

The South Kerry Set (Ireland)

The South Kerry Set is also known as Sliabh Luachra Set, Knocknagree Set, and Polka Set. It was learned in several variants in Sliabh Luachra, a parish in West Cork/South Kerry. This particular variant was learned from the people of Kerry living in and around Knocknagree.

Music: Polkas, Jigs, Slides and fast Hornpipes or slow Reels.

Formation: Four couples in a square, waltz hold.

Meas

Pattern

THE BODY.

- 1-2 All cpls take one step into ctr; one step out.
- 3-4 All cpls take two steps making a 3/4 turn CW to next position CCW.
- 5-16 Repeat meas 1-4 three more times into each position until home.

SEQUENCE: Body/Tops/Body/Sides/Body/Tops/Body/Sides/Body. This is the sequence for most figures unless otherwise stated.

FIRST FIGURE--POLKA "Ladies Chain".

- 1-8 Top W slow chain across to opp M giving L hands; being turned under CW twice as M walks around CCW; return home.
- 1-8 Top cpls swing at home.

SECOND FIGURE--POLKA "Show the Lady".

- Sequence: First Tops/Opp Tops/First Sides/Opp Sides/Body
- 1-8 First cpl only do a Full-House within the set and return home.
 - 1-4 First cpl Advance and Retire.
 - 5-8 Dance once round at home.

THIRD FIGURE--HALF-SLIDE "In, Out, and Roundabout".

- Usually a double jig is played, sometimes a slide or polka.
- 1-4 Top cpls Advance and Retire.
 - 5-8 Top cpls Half-House exchanging places.
 - 1-8 Repeat returning home.

FOURTH FIGURE--POLKA "Around the House and Mind the Dresser"--"The Four Shoves".

- Positions or home places are random and unimportant in this figure. It begins and ends with the Body.
- 1-8 Cpls lead around CCW with skaters hold, approx. half way to opp position.
 - 1-8 Continue around CCW back to approx. home turning W CW under joined L hands.
 - 1-8 Four W R-hand star and chain half way around to opp M, giving L hand and turning under as they pass behind him; chain back the same way to ptr.
 - 1-8 Ptr swing.
- This figure can be repeated 1-3 more times, ending with Body.
Alternative replacing first 16 meas: M's hands on ptrs waist, W's hands on ptrs shldr, M stepping fwd and W backing all the way around to home.

The South Kerry Set--Continued

FIFTH FIGURE--SLIDE.

No body is performed. Tops perform figure first followed by sides. Sequence: Tops/Sides/Tops/Sides. The inactive cpls usually step back and may even seat themselves to watch the active cpls dance, leaving the whole floor for them.

- 1-8 Tops Full-House.
 - 1-8 Tops Advance and Retire; Half-House.
 - 1-8 Tops Advance and Retire; Half-House.
 - 1-8 Tops Full-House.
 - 1-8 Tops Advance and Retire; Half-House.
 - 1-8 Tops Advance and Retire; Half-House.
 - 1-8 Tops Full-House.
 - 1-8 Tops Full-House again.
- Sides can take up to eight bars preparing for their turn.
Variant: Dance only first 32 meas.

SIXTH FIGURE--FAST HORNPIPE/SLOW REEL.

The Body using the hornpipe step.

- 1-8 All cpls Full-House.
- 1-2 M take one step into ctr while W take two steps to travel to next pos CCW and new ptr; M one step out to meet new ptr.
- 3-8 Continues as in Body with new ptr, then Full-House, etc. until home with original ptr.

VARIATIONS.

All figures can end with all four cpls Full-House at the very end before the music stops and a new figure begins.

Sixth Figure Variants: It is common for eight bars to happen with little activity (sometimes stepping) during the partner change: the W walk to the next pos CCW and everyone waits for the next eight-bar phrase.

Other Variants:

1. After the Body and the Full-House, M do a R-hand star around CW then a L-hand star CCW to home and a new ptr (the W having progressed one place CCW).
2. An eight-bar swing before or after the Full-House.
3. Another rare figure, a floater sometimes used to end in different sets or as a seventh figure.

Presented by Danny and Joan Hathaway