

The Overland Telegraph

John Short

Formation: Quadrille. Tops and Sides

Stepping/style: Skip change steps, setting steps Australian bush dance style ie step right, left, right, step left, right, left” taking 2 bars of music and two hand open turns

Music: 2 x 32 bars of jigs (preferably Australian), played at a speed of approximately 64 bars per minute. The format is AABB

Bars	Steps
4	Introduction (honour partner and join right hands with partner)
4	Top Couples Advance and Retire – Top couples, right hand in right hand, advance and retire
4	Top Gents Turn the Ladies In and All Set – The top gents twirl their partners (right shoulder back) under joined right hands into the centre of the set. The ladies join left hands and the gents finish facing clockwise around the set, creating a wavy line of four (2 bars). All four set once (2 bars).
4	Half Turn as a Couple and Set – Top ladies drop joined hands but keep right hands joined with partners. Both top couples half turn with the right hand to change places with their partners. The gents join left hands to recreate a wavy line of four (2 bars). All four set once (2 bars).
4	Gents Half Turn and Set – Gents drop hands with partners and half turn with the left hands to change places and then join right hands with opposite to create a new wavy line of four (2 bars). All four set once (2 bars).
4	Gents Turn Once by the Left hands, (While) Ladies Solo Turn and Dance Behind (the Side Couples). - Top Gents turn by the left hand one and a quarter times around <i>meanwhile</i> the top ladies solo turn (left shoulder back) on the spot (2 bars) and then dance clockwise (one quarter of the way) around the outside of the set to finish behind the side couple (2 bars).
4	Right Hand Stars - Each top couple creates a right hand star with nearest side couple (top ladies from the back and top gents from the front) and star once around (i.e. there are four people in each star) – <i>see Notes</i>
4	Top Gents Crossover (and) Left Hand Stars - Top gents cross over (passing right shoulder in the centre of the set) to the other side couple and dance a left hand star once around with the other side couple and each top gent's opposite. (Again there are four people in each star.)
4	Return to Place (Tops Back to Place) - Top couples (individually) dance back toward their own places meeting their partner on the way and turning partner by two hands to finish in place.
32	Sides Repeat (Repeat for Sides Leading)

Notes:

Stars: The four people stars in this dance are unusual in that they are formed by the non-leading couple being approached by the leading couple, the leading gent from in front and the leading lady from behind. To create the star neatly the non-leading lady will need to pivot at the start of the star. The non-leading couple should wait with right hands joined to anticipate this movement.

Background of the Dance:

The construction of the Overland Telegraph (1870 to 1872) was one of the greatest civil engineering feats in Australia's history. In only two years the construction crews installed over 36,000 poles which carried the single wire 2,900 kilometres from Adelaide to Darwin through desert, over mountains and across flood plains.

This bush dance commemorates the completion of the Overland Telegraph. The wavy line of four dancers represents the telegraph poles supporting the wire. When the dancers set they are tapping out a Morse code message. The right and left hand stars represent the repeater stations receiving the message and sending it on.