

THE PARASITE CUCKOO

4 couple longways, proper.

Tune: 4 x 32 bar tune in 3/4 (Variation on Sheebeg & Sheemore).

A	1s lead down the centre to the bottom, other couples chassé up one place in bar 4 (4 bars); New top couple (2s) lead a single cast to invert the set (4 bars); All set R&L to Ptnr and Turn Single Rt (4 bars); All back-to-back Ptnr Rt shldr (4 bars). <i>Order now: 1, 4, 3, 2</i>
B	Bottom 2 couples (2s and 3s) ½ RH Star, middle 2 couples ½ LH Star, top 2 couples ½ RH Star, 2s now at the top ½ LH Turn (8 bars); <i>Order now: 2, 1imp, 4imp, 3imp.</i> All balance forward and back, Turn Single Rt (4 bars); 2s (at the top) 2HT once round and face down <u>while</u> others hands 6 circle Left ½ way and fall back into set lines (4 bars).

Progression: 2, 3, 4, 1

The British cuckoo has nearly always received favourable treatment in English folk song and dance, often referred to as pretty and bonny. Yet its behaviour suggests quite the opposite: it lays its egg in other birds' nests, disguising it to look the same as the host's eggs; and then the hatched baby cuckoo instinctively seeks to kick the host's eggs out of the nest so that it can take all the food that the host parents are bringing back to feed "their" young. This behaviour results in the cuckoo being labelled as a 'brood parasite' bird.

With apologies to Gail Ticknor, I therefore wrote this dance as an 'antidote' to the normal presumptions about cuckoos. The tune used is a variation on Sheebeg & Sheemore (the tune used for Gail's dance The Bonny Cuckoo), which I wrote for a play that I provided music for many years ago. The tune was deliberately written to sound brooding and even threatening, as suited the play and hopefully this dance.

Dance written 31st January 2020.