

A Golden Milestone

2x32-bar strathspey 2x32-bar jig medley for four couples in a four-couple longwise set
3rd and 4th couples start on opposite sides

MUSIC	DESCRIPTION
Bars 1 – 4	1st and 2nd men as well as 1st and 2nd women set and link to finish across the set with nearer hands joined with partner, 2nd couple facing down and 1st couple facing up. 3rd and 4th couples dance likewise to finish with 4th couple facing down and 3rd couple facing up.
5 – 8	2nd and 1st couple set and link to finish on opposite sides, 2nd couple in first place and 1st couple in second place. 4th and 3rd couples dance likewise. The order is now 2x, 1x, 4, 3. At the end of bar 8 the middle 4 dancers should be just beyond the sidelines, busy curving to face diagonally in.
9 – 11	1st woman, 1st man, 4th woman, and 4th man each dance a little clockwise circle: the dancers dance diagonally in on bar 9, cast or curve to the right on bar 10, and dance back to place on bar 11. All four dancers keep facing clockwise.
12 – 16	1st and 4th couples chase clockwise just over once round. During the chase the men need to catch up with the women they are following so that 1st woman followed by 4th man, on the men's side, and 4th woman followed by 1st man, on the women's side are ready to enter the reels as tandem couples. The result of the "catching up" is that the chase changes from four equidistant dancers dancing round to two tandem "couples" dancing round.
17 – 24	1st woman followed by 4th man, in tandem, dance a reel of three across the set with 2nd couple. At the same time 4th woman followed by 1st man, in tandem, dance a reel of three across the set with 3rd couple. To begin, 1st woman and 2nd man as well as 4th woman and 3rd man pass by the right shoulder. At the end of the reels 1st woman, followed by 4th man, dance down the men's side while 4th woman, followed by 1st man, dance up the women's side. The order is now 2x, 4, 1x, 3.
25 – 28	2nd and 3rd couples, giving both hands in strathspey time and right hands in jig time, dance a half turn and cast away to change sides: 2nd and 3rd couples turn halfway to face partners in the middle of the set and, on bar 27, releasing hands, cast to the right, away from each other and curve to own sides for 2nd couple and opposite sides for 3rd couple. The order is now 2, 4, 1x, 3x. In many parts of the SCD world this formation is known as half turn and twirl.
29 – 32	2nd and 4th as well as 1st and 3rd couples dance four hands once round to the left. Repeat from new positions.

Devised by Wouter Joubert, 24-25 August 2024. In honour of Norma and Patrick Craven who celebrate their golden wedding anniversary in December 2024.

A fifty year journey of married life involves not just the couple but all those they interact with along the way. These interactions create beautiful patterns in the dance of life.

The figure of bars 1-8 I encountered in Malcolm Brown's dance "Links with St Petersburg".

The reels of bars 17-24 I encountered in Alice McLean's dance "Scott Meikle".

Iain Boyd pointed out that the figure in bars 9-16 bears a lot of resemblance to Alex Hay's "big spiral" formation, although the phrasing is not quite the same.

Teaching notes:

- The set should be fairly wide (it facilitates the dancing of the little circles of bars 9-12) but be careful not to let the set stretch out too long (if the tandem dancers start the reels from too far away they effectively hinder 2nd and 3rd men's entry into the reels as the tandem couples block their way).
- The set and link of bars 5-8 should finish with dancers dancing well out to the sides.
- The whole dance is about curves, and the curves of each formation should flow elegantly and seamlessly into those of the formation that follows it, which is just possible if each formation is danced within the number of bars allotted to it.
- After the half turn and twirl by the outside couples, the inside couples must anticipate joining the once round circles to the left so that everybody can finish on the sides, ready to repeat the dance from new positions.