

8/11/80

Alice, myself, Julie, Jauman + Carl Hays visited several clubs in Birtley.

Man told us of William Finlay who used to teach clog dancing at Fatfield - a village which he said no longer existed. He used to have a troupe called 'Billy Finlay's Troupe' who danced at local village concerts. They danced on wooden lath mats 'because it made a better sound' - they danced on the spot & to gramophone records. They often danced to 'Swanee River' & to an un-remembered hornpipe. There were competitions in local cinemas at which winner decided by volume of clapping. Some of his 'mates' learnt from WF - this would be ~ 1920's. Some of his pupils were:-

Joe Little  
Mary Colpits (?Coalpits) } née Appleby  
Jenny Maddison  
? Heather Scott née Cumson.

He thought they now lived 'by the old church up at Hemington (?Honoten)'

At the same club (Barley Mews.) we met Fred Foster. who lived 4 doors down from the club on the R. Apart from the capper dance he had learnt to clog from a Mr Samyman at the age of 7. 'just the basics'

Carl met a woman who had heard of a champion from Ashington called Mrs Cowie - she owns a shop there. She used to dance at Balmbra's + had lots of medals for dancing + had done tours abroad.

At the Ouston Social Club we met a woman who said that people used to dance at Beamish on a Sat night in the pub + that there were competitions in the cinemas on Sat nights. She had heard of a Mr Hoyle (not Walter Doyle)

A Mr Charles Searle had a brother in Gateshead who had 'taught himself clog-hopping' - sounded like he just used to make it up.

A woman had learnt to clog dance from her father John Suter of Birtley. She said that her sister had also learnt + was a better dancer.

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