

## Notes for Deep Dive #5

David Smukler, October 4, 2020

**Mad Robin**                      The Dancing Master, 1687                      longways, duple minor  
As reconstructed by Cecil Sharp (1922)

- A1** 1-4 Gent 1 right-hand turn with corner  
5-6 Then a strong left-hand turn with his partner across, and...  
7-8 Cast down 1 place, gent 2 moving up
- A2** 1-4 Lady 1 left-hand turn with partner (now in second corner positions)  
5-6 Then a strong right-hand turn with gent 2 across from her  
7-8 And cast down 1 place *while* lady 2 move up
- B1** 1-4 Ones dance individually clockwise around neighbor: lady 1 up the center and then down the outside to place *while* gent 1 goes up the outside and down the center  
5-8 Ones 2-hand turn
- B2** 1-4 Twos dance individually clockwise around neighbor: lady 2 down the center and up the outside to place *while* gent 2 goes down the outside and up the center  
5-8 Twos 2-hand turn

A strong turn in each A-part (5-6) is necessary because of shortened time, and it also facilitates the cast.

Maintaining eye contact with partner throughout the “Mad Robin chase” in the B parts is considered part of the figure. When did that begin?

**Not in 1687:**

The 1. wo. cast up above the 2. woman and flip down the middle, the 1. man go up between, and then cast off below and turn hands

The 1. wo. go up the middle and cast off below the 2. wo. the 1. man cast up above the 2. man, and flip down the middle and turn his Partner

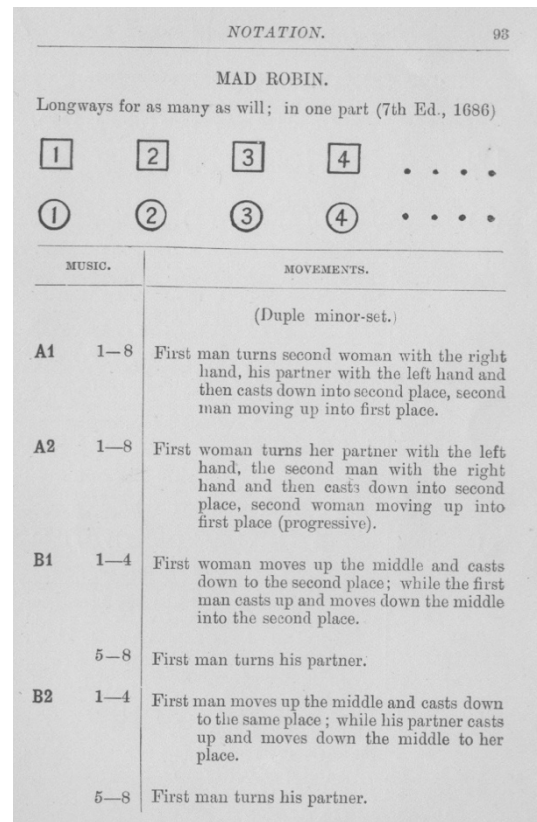
**Not in 1922 →**

It is **not even** really reflected in the directions in Keller and Shimer’s book *The Playford Ball* which was first printed in 1990, although by then it was well established. Keller and Shimer write:

1st woman move up center and cast down to 2nd place **while** 1st man move up outside and down the center to 2nd place... etc.

But in 2020, the term “Mad Robin” (or sometimes “double Mad Robin”) is routinely used to name a figure. It has been adopted in many recently composed dances in both ECD style and contra dance, and it usually implies that face-to-face eye contact.

It is also worth noting that in both the 17<sup>th</sup> century dance *and* in Sharp’s reconstruction the ones did the chase both times, once clockwise and once counterclockwise. I think it might have been Keller and Shimer who decided to give B2 to the twos.



**Beautiful Grove**

Nathaniel Kynaston, 1711

3-couple longways

As reconstructed by Andrew Shaw

- A1** 1-2 Ones set
- 3-4 Then cast down 1 place, twos leading up
- 5-8 Ones look right (gent to the threes, lady to the twos) and circle 3-hands round
- A2** 1-4 Ones lead through that end couple and cast left around one to change ends
- 5-8 Circle 3-hands round at the opposite end until the ones are back in the center
- B** 1-8 Ones turn over right shoulder into hey-for-3 on the side (first corners pass right shoulder to begin), the hey ends in lines-of-3 facing up or down and coming together (gent 1 between the twos and lady 1 between the threes)
- 9 Ones fall back *while* others meet your partner
- 10-12 Ones cast left to middle place on proper side *while* others lead partner out (up or down); twos turn to face partner
- 13-16 Twos 2-hand turn at the top and ones 2-hand turn moving down to the bottom place; *meanwhile* threes do a long cast up to middle place

Ends in 2-3-1 order. Repeat twice more to place.

It is useful for the ones to be clearly oriented at the end of each A part. In both cases they have just completed a circle with one end couple or the other and are in the center, backs to one another, and facing that end couple.

B (9-16) is squirrely. It may help to explain each couple's part separately:

1. Ones fall back, cast left to middle place on proper side, and 2-hand turn moving down.
2. Twos come together, face up and lead up a bit, turn to face each other, and do a 2-hand turn.
3. Threes come together, face down, lead down and keep moving into a wide cast up to middle place.

The image shows a musical score for 'Beautiful Grove', a longway for as many as will (15). The score is written on three staves. Below the staves is a large block of text providing instructions for the first couple's part. The text reads: 'Note the 1st Strain twice the last once. The 1st cu. set and cast off; the 1st man take hands with the 3rd cu. and go half round the 1st wo. do the same with the 2nd cu. at the same time - fall back the 1st man cast up, the 1st wo. cast off at the same time, then the 1st man take hands with the 2nd cu. and go half round, the 1st wo. do the same with the 2nd cu. - the 1st cu. go the key sides improper with the 2nd and 3rd cu. 1st cu. fall back the 1st man cast off, the 1st wo. cast up at the same time both turn in the 2nd cu. place proper -'

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***Michael and All Angels***      Fried de Metz Herman, 1991      longways, duple minor  
Tune: Air by Henry Purcell (1690 - “Let monarchs fight for power and fame” from *Dioclesian*)  
adapted by Fried de Metz Herman

- A1**      *First corners trade places as follows:*  
1-2      A tight right shoulder round each other  
3-4      Cast left around neighbor (gent down, lady up)  
5-8      Left-hand turn once, ending close, and fall back
- A2**      *Second corners, the same in mirror image:*  
1-4      Left shoulder round each other, cast right around partner (gent up, lady down)  
5-8      Right-hand turn once, ending close, and fall back
- B**      1-2      Right-hand star, halfway  
3-4      First corners slide face-to-face past each other with 2 chassé steps  
5-6      Left-hand star, halfway (*ending gents above and ladies below*)  
7-8      All turn single right, expanding the circle  
9-12      Single file clockwise three-quarters round (*to progressed place*)  
13-16      Half pousette clockwise to home, lady 1 and gent 2 forward to begin  
17-18      Partners retain 2 hands, balance in and out  
19-20      Ones cast down *while* twos lead up

Having good control of your rate of movement is key in this dance. The A-parts move right along and having a sense of the destination is a good idea. A1 is for the first corners and ends with their changing places. A2 does the same for the second corners. There are four bars (12 steps) for that initial S-shaped path that accomplishes the change of places. That means there are only six steps to go all the way around each other, and then six more to cast around the dancer in your line. Once you have changed places, the pace begins to slow: three bars to go once around in a hand turn (pulling in at the end), and one more to fall back to place.

By contrast (Fried Herman loved contrasts), the movements in the B-part are either quite measured or exceptionally expansive. In either case, using all the music and not arriving early is what makes the dance sing. I find that both the single file and half pousette tend to end early. Make those larger while keeping your stride relatively small. (This may seem paradoxical, but either is a strategy to delay arrival.) The challenge is to remain in motion wherever possible.



**Henry Purcell**

# X Ackley

Chris Sackett, 2007

longways, duple minor

Tune: Jig du Jour by Jonathan Jensen

- A1** 1-4 Second diagonals cast right into large clockwise loop on own side ending at home but facing out; *meanwhile* others follow partner to orbit the set clockwise halfway, curl in to end in corner's place facing out, and partners join inside hands  
5-8 Partners lead out and fall straight back  
9-10 California twirl, bottom person going under (*might be right- or left-hand dancer*)
- A2** 1-4 Repeat A1 with roles exchanged: New second diagonals loop and the others orbit, end facing out with neighbor  
5-8 Neighbors lead out and fall back  
9-10 California twirl, again bottom person under (*all are progressed and improper*)
- B1** 1-4 Neighbors gate, ones forward  
5-8 Double half figure-8, ones cross up and twos cast down to begin
- B2** 1-4 Neighbors gate, ones forward (*same neighbors, other side*)  
5-8 Partners back-to-back

This romp of a dance is a perfect illustration of why it is good to examine a dance from all positions. It is the change of roles in A2 that is apt get a dancer off track. Everyone simply has to know it all, no matter their number or position, for the dance to run smoothly. When you do, it is glorious!

So, once you learn and understand the pattern, try to know for sure at the start of each A-part which part you will play: "Am I crossing (1<sup>st</sup> diagonal) or casting (2<sup>nd</sup> diagonal)?" You have about a microsecond to know. If you can spare some bandwidth during the final back-to-back for thinking about that, you'll come out ahead. Then, in A2, just do whichever you did not do before. And remember, when you change from a one to a two (or vice versa) the roles flip!

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## And... a bonus!

From our last deep dive, here is the almost-never-used tune for:

### A Trip to Killburn

Original Tune

1719

Musical notation for "A Trip to Killburn" (Original Tune). The notation is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff (measures 1-6) is marked with a circled 'A' and has chords G, G, D, G, D, G, D. The second staff (measures 7-11) is marked with a circled 'B' and has chords D, A, D, A, D, D, G, Em, B, Am, B. The third staff (measures 12-15) has chords Em, B, Em, D7, G, C, D, C, D, C, D, G. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.