

GALOPEDE (England)

In the 17th century, court dances were a major pastime as well as an important part of the noblemen's education. To gain high ranking and esteem in a military and political position, learning how to dance well was an invaluable tool to acquire agility as well as proper etiquette. Contra dances became very popular, and many were created over the next centuries. A contra is literally a dance of opposition. It is usually performed by sets of couples, standing face-to-face in two facing lines with many lines running the length of the ballroom. Decked out in full regalia, the men had to take care to acknowledge their partners by a mere nod of the head so as not to pierce the ladies standing in the line behind the men with their swords. The ladies, tied down with tight corsets and unable to bend from the waist, would curtsy slightly in response.

Contra dancing became equally popular with the towns people, and in England became known as country dancing. Often dancing in open fields with less restrictive clothing, the towns folks would perform those dances usually in a faster tempo with bouncier steps than the nobles.

Music: Cadans 15041, side 1, band 4.

Meter: 4/4

Formation: Longways sets of 6 couples with Man on the right and Woman on the left as seen from the top of the room (the music source).

Meas	Cts	Pattern
		Introduction 2 notes.
		Advance, Retire & Across
1	1-3	Partners face. Men take hands in their line, Women do the same. With 3 steps forward R,L,R both lines meet.
	4	Closing the Left foot next to the Right, acknowledge the partner.
2	1-3	With 3 steps backward R,L,R both lines back up.
	4	Close Left foot next to Right.
3-4		Release hands and with 8 steps partners change places, passing each other by the Right shoulder.
5-8		Repeat 1-4 back to own place.
		Allemande Right & Left or Swing
1-2		Gallantly holding the partner's hand on shoulder level, walk around Clockwise with 8 steps and return to place.
3-4		Repeat 1-2 Counterclockwise with Left hand.
Note:		The court version of Allemande Right & Left can be replaced by the country dance Swing: partners with both hands joined skip around Clockwise 16 counts and return to place.
		Head Couple Down the Middle
1-4		The head couple, holding Right hands and facing down the set, walk (or skip) to last place in the set while all the other couples move up one place.

The dance starts over with a new head couple.

Dance notes by Thea Huijgen

Dance presented by Thea Huijgen at the Seattle Folkdance Festival March 1998.