

Enigma

A 32 bar strathspey for three couples in a longwise set to commemorate the work of Hugh Foss, along with Alan Turing and others, at Bletchley Park during the 2nd World War. Devised in response to a suggestion from Judith Hanson in discussions during the interval at the 2019 Richmond Spring Dance.

The Enigma Machine had three coding wheels to scramble messages to a ciphered form or to decipher encoded messages. These are represented here by hands across, circles and turning with both hands.

Cryptographic literature often uses a few stock characters to illustrate problems. Alice and Bob are the main actors who hope to exchange secret messages without them being intercepted or decrypted by Eve, the eavesdropper. Here 1st woman and 2nd man are Alice and Bob while 3rd woman is Eve. Bars 1-8 and 9-16 represent encryption and decryption with Alice and Bob exchanging places as Eve tries to get close to Bob. The final progression is suitably scrambled with all changing partners. Alice and Bob end up together for the repeat.

Bars Description

- 1-4 1st woman and 2nd man change places giving right hands while 3rd woman casts up as 2nd woman steps down. Then 2nd man and 3rd woman pass each other right shoulder on the sides as 1st woman and 3rd man pass left shoulder.
- 5-8 3rd man, 2nd man, 1st woman and 2nd woman (in the bottom two places) dance left hands across one and a quarter times ending on the sides. 1st woman and 3rd woman are in exchanged places, all others are back in original places.
- 9-12 1st woman and 2nd man change places giving left hands while 3rd woman casts off as 2nd woman steps up. Then 1st couple pass each other right shoulder on the sides as 3rd woman and 2nd man pass left shoulder.
- 13-16 1st and 2nd couples circle four hands round one and a quarter round to the left so that all are now back in original places.
- 17-20 All dance a modified set and link for three couples. All set on the sides, those with left hand free coming into the centre. Then 2nd couple and those with right hand free (1st woman and 3rd man) cast clockwise to the ends as usual. Meanwhile 1st man and 3rd woman turn with the left hand to end in the centre facing up or down to the ends.
For teaching purposes it may be fun to refer to this figure as Set and Cryptolink.
- 21-24 The three men at the top and three women at the bottom dance right hands across. 1st man and 3rd woman end on the diagonal facing their 2nd corner positions which are occupied by 2nd man and 2nd woman respectively. 3rd man and 1st woman end in 1st and 3rd places on their own sides.
- 25-28 2nd man, 1st man, 3rd woman and 2nd woman dance half a right shoulder diagonal reel of four. 1st man and 3rd woman end passing right shoulders to own sides. The men are now in the order 3,1,2 and the women in the order 2,3,1.
- 29-32 All turn their new partners once round with both hands.

Music

- Suggested tune: Cate Gray (James Gray).
- Suitable recording: Cate's Conundrum (J Gray & S Petrov: Opus Dance - Tweeddale).