

ENKEL ENGELSKA

Origin: In the 18th and 19th centuries, English sailors roamed the globe and in many coastal areas left traces of their music and dance which survive unto this day. The term “Engelska,” meaning “English” in Swedish, refers to such dances, which can be traced back to an English dancing master book published in 1651. The very simple form here described is from the southern part of Sweden, where most of the Engelska dances are to be found. Footwork throughout is a soft, somewhat springy (but not jerky) walking step, neither a “square dance shuffle” nor a hop. Foot weight rolls from heel to sole. The cadence is steady, the measures evenly phrased on “base 8.” One time through the pattern is 16 measures of 2/4 music, thus 32 steps. Most any Swedish engelska melody at moderate to moderately slow tempo, with consistent 16-measure phrasing would be suitable. The most common tune is that recognized in the US as “Soldier’s Joy,” which was spread by British soldiers to both Europe and North America in the 18th century.

Source: This dance was learned in Sweden at Rättviksdansen by Gordon Tracie in 1982. Taught at Skandia Folkdance Society, Seattle. Recording for this dance is on the Viking Skandia CD, available from www.folkdancing.com. © 1997 Skandia Music Foundation.

Rhythm: 2/4 duple meter, evenly phrased 16-bars

Formation: Sets of 2 couples facing one another. Works best if all the couples are arranged in a large circle. Couples 1 facing CCW, couples 2 facing CW. Ring hold. As couples, inside hands joined at shoulder height.

Measures RING LEFT AND RIGHT (Eight hands round)

1-8 Hands joined at shoulder level in ring of 4 persons, take 8 walking steps to the L (CW), changing direction on the last step, and 8 walking steps back (CCW) to place.

ADVANCE AND RETIRE

9-12 Each couple, w/inside hands joined at shoulder height, advances to opposite couple w/4 walking steps, giving a compliment (a slight nod of the head) to the other on the 4th step, then retires BKWD to place w/4 more walking steps, with a compliment to partner on the BKWD 4th step.

ARCH AND UNDER PROGRESSION

13-16 All couples 1 (facing CCW in big circle) move FWD w/8 walking steps under an arch formed by all couples 2 (facing CW in big circle), who also move 8 walking steps in their direction (CW), so that each couple winds up facing a brand new couple “up ahead.”

Dance resumes again with new couples in set and REPEAT until music ends.

