

The Rivers of Carlisle

A 56-bar Strathspey for four couples in a square set

Devised by John Foster and Jane Atkins

Music – The Three Rivers and John Foster of Peebles both by Ian R. Muir.

- 1-4 1st and 3rd couples dance right hands across once round while
2nd and 4th couples dance clockwise halfway round the outside of the set to change places.
- 5-8 2nd and 4th couples dance right hands across once round while
1st and 3rd couples dance clockwise halfway round the outside of the set to change places.
- 9-16 Starting from their new positions, all four couples repeat bars 1-8 back to original places to finish facing own partner.
- 17-24 All four couples dance a grand chain, one bar per hand.
- 25- 28 Giving right hands, all turn partner to finish in promenade hold facing in.
- 29 -40 In promenade hold, all four couples dance a reel of four between first and third positions. To enter the reel, 2nd and 1st couples and 4th and 3rd couples pass by the right (Fig. 1).
To finish in a line with
1st couple facing up and out at first place with 2nd couple following them while
3rd couple facing down and out at third place with 4th couple following them (Fig. 2).
- 41-48 Releasing hands, 1st couple followed by 2nd couple and 3rd couple followed by 4th couple cast away from their partner round to nearest side (men casting left and women right) to meet a new partner at the side places.
At fourth place, joining nearer hands to form an arch, 1st man with 3rd woman join bar 43) and 2nd man with 4th woman (join on bar 44) dance across the set to second place (Fig. 3).
At second place, joining nearer hands, 1st woman with 3rd man followed by 2nd woman and 4th man dance across the set under the arches (Fig. 4).
Releasing hands, on reaching the side places, the men cross in front of their new partner and all four men dance clockwise followed by their new partner to finish 1st man in fourth place, 2nd man in third place, 3rd man in second place and 4th man in first place (Fig. 5).
- 49-56 All four couples dance eight hands round and back finishing in new places (Fig. 6).

Repeat bars 1 – 56 back to original partners and places.

The dance represents the Rivers Eden, Petteril and Caldew which meet in Carlisle.

The wheels and reels represent the whirls and flow of the water

The arches represent the bridges over the rivers and the circle represents the communities either side of the bridge coming together.

The dance should be phrased carefully to form one continuously flowing movement, like water flowing in a river.

Devised by John Foster to be a gift to Carlisle and Border Branch for the occasion of its 70th Anniversary in 2020. It was completed by his daughter Jane Atkins a member of the branch following his death in 2020 and demonstrated at the 70th Anniversary Ball in November 2021.