

“John McDouall Stuart”

Written by John Short
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Formation

The formation is a longways set of three couples.

Stepping

The entire dance is in strathspey time and uses strathspey stepping.

Music

The music required is a 3 x 32 bar strathspey played at a speed of approx 30 bars per minute.

Movements

1. Note that the mirror reels of three on the sides take 6 bars.
2. “Advance and Retire on the Diagonals” means that two couples advance toward a point in the centre of the set (1 bar) and retire back to the point where they started the movement (1 bar). This movement represents a St. Andrews Cross.

Background

This dance was written to celebrate the achievements of Scottish-born explorer John McDouall Stuart, the first to cross Australia from south to north through central Australia. The Stuart Highway approximately follows his route from Adelaide to Darwin.

Stuart left Adelaide six times on expeditions aiming to cross the continent and solve the riddle of what lay in central Australia. In 1862 on his sixth expedition he succeeded and for the first and last time, saw the northern sea.

His return from this last expedition was less than triumphal. He nearly died and the hardships and accidents of that journey left him debilitated and crippled for the rest of his life.

Based on his successful transcontinental crossing, the South Australian government petitioned the British Parliament to be given Northern Australia (now known as the Northern Territory) which theoretically belonged to New South Wales. They were successful and with the stroke of a pen (and no cost) South Australia gained a northern sea front and 1.35 million square kilometres. The same South Australian government refused to give the ailing Stuart, now too sick to work, a pension. A destitute Stuart left Australia in 1864, his fare to England being paid for by friends.

When he died in his sister's house in London in 1865, aged 50 years, only seven people attended his funeral. Although his achievements were great few remembered him or, at the time, appreciated what he had done.

Later explorers and surveyors who used his maps to locate the Overland Telegraph and the Central Australian Railway were frequently amazed at their accuracy and detail.

Perhaps his greatest accolade however, was the fact that despite the hardships and difficulties of his six expeditions, not one man under his command lost his life.

Dance Instructions for "John McDouall Stuart"

| Honour Partners (Introduction) | Single Chord |
|---|--------------|
| First couple lead down the set with inside hands joined. | 2 bar |
| First couple two hand turn once around clockwise and finish facing up the set with inside hands joined. | 2 bars |
| First couple lead back up the set with the lady crossing in front of the gent to finish in partner's place facing out. | 2 bars |
| First couple cast off one place to finish in second place in opposite line. Second couple move up. | 2 bars |
| Second, first and third couples dance mirror reels of three on the sides. (The first couple dance in and down to start the reels.) | 6 bars |
| First couple cross to second place on own side giving right hands and finish facing into the set. Second and third couples rest. | 2 bars |
| First couple turn by the right hand to finish in own place facing out while second and third couples change places with partners giving right hands. | 2 bars |
| First couple dance to their right around the outside of the set (first gent finishing between second couple facing down and first lady finishing between third couple facing up) meanwhile second and third couples advance and retire on the diagonal. | 2 bars |
| First couple turn by the right hand to finish at ends of set (first gent at the top of the set, first lady at the bottom of the set) facing out while second and third couples change places up and down the set giving right hands. | 2 bars |
| First couple dance to their right around the outside of the set (first gent finishing in second place in the lady's line, first lady finishing in second place in the gent's line) while second and third couples advance and retire on the diagonal. | 2 bars |
| Repeat the previous 8 bars following the same pattern. | 8 bars |
| Total | 32 bars |

First couple, finishing in second place on own side, drop to the bottom of the set and a new first couple starts the dance. Each of the three couples leads the dance once.

Suggested Calls for “John McDouall Stuart”

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|---|----------------------|
| First couple lead down. | 2 bar |
| Two hand turn. | 2 bars |
| Lead back up, crossing over. | 2 bars |
| Cast off into second place. | 2 bars |
| Mirror reels of three. (After three bars, call “Halfway”.) | 6 bars |
| First couple cross over, others rest. | 2 bars |
| First couple turn by the right hand, others change across. | 2 bars |
| First couple dance around, others advance and retire. | 2 bars |
| First couple turn by the right hand, others change places up and down. | 2 bars |
| First couple dance around, others advance and retire. | 2 bars |
| First couple turn by the right hand, others change across. | 2 bars |
| First couple dance around, others advance and retire. | 2 bars |
| First couple turn by the right hand, others change places up and down. | 2 bars |
| First couple dance around, others advance and retire. | 2 bars |
| Total | <hr/> 32 bars |

First couple, finishing in second place, drop to the bottom of the set and a new first couple starts the dance. Each of the three couples leads the dance once.