



## Pillings or Scottish Country Dance Diagrams?

- Pillings and Scottish Country Dance diagrams are the same thing.
- First published by Mr F L Pilling in 1955.
- Taken over by a committee in 1967.
- “The little green book” is now in its 8th edition (2004) + a supplement (2009).
- Maybe as many as 1000 dances are coded in diagrams, and they keep coming.



# We have made a “Key to the symbols” on a card in a handy format.

KEY TO THE SYMBOLS					
○	Men	□	Women	↶	Cast off one place
A	Allemande			↶	Cast up one place
B	Balance in line			↷	Lead (or dance) down one place
D	Pass back to back			↷	Lead (or dance) up one place
DT	Double triangles			⊙	Six hands round and back
P	Poussette			⊙	Round to the left only
R	Repeat previous movement			⊙	Round to the right only
RA	Right hands across			)	Form arch
LA	Left hands across			→	Pass under arch
RL	Rights and lefts			⊞	Ladies' chain
S	Set	S <sub>4</sub> Set advancing		⊞	Mens' chain
T	Turn			└	First corner position
X	Cross over			└	Second corner position
∞	Reel of three			└	Partner's 1st corner position
∞∞	Reel of four			└	Partner's 2nd corner position
※	Clap			┌┐	Set to corners

↕	Advance ↑ and retire ↓	┌┐	Set and turn corners
※	Retire and advance	└└	Turn corners, partner, corners, partner
↔	Lead down and back Dance down and back	HS	Highland Schottische Setting
◇		PROM	Promenade
◇	Petronella movement for eight bars	CHAIN	Grand Chain
◇	Petronella turn (2 bars)	HSP	Highland Schottische Poussette
⊞	Petronella in tandem (2 bars travelling)		Other formations are indicated by their usual names
⊞	Slip steps with both hands joined		
Suffixes to Symbols			
R	with Right hand	⊙	Leading man's reel
L	with Left hand	⊕	Advancing
B	with Both hands	⊖	Retiring
Notes			
Spaces between full vertical lines represent eight bars unless otherwise stated		Broken vertical line halves space into four bar sections	
Movements bracketed are danced at the same time		Dance movement with hands joined	
1 2 RL	Numbers above symbols indicate couples dancing	Horizontal line halves a figure	
②③	Dancer follows route shown (full line for men broken line for women)	Dancers follow route shown (full line for men broken line for women)	

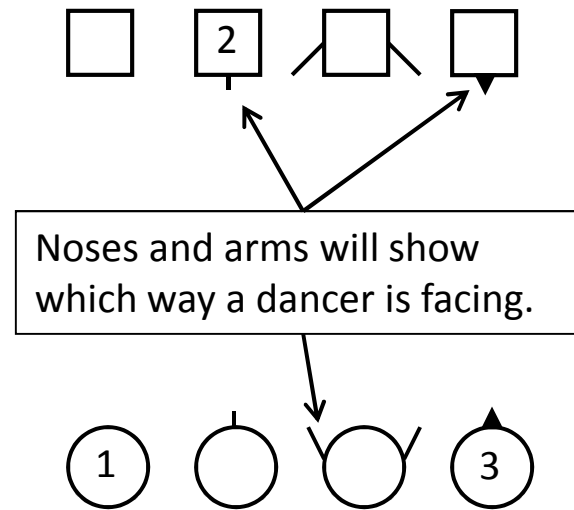
Not all the symbols are there but you will find the most common ones.  
New symbols are added as the need arises.



# Who is who?

Ladies are represented by a square

Men are represented by a circle



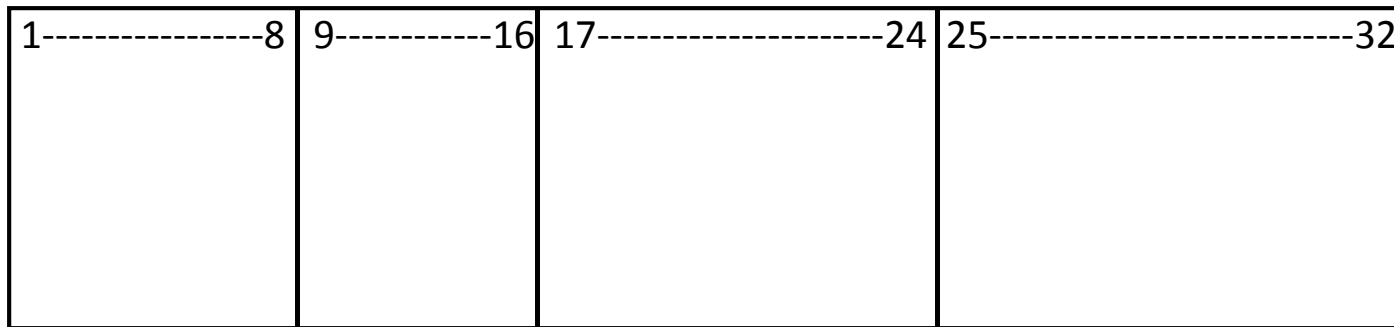
The number denotes which couple in the set the dancer is part of. Sometimes there will not be a number, not even a circle/square. Then it is either obvious which couple(s) is/are dancing or it will be indicated in some other way.



A diagram is divided into 8 bar chunks



Top of the  
set is here.

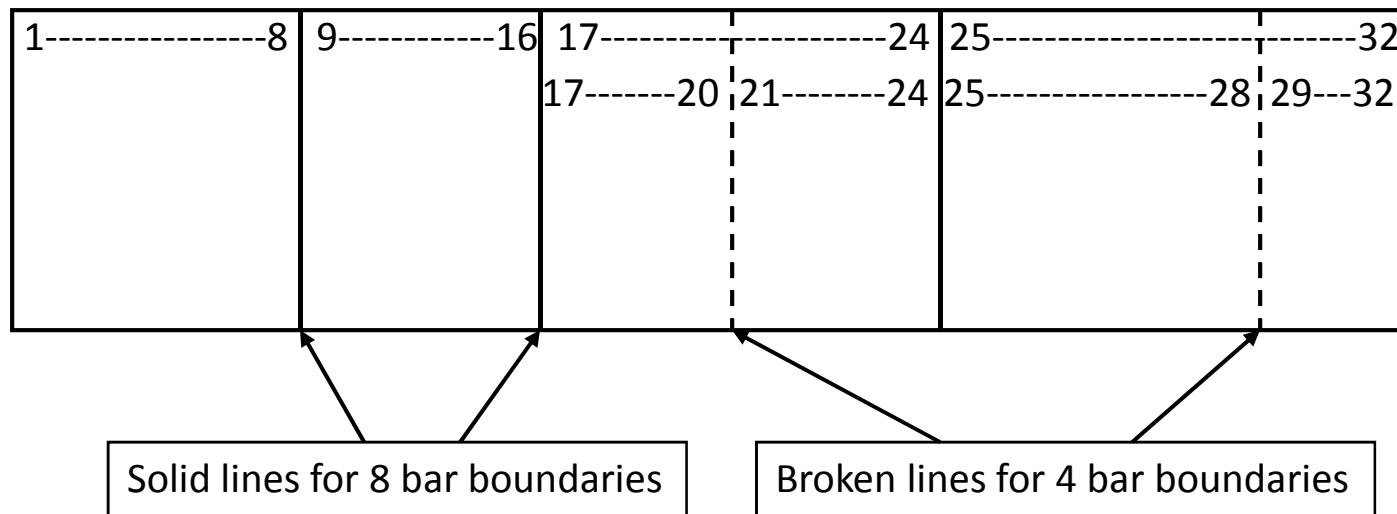


The 8 bar chunks are not necessarily equal in size.  
It depends on what happens inside them.

The top of the dance is always on/to the left.



An 8 bar chunk may be subdivided into two 4 bar parts

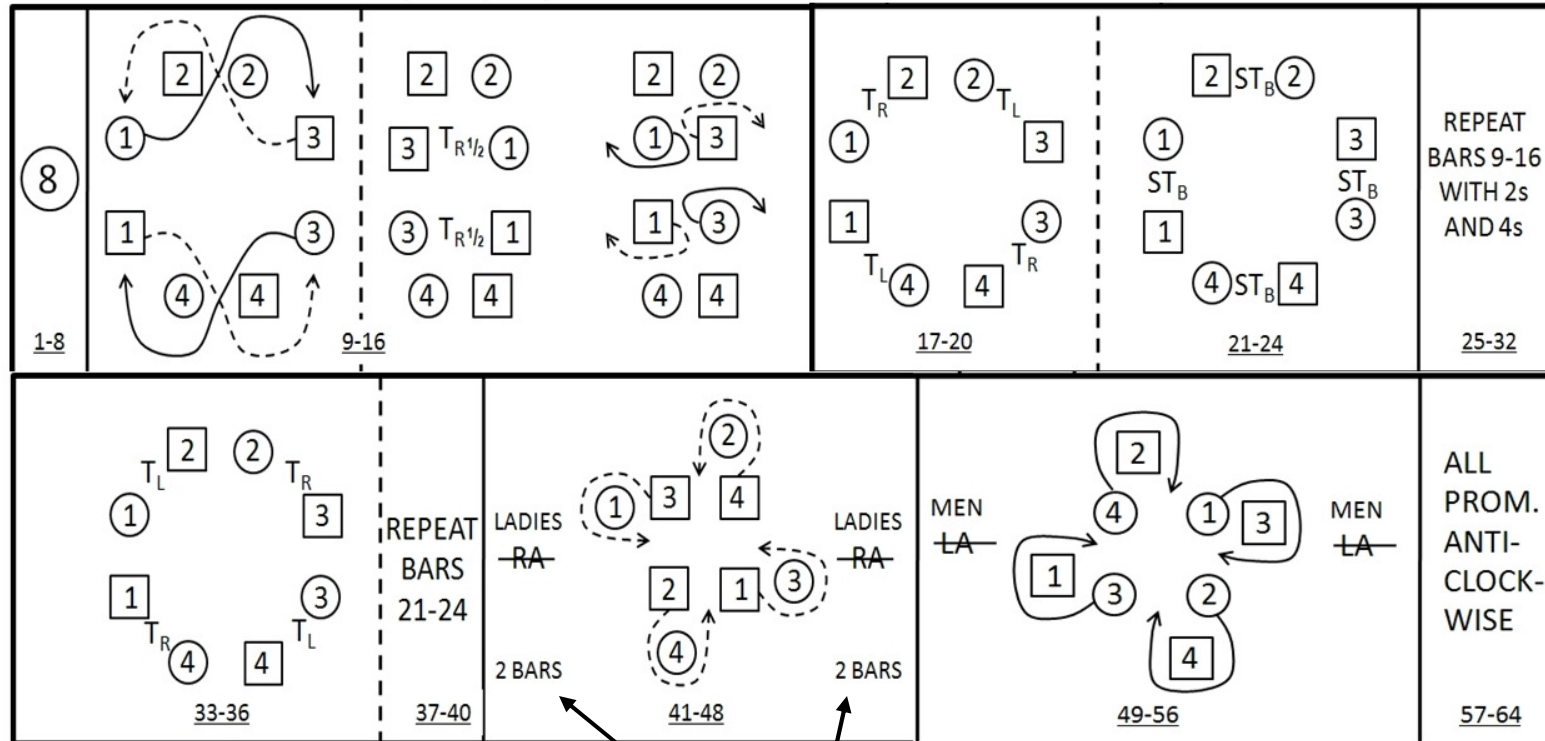


This technique is used to make the phrasing clearer



# Let us see how The Arctic Circle is divided up

## THE ARCTIC CIRCLE (R64) Sq. set



Sometimes even smaller parts are specified



The Arctic Circle could also look like this

The Arctic Circle		Sq Set	M S64+R64	J.Drewry				
(8)				All S&T Prt (SkCh)	<sup>25-40</sup> 2&4's Rep Bars 9-24	<sup>41</sup> Wm RA Rnd Opp M LS RA	<sup>49</sup> Men LA Rnd Opp Wm RS LA	<sup>57-64</sup> All Prom Anti-clk

I think I prefer our own version!



However, it is always an issue how much or how little information one should put into the diagrams.

You should never rely on diagrams for learning a dance.

The diagrams are only meant as an aide mémoire.

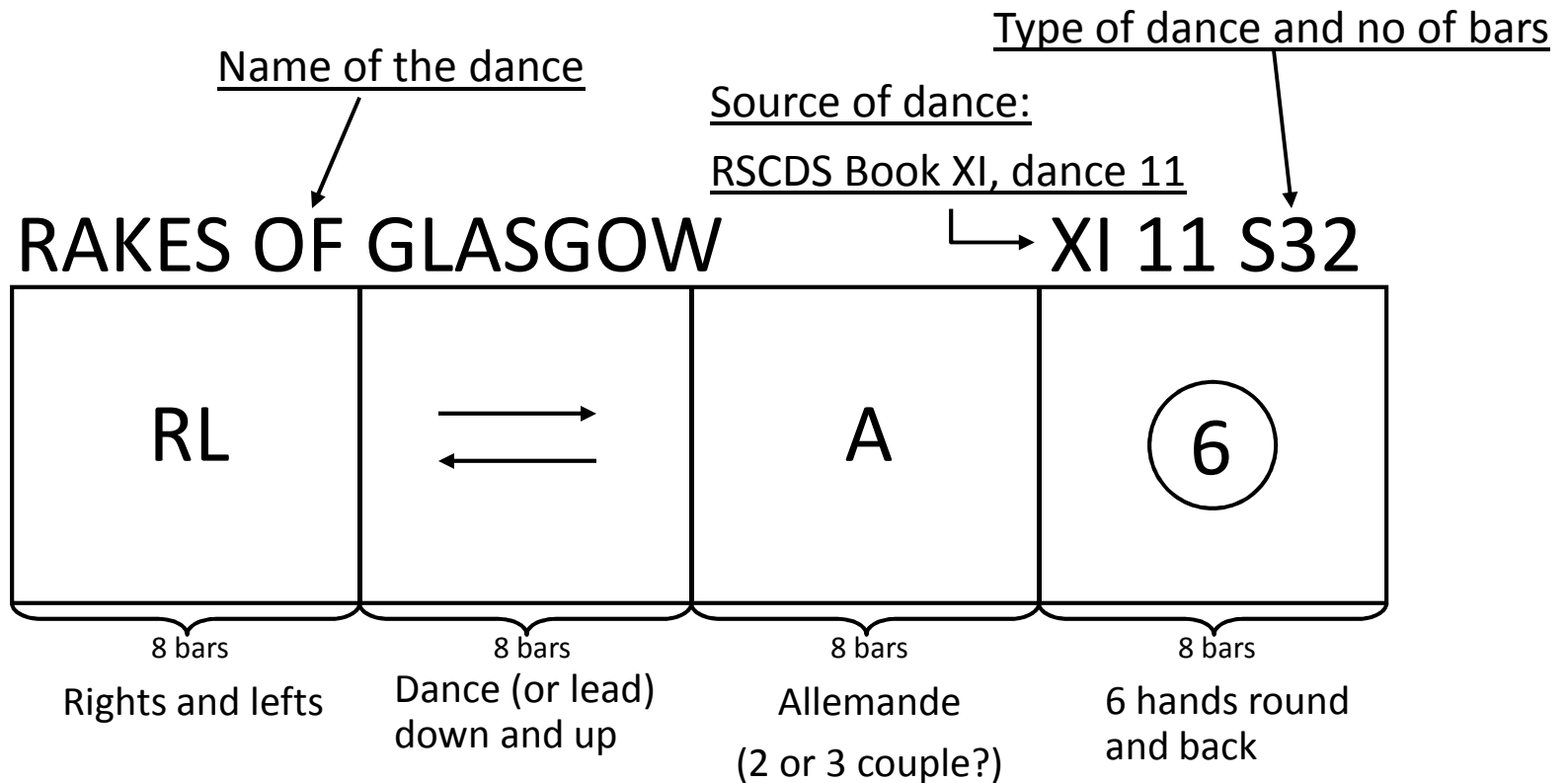
A quick glance, and we know how the dance starts!

So, how do we interpret them?





# Let's take a simple dance:



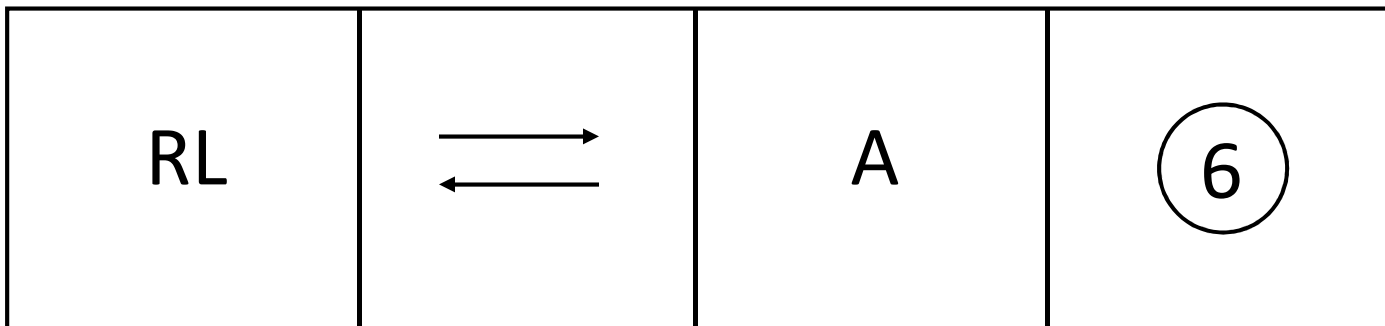
But, there are no ladies, no men! Who is dancing?  
And what about that Allemande?



## Who is dancing?

RAKES OF GLASGOW

XI 11 S32



If there is no explicit indication who is dancing a formation it is the **dancing couple** or the **leading couple** which is usually the **1st couple**.

They cannot do a Rights-and-Lefts all by themselves so there must be another couple involved. There is no couple above them so it must be **2nd couple**.

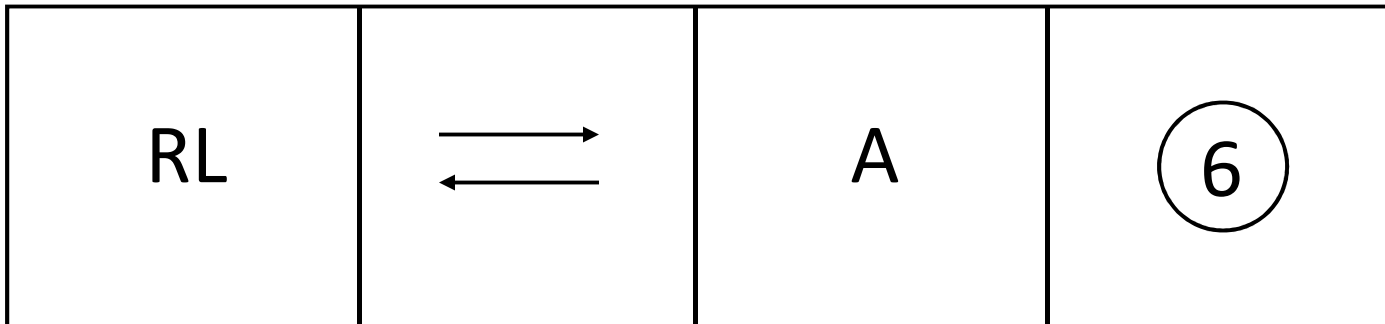
In other words, the first 8 bars translated into Minicrib: 1C+2C dance R&L



## Who is dancing (2)?

RAKES OF GLASGOW

XI 11 S32



Bars 9-16: Dancing (or leading?) down and up, 1st couple, obviously. Is it 'dance' or 'lead'? The diagram does not tell; we have to know. Since this formation is followed by an Allemande it is most likely a 'lead down and up'.

Bars 17-24: Allemande. Is it a two or three couple Allemande? It is a two couple Allemande. If it were a three couple Allemande it would be indicated.

Bars 25-32: Six hands circle round and back. In order to get the required number of hands we need to involve the next couple down the set, 3rd couple.



# Explicitly who is dancing?

## RAKES OF GLASGOW

## XI 11 S32

1 2 RL	1 → ←	1 2 A	2 1 3 ⑥
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To explicitly say who is dancing the number(s) of the couple(s) involved can be written above the symbol(s) for the figure(s). The numbers will also indicate in which order the couples are in the set (see bars 25-32).

In this dance that is regarded as superfluous information.



Not all formations have a symbol or a one- or two-letter abbreviation. Some are described with an easy to understand word, and sometimes even a Minicrib-like explanation.

## GOLDEN PHEASANT

XVI 9 J40

1 2 3 <b>CHAIN</b>	<b>P</b>	(6)	┌ S ─ T ┐	<b>DT</b>
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Bars 1-8: CHAIN = 'Grand chain' is one of these formations. Others are CHASE, the KNOT, PROM(enade) and RONDEL.

Bars 9-16: P = Poussette

Bars 17-24: Obvious.

Bars 25-32: The angles represent 2nd and 1st corner positions, as if you were looking into the corners (1st diagonally to the right and 2nd diagonally to the left). 'S = Set' and 'T = Turn'. This diagram says: Dancing couple 'Set and Turn corners', which also says something about the position of 1C at the end of bar 24.

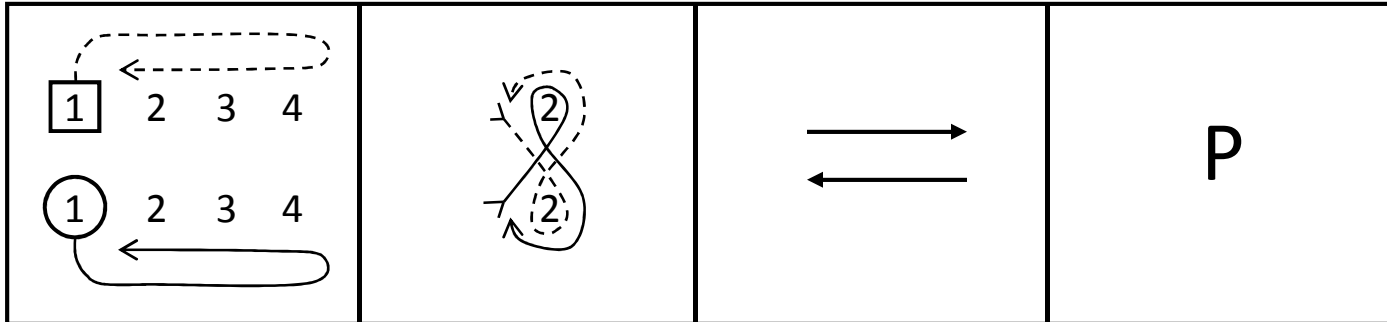
Bars 33-40: DT = 'Double Triangles'. (Do not confuse this with 'Pass back to back' and 'Turn' which would be denoted D<space>T, similar to S T above!)



# Some times words are not enough...

## CORN RIGS

IV 12 R32



Some times we must show exactly where a dancer is going. That is done by showing the actual path a dancer is taking. We do this by using lines: a solid line (————) for men and a broken line (-----) for ladies.

Bars 1-8: 1L and 1M cast behind their own lines down to 4th place, turn inwards and dance up to place. (A single line can say all this!)

Bars 9-16: 1C dance figure of 8 around 2C.

Bars 17-24: Obvious? Not quite! Reel time poussette, starting in the middle with both hands joined, could indicate 'dance' but the description says 'lead'!

Bars 25-32: Poussette



## More symbols...

DONALD BANE

XVII 12 S32

	<p>1 2 RA </p>	<p>1 3 LA</p>	<p></p>	<p><math>\overline{S}</math>   S   <math>\overline{S}</math>   S</p>
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is the symbol for 'Reel of three'. If there is a need for clarification on how the reel starts a small line is added which shows which way the head dancer goes into the reel. In this dance it will be a right shoulder reel on the men's side and a left shoulder reel on the ladies' side, in other words mirror reels.

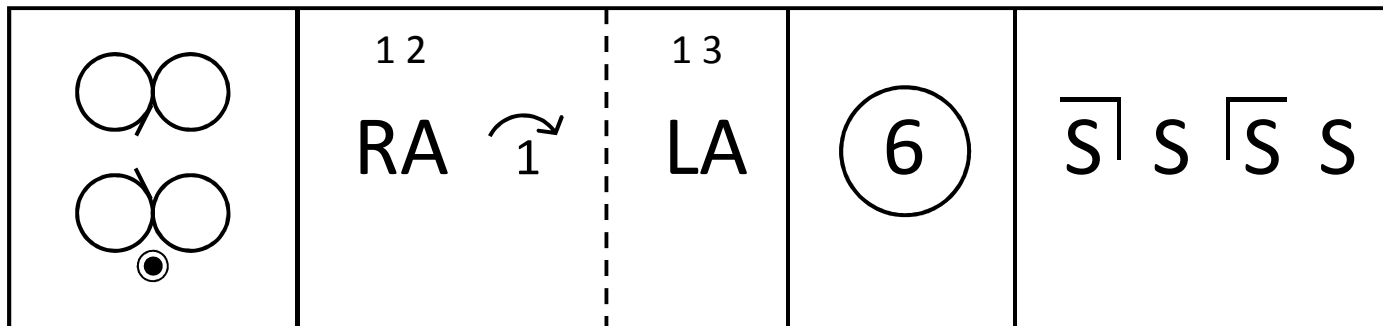
indicates 'lead man's reel' which is useful when there are more than one reel going on at the same time.



## ... and more...

DONALD BANE

XVII 12 S32



RA = right hands across all the way to places

LA = left hands across all the way to places

$\overset{\curvearrowright}{1}$  = cast off one place. The number tells you how many places to cast.

$\overset{\curvearrowleft}{1}$  = cast up one place. Again the number tells you how many places to cast.





## ... and even more...

DONALD BANE

XVII 12 S32

	<p>1 2 RA <math>\overset{\curvearrowright}{1}</math></p>	<p>1 3 LA</p>	<p>6</p>	<p><math>\overline{S}</math>   S <math>\overline{S}</math> S</p>
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$\overline{S}$  | S  $\overline{S}$  S These are all well known symbols by now, but put together like this, what do they mean?

(Hint: An S without 'adornment' means 'Set to partner'.)

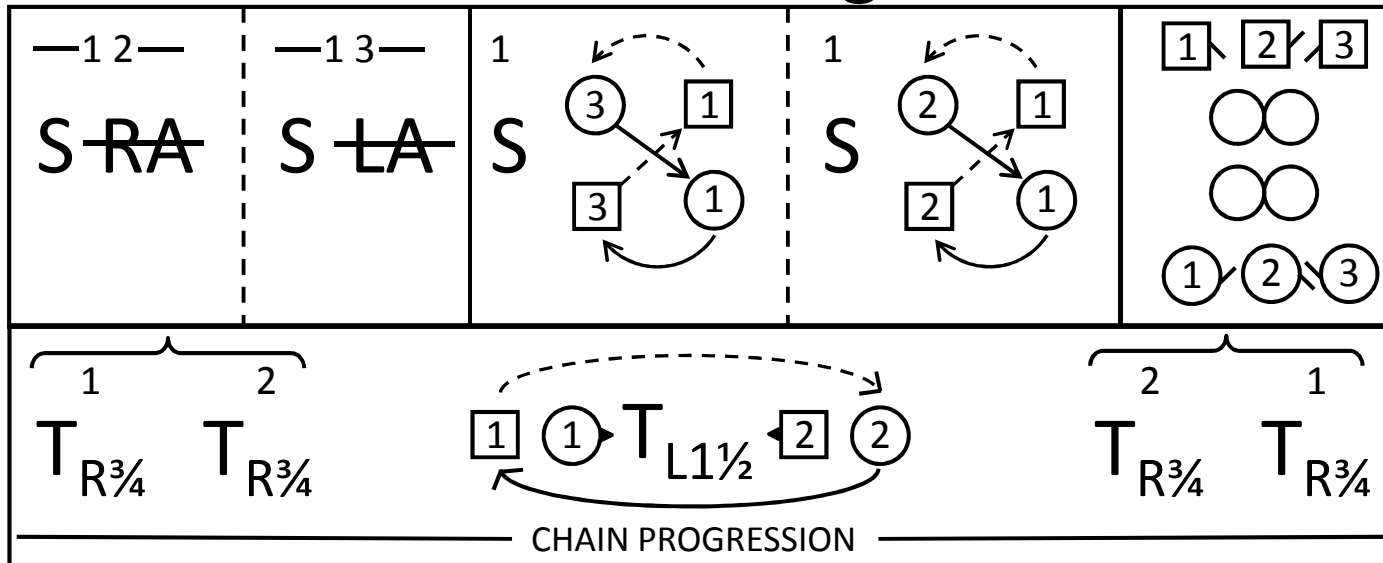
Answer: 'Hello-Goodbye' setting ending with petronella turn to 2nd places



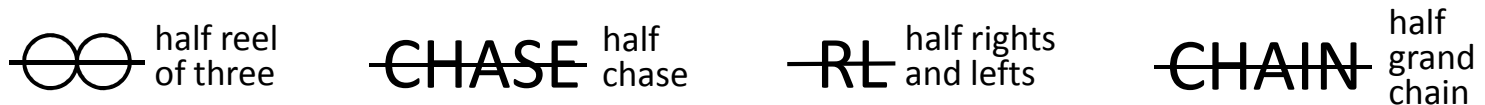
# Hmm, getting trickier? Not really.

## GLEN MOR

## Birmingham 1973 J32



Bars 1-8: RA = 'Right hands across' as we saw on the previous page. The horizontal line through ~~RA~~ means that you do half the formation. THIS GOES FOR ALL FORMATIONS. In other words, ~~LA~~ is half 'Left hands across'. **Other examples:**

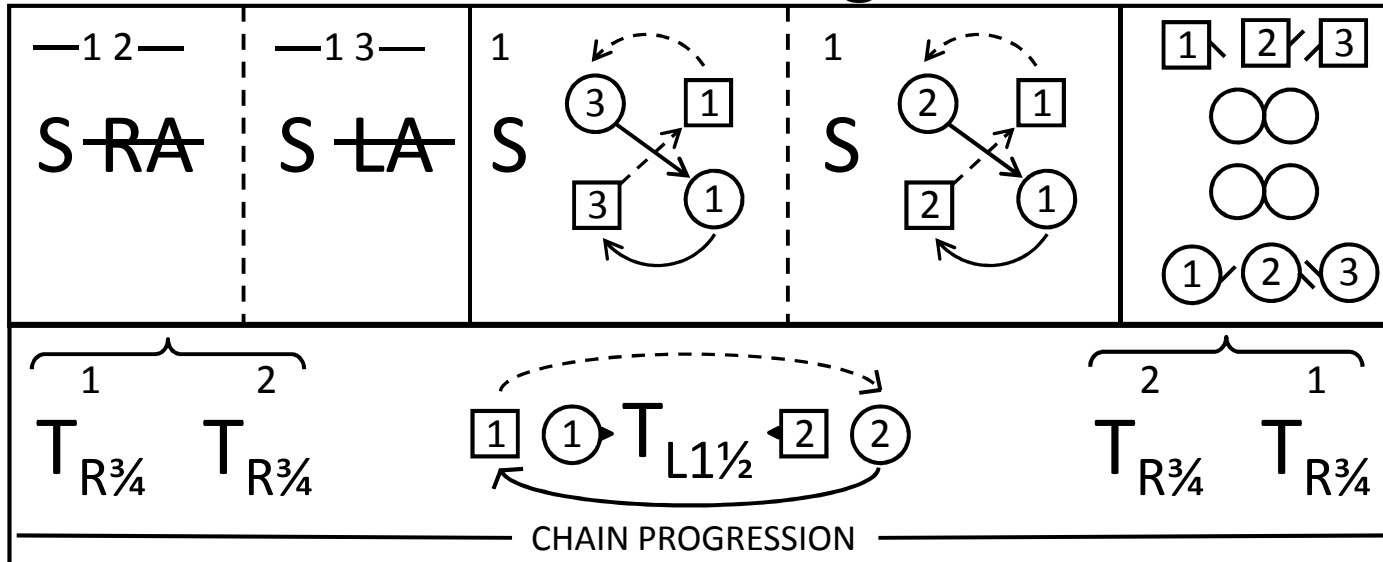


Bars 9-16: 1C set and then cast up while 3C cross down. And then the same again with 2C.



# GLEN MOR

# Birmingham 1973 J32



Bars 17-24: Here we have two reels on the sides and it is shown explicitly who goes where. (Mirror reels where 3C are head and dancing in and up.)

Bars 25-32: The friendly person who has diagrammed this dance could have written 'CHAIN PROGRESSION' and been done with it. However, she/he has gone to the trouble to explain how the formation goes. 'T = Turn', and the additional subscript  $R^{3/4}$  means 'Right hands three quarter round'. Then we are shown the actual progression, with the 1L & 2M dancing a half chase while 1M & 2L turn left hand one and a half time.

The horizontal brackets show formations which are danced at the same time.



We have seen how the system works.  
Let us do some summing up:

- The diagram is split into 8-bar parts by solid vertical lines.
- An 8-bar part may be subdivided into two 4-bar parts using a broken line.
- The top of the set is always the left end of the diagram.
- The name, origin and type of dance are always stated on the top line of the diagram.
- A lady is represented by a square; a man by a circle.
- They may have a 'nose' or 'arms' to indicate which way they are facing.
- The formations of the dance are shown using simple codes (called mnemonics) in the order they are danced.
- Unless obvious, the dancers involved in a formation are shown by numbers inside the symbols in the formation or above the code for the formation.
- We have seen that some of the symbols, like T and S, can have a suffix like  $T_B$  or  $S_2$  which gives further information about how to execute the formation.



# Which suffixes are there?

R = 'right hand'. Usually used with T (turn):  $T_R$ , and X (cross):  $X_R$

L = 'left hand'. Usually used with T (turn):  $T_L$  and X (cross):  $X_L$

B = 'both hands'. Usually used with T (turn):  $T_B$

⊙ = 'leading man's reel'. Used with reels

↑ = 'advancing'. Used with S (set):  $S_↑$

↓ = 'retiring'. Used with S (set):  $S_↓$

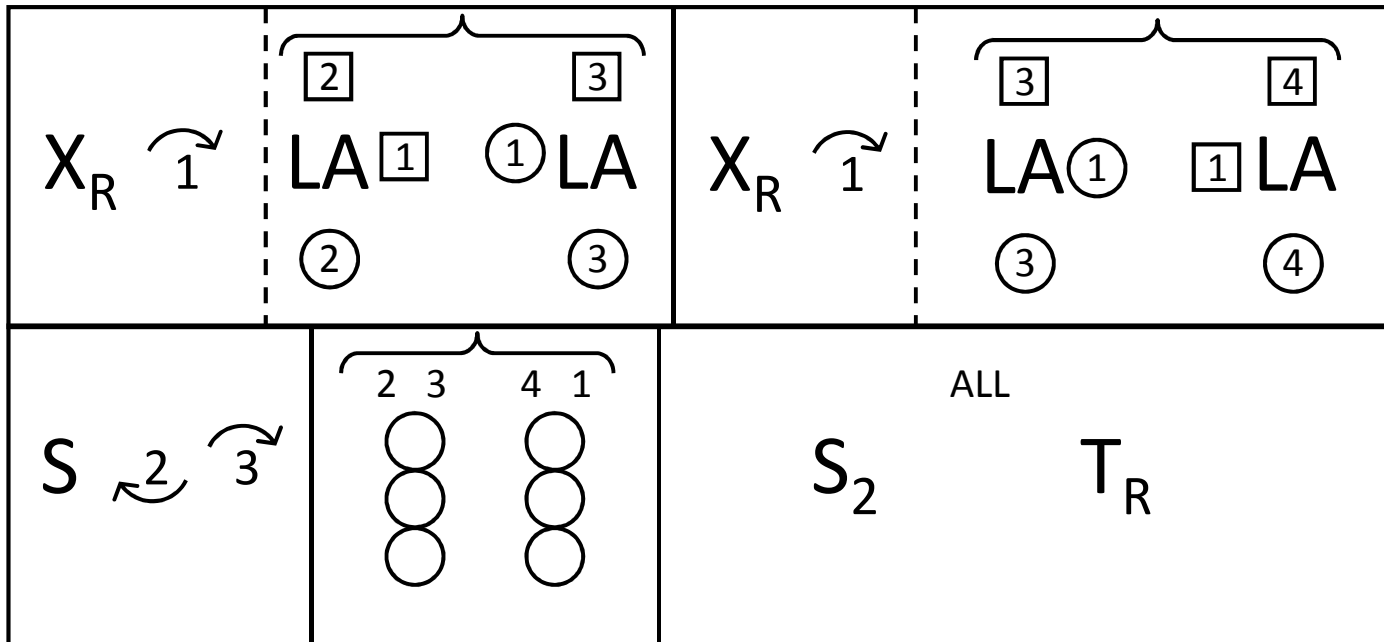
(Note: The formation 'Advance and retire' has its own mnemonic:  $↑↓$   
and 'Retire and advance' is denoted:  $↓↑$ .)

Sometimes we will see a number as a suffix, e.g.  $T_{R\frac{3}{4}}$  or  $T_{B1\frac{1}{2}}$  or  $S_2$ .  
This tells us how many times to perform the action, like 'set twice'.



# MISS JARVIS REEL

R40



**A couple of new symbols here:**

Bars 1-8: **Cross right hand**, cast off one place (four bars) and two simultaneous 'three left hands across' (four bars) where the dancers are specified.

Bars 9-16: Spot the differences from bars 1-8...

Bars 17-24: 1C set, **dance (or lead) up two places** and cast off three places.

Bars 25-32: Two **reels of four** across (dancers specified).

Bars 33-40: All couples **set twice** and turn right hand.



## What is Minicrib saying about it?

MISS JARVIS'S REEL (R4x40) 4C set

Stirlingshire Branch

1- 8 1s cross RH, cast 1 place, 1L dances LH across with 2s while 1M dances LH across with 3s

9-16 1s cross RH, cast to 3rd place, **1L dances LH across with 3s while 1M dances LH across with 4s**

17-24 1s set, lead up to top & cast to 4th place, 3s & 1s dance in to face 2s/4s in line across

25-32 2s+3s & 4s+1s dance full **diagonal reels** of 4 (2L+3M & 4L+1M pass LSh to start)

33-40 **All circle 8H round & back**

*Here there is clearly room for personal interpretation!*

If there is a difference between the Diagrams and Minicrib, who should you trust?

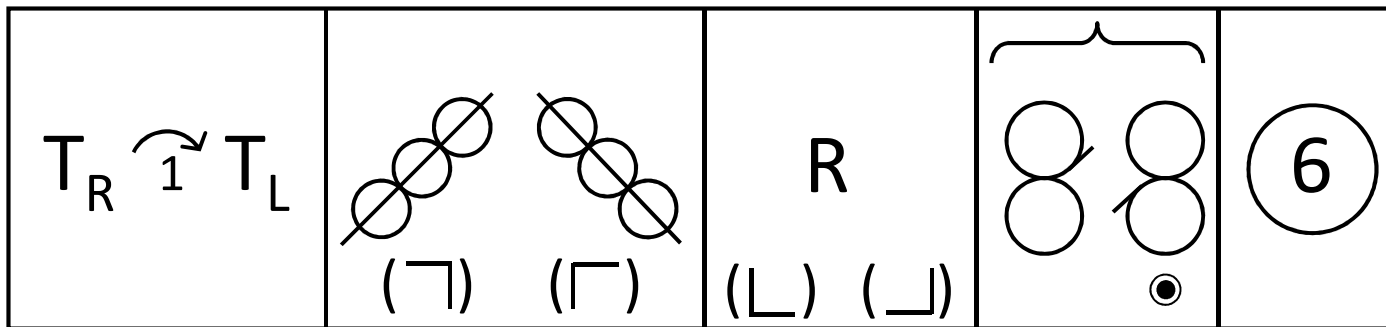
Neither the diagrams nor Minicrib tell the full story, and sometimes they don't even tell the same story!



# Finally a dance we all know and love...

## MAIRI'S WEDDING

## Cosh R40

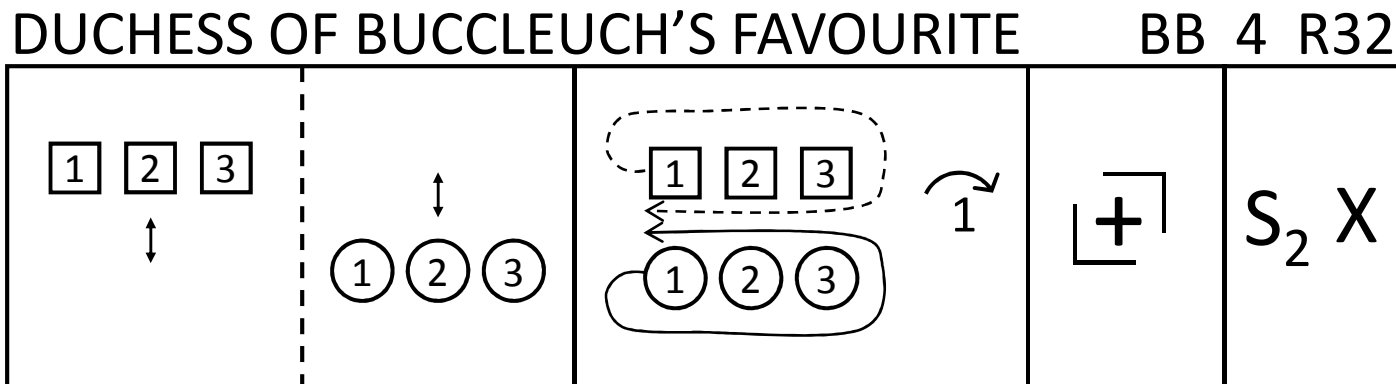


Anything new in here?





## And finally – a little test:



There is one symbol here we have not explained. Find it in your book or on your card. Form 3-couple sets and walk the dance.

## That's all! Thank you, and good night.