

Lull Me Beyond Thee: Reconstruction and Philosophy

Tim McDaniel, in the SCA Daniel de Lincoln; 25 March 2019

Cheat Sheet à la Terp Booklet

Lull Me Beyond Thee (Playford 1651)
(4 couples in a line, C3 C1 C2 C4, C2 and C4 improper) == In 1, Yes, 1 ==

M and W refer only to positions from Playford, not to identity. C1 and C2 are "mids". C3 and C4 are "ends". C1 and C2 are opposites for each other; C3 and C4 are opposites for each other.

```

      wall
    W3  W1  M2  M4
head  M3  M1  W2  W4      down
      wall

```

V1	Longways lines, double to meet & back (2x)	8;8
Ch1a	Ends double to meet as mids double out	4
	New sideways lines double back & meet a double; two-hand turn your opposite	8;4
Ch1b	Ends double out as mids double to meet	4
	New longways lines double back & meet a double; two-hand turn your partner	8;4
V2	Side R w/partner	8
	Side on the square: ends side L w/partner as mids side L with opposites	8
Ch2a	Longways lines double out; mids fall back a double as ends curve in to form circles	4;4
	Circle L full circle	8
Ch2b	Sideways lines double out; mids fall back a double as ends curve in to form circles	4;4
	Circle L full circle	8
V3	Arm R w/partner	8
	Arm on the square: ends arm L w/partner as mids arm L with opposites	8
Ch3a	Mids double out as ends pass partners and cross over a double	4
	Mids double back as each end doubles to meet opposite	4
	Mids form arches and double out as ends double under	4
	Take two hands with whom you're facing, half turn	4
Ch3b	Ends double out as mids pass opposites and cross over a double	4
	Ends double back as each mid doubles to meet opposite	4
	Ends form arches and double out as mids double under	4
	Take two hands with partner, full turn	4

Setup and numbering

This is my reconstruction of the English country dance "Lull Me Beyond Thee" (Playford first edition, 1651). The goal of the rest of this document is to be so complete that someone somewhat familiar with English Country Dance can dance my reconstruction just from this and common music. It is complicated because of the number of unusual movements, and because often two groups of people are doing different things simultaneously.

Start by lining up longways with four couples. W refers to a "woman's" position in Playford, and M to "man". "Up" is the end with the Presence or the music or whatever:

```

      wall
    W3  W1  M2  M4
up      M3  M1  W2  W4      down
      wall

```

This numbering is from Playford, but is not very important. What's important is whether a dancer is a "middle" (1 or 2) or "end" (3 or 4). Your partner is the person across from you, with the same number but different W/M letter. For the middles, your opposite is beside you: M1 and W2 are opposites; W1 and M2 are opposites. For the ends, your opposite is at the other end of the set: M3 and W4 are opposites; W3 and M4 are opposites.

People's notations don't change when they move. For example, M1 is always a middle with W1 as his partner and W2 as his opposite, regardless of where they are and who they're dancing with.

I use "the center" to refer to the general area where the middles start. "Out" means turning your back to the center, either facing the walls or facing up or down, depending. "In" is the opposite: facing the center.

"Sideways" refers to when the lines are instead running from wall to wall:

```

      wall
    W_  M_
up      W_  M_      down
    M_  W_
    M_  W_
      wall

```

The steps

Nota bene: in all the step listings below, moves in the same paragraph are done simultaneously, unless stated otherwise.

Turning or taking hands are often notated as taking 0 beats. That's not really possible. Instead, they are combined with the previous or upcoming moves.

It helps to note the repeating patterns in the choruses, as I interpret them. I call it a "cootie catcher" pattern. Each chorus starts with the set longways, and the middles take inside hands with their opposite and double out, while the ends head towards their opposites (the meeting place depends on which chorus). Halfway through a chorus, after 16 beats, the set is sideways. The chorus then repeats in a symmetric way, but with ends and middles swapping roles: whoever is now in the center takes inside hands and doubles out, while the others head towards

their partners in the same way that the ends did first. At the end of the chorus, after 32 beats, the set is longways again and everyone is home.

Verse 1: Take hands longways, double to meet, back, that again

Start in longways lines, facing your partner and holding hands four abreast:

-W3 --- W1 --- M2 --- M4-

-M3 --- M1 --- W2 --- W4-

Beats Steps

4 Double forward as a line to meet your partner

4 Double backwards to your original place

4 Double forward as a line to meet your partner

4 Double backwards to your original place

Chorus 1: sideways the line, two-handed turn

Beats Steps

0 Ends: quarter turn to face the center, take inside hands with your partner. Middles: half turn to face out, take inside hands with your opposite.

W3	W1 - ^ - M2	M4
>		<
M3	M1 - v - W2	W4

4 Middles: *small* double out. Ends: double towards the center to meet your opposites.

0 Middles: let go and quarter turn to face your opposite. All: take hands in sideways lines four abreast. Every person is now facing their opposite.

W1	M2
W3	M4
M3	W4
M1	W4

Beats Steps

8 Each line does a *small* double backwards, double forward to meet, take two hands with your opposite.

4 Do one full turn, let go.

For the full turn at the end there, four beats works for us. The biggest factor is that the music we use, from *Country Capers*, is slow and stately. Also, we have forward momentum from doubling forward. If needed, we

could do the double forward a beat or two faster and use it for the turn. If needed, the two-handed turn means that the dancers could give weight and therefore could do it tighter and faster.

Now the same thing but reversing the roles of middles and ends, making the lines longways again with everyone home:

Beats Steps

0 Middles: quarter turn to face the center, take inside hands with your opposite. Ends: half turn to face out (up or down), take inside hands with your partner.

W1 - v - M2

W3	M4
<	>
M3	W4

M1 - ^ - W4

4 Ends: *small* double out. Middles: double towards the center to meet your partners.

0 Ends: let go and quarter turn to face your partner. All: take hands in longways lines four abreast. Every person is now home and facing their partner.

8 *Small* double backwards as a line, double forward to meet, take two hands with your partner.

4 Do one full turn, let go.

Verse 2: side with your partner, side on the square

Everyone is home and facing their partner, not holding hands. I call this verse as "side right shoulders" then "side on the square". That is, the first time is done like normal siding for a set of couples. But the second time is aligned like in "If All The World Were Paper" or other dances with four couples aligned in a square set: in that kind of dance, the head couples do siding parallel to the presence, but the side couples do siding parallel to the walls.

Beats Steps

8 Side right shoulders with your partner.

8 Side on the square. Ends: side left shoulders with your partner. Middles: side left shoulders with your opposite.

Chorus 2: double out and circle squares

Beats Steps

0 Turn to face out, towards the wall. Take hands in longways lines, four abreast.

4 Double forward as a line.

4 Don't let go. Middles: double backward to your original place. Ends: wrap inwards to meet your opposite, then join free hands to form a square.

```

W3 - - M4
|       |
W1 - - M2

M1 - - W2
|       |
M3 - - W4

```

8 Turn the square one full circle clockwise back to your new place.

Each square should be precise, aligned with the walls.

Now do it again, but starting with sideways lines, then two squares longways from each other, getting back home.

Beats Steps

0 Turn out. Those closer to up, meaning couples 1 and 3: face up. Those closer to down, meaning couples 2 and 4: face down. Take hands in sideways lines, four abreast.

```

      W3  M4
      <|  |>
facing W1  M2  facing
      <|  |>
up     M1  W2  down
      <|  |>
      M3  W4

```

Beats Steps

4 Double out as a line, meaning up or down.

4 Don't let go. Middles: double backward to original places. Ends: wrap inwards to meet your partner, join free hands to form a square. Everyone is now home.

8 Turn the square one full circle clockwise back to home. Let go, turn to face your partner.

Verse 3: arm with your partner, arm on the square

Like at the start of verse 2, everyone is home and facing their partner. I call this as "arm right arms" then "arm on the square". Arm as you sided.

Beats Steps

8 Arm right arms with your partner.

8 Arm on the square. Ends: arm left arms with your partner. Middles: arm left arms with your opposite.

Chorus 3: crossover and arches

Beats Steps

0 Middles: half turn to face out, take inside hands with your opposite.

4 All double forward. Middles: forward a *small* double. Ends: a bigger double to pass your partner by

the right shoulder and get near the mids on the opposite side of the set.

M3 W1 - - M2 W4

W3 M1 - - W2 M4

- 4 Middles: backwards a *small* double back to place. Ends: double to meet your opposite in the places the middles are vacating.

M3 - - W4

W1 - - M2

M1 - - W2

W3 - - M4

- 4 Arches. All double. Middles: keeping inside hands with your partner, form an arch and double out. Ends: take inside hands, double towards the center passing under the arches, meet your partner.

W1 - - M2

M3 - - W4

W3 - - M4

M1 - - W2

- 4 Ends: two-handed turn halfway the one you're *facing*, who is your *partner*. Middles: two-handed turn halfway the one you're *with*, who is your *opposite*. Then all let go.

At this point, halfway through this chorus, this is the lineup, with the ends in the center and middles outside:

M2 W1

W3 M4

M3 W4

W2 M1

The ends, when they crossed, got "improper" (opposite their original side), but the half turn got them proper again. The middles were OK until the half turn exchanged the two couples.

Finish the chorus with the same, except this time the ends go out-in-out, and the middles cross (unreversing them) and pass under the arches.

Beats Steps

- 0 Ends: half turn to face out, take inside hands with your partner.
- 4 All double forward. Ends: forward a *small* double. Middles: a bigger double to pass your opposite by the right shoulder and get near the ends on the opposite side of the set.

W1	M2
W3	M4
M3	W4
M1	W2

Beats Steps

4 Ends: double back. Middles: double to meet your opposite in the places the ends are vacating.

W1	W3	M4	M2
M1	M3	W4	W2

4 All double. Ends: keeping inside hands with your partner, form an arch and double forward. Middles: take inside hands, double towards the center passing under the arches, meet your opposite.

You're now back home.

4 Two-handed *full turn* your partner, ending back home again.

Behind the Music

Sources

A good rendition is track 15 from *Country Capers* by the New York Renaissance Band. It's pretty. It's slow enough so you can learn with it, but even after you're familiar with the dance, it's not boringly slow.

Sources can be found at <http://www.rendancedb.org/#/dance/45>, including a facsimile of John Playford's *The English Dancing Master*, first edition, 1651.

Country Dance New York (CDNY) has two video recordings of a dance at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6STcWFqQXY> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ck9tHHprcgU>, titled "Lull Me Beyond Thee" and "Lull Me Beyond Thee (Encore)" respectively. Regardless of what you think of the reconstruction, the set they centered had *very* smooth and skilled dancers, some in very nice clothing. Also, the camera was above the floor, making it more convenient to see the whole set.

Lord Gwommy Anpurpaidh has a reconstruction video at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFwV3HzVp_Q, titled "Gwommy's Reconstruction: Lull Me Beyond Thee". It is a fine convenience that, while they danced each piece, he provided the corresponding quotes from Playford as captioning.

Assumptions, arbitrary decisions, constraints

I would like to adhere to Playford's version, but there are problems with interpreting the first verse and the third chorus. I had to compare sources, complicated by the fact that none of them give reasons for their choices. (Hence this page.) Reconstruction details are above.

I think it's pretty clear that, when Playford calls for "turne" in this dance (which I interpret as a two-handed turn), it can only fit if it's a figure in 4 beats. That seems too fast to me, because siding and arming get 8 beats,

and several of our local dancers are not so mobile. Also, at one site we often use for events with dancing, the floor can be slick as snot; we've had dancers slip and fall on fast dances. So I made efforts to avoid full turns in 4 beats when actually danced, by either making them half turns or by trying to bum beats from adjacent moves.

I assumed a lot of taking of hands. In particular, Playford in the "abreast" parts doesn't say to take hands. The only explicit taking of hands is turning (and there's even a small assumption there, that it's not a gypsy), hands round in chorus 2, and arches in chorus 3. Nevertheless, I assume that people dancing as a couple (e.g., middles leading out) or four abreast take hands where possible.

Verse 1: Take hands longways, double to meet, back, that again

As an aside: Playford's instructions imply that the couple numbering is

```

      wall
up    3  1  2  4          down
      3  1  2  4
      wall

```

(Or swapping 1 and 2, and/or 3 and 4.) Otherwise, his instructions for choruses don't work. Anyway, Playford starts

```

For eight thus   o  o  )  )
                  )  )  o  o

```

Meete a D. and ...

Crescents are used to show which way the men are facing in at least some dances, like "Gathering Peascods" and "If All the World were Paper".

I think that "meet" ought to imply two or more people approaching close enough that traditional Southern Baptists would not approve. But the diagram in Playford shows the men starting facing up, which would make it hard for them to meet.

Dafydd interprets "meet" as "lead up", leading to the standard ECD USA intro of "Lead up a double and back". This preserves the diagram but ignores "meet".

Gwommy has an interesting opinion. He has couples 1 and 3 facing down, 2 and 4 facing up, doubling towards the center. Also, he exchanges the men and women, I guess to keep everyone proper:

```

M3   M1   W2   W4
W3   W1   M2   M4

```

This flips the diagram and rotates two men, and has a kind of meeting only for couples 1 and 2.

CDNY has the dancers start four abreast in longways lines, doubling the lines forward and backwards. This preserves the fullest meaning of "meet", but rotates the men 90 degrees in Playford's diagram. The Round also appears to specify that, but it's not 100% perfectly clear.

Given the number of times Playford has "Leade up all a D.", I am inclined to think "meet" is different. I don't see why Gwommy goes so far from Playford. Also, the dancers here like the long lines abreast.

So I teach the CDNY version: start in longways lines, facing your partner and holding hands four abreast, double forward to meet all, that again.

Chorus 2: face the wall, double out, form a square, circle the square

Playford: First man and 3. man, the 2. Wo. and 4. Wo. lead a brest to the wall, fall back and hands round to your places, the other foure doing the like at the same time __. The first and 3. Cu. lead a brest to the presence, fall back and hands round to your places, the other foure doing the like downeward at the same time _:_

Dafydd and the Round agree with each other. They take literally and fully "fall back and hands round to your places". That is, the dancers form longways lines four abreast, all lead out a double towards the wall, all double back to their own places as a line, and then form a circle and do a full turn. They take the next part literally too. Couple 1 (the middles nearer the presence) lead up and couple 3 have to get out of the way and form a sideways line, they double back as a line, then form a circle and do a full turn back (and all similarly for couples 2 and 4).

I don't see how they could do it. With my reconstruction, we fall from a line into a square, and some still have trouble doing hands all the way round in 8 beats. I suspect the other reconstructions have to scurry to also go from a line into a circle and then do a full circle. The second repetition looks even more awkward, adding a middle couple leading up and their end couple having to go diagonal or something to get out of the way and also form a line.

Also, my group and I prefer the "cootie catcher" pattern of switching between = and ||. Also, I prefer symmetry.

Gwommy, CDNY, and I agree on our version. We interpret "fall back" as applying only to the middles, so the ends wrap inwards and form a square to be in place for the start of "hands round". We also interpret "to your places" as "to your new places": that is, that it's only saying that the "hands round" is a full circle. Also, this circling leaves us in our preferred || orientation for the middle of a chorus, and also allows us to immediately lead abreast without couples doing a different movement than in the first repetition.

Chorus 3: crossover and arches

Playford: First man and 2. Wo. the 2. man and first Wo. lead out to the wall, and fall back againe, while the other foure crosse over each with his owne, and meeting each others Wo. leade them under the first and 2. Cu. armes, falling into your places, and turne his owne. That againe, the last foure doing what the first foure did.

I have not yet thought of a way that this can be done as written, especially in the 16 beats available for each half of the chorus. Either you finish the dance away from your start and/or with a different person, or else you have to be inconsistent in interpreting words. I've looked at various versions, which have various decisions. Figuring each out in detail could use eight labelled Lego® figures, coins, obliging dancers, or other manipulable objects to keep the patterns straight. For each, I'll describe the first half too briefly; all but mine do the exact same moves in the second half as in the first except with ends and mids swapped.

Dafydd and Terpsichore at the Tower 14 start by "sideways the lines" as in chorus 1. He has no "crosse over", but it could be added (it would make the ends proper while arching but require a crossover when going to place). He has the arching during the "fall back againe", and then has ends go back to the center ("falling into your places"?). Instead of "turne his owne" in the first place, they turn opposites.

The Round and CDNY are the same except that, after arching, people stay in place. So there is no particular move for "falling into your places", and you turn whomever you're with.

Gwommy's version has a crossover like mine, except that ends meeting do a half gypsy and then a full turn, and middles cast out to the ends and do a full turn. So there's no sideways the set, but you do end up proper (in his arrangement of "proper") and turning your own partner. This may actually be the closest to what Playford wrote, if you're not trying to preserve "sideways the set".

In my version, I preserve the "sideways the set" motif from the other choruses. The "crosse over" is the ends going towards the other wall, so that is not really a fit with "crosse over *each with his owne*". Only the ends turn

their own; the middles have to turn their opposites. More significantly: you have to do a half turn in the first half, or you end up out of position at the end, but a full turn in the second half, which breaks symmetry.

In sum, I've not found a really satisfactory way to dance it in the time available and following Playford's written instructions. I think there has to be at least one deviation or compromise somewhere. If my local group didn't already have this version burned into their brains, I might go closer to Dafydd's or Gwommy's version.

Copyright 2012, 2019 by Tim McDaniel, tmcd@panix.com.

The URL for this page is http://www.panix.com/~tmcd/dance/lull_me_beyond_thee.html A printable PDF version is at http://www.panix.com/~tmcd/dance/lull_me_beyond_thee.pdf

