

Beckett's Reel

I believe it's good to go back and do some of the more traditional ^{**see footnote*} New England contras at our dances. Many of the older contras are great dances. And it would be a shame if we lost touch with this part of our dance heritage. I frequently try to program one of them when I call a dance. So I thought I should include one in this book, too. The one I've chosen is Beckett's Reel (*). I'm also including one of my own variations. [...] The basic progression in Beckett's Reel is often confusing. The diagonal right and left through, followed by the right and left through with the new couple across the set, is disorienting for some dancers. Therefore, I recommend that you teach it carefully, and that you use a moderate New England tempo for this dance. With a fast tempo, it becomes frantic. Also, the dance is not forgiving at all if someone makes a mistake. I'd recommend walking through it twice. Make sure all the new dancers are not in the same set.

Beckett's formation: couple facing couple across the set.

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

A2: Ladies chain (16).

B1: On the left diagonal, right and left through (8);

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

B2: Left hand star (8); And a right hand star the other way back (8).

Moderate tempo 32-bar reel

If you, make a long line up and down the hall, your corner is the lady next to you. At the ends of the set, your corner is across from you. You will have the same corner throughout the dance.

For the ladies chain over & back, a courtesy turn, rather than a twirl, is a good idea here, as it helps everyone to be facing on the diagonal for the next 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.

With this same couple you just did the right and left through with.

* Anything becomes "traditional" if it sticks around long enough. But everything was originally created by someone. Beckett's Reel was written by Herbie Gaudreau in the 1950's.



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