

The House Keys of Lisbon

A 32 bar strathspey for three couples in a triangular set.

The title was inspired by a BBC news article about a Portuguese law allowing descendants of Jews expelled in the 15th and 16th centuries to return and claim citizenship. Apparently a few families who took refuge in Istanbul still have keys to the houses in Lisbon that they were forced to leave centuries ago. These keys have been passed down for generations as family heirlooms. For more details see https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/1dt-sh/Turning_Portuguese.

Those keen on symbolism can imagine the six dancers starting at the points of a Star of David and that the hands across and turns represent keys in locks.

This dance also provides an opportunity to thank several people that I know in Lisbon: firstly Adriana Duarte for organising the Curia weekends; also Isabel Monteiro and Isabel Neves for devising lovely dances; and Barbara Gray, Joana Ferreira, Roger Picken and Sue Willdig for running the Carcavelos, Lapa and Telheiras SCD groups.

Bars Description

- 1-4 All three men dance left hands across back to place.
- 5-8 All set and link.
- 9-12 All three women dance left hands across back to their partner's place.
- 13-16 All set and link back to original places but the women stay facing out.
- 17-20 All dance four bars of Schiehallion reels, passing left shoulder in the centre, and end with the women facing out again, having progressed one place anticlockwise.
- 21-24 Giving left hands, all turn their corner once round and face their partner. Then, giving both hands, all turn their partner once round and open out to form a circle.
- 25-32 All circle six hands round to the left and back. The progressed order is 2,3,1.

Music

- Suggested tune: Da Slockit Light (Tom Anderson). This was written as a lament for the lights of houses in Shetland being extinguished as people moved away. It seemed appropriate for this dance.
- Suitable recording: Da Slockit Light (Chris, Julie & Nick Dewhurst: Short & Sweet).