

The Borlin Valley Polka Set

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First Figure - Ladies Chain (Polkas)		152 bars
1	Lead around: Partners take crossed-hand hold in front and lead round anti-clockwise. The gents turn the ladies clockwise under both arms on the last 2 bars and take waltz hold.	8 bars
2	Body: Couples dance - jump (on both feet), cut (with gent's R, lady's L), brush 1,2,3 (2 bars) then turn 2 steps on to the next place on their R (2 bars). They repeat this 4 bar movement into each place and back home.	16 bars
3	House around.	8 bars
4	<i>Top couples:</i> House around each other.	8 bars
	Square the house: Couples slide 1, 2, 123 to a point in front of the couple on their R, make a ¼ turn clockwise and slide 1, 2, 123 to a point in front of their opposite couple's position then house back to place. *	8 bars
	Ladies chain: Ladies give R hands in the centre, L to turn the opposite gent, R hands in the centre and back to their partners, taking waltz hold.	8 bars
	Swing.	8 bars
5	Body.	
	House around.	24 bars
6	<i>Side couples</i> now dance 4.	32 bars
7	Body.	
	House around.	24 bars
	* Alternatively, dancers may 'walk the square', taking waist hold and dancing forward 1, 2, 3, hopturn, past the couple on their R, and backwards 1, 2, 3, hopturn, past their opposite couple to take waltz hold and finish as above with a half-house to home.	
Second Figure - Two Squares (Polkas)		136 bars
1	Lead around. Body. House around.	32 bars
2	<i>Top couples:</i> House around each other.	8 bars
	Square the house twice.	16 bars
3	Body. House around.	24 bars
4	<i>Side couples</i> house and square twice.	24 bars
5	Body. House around.	24 bars
Third Figure - Advance and Retire (Polkas)		168 bars
1	Lead around. Body. House around.	32 bars

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2	<i>Top couples:</i> House around each other.	8 bars
	Square the house.	8 bars
	Advance and retire: partners advance and retire, R in R (4 bars). Ladies exchange places R to R and the gents exchange places L to L, partners turning inwards to take R hand hold again (4 bars). The whole movement is then repeated back to place.(See endnote on SOURCE for the original version of this movement)	16 bars
	Swing.	8 bars
3	Body. House around.	24 bars
4	<i>Side couples</i> now dance 2.	40 bars
5	Body. House around.	24 bars
Fourth Figure - Four Squares (Slides)		184 bars
1	<i>Top couples:</i> Lead around.	8 bars
	Body.	16 bars
	House around.	8 bars
	Square the house four times.	32 bars
	Body.	16 bars
	House around.	8 bars
2	<i>Side couples</i> dance 1.	88 bars
	When the set was first revived the side couples would leave the floor while the top couples danced and vice versa, then tops would repeat and sides would repeat.	
Alternative Fourth Figure - Four Squares (Slides)		120 bars
1	<i>Top couples:</i> Lead around.	8 bars
	House around.	8 bars
	Square the house four times.	32 bars
	House around.	8 bars
2	<i>Side couples</i> dance 1.	56 bars
Fifth Figure - The Hornpipe (Traditional)		208 bars
1	Body.	16 bars
2	House around.	8 bars
3	Changeover: Ladies advance to take hands in a circle, retire with hands still held, advance two steps to the R, drop hands and retire to place beside the next gent on the R. (8 bars) Gents dance a R hand star and L hand star back to take their new partners	16 bars

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	in waltz hold. (8 bars)	
4	Body. House. Changeover.	40 bars
5	Body. House. Changeover.	40 bars
6	Body. House. Changeover.	40 bars
7	Body , with own partners. House.	40 bars
Fifth Figure - The Barndance (Hornpipes) SEE ENDNOTE		160 bars
1	The Barndance: taking waist hold, couples dance side by side 2 steps to the next place on R, take hold for the Hop and dance 2 doubled steps (hop1, hop2, hop3, hop4) to the place opposite their own. They dance side by side 2 steps to the place L of their own and dance doubled steps back to their own place (8 bars). The whole movement is then repeated.	16 bars
2	House around , doubled all the way.	8 bars
3	Ladies move on , walking to the next gent on R while gents stand.	8 bars
4	Barndance. Doubled house around. Ladies move on until the ladies are back with their own partners.	96 bars
5	Barndance. Doubled house around to finish.	24 bars

STEPS

The normal steps are used for all figures with the exception of the **Body** which is danced as described in the First Figure.

SOURCE

Timmy McCarthy at the first Cork/Kerry Weekend in Dingle, November 1993.

Timmy told us that the **Advance and Retire** movement described in the Third Figure is not the original version, having been changed slightly to make it easier for the ladies to dance. Originally, couples would advance R in R but, as they retired and still holding hands, each lady would dance anti-clockwise into the gent's position while the gent fell back into the lady's position. From there they would then pass through and turn inwards to take hands and repeat the movement back home. Try it, but the ladies need to be nimble and both couples must be agreed on which version they are to dance! It's a nice move, properly executed, and is, after all, how it was meant to be danced.

ENDNOTE

I am indebted to Lurna Levis of Bantry for the traditional hornpipe which should be danced as the Fifth Figure of this set. Her father, a native of the Coomhola Borlin Valley, trains dancers for Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann and local competitions and tells her that only this figure is recognised at competition level. The Barndance, it appears, is not accepted as truly traditional, it being a later variation which was adopted to be danced at speed at house dances in the area. (February, 2005)