



THE LAMBETH WALK

As reconstructed by Richard Powers

The Lambeth Walk became a huge dance fad in England in 1937-38, following its premiere in the 1937 musical *Me and My Girl* with Lupino Lane. The fad spread to the U.S. in 1938-39.

The original was a five-minute stage extravaganza. There have been many different ways of shortening the Lambeth Walk into a social dance routine, through 75 years of the folk process, and many revivals of *Me and My Girl*. This version is based on first generation 1938 and 1939 British films of the Lambeth Walk.

Couples begin side-by-side, woman on right, facing LOD, not touching.

A

Lambeth Walk Step:

Take 8 long walking steps LOD, woman beginning R and man beginning L. Swing the arms in opposition to walking, slightly lifting elbows as the arm swings forward, slightly leaning away from the lifted elbow. (This means you slightly lean away from your partner on the first step.) Then the man turns halfway to his right on the 7th and 8th steps.

Facing partner, hook L elbows and walk forward around each other 8 steps, turning as a couple CCW. The man turns halfway to his left on the 7th and 8th steps, to face LOD, and offers his R arm.

B (Chorus)

Couples hook inside elbows and walk forward LOD 3 long steps.

Rock Step: He rocks back on his R, then rocks forward L. She steps opposite. S-S-QQ-S timing.

Repeat this pattern LOD on opposite feet.

Release elbows and cast off away from partners, walking in 3/4 of a circle in 3 walking steps, ending facing partner. Jump onto both feet, feet apart in a slight crouch, knees bent, on the 4th count. Then do the Cockney Salute.

The Cockney Salute:

There are also many versions of the Cockney Salute. This is the basic one, from the original 1939 film:

Slap L palm onto above the L knee, slap the R palm above the R knee, repeat both, slap L palm onto above the L knee (5 slaps). Clap hands together. Raise R hand, led by the R thumb sticking out, over R shoulder, leaning back. The timing is cakewalk timing, in the same cadence as saying, "DO-ing the LAM-beth WALK, OY!"

Other versions involve crossing hands over to slap the opposite knee, or slapping palms to the opposite elbow, rolling the crossed arms over each other, and more.

C

Turning to face LOD, solo (not taking elbows), take 4 long Lambeth Walk Steps LOD, starting to turn left on the 3rd and 4th steps.

Repeat taking 4 Lambeth Walk Steps to the center of the hall. (W behind M)

Repeat taking 4 Lambeth Walk Steps RLOD.

Repeat taking 4 Lambeth Walk Steps toward the outside. (M behind W)

Thus the path is a square with rounded corners.

D (Chorus)

Couples hook elbows to repeat the Chorus B from above.

E (Break)

Face partners and Do-Si-Do around each other, passing R shoulders, in Lambeth Walk style for 8 steps.

Repeat the entire dance twice more. End on the final "OY!", without continuing on to the do-si-do.