

# Beckett's Crossing

devised by Chris Kermiet

This is a progressive contra dance. I'll explain: As well as progressing up and down the set, you'll also be progressing from one set to another across the hall. In this way you'll get to dance with darn-near everyone in the hall. This dance works best if there are 4 or 5 (or 6) even contra lines. It's also critical that each line has the same number of dancers. Twelve or fourteen couples in each set is ideal. This dance is impossibly complicated and confusing if there are extra couples at the end of a set, or a shorter set on one side of the hall. Try hard to get all the sets even. (If you have to do this with uneven numbers, let a set on one side of the hall be two couples shorter. Don't have extra couples at the end of any set.) Since you'll be progressing across the hall, the sets will have to be spread evenly down the length of the hall.

Once you have your sets organized, then you have to explain the rules.

Rule 1: On the double pass through, you will pass straight through two couples, the couple you are now facing plus a couple from the set next to you. This will put you in a new set.

Rule 2: Whenever you end up facing a wall, you'll automatically wheel as a couple (or California twirl) to face back in. This will happen on the sets on either side of the hall during the double pass through.

After explaining this, it's good to walk through just the double pass through a couple of times, so that everyone gets the hang of it. Then walk the dance through a couple of times.

Then explain to the dancers that you're going to change the dance half-way through. Here's the reason: since this is a double progression (with the diagonal right and left through and the right and left through straight across the hall), there will be one couple in the near right hand corner of the hall, and one couple in the far left hand corner of the hall, who won't progress. Everyone else will come to visit them and dance with them. Which is a fine and sociable thing, except that you would like those two couples to get the opportunity to travel across to the other side of the hall also. The way to do this is to switch the last two figures in B2. Then two couples in the other two corners will be stuck for a while. Be sure to warn the dancers way in advance (maybe during the partner swing) when you're about to change the dance. As in Beckett's Reel, a moderate New England tempo (and tune) is best for this dance.

Here's the dance:

*4 or 5 contra lines of the same length in Beckett formation*

*Moderate tempo 32-bar reel*

A1: With your corner, allemand left & partner swing (16).

Your corner is the lady next to you along your line. You will have the same corner most of the time, but will switch in the corners of the hall.

A2: Ladies chain (16).

Over and back. The courtesy turn is a good idea here, too.

B1: Double pass through (8);

See Rules 1 and 2 above.

Long lines, forward and back  
(8).

B2: On the left diagonal, right and  
left through (8);

Straight across the set, right  
and left through (8).

You will be facing a new couple  
across the set for this figure.

At the ends of the set, if you are not  
facing someone on the left  
diagonal, just wait there for 8  
counts. *This is very important.*

You will be facing a new couple  
across the set for this figure.

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