

Bridge Of Athlone

A 2 1/4 x 32 bar jig, longways proper progressive, for as many couples as will.
Traditional version.

Traditionally, this dance is done in sets of 4–5 couples. However, it can be danced with more couples (a longer set), although some figures may take longer than specified. See individual notes in the dance description and end notes for variations for handling longer lines (as well as other traditional variations).

(32) **Set, Advance & Retire, Set, Pass Through.**

- (4) Set twice.¹
- (4) Advance & Retire.
- (4) Set twice.²
- (4) Pass Through.
- (16) Repeat, to place.

(8) **Down The Center.** Top couple³ dances down the center⁴

(16) **Cast Off & Arch.**

Top couple⁵ casts off, each partner dancing down his or her own side to the bottom of the set. The rest of the lines follow their respective gender. Top couple forms an arch at the bottom; all other couples dance under the arch and up to the top. (This is the progression.)

The other couples then form a bridge (a line of arches).

(16) **Bridge Of Athlone.**

- (8) Top couple⁶ dances up the set: top lady under the bridge, top gent outside the line of gentlemen.
- (8) Repeat, down the set to place, except the lady dances outside the line of ladies while the gent dances down under the bridge.⁷

¹May be skipped. See end notes.

²May be skipped. See end notes.

³See end notes regarding “top couples.”

⁴See end notes on “Down The Center.”

⁵See end notes regarding “top couples.”

⁶See end notes regarding “top couples.”

⁷If there are multiple top couples travelling, then they should return to their respective places, from where they started this figure, to maintain the progressed couple ordering.

There are many variations for this dance:

- The setting steps (in the first section) may be skipped. This can be useful if dancers are not familiar with jig setting steps. (This reduces the dance's length to $1\frac{3}{4} \times 32$ bars.)
- If the line is longer than 6 or 7 couples, then it may take too long for everyone to progress up to the top couple's spot and dance that special role. In that case, have the top few couples (roughly 1 per 4–5 couples) act together.

Specifically, if K couples at the top are designated to dance the role of “top couple,” then:

- The top K couples all dance in line during “Down The Center.”
 - The top K couples arch at the bottom during “Cast Off & Arch.” The first top couple forms an arch, the next top couple dances under the arch and forms an arch extension next to the first top couple, and so forth. This reverses the K top couples' order at the bottom of the set.
 - The top K couples dance under the bridge during “Bridges.” First the top K ladies dance under the bridge (up the set), then the the top K gentlemen (down the set).
- “Down The Center” may be danced using either travelling steps or 7s (2 sets down, 2 sets up).

Caller's Notes for Bridge Of Athlone:

- (32) **Set, Advance & Retire, Set, Pass Through.**
- (8) **Down The Center.**
- (16) **Cast Off & Arch.**
- (16) **Bridge Of Athlone.**