn giving both hands. Meanwhile 2nd and 1st couples, giving both hands, turn once moving up one place, then half turn to the sides. All end on own sides in the order 2,1,3.
- 25-32 **The Loch.** All three couples circle six hands round to the left and back.

Music

- Suggested tune: Miss Betsy Robertson (Traditional).
- Suitable recording: Set of Strathspeys 8x32 (Ian Robertson and Muriel Johnstone: Robertson - a musical heritage).

Notes

- The bubbles figure is a completely mistaken memory of a similar concept in the dance Bubbles in the Pond by Katherine Nealley.
- The Mixed Chain (here cheekily renamed as PCR) occurs in several dances. The dancing pair, 1st woman and 2nd man, spend six bars turning the two opposite gender dancers.
- The Polymerase Chain Reaction is a clever reuse of our own cellular genetic machinery. It was invented by Kary Mullis who was awarded the 1993 Nobel Prize for Chemistry.
- In the original version 3rd couple crossed right hand in bars 23-24.