

GAY GORDONS  
(Scotland)

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- SOURCE: Gay Gordons is a couple dance that originated in Northern Scotland/
- MUSIC: RECORD: Express E-282-B
- FORMATION: Cpls facing LOD in Varsouvienne pos (M H are not on bottom, but H are raised from normal shaking H hold so that W's L H on bottom and W's R H on outside).
- STEPS: Walk, Pas de Basque: Leap lightly onto R, knee and toe turned out (ct 1), step L beside R so that L heel is close to R in-step, knees and toes turned out (ct &), step R in place (ct 2) extend L ft diagonally fwd L, Knee straight and toe pointed dn (ct &). Begin next step L (ct 3 & 4 &).
- Skip Change of Step: Hop on L, lifting R leg fwd with toe pointing dn, knee turned out (ct & of preceeding meas) step fwd R (ct 1), close L ft up to and behind R, L instep close to R heel and take wt on L (ct &), step fwd R (ct 2). Begin next step hopping on R (cts &,3&,4). In this dance there are 2 skip changes of step per meas, and the step is the equivalent of a ptr turning polka done on the toes.

MUSIC: 4/4

PATTERN

Meas.

- Upbeat INTRODUCTION
- 1 Starting outside ft, walk 4 steps fwd LOD. Retaining H hold, turn individually  $\frac{1}{2}$  CW on last step.
- 2 Walk 4 more steps bkwd LOD
- 3 Walk 4 steps fwd RLOD. Retaining H hold, turn individually  $\frac{1}{2}$  CCW on last step.
- 4 Walk 4 more steps bkwd RLOD.
- 5-6 Release L H and raise R H high. Progressing slightly fwd LOD W turns twice CW in front of M under joined R H dancing 4 pas de basque steps, starting R. M follows W with 8 walking steps, starting L.
- 7-8 Assume closed pos and dance 4 skip change of steps turning CW and progressing LOD. On last ct W turns CW into Varsouvienne pos to repeat dance from beginning.
- NOTE: During meas 5-6 as M follows W, instead of 8 walking steps he may dance 4 pas de basques steps or 4 skip change of step. All three versions are danced in Scotland.

Presented by John Filcich  
Idyllwild Workshop Mix Master 1977

## GAY CORDONS

SCOTTISH

An old favorite with many variations, two of which are presented here.

Records: Beltona 2455; Victor EPA 4129; World of Fun 116; Folkraft 1162.

Steps: Walk, pas-de-bas, two-step.

Formation: Partners, double circle, all facing counterclockwise, inside hands joined.

Timing and Rhythm: One beat per walking step (brief one-note introduction on F 1162).

## PATTERN:

- PART I: Moving forward (CCW), take 4 walking steps (man begins L, lady R).  
Turning in toward partner to face CW, join other hands and take 4 walking steps backward (still moving CCW).  
Then dance 4 walking steps forward (CW), (man begins L, lady R).  
Turn in toward partner, face CCW, join other hands, take 4 walking steps backward (still moving CW).
- PART II: Balance toward, and then away from partner, doing one two-step or one pas-de-bas step toward, and one away.  
With lady passing in front of her partner and making full turn to her left, partners change places with 4 walking steps.  
Join new inside hands, and again balance toward, and away from partner.  
With 4 walking steps the lady, making a right turn, dances under partner's left arm and to the right side of the man behind, while man dances forward to left side of the lady ahead who becomes his new partner.

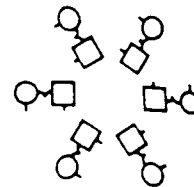
## RHYTHMIC LEARNING CUES:

- (Man begins L, lady R)*
- I:       *(To CCW)*   Walk, 2, 3, turn.  
          "           Back, 2, 3, 4.  
          *(To CW)*    Walk, 2, 3, turn.  
          "           Back, 2, 3, 4.
- II:       *(In place)*   Balance toward, and away.  
                      Cross, 2, 3, 4.  
          *(In place)*   Balance toward, and away.  
                      Change, partner, 3, 4.

TRADITIONAL VERSION: In Part II, partners have right hands joined. Lady turns twice around CW with 4 two-steps under joined hands, while man moves forward around circle (CCW) with 4 two-steps. (Cue: lady turns, 3, 4.) Then in closed position, couple turns CW with 4 two-steps while moving CCW around the room. (Cue: couple, turns, 3, 4.)

## MIXER

One big circle of couples  
facing in line of direction




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**GAY GORDONS MIXER**


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| MUSIC  | CALLS                        | MUSIC  | DESCRIPTION   |
|--------|------------------------------|--------|---|
| Intro: | — — <u>Forward all</u>       |        |   |
| A1 1-4 | — — <u>Backwards now</u>     | A1 1-4 | Take Varsouvienne position with your partner (see illustration) and walk forward 4 steps in the line of direction, both starting on the right foot.   |
| 5-8    | — — <u>Forward again</u>     | 5-8    | Without dropping hands, turn individually to the right and continue 4 steps <i>backwards</i> , still in the line of direction.  |
| 9-12   | — — <u>Backwards now</u>     | 9-12   | Still without dropping hands, walk <i>forward</i> 4 steps, i.e., in the reverse line of direction.  |
| 13-16  | — — <u>Balance in</u>        | 13-16  | Without dropping hands, turn individually to the left and continue 4 steps <i>backwards</i> , still in the reverse line of direction.   |
| A2 1-4 | — — <u>Ladies cross over</u> | A2 1-4 | Join inside hands (gent's right, lady's left) with your partner. Balance, going toward each other with a pas-de-basque step, gent starting on his right foot, lady on her left, and then away from each other with a pas-de-basque step (gent left, lady right) (4 counts in all).                                  |
| 5-8    | — — <u>Balance again</u>     | 5-8    | With 3 light steps (lady: left, right, left; gent: right, left, right), the lady rolls across in front of the gent, and the gent moves to his own right, so the lady ends up on the gent's left side. At the same time, change the handhold to gent's left, lady's right (4 counts in all, no movement on count 4). |
| 9-12   | — — <u>Under you go</u>      | 9-12   | Balance toward each other with a pas-de-basque step, gent starting on his left foot, lady on her right, and then away from each other with a pas-de-basque step (gent right, lady left) (4 counts in all).  |
| 13-16  | — — <u>Forward all</u>       | 13-16  | With 4 light steps (right, left, right, left), the lady turns under the gent's upraised left arm and takes Varsouvienne position with the gent behind him.  |

- B1:** Repeat A1
- B2:** Repeat A2

## Comments

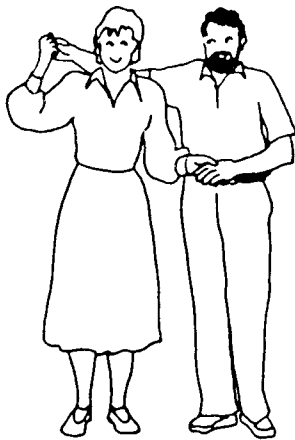
The Gay Gordons is a popular dance in Scotland, where it comes from. In the original dance, instead of balance, cross over, balance and under the arch in A2, couples do four two-steps forward with the lady turning under the gent's right arm, and then four turning polka steps in closed dance position. A mixer similar to the one presented here—presumably inspired by The Gay Gordons—was devised some years ago by Doc and Winnie Alumbaugh of California. Called the All-American Promenade, it can be found in Harris, Pittman and Waller's standard college text, *Dance a While*. One of the differences in their version is that couples use a simple inside handhold in A1 instead of Varsouvienne position, but I prefer the latter because it

is more fun and closer to the original dance. A little demonstration of how to turn without dropping hands is usually sufficient (much better than trying to explain in words!), and it makes the dance more interesting.

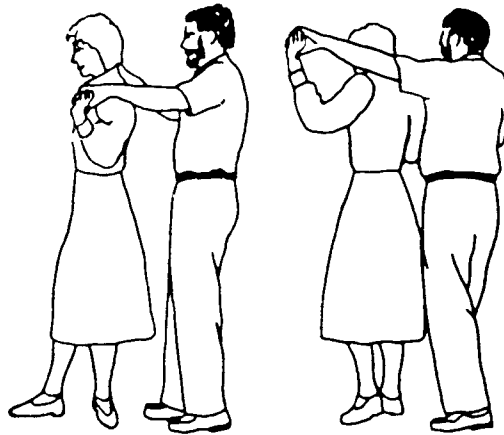
With this dance, I usually restrict my "calling" to short cues as indicated above, and stop calling as soon as the dancers know the pattern.

## Music

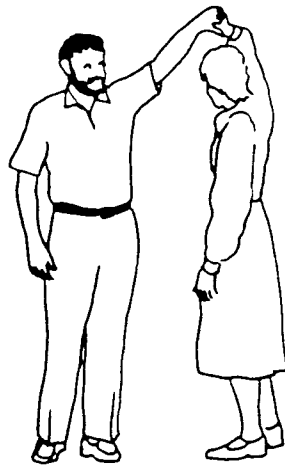
The Gay Gordons is usually danced either to the original tune of the same name or to other march-like Scottish tunes such as "Marching Down to Fyvie" or "The Meeting of the Waters." But tunes in New England or Canadian style can also be used, such as "Shelburne Reel" from *Maritime Dance Party*. One good recording using the original tune is found on the album *New England Chestnuts* 2. **Tempo:** relaxed, about 120.



Varsouvienne position.



Turn individually, without dropping hands.



The lady turns under the gent's left arm and goes to the gent behind him.