

A Basic Hornpipe Routine in the
Lancashire Style arranged by

Sam Sherry

M Hollis

Newcastle Series

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arranged by SAM SHERRY**

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INTRODUCTION

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Background

When Sam Sherry began teaching a new generation of aspiring clog dancers several years ago, he put together this basic routine of hornpipe steps, since the steps he actually performs are far too difficult for beginners. The routine has proved extremely successful both as a vehicle for learning basic movements and steps, and as a set piece suitable for performance. Although the steps are simple, the routine has sufficient variety of movement and rhythm to interest both dancers and audience, and it works well over a wide range of speeds. There are no heel beats, which means that all the steps meet the rules for the Lancashire competitions.

Origin of Steps

Sam was taught three Lancashire steps by his father, two of which appear here (Nos 4 and 10).

Steps 1,3,5,6 and 7 are based on steps described in Julian Pilling's "The Lancashire Clog Dance" (Folk Music Journal, 1, p 158-179, 1967), which were collected by Julian Pilling from the Nelson dancer, Sammy Cash. A version of Step 4, "crossing the buckle", also appears in the article.

Step 9 is a step from Mrs Viona Marhoff via Geoff Hughes.

Steps 2 and 8 are variations on Steps 1 and 4 respectively.

Sam has put the various Finishes (Sam's term for the more usual word "break" - to Sam, a break means a change of step during the first six bars) on the steps himself, and they are his own, except for the well-known "Bob's Your Uncle" Finish used for Steps 5 and 7.

Learning the Steps

Sam suggests that all the steps are learned off both feet before the routine is tackled.

My experience has led me to abandon this practice at workshops where time is limited, as I find people get too physically tired with the repetitions (the lack of heel beats make these steps particularly hard on the legs) and too mentally confused by the changeover from everything off both feet to the actual routine.

However,

DANCERS SHOULD NOT CONSIDER THEMSELVES PROFICIENT AT THE ROUTINE UNTIL THEY CAN DANCE IT OFF EITHER FOOT.

Technique and Style

1. General Points

This book is intended for use as an aide memoire, but these observations may help those who have been to the odd workshop or have seen Sam perform on film or in the flesh. Although it is possible to dance the steps in any style, particularly if insufficient attention is paid to the modifier column, I feel that if you have bothered to learn them at all, then you should devote some time and care to style and execution.

The subject of regional styles and whether they really exist is a complex one, which I do not purpose to discuss here, as this book is intended primarily for dancers, not academics. All I can say is that Sam dances in a style that he regards as Lancashire. The main characteristics of this style are that the dancing is light, relaxed, mainly straight-legged, and very compact. Other Lancashire dancers e.g. Bill Gibbons and Pat Tracey show the same characteristics in their dancing.

2. Some Technical Observations

a) There is considerable spring in Sam's style, far more than is general in North Eastern dancing, and slightly more than in other Lancashire dancers, and he likes his pupils to put this "bounce" into their dancing, regarding it as the Sam Sherry trademark.

b) The Round Shuffle

All the shuffles in this routine are round i.e. semi-circular, and woe betide you if Mr Sherry ever catches you doing anything else!

Round shuffles are not something you can do straight away, they require much practice. We always start our beginners off with shuffles, and often spend the whole of their first lesson on them. Subsequent classes always begin with shuffle practice.

The round shuffle is very neat and controlled, executed close to the load-bearing foot, generally in position B, and the working foot remains close to the ground throughout with very little movement of the heel. The ankle should be loose and the movement of the foot done from the thigh.

c) Remember that the natural foot angle is assumed to be slightly turned out (see p.7 "Newcastle Notation") and to stand or dance pigeon-toed looks ugly, unless part of a specific step e.g. clicking heels together. In particular, the foot should be in its natural, slightly turned-out position after the second beat of the round shuffle.

3. Personal Style

All dancers put something of themselves into their dancing which makes it different from everyone else's. As your technique improves, this personal style begins to show. Do not stifle it by aping the mannerisms of other dancers. Sam Sherry's aim is not to produce a lot of carbon copies, but to train dancers whose technique is so good that their own style can develop and shine through their dancing.

Speed

There is no set speed, but if you want to dance these steps really fast, don't forget that they are hornpipe steps and they must be danced dotted. This becomes virtually impossible beyond a certain tempo.

Length of Routine 12 times 8 bars

Music Dotted hornpipes e.g.
Navvie on the Line, Boys of Bluehill.

STEP NO.	STARTING FOOT
1	L
1	R
2	L
3	R
4	R
4	L
5	L
6	R
7	L
8	R
9	R
10	L

Notation

In line with convention, all movements are written beginning off the L foot, except where they occur off the R foot only in the routine.

Step 1

1	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	A: /
a	|		|	)	|	:B,B
2	|		|	)	|
a	|		|		|	<u>step</u>
3	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	:B
a	|		|		|	A:
4	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	:B
	|		|		|	A:

Finish

1	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	A: /
a	|		|	)	|	:B,B
2	|		|	)	|
a	|		|		|	<u>step</u>
3	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	:B
a	|		|	)	|	A: /
4	|		|	)	|	:B,B
a	|		|		|	
5	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	:B
6	|		|		|	A:
7	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	:A
8	|		|	↓	|	A:

Step is 6 times through off alternate feet & Finish

Step 2

A is the same as Step 1 Finish

Finish

1	|		|		|	:A
a	|	)	|	<u>shuffle</u>	|	B,B:
2	|	)	|		|
a	|		|	<u>step</u>	|	B:
3	|		|		|	:A
a	|	)	|	<u>shuffle</u>	|	B,B:
4	|	)	|		|
a	|		|	<u>step</u>	|	B:
5	|		|		|	:A
6	|		|	<u>step</u>	|	A:
7	|		|		|	:A†,B,D†
8	|		|	↓	|	

Step is A A A & Finish

L	R	L	R

Step 3

1	|	<u>step</u>	|	shuffle	|	A:
a	|		|		|	:Ċ,C
2	|		|		|	
a	|		|	<u>step</u>	|	:XĊ/XĖ
3	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	A:
a	|		|	<u>step</u>	|	:XĊ/XĖ
4	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	A:

Finish

1	|		|	<u>step</u>	|	:A
a	|	)	|	shuffle	|	Ċ,C:
2	|	)	|		|
a	|	)	|	<u>step</u>	|	ẊĊ/ẊĖ:
3	|		|		|	:A
a	|	)	|	<u>step</u>	|	Ċ,C:
4	|	)	|		|
a	|		|	<u>step</u>	|	ẊĊ/ẊĖ:
5	|		|		|	:A
6	|		|	<u>step</u>	|	A:
7	|		|	touch	|	:A
8	|		|		|	

Step is 6 times through off alternate feet & Finish

Note

1. Apart from 'crossing the buckle', this is the same as Step 1.
2. Feet are well crossed.
3. In the Finish, feet are 'unwound' between each shuffle.
4. The touch at the end of the Finish is to enable Step 4 to start off the R. This is not logical, but is how the routine has evolved!

Step 4

1	|	<u>step (hop)</u>	|		|	A: /
a	|		|	)	|	: B, B
2	|		|	)	|
a	|		|		|	<u>step</u>
3	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	: A
4	|	<u>hop</u>	|		|	A: D†

Finish

1	|	<u>step</u>	|	)	|	A: /
a	|		|	)	|	: B, B
2	|		|	)	|
a	|		|		|	<u>step</u>
3	|	<u>step</u>	|	)	|	: B
a	|		|	)	|	A: /
4	|		|	)	|	: B, B
a	|		|		|	<u>step</u>
5	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	: A
6	|	<u>hop</u>	|		|	A: D†
7	|	↑	|		|	D†: A
8	|		|	↑	|	<u>spring</u>

Step is 6 times through off alternate feet & Finish
 Repeat off opposite foot, starting with a hop.

Step 5

1	|	<u>step</u>	|	)	|	A: /
a	|		|	)	|	: B, B
2	|		|	)	|
a	|		|		|	<u>step</u>
3	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	: B
4	|		|		|	A: C
	|		|		|	: C

Finish

1	|	<u>step</u>	|	)	|	A: /
a	|		|	)	|	: B, B
2	|		|	)	|
a	|		|		|	<u>step</u>
3	|	<u>step</u>	|	)	|	: B
a	|		|	)	|	A: /
4	|		|	)	|	: B, B
a	|		|		|	<u>step</u>
5	|	touch	|		|	: A
6	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	X C:
7	|		|		|	A:
8	|		|	↑	|	: X C

Step is 6 times through off alternate feet & Finish

Step 6

1	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	A:
a	|		|	shuffle	|	:B,B
2	|		|		|	
a	|		|	<u>step</u>	|	:B
3	|	<u>step</u>	|	shuffle	|	A:
a	|		|	[reverse shuffle]	|	:A,RB
4	|		|		|	

Finish

1	|		|	<u>step</u>	|	:A
a	|	shuffle	|		|	B,B:
2	|		|		|	
a	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	B:
3	|		|	<u>step</u>	|	:A
a	|	shuffle	|		|	B,B:
4	|		|		|	
a	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	A:
5	|		|	<u>step</u>	|	:A
6	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	A:
a	|		|	shuffle	|	:B,B
7	|		|		|	
a	|		|	<u>step</u>	|	:A
8	|	touch	|		|	A:

Step is 6 times through off alternate feet & Finish

Note

This belongs to the family of steps in which the working foot does a movement in front of, then behind, the load-bearing foot.

Step 7

A								
1	|			|				A:
a	|	<u>step</u>		|		shuffle		:B,B
2	|			|				
a	|			|		<u>step</u>		:B
3	|	<u>step</u>		|		shuffle		A:
a	|			|		{reverse shuffle}		:A, RB
4	|			|		<u>step</u>		:RB
a	|			|				
B								
1		<u>step</u>				shuffle		A:
a								:B,B
2								
a						<u>step</u>		:A
3		touch						A:
4								

Finish as for Step 5 Step is A A A A A B and Finish

| | | | | | |
L L L L L L L

Note

1. During the 'A' part of the step, the dancer rotates on the spot counter-clockwise: i.e. turning L to start, once round. The 'B' part and Finish are danced facing front.
2. Almost the same as Step 6, except working foot does not change.
3. The pause at the end of the 'B' part before the Finish is an effective device to vary the pattern of sound: cf Step 10.

Step 8

A same as Step 4

B								
1	|	<u>spring</u>		|		<u>step</u>		F*:
a	|			|				:XC
2	|	<u>step</u>		|				A:

Finish - same as Finish to Step 4

Step is A A B B A B B A & Finish

| | | | | | | | |
R L R L R L R L R

Note

1. A variation on Step 4.
2. 'B' is similar to the 'setting' movement of country dancing, except that the legs are crossed and the spring higher.
3. 'B' can be used in the same way to vary any step whose basic unit is one bar long: i.e. which follows the pattern 6xA plus Finish

Step 9

1	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	A:
a	|		|	)	|	:B,B
2	|		|	)	|
a	|		|		|	<u>spring</u>
3	|	<u>touch</u>	|		|	:A
4	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	C:
5	|		|		|	A:
6	|		|		|	:XC
a	|	<u>shuffle</u>	|		|	:B
7	|	)	|		|	B,B:
a	|	)	|		|
8	|	<u>spring</u>	|		|	A:
	|		|		|	:XC
	|		|		|	<u>touch</u>

Finish

1	|	<u>spring</u>	|		|	A:
&	|		|	)	|	:B,B
a	|		|	)	|
2	|		|		|	<u>step</u>
a	|	<u>shuffle</u>	|		|	:A
3	|	)	|		|	B,B:
a	|	)	|		|
4	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	A:
&	|		|	)	|	:B,B
5	|		|	)	|
a	|	<u>shuffle</u>	|		|	<u>step</u>
6	|	)	|		|	:A
a	|	)	|		|	B,B:
7	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	A:
8	|		|		|	:A
	|		|		|	<u>step</u>

Step is A A A & Finish
 | | | |
 R L R L

Note

The Finish is the hardest movement so far. The initial spring is high to enable the feet to unwind ready for the quick shuffle. Note the timing very carefully - the shuffle on the "4 &" beats is quicker than you expect, because the 'a' beat, the third beat of the usual triplet, is missing. Having executed this correctly, avoid the temptation to rush on the last bar too early.

Step 10

A				
1	|	<u>step</u>	|	
a	|		|	
2	|		)	shuffle
a	|		)
3	|	<u>step</u>	|	<u>step</u>
4	|	<u>hop</u>	|	
&	|		)	shuffle
a	|		)

A: :B, B
:B
A:
A:
:B/C, B/C

B same as Step 7

Finish

1	|		|	<u>step</u>	|	A
a	|	shuffle	|		|	B, B:
2	|		|		|	
a	)	<u>step</u>	|		|	A:
3	)		|	<u>step</u>	|	A:
4	|	<u>step</u>	|		|	A:
5	|	<u>step</u>	|	catch out	|	:A, B, D
6	|	<u>hop</u>	|		|	A:
7	|		|	touch	|	:XC
8	|		|		|	

Step is A A A A A B & Finish
 | | | | | | |
 L R L R L R R

Note

A progression from Step 4.