

CHESTNUT TREE (England)

This dance has appeared in many areas in various forms. It has even been referred to as an English singing game, though it is not documented in any books of traditional dances. In any case, it is a good dance for any age group, especially for beginners in the "schottische" step. There are lyrics (included in the directions below), but it is sometimes difficult for dancers to remember both words and steps. Action should start with the line—"Neath the spreading chestnut tree."

EPA-4139-2

OPENING FORMATION: Double circle, men on the inside, all facing counter-clockwise. Lady stands to right of man.

PART 1: WORDS: "Underneath the spreading chestnut tree,
I love her and she loves me."

ACTION: Man starts on left foot, lady on right foot and both move forward hand-in-hand with 4 schottische steps.

Man's step: Walk left, right, left, hop on left. Walk right, left, right, hop on right. Repeat above.

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Lady's step: Walk right, left, right, hop on right. Walk left, right, left, hop on left.

Repeat above.

WORDS: "There she used to sit upon my knee."

ACTION: Dancers drop hands and turn away from each other, man to left, lady to right, with 4 step-hops, making one full turn in place; finish facing partner, with man's back to center of ring.

WORDS: "'Neath the spreading chestnut tree."

ACTION: Dancers crouch slightly and place hands on own knees on the word "'neath." Spread arms to side, palms

up, for the word "spreading." Quickly touch hands to chest and head, and thrust both hands upwards overhead on the words "chestnut tree."

Repeat all of the above once.

PART 2: Starting on outside foot (man's left, lady's right), do two heel-and-toe steps (touch heel forward, toe backward and repeat). Run forward 4 steps, starting on outside foot. Then take 2 slow stamps in place.

Repeat PART 2.

Repeat dance from beginning. It can become a change-partner dance by having men move forward to next lady on the last 2 stamps.

