

**Tidbinbilla**

Robert Mahony 14/01/2007

**Notes:** Written on a Sunday bike ride out to Tidbinbilla and back.**Speed:** 120 beats/minute.**Tune:** 32 bar contra.**Level:** easy.**Dance structure:** Duple improper.**Notes for the caller:** The progression is best done as described in the bracket to get the dance to flow. It will still work if you do a normal ladies chain and then simply turn back-to-back with your neighbour to progress, but there will be less momentum into the balance and swing.

Pt	Beats	Move
A1	[16]	Balance and swing neighbour (end in side lines)
A2	[8]	Men left hand allemande 1½
	[8]	Right hand allemande 1½ with partner
B1	[8]	Women left hand allemande 1 turn and return to partner.
	[8]	Partner swing.
B2	[8]	Rights and lefts through
	[8]	Ladies chain to progress. (Ladies cross right, gents turn ladies under left hand into side lines, pull by left to progress.)

### A Cast of Stars

Robert Mahony 10/09/2006, and Peter Foster 03/10/2007

**Notes:** A dance based around the cast of stars movement that seemed a cute idea at the time. Peter suggested some modifications to the A part to incorporate a partner swing rather than a neighbour swing.

**Speed:** 120 beats/minute.

**Tune:** 32 bar contra.

**Level:** Medium.

**Dance structure:** Duple improper.

**Notes for the caller:** The cast of stars movement is harder to write down and explain than to do. It is a fluent movement with each person walking interlocking figures of eight and loops through the set.

Pt	Beats	Move
A1	[8]	Men left allemande 1+1/2 (actually a 1+1/4)
	[8]	Swing partner (on women's side)
A2	[8]	Rights and left through
	[8]	Ladies chain
B1/B2	[32]	Cast of stars
		[4] Men cast while women cross. (Men cast (L sh) one place (to womans place) while women RH turn 3/4 and let go ready to cast. Women's movement is the same as for the start of a ladies chain.)
		[4] Women cast while men cross. (Women cast one place (L sh) while men RH turn 3/4. Men hold on, women join in to make a star (hands across)) (Note: women will always join the star in front of their partner.)
		[8] RH star (hands across) once around.
		[4] Men cast while women cross.
		[4] Women cast while men cross.
		[8] RH star once around. (Release from star and progress with men flowing into left allemande while women can loop out and back in with a twirl to flow into swing.)

### A Happy Face

Robert Mahony, 30/09/2006.

**Notes:** Two circles make the eyes. The Ladies chains make the nose. The hey is the mouth. Perhaps just ignore this and do the dance.

**Speed:** 120 beats/minute.

**Tune:** 32 bar contra.

**Level:** Easy/Medium

**Dance structure:** Duple improper.

**Notes for the caller:** Inexperienced dancers have to count the places in the hey – don't forget to count the turn around at the end.

Pt	Beats	Move
A1	[8]	Circle L $\frac{3}{4}$
	[8]	Swing partner (on sides)
A2	[8]	Circle L $\frac{3}{4}$
	[8]	Swing neighbour (on sides)
B1	[8]	Ladies chain across
	[8]	Ladies chain back. (face neighbour along side lines)
B2	[16]	Half a hey across the set and progress. (R Sh neighbour, W L Sh, R sh partner, M L Sh, R Sh neighbour and progress)

## The Slalom

Written by Robert Mahony, 30/04/2006.

**Notes:** Sidmouth festival has a whole series of American social dances as part of the program. Dancing there in 2003 was the first time I was exposed to patter call square dancing and I particularly enjoyed some of the Allemande moves around the square. Three years later a move that may be something like that but may also be something completely different seemed a good idea for a contra dance. The side lines allemandes are something like a slalom course – hence the name.

**Speed:** 112 beats/minute.

**Tune:** 32 bar contra.

**Level:** Difficult. (The ends of the contra line are especially tricky)

**Dance structure:** Duple improper (or Sicilian circle to avoid the tricky ends). Double progression.

**Notes for the caller:** In duple improper the slalom move must wind around the end of the set. The dancers must remember two things at the ends of the set

- 1) Never swap over.
- 2) Every move on the end of the set *must* end facing back down the contra line.

These two rules should make everything work.

If you have an even number of couples in a contra line then by starting in progressed position all dancers will be active for the whole dance. To reach progressed position, line up in duple improper as normal and progress one place without changing sides at the end. The couples at the end are not standing out, as the slalom will include them and the first progression will incorporate them in the B part of the dance. The second progression brings a new couple out of the dance line to be an end couple. If you have an odd number of couples then you must ensure that the couple standing out has not swapped over as would be normal in a contra, this couple will be incorporated in the slalom and be part of the dance from there on. At the other end the first progression will leave a couple standing out of the B part. This couple must swap sides as normal to re-enter the dance the next time through. Alternatively, do the dance in Sicilian circle.

Pt	Beats	Move
<b>A1</b>	[12]	Slalom right [16 beats]
		[2] Half turn <b>right</b> neighbour ( <i>change places and reverse direction with neighbour</i> ) ( <i>free couples at end will do this move with their partner</i> )
		[2] Pull by <b>right</b> ( <i>the person you just turned</i> ) along side lines.
		[2] Pull by <b>left</b> along side lines.
		[2] Half turn <b>right</b> ( <i>change places and reverse direction</i> )
		[2] Pull by <b>right</b> along side lines.
		[2] Pull by <b>left</b> along side lines.
	[4]	<b>Right</b> hand star in set ½ way. (end facing along side lines in direction of progression.) Ends should either (if they started as a free couple) have no one to dance with and simply line up facing into the lines here, or (if they were in a set) finish the RH star facing out of the set and start the next slalom move with their partner.
		(All couples have progressed one place at this point in time but are swapped over onto the opposite side line from normal.)
<b>A2</b>	[12]	Slalom left
		[2] Half turn <b>left</b>
		[2] Pull by <b>left</b>
		[2] Pull by <b>right</b>
		[2] Half turn <b>left</b>
		[2] Pull by <b>left</b>
		[2] Pull by <b>right</b> ( <i>all turn into the set</i> )
	[4]	<b>Left Hand star</b> in set ½ way. ( <i>this is with a new group of 4</i> )
<b>B1</b>	[4]	Ladies retain hold and allemande left ¼ then pull through to their partners, while men turn out over right shoulder to receive partner
	[12]	Swing partner on sides
<b>B2</b>	[8]	Ladies Chain across
	[8]	Ladies slingshot, half hitch and pull by left. (4 beats) Ladies half turn <b>right</b> with opposite lady then pull by back to gent. (2 beats) Gents turn ladies under into original places holding left hands. You should be facing your neighbour in progression direction along side lines. (2 beats) Pull by left for the second progression

## The Nightmare

Written by Robert Mahony, 20/03/2004.

**Notes:** An unusual dance a little like the Levi Jackson's Rag. In general I am not keen on playing for Beckett formation contra-dances as I find that dancers often find them difficult to learn. One morning, I dreamt a particularly ugly scene where a Beckett formation dance was stuffed up spectacularly by a faceless and accusing dance crowd. On waking I found that, along with the feeling of guilt, I could still remember the essence of the dance that was meant to be. Somewhat hesitantly, I wrote it down.

As dreams are wont to do, the memory was not entirely logical. The set I had imagined wasn't quite in Beckett formation, rather I had combined a memory of the Levi Jackson's Rag into a contra formation. The dream involved contra lines with the active couples progressing down line of dance with 4 side couples inactive, each group of five couples forming a horseshoe. For the modified version, the progression keeps all couples in the one set to avoid end couples having to wait up to 5 times through the dance before they could rejoin the dance. Dreams don't show what goes on in peripheral vision.

**Speed:** 112 beats/minute.

**Level:** Very Difficult (probably to hard to do really)

**Tune:** 32 bar raggy real.

**Dance structure:** A1, A2, B1, B2.

**Set:** 5 couples in horseshoe formation (as for Levi Jackson's Rag)

W1	M1
M2	W3
W2	M3
M4	W5
W4	M5

**A1:** 16 beats:

M1&W1 lead down inside set. Side lines single file to top of set, and lead down inside set with partner that you meet from the other side line. On reaching the bottom of the set the M1 draws the W1 across in front of him and the couple casts back to top of set on opposite sides. Each couple follows in turn (swapping place at the bottom of the set) and returning to the set in the opposite line to where they started.

M1	W1
W3	M2
M3	W2
W5	M4
M5	W4

**A2: (measures 1-4)** 8 beats

**Circles and cross**

**(For each ½ circle move the men end up in the same positions)**

M1W3 and M2W1 do half circle and then men cross back to place.

M3W5 and M4W2 do half circle and then men cross back to place.

M5W4 gypsy left and back by the right.

M1	W3
W1	M2
M3	W5
W2	M4
M5	W4

**A2: (measures 5-8)** 8 beats

M1W3 gypsy left and back by the right.

M2W1 and M3W5 do half circle and then men cross back to place

M5W4 and M4W2 do half circle and then M1 and M2 cross back to place

M1	W3
W5	M2
M3	W1
W4	M4
M5	W2

**B1: (measures 1-4) 8 beats**

M1W3 and M2W5 do half circle and then men cross back to place  
M3W1 and M4W4 do half circle and then men cross back to place  
M5W2 gypsy left and back by the right.

M1            W5  
W3            M2  
M3            W4  
W1            M4  
M5            W2

**B1: (measures 5-8) 8 beats**

M1W5 gypsy left and back by the right – end facing out side lines.  
M2W3 and M3W4 do half circle and then men cross back to place  
M4W1 and M5W2 do half circle and then men cross back to place

M1            W5  
W4            M2  
M3            W3  
W2            M4  
M5            W1

**B2: 16 beats**

M1W5 cast out with sidelines following.

Couples 1 and 5: On reaching the bottom of the set the M1 draws W5 in front and both M1 and W5 proceed to take their own partner W1 and M5 who are last in line casting down the outside of the set. On reaching the bottom of the set M2 draws W4 in front and both M2 and W4 join their own partners (W2 and M4) who are casting down the outside of the set. Finally M3 and W3 will reach the bottom of the set. M1W1 are in position 3 and need to lead a couple of steps to position 1 at the top of the set before swinging. M2W2 need to lead diagonally across the set to position 3 where M1W1 have just left. M3W3 meet at the bottom of the set and need to lead into position 4 that has just been vacated by M2W2. All couples have time for a very brief swing.

	W5	M5		W1	M1
M1		W2		M2	W3
W1		M2	→	W2	M3
M3		W4	renum.	M4	W5
W3		M4		W4	M5

Note that couple 1 progress to position 2, couple 2 to position 3, couple 3 to position 4 and couple 4 to position 5. Couple 5 progress to the top of the set and take position 1. Repeat the dance 5 times for a full progression.

**Variation:**

Rather than the half circles and men crossing moves in parts A2 and B1 it is possible to do a series of ½ ladies chains. This is how I originally saw the dance in my dream (well how it was meant to go), but getting this to work well needs a lot of practice.

For example the A2 part would go.

**A2: (measures 1-4) 8 beats**

M1W3 and M2W1 do half ladies chain across set.  
M3W5 and M4W2 do half ladies chain across set.  
M5W4 gypsy left and back by the right.

**A2: (measures 5-8) 8 beats**

M1W3 gypsy left and back by the right.  
M2W5 and M3W1 do half ladies chain up/down set.  
M5W4 and M4W2 do half ladies chain up/down set.

## Los Higueros

Written by Robert Mahony, 29/09/2002.

**Notes:** A fast waltz written for a South American type feel tune. The dance is written particularly for the tune 'Los Higueros'. Note that the pivot steps in part B take two beats each. 3 pivot steps take 6 beats or two bars of music, ie. |(1 2) (3 | 1) (2 3)|. The cross bar rhythm is one of the characteristics of the tune Los Higueros.

As played by BLT, Los Higueros has 64 bars of A part, repeated first time through the tune and then a single 64 bars of A part the second time through the tune. The A part variation can be used to avoid dancing the A part of the dance four times.

**Speed:** 160-180 beats/minute.

**Tune:** Los Higueros. Alternatively any fast South American feel waltz, 'La Patida' etc, be careful of the split rhythm in the B part. The dancers may need some guidance at first to get this rhythm correct.

**Set:** Couples dance

**Dance structure:** A, A, B, B

Pt	Bars	Move
<b>A1</b>	[2]	Turn out single
	[2]	Two hand open turn (anti-clockwise) to change places
	[2]	Mans turns lady into a sweetheart hold – ending facing forward. <i>Mans left hand (ladies right) forward and over. Continue turning during move in order to finish facing forward</i>
	[2]	Lady unwinds <i>Man releases his left hand. Lady unwinds retaining hold with mans right hand. Pull into waltz hold.</i>
<b>A2</b>	[2]	Waltz on (only two waltz steps)
	[6]	Triple twirl: Mans left hand in ladies right. <i>[2 bars] turn lady away and under (lady turns clockwise). [2 bars] change places with man passing under joined hands (man turns anti-clockwise). [2 bars] change places with lady passing under joined hands (lady turns anti-clockwise)</i>
<b>B1</b>	[4]	Pivot and waltz - 3 Pivot steps and 2 waltz steps: <i>Man leads with left on pivot but must lead with the right foot in the waltz steps.</i>
	[4]	Pivot and waltz - 3 Pivot steps and 2 waltz steps (out-of-phase) <i>Continue in the same direction of travel. Note that the man must lead with his right foot for the pivots and with his left foot for the waltz on steps.</i>
<b>B2</b>	[2]	Lunge. <i>Any latin American lunge or dive move (or approximation) will do. Eg. Lady with back to direction of dance. Man steps forward on left, lady steps back on right (1 bar). Stand up (1 bar).</i>
	[6]	Triple twirl: Mans left hand in ladies right.

### A variation (32 Bars).

- 8 bars: Swirl turns.  
*Cross hand hold, right hands over left - take eyes.  
Lady turns under (2 bars), man turns under (2 bars), lady under (2 bar).  
Release left hands, man turns out (not under) passing ladies right hand into his left behind his back as he turns, end in ball-room hold (2 bars).*
- 2 bars: Waltz on.
- 6 bars: Triple twirl: Mans left hand in ladies right. (keep this hold)  
*(2 bars) turn lady away and under.  
(2 bars) change places with man passing under joined hands (man turns anti-clockwise – man does not change hands).  
(2 bars) change places with lady passing under joined hands (lady turns)*

**Ellens Concerto.** Written by Robert Mahony, 1997

**Notes:** A dance in the Playford style modelled on the 'Queen of Sheba'. To be danced quite fast. Written for the music Ellen's Concerto (Allegro).

**Speed:** 120+ beats/minute.

**Tune:** Ellens Concerto. Alternatively any classical sounding reel. Can be danced to 'Queen of Sheba'. Requires 3 times 32 bar reels (A, B & C) for once through the dance.

**Level:** Medium

**Dance structure:** 4 couple improper longways set: Couples number 1-4 from top. 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> couples improper.

**Notes for the caller:** There needs to be a full sets worth of free space between the back wall of the room and bottom set.

Pt	Beats	Move
A1	[8]	Up an back a double
	[8]	Turn in one-and-a-half <i>Turn in towards partner and continue a walking turn 1 ½ times round to finish facing down the set. Takes eight steps without pause.</i>
A2	[8]	Down an back a double
	[8]	Turn in one-and-a-half <i>Couples end facing up set.</i>
A3	[16]	Banana cast <i>Couple 1 cast out and down behind set, all couples follow. As couple progress they come together and touch inside hands (after 4<sup>th</sup> couple is out of the way) and then (on reaching bottom of set) cast out and back to the top of the set</i>
A4	[16]	Cast and two hand turn <i>Cast as though a banana cast but when couple 1 reach bottom of the set they take two hands in open turn for 8 beats to finish on the their side of the set. Couples finish the move in reverse order</i>
B1	[16]	Arches <i>Couples 1 and 2 (resp. 3 and 4) take inside hands along side lines. Arch across (4 beats). California turn lady to swap places (4 beats). Arch back and California turn to place.</i>
B2	[8]	Half rights and lefts. <i>Right hand across and then left hand with the person you have just arched with. Keep facing out of the set at the ends. Couples are now in order 3, 4, 1, 2 from top of set</i>
	[8]	Ends cast, centre - half rights and lefts (across first) <i>End couples cast out and travel to the opposite end of set (bypassing other end couple). Centre couples do half right and lefts. Order of couples is now 2, 1, 4, 3 from top</i>
B3	[8]	Right shoulder Gypsy with partner
	[8]	Ends - Half rights and lefts (across first) <i>Couples are now in original order 1, 2, 3, 4 from top of set</i>
B4	[16]	Arches <i>Couples 1 and 2 (resp. 3 and 4) take inside hands (with neighbours) along side lines. Arch across (4 beats). California turn lady to swap places (4 beats). Arch back and California turn to place</i>
C1 - C3	[40]	Cascade Weave <i>Each couple in turn (beginning with couple 1) complete the following move, starting every 8 beats.</i>  <i>Couple 1, cast out from the top of set, man and woman weave separately down the line, outside couple 2, inside 3 and outside 4 and then crossing at the bottom of the set with a half right hand turn to be on the other side of the set. They remain in this position to provide structure for the following couples. The sequence for a single couple requires 16 beats.</i>  <i>Note that the set has moved a one set distance away from the band and that dancers should be on the opposite side of the set to which they began.</i>
	[8]	Advance: <i>All couples advance toward the band 8 steps.</i>
C4	[16]	Crossing banana cast: <i>Couples cast as though to do a banana cast, but instead of touching inside hands, man reaches across with his outside hand, and pulls the lady through to cast back up on the opposite side of the set.</i>