



Edinburgh University Swing Dance
Society notes on:
The Lambeth Walk



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The Lambeth Walk is a dance inspired by the 1937 musical *Me And My Girl*, which ran until its theatre was closed by bombing in 1941. It is not the 'dance' done in stage in the musical, which really is just walking, but a social dance inspired by it. It has been included in these notes because we often use it for a quick dance class at 1940s events. It is not a strong part of USA swing history (although both Joe Rines and Duke Ellington recorded version) but is very much part of the real history of social swing-era dancing here in the UK, and it was danced in the USA in the early 1940s as a sort of expression of solidarity with bombed London.

(Historical note: in 1942, the British director Charles Ridley superimposed a soundtrack of the *Lambeth Walk* over edited clips of Leni Riefenstahl's film footage of Hitler and his soldiers marching, to make it look as if they were dancing the dance: when he saw it, Goebbels was so angry that left the room swearing and kicking over furniture. You can see it on Youtube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYJ5F8ctyus>).

Start in a circle of couples, each couple facing anticlockwise round the circle, lady on man's right (ie the outside of the circle), disconnected.

- 2 x 8 – 8 walks forward (2bts each step), man starting with his L foot and lady with her R. Ladies swing arms. Men can too, or hook their thumbs into their waistcoat top pockets (or pretend to) so that elbows are out to the side, and walk with an exaggerated Cockney swagger). On the last step, men turn, offset slightly so that you can link R arms.
- 8 – walk 4 steps (2bts/ step) round a clockwise circle centred on your linked elbows: on the last step let go and turn individually on spot (both c/w) ready to link L elbows.
- 8 – walk 4 steps (2bts/ step) round an a/c circle centred on your linked elbows: on the last step, when the lady should again be facing a/c around the main circle of dancers, let go and man turn individually on spot a/c, place lady's L arm in man's right.
- 8 - 3 walks fwd (man LRL lady RLR, 2 bts each). Rock step on 7-8.
- 8 – 3 walks fwd (man RLR last LRL, 2 bts each). Rock step on 7-8, letting go
- 8 – man steps towards centre 2 steps, lady steps to outside 2 steps, close feet and turn (5), bend forward and slap hands on knees (R hand on right knee followed by quickly by L on left) - &7
- 8 walk 2 steps towards each other, Close feet (5) thumbs up in hitchhiker position and "Oi!" on 7 throwing thumb over R shoulder

Start again.

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