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Sam Sherry.

The Polka Routine.

C. Metherell

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Introduction.

A full biography of Sam is already available, both in print (Sherry, S., "Actual Step Dancing", *English Dance and Song*, Vol 41 No 2, (1979)) and in DVD format (Callaghan, B. & Metherell, C., *Sam Sherry. A Memorial Compilation*, London: EFDSS (2007)) and accordingly all that is appropriate here is a brief resume.

Sam was born in 1912 in the village of Costock, Nottinghamshire, one of nine children, all of whom became involved in professional theatre. His father (under his stage name of Dan Conroy) had been a professional music hall artiste of considerable renown, until he retired shortly after WW1. Sam's brothers and sisters performed in a number of combinations under a variety of stage names the most famous of which was The Five Sherry Brothers, who became internationally famous between about 1929 and 1939.

Sam had been taught to dance by his father – "almost as soon as I could walk". He left school at 14 and began touring with his brothers, eventually beginning his professional career as a double act with his brother Peter. Although many of Sam's steps came from his father, he also acquired a large number from his brother Jim who was considered to be the best dancer in the family.

Sam retired from show business in 1956 and went into a boat hire and repair business. He died in 2001.

The Routine.

Over the years Sam has taught his steps to countless dancers and, unsurprisingly the routines he devised changed from time to time.

This routine was devised by Sam in the early 1990s, and contained a mix of steps he had not used before in previous dances together with two steps, numbers 2 and 4 which formed part of Sam's original Exhibition Routine (see Metherell, C., *Sam Sherry. The Exhibition Routine*, Newcastle: Newcastle Series (2008). The steps are believed to come from a number of sources which are detailed in the notes to the individual steps.

The Notations.

The dance was notated after Sam's death from the dancing of his pupils, Melanie Barber and Harry Cowgill and the fine detail thus reflects their style of performance rather than Sam's, in particular that of Harry Cowgill. For example, Sam's A:A position was rather wide, for most dancers it would be noted as A/F:A/F, however no

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attempt had been made to reconstruct the steps as Sam might have danced them.

Acknowledgements.

Step 1

A

a	tap) lazy			Rb	:	
1	<u>spring</u>)			a	:	
&		)	shuffle		:	3,£
a		)			:	
2	<u>heel drop</u>		)	a	:	x3_
a			catch in		:	x3_,b,a)
3			<u>step</u>		:	a
a	<u>heel step=</u>			c	:	
4			<u>heel drop</u>		:	a

B

a	<u>step</u>			a	:	
5	<u>heel drop</u>			a	:	
a			heel tap		:	c
6	<u>heel drop</u>			a	:	
&		)	shuffle		:	3,£
a		)			:	
7	<u>heel drop</u>			a	:	
a			tip tap		:	rd
8	<u>heel drop</u>			a	:	

Step is <u>AB</u> <u>AB</u> B B and finish

	L	R	L	R	L

Finish

a	tap) lazy			rb	:	
1	<u>spring</u>)			a	:	
&		)	shuffle		:	3,£
a		)			:	
2			<u>spring</u>		:	a
&	)	shuffle		C,£	:	
a	)				:	
3		<u>spring</u>			a	:	
a			) shuffle		:	3,£
4			)		:	
&		<u>hop</u>		a	:	
a		<u>heel drop</u>		a	:	

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5		<u>step</u>		: rc/d*
a	catch in		c/d),b,a) :	
6	<u>step</u>		a :	
an		) shuffle		: 3,£
and		)		:
e	<u>shunt</u>		a,b/c* :	
7		heel catch out		: rb/c),a,d_
8				:

Notes.

1. Sam said that he had acquired this step from his brother Jim. He thought it a simple step with a "North-East" look about it and wondered whether Jim had acquired it there.

2. The finish is also used in Exhibition Step 2.

Step 2

				:	
1		(step) shunt		:	(!) rb/cc,a
&	) shuffle		F,^	:	
a	)			:	
2	step=	heel swivel=	rb/c	:	!,1
a		catch in		:	a),rb,rb/c)
3	shunt		rb/c,a	:	
&		) shuffle		:	6,^
a		)		:	
4	heel swivel=	step=	!,A	:	rb/c
a	catch in		a),rb,rb/c)	:	
5	step		rb/c*	:	
a		heel swivel=		:	C,3
6	step		a	:	
a		catch in		:	c),b/c,a)
7		step		:	
a	heel swivel		3,C	:	
8		step		:	a
a	catch in		C),b/c,a)	:	

Step is three times through off the same foot and finish

Finish

				:	
1	step		a	:	
&	) shuffle			:	3,£
a	)			:	
2		step		:	a
&	) shuffle		C,£	:	
a	)			:	
3	step		a	:	
a		) shuffle		:	3,£
4		)		:	
&	hop		a	:	
a	heel drop		a	:	
5		step		:	rc/d
a	tap) lazy		rb	:	
6	step)		a	:	
&	) shuffle			:	3,a
a	)			:	
7	heel drop	)	a	:	rd+
8				:	

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Notes.

1. Sam said that he had learned this step from his brother Jim. Sam nicknamed it "Swanee" when teaching. The step is also used (with a different finish) as Exhibition Step 16.

2. Note that the initial <u>shunt</u> on the R is replaced by a <u>step</u> the first time the unit is performed.

3. Beats 5-8 are performed with a considerable amount of body turn, although the step has been notated omitting this for reasons of clarity.

4. The final shuffle of the finish is unusual, the second beat of the shuffle becoming almost a catch in.

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Step 3

A

1	<u>hop</u>		a	:	
2	<u>hop</u>		a	:	
&		) shuffle		:	r5,re
a		)		:	
3	<u>hop</u>	)	a	:	b)
4	<u>hop</u>	)	a	:	c)
&		) shuffle		:	3,£
a		)		:	
5	<u>hop</u>	)	a	:	rc)
6	<u>hop</u>	)	a	:	rd_
&		) shuffle		:	r5,re
a		)		:	
7	<u>hop</u>	)	a	:	b)
8	<u>hop</u>	)	a	:	c)
&		) shuffle		:	3,£
a		)		:	
1	<u>hop</u>	)	a	:	b)
&		) shuffle		:	3,£
a		)		:	
2	<u>hop</u>	)	a	:	b)
&		) shuffle		:	3,£
a		)		:	
3	<u>hop</u>	)	a	:	b)
&		) shuffle		:	3,£
a		)		:	
4	<u>hop</u>	)	a	:	b)
&		) shuffle		:	3,£
a		)		:	
5	<u>hop</u>	)	a	:	b)
&		) shuffle		:	3,£
a		)		:	
6	<u>hop</u>	)	a	:	b)
&		) shuffle		:	3,£
a		)		:	
7	<u>hop</u>	)	a	:	rc)
8	<u>hop</u>	)	a	:	rd_
&		) shuffle		:	r5,re
a		)		:	
1	<u>hop</u>		a	:	b)
2	<u>hop</u>		a	:	c)
&		) shuffle		:	3,£
a		)		:	
3	<u>hop</u>	)	a	:	rc)
4	<u>hop</u>	)	a	:	rd_

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&		) shuffle	:	r5,re
a		)	:	
5	<u>hop</u>	)	a :	b)
6	<u>hop</u>	)	a :	c)
&		) shuffle	:	3,£
a		)	:	
7	<u>hop</u>	)	a :	rc)

Step is as above and finish

Finish

8		catch out	: rc/d), b, d_	
1	<u>hop</u>		a :	
2		<u>spring</u>	:	a
and	) shuffle		C,£ :	
3	)		:	
and	<u>spring</u>		a :	
4		) shuffle	:	3,£
and		)	:	
5	hop		a :	
and		tap) flop	:	c
6		<u>step</u>)	:	c[*
and	catch out		rc),b,d_ :	
7		<u>heel drop</u>	:	a
8			:	

Notes.

1.   This step was part of the Five Sherry Brothers repertoire. The finish is used as the finish for Exhibition Step 5.

2.   The precise foot positions for the shuffles in rear position will vary somewhat in proportion to the speed with which the step is performed. The second beat of the shuffle moves toward :F as the step speeds up.

3.   The finish is the same as that used for Exhibition Step 5, but has been notated using Harry Cowgill's foot positions.

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Step 4

				:	
1	step		a	:	
&		) shuffle	a	:	5,%
a		)		:	
2	hop		a	:	
&		) shuffle	a	:	5,%
a		)		:	
3	hop		a	:	
a		tip tap		:	rd
4	hop		a	:	
a		catch out		:	rd),a,c)
5	hop		a	:	
a		heel step		:	c/d
6	step		a	:	
a		step		:	e/f
7	step=		e*	:	
8		click toe heel		:	rb)
&	hop		b*	:	
a	heel drop		a	:	
1		step		:	re/f
2	flat step		A	:	
3		) shuffle		:	
&		)		:	5,%
a		step		:	A**
4	flat step		a*	:	
5		catch out		:	rB),A,b)
&	)	click heel toe	at	:	b)
a	drop		a	:	
6		step		:	xe/f
&	rev click toe heel		a)	:	
a		heel drop		:	xe/f*
7	catch out		r2),1,b)	:	
&	click heel toe		b)	:	
a		drop		:	a
8	step		xe/f	:	
&		rev click toe heel		:	a)
a	heel drop		xe/f*	:	
1		catch out		:	rB),A,b)
&		click heel toe		:	b)
a	drop		a	:	
2		step		:	xe/f
&	rev click toe heel		a)	:	
a		heel drop		:	xe/f*
3	catch out		r2),1,b)	:	
&	click heel toe		b)	:	
a		drop		:	a

4	step		xe/f	:	
&		rev click toe heel		:	a)
a	heel drop		xe/f*	:	
5		catch out		:	rB),A,b)
&		click heel toe		:	b)
a	toe drop		a	:	
6		step		:	xe/f
&	click toe heel		b)	:	
a	)	heel drop	h_	:	xe/f*
7	touch		a	:	
8				:	

Step is as above and finish

Finish

a		) shuffle		: 3,£
8		)		:
&	hop		a	:
a		tap) flop		: a
1		step)		: a[
a	tap) flop		a	:
2	step)		a[	:
a		) shuffle		: 3,£
3		)		:
&	hop		a	:
a		tap) flop		: a
4		step)		: a[
a	) shuffle		C,£	:
5	)			:
&		hop		: a
a	tap) flop		a	:
6	step)		a[	:
&		step		: a
a		heel drop		: a
7	heel drop=		a	:
8				:

Notes.

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1.   Learned by Sam from his brother Jim.

2.   Also used as step 14 of the Sam's Exhibition Routine, but with a different finish. Slight changes have been made to reflect the dancing of Harry Cowgill. The most obvious differnce is that Sam performed the final 2/3 of the exhibition version moving across the satge, whereas this version moves straight towards the audience.

3.   The finish utilises movements also found in Exhibition Steps 11 and 12, which Sam acquired from the Scottish comedian Andy Powers.

Step 5

A

1		jump=		a	:
2	hop			a	:
&		) shuffle			: 3,£
a		)			:
3		jump=		xE/F	: a
4		hop			:
&	) shuffle			C,£	:
a	)				:
5		jump=		a	: x5/6
6	hop			a	:
&		) shuffle			: 3,£
a		)			:
7		jump=		xE/F	: a
8		hop			: a
&	) shuffle			C,£	:
a	)				:

B

1	step	)		a	: rd_
2		catch out			: rd_,b,d_
3	hop			a	:
4		heel step			: c
5	step			a	:
and		tap) TH			: c
6		heel step)			: c
and	step			a	:

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7 8	catch out	flat step rc),b,d_	: :	c*

Step is A A B and finish

| | | | |
L L L   L

Finish

1			hop			:	a
2		spring			a	:	
and			)	shuffle		:	3,£
3			)			:	
and			spring			:	a
4	)	shuffle			C,£	:	
and	)					:	
5			hop			:	a
and		tap) flop			a	:	
6		step)			a[	:	
&			step=			:	a
a			heel drop			:	a
7		heel drop=			a	:	
8						:	

Notes.

1. Sam though this was like a Schotische step.

2. The finish was learned by Sam from his brother Jim.

Step 6

A

			B col	:	value
a	heel step		B	:	
1		heel step		:	2
&	heel swivel click toes=		B,2	:	2,B
a	step		a	:	
2		step=		:	a
a	heel step		B	:	
3		heel step		:	2
&	heel swivel click toes=		B,2	:	2,B
a	step		a	:	
4		step=		:	a
a	heel step		B	:	
5		heel step=		:	2
&	heel swivel click toes=		B,2,B	:	2,B,2
a	heel step		B	:	
6		heel step=		:	2
&	heel swivel click toes=		B,2,B	:	2,B,2
a	heel step		B	:	
7		heel step=		:	2
&	heel swivel click toes=		B,2	:	
a	step		a	:	
8		tap		:	a

B

			B col	:	value
a	spring		a	:	
1		click toe heel		:	rb)
&	hop	)	a	:	rxh_
a		rev click toe heel		:	rxe/f)
2	hop		a	:	
a		step		:	re
3	step		a	:	
&		heel step		:	2
a	heel step=		B	:	
4	heel swivel click toes=		B,2	:	2,2
a		step		:	a
5	click toe heel		rb)	:	
&	)	hop	rxh_	:	a
a	rev click toe heel		rxe/f)	:	
6		hop		:	a
a	step		B	:	
7		heel step		:	2
&	heel step=		B	:	
a	heel swivel click toes=		B,2	:	2,B
8	step		a	:	

Step is A A A and finish
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      |   |   |          |
      L   R   L          R
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Finish

beat				
an		) shuffle		3,£
and		)		
e		tap) flop		a
1		step)		b[*
a	tap) flop		a	
2	step)		a[	
a		) shuffle		3,£
3		)		
&	hop		a	
a		step		a
4	step		a	
5		heel step		3
a	heel step=		C	
6	heel swivel click toes=		C,3	3,C
&	step		1	
a		step=		A
7	heel swivel clickheels=		1,A	
8				

Notes.

1. Sam said that he had seen the dancer Horace Wheatley do this step, he had however made the finish up himself.

2. The movements of the A part or the step have been slightly regularised to make the unit identical off both feet.

3. Similarly, the foot positions in the B part, particularly the rear aerial positions, have again been regularised.

4. In the B part beats 6a7&a8 could equally well be performed off the other foot (with beat 6 becoming a step instead of a hop), which would be a more regular pattern. However beat 8 would then have to be a tap, rather

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than a <u>step</u>.

5.   Note the change of position for the <u>heel step</u>s in the finish. In the step they
        are in :B, in the finish in :C.

Step 7

Beat	Action	)	Step	Symbol	:	Value
8	spring			a	:	
&		)	shuffle		:	3,£
a		)			:	
1	)		spring	xE_	:	f*
2	spring			a	:	
&		)	shuffle		:	3,£
a		)			:	
3	)		spring	xE_	:	f*
4	spring			a	:	
&		)	shuffle		:	3,£
a		)			:	
5	)			xE_	:	f*
and	catch in		spring	XE_,b,a)	:	
6	spring			a	:	
&		)	shuffle		:	3,£
a		)			:	
7	hop			a	:	

Step is three times through off alternate feet and finish.

Finish

Beat	Action	)	Step	Symbol	:	Value
a			tap) lazy		:	rb
8			step)		:	a
and	tap) lazy			rb	:	
1	step)			a	:	
and		)	shuffle		:	3,£
2		)			:	
and	hop			a	:	
3			tap) lazy		:	rb
and			step)		:	a
4	tap			b	:	
and	spring			a	:	
5		)	shuffle		:	3,£
&		)			:	
a	hop			a	:	
6			tap) flop		:	c
&			step)		:	c[*
a	catch out			rc),a,d+	:	
7			heel drop		:	a
8					:	

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Notes.

1.   Known to Sam (and probably almost every other stage dancer) as "Off to Buffalo".

2.   The finish utilises movemnets also found in Exhibition Steps 11 and 12, which Sam acquired from the Scottish comedian Andy Powers.

Step 8

A

Beat				
1	step		a	:
a		) shuffle		: 3,£
2		)		:
&		step		: rb
a		heel drop		: rb
3	step		a	:
a		catch out		: rb),b,d_
4	heel drop		a	:
a		catch in		: d_,a,rc)
5	heel drop		a	:
&		tap) lazy		: rc
a		step)		: rc*
6	) shuffle		C,£	:
&	)			:
a	step		c*	:
7		) shuffle		: 3,£
&		)		:
a		step		: c
8		heel drop		: c*

B

Beat				
a		tap) lazy	rb	:
1		step)	a	:
&		) shuffle		: 3,£
a		)		:
2	heel drop		a	:
&		step		: rb
a		heel drop		: rb*
3	) shuffle		C,£	:
&	)			:
a		heel drop		: a
4	step		rb	:
&	heel drop		rb*	:
a		) shuffle		: 3,£
5		)		:
&	heel drop		a	:
a		step		: rb
6		heel drop		: rb*
&	) shuffle		C,£	:
a	)			:

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Count					
7	) shuffle	hop		:	a
an	)		RE/H,Re/h	:	
and	)			:	
e	spring		rd*	:	
8		catch in		:	d),c,a_

C

Count					
a		tap) flop		:	a
1		step)		:	b[*
a	) shuffle		C,£	:	
2	)			:	
&	step		c	:	
a	heel drop		c*	:	
3		) shuffle		:	3,£
&		)		:	
a		step		:	c
4		heel drop		:	c*
&	) shuffle		C,£	:	
a	)			:	
5	step		c	:	
&	heel drop		c*	:	
a		) shuffle		:	3,£
6		)		:	
&		step		:	c
a		heel drop		:	c*
7	) shuffle		C,£	:	
&	)			:	
a	step		c	:	
8	heel drop		c*	:	

Step is A B C B no finish
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     |  |  | |
     L  L  R R
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Notes.

1. Composed by Sam in about 1985, but using walking forward and backwards sections taught to him by his father, James Sherry.

2. Note that the step moves forwards on the A and C parts and backwards on the two B parts.

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Step 9

A

1	spring	)	a	:	rc_
a		catch out		:	rc_,a,d_
2	hop		a	:	
a		catch in		:	d_,c,a)
3	hop		a	:	
&		tap		:	a
a		heel catch out		:	a),c,d_
4	hop		a	:	
&		heel tap		:	d
a		catch in		:	d),d,a)
5	hop		a	:	
&		tap		:	a
a		heel catch out		:	a),c,d_
6	hop		a	:	
&		heel tap		:	d
a		catch in		:	D),d,rc_
7	hop	)	a	:	
&		tip tap		:	rxe/h
a	hop		a	:	
8		tip tap		:	rc/e

B

1	spring		a	:	
&		tap		:	a
a		heel catch out		:	a),c,d_
2	hop		a	:	
&		heel tap		:	d
a		catch in		:	d),d,a)
3	hop		a	:	
&		step		:	a
a		heel drop		:	a
4	tap		a	:	
&	heel catch out		a),c,d_	:	
a		hop		:	a
5	heel tap		d	:	
&	catch in		d),d,a)	:	
a		hop		:	a
6	tap		a	:	
&	heel catch out		a),c,d_	:	
a		hop		:	a

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7	step		xE*	:	
&		rev click toe heel		:	rxe/f)
a	heel drop		a	:	
8		tap		:	rc

Step is A A B and finish
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      |  |  |        |
      L  R  L        L
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Finish

a		)		:	rE/H_
1		catch in		:	Re),b,b/c)
&	)	click heel toe	at	:	b/c)
a	drop		a	:	
2		step		:	xe/f*
&	rev click toe heel		rxe/f)	:	
a		heel drop		:	a
3	step		rc*	:	
&		step		:	b*
a	step		rb*	:	
4		) shuffle		:	3,£
&		)		:	
a	hop		a	:	
5		spring		:	a
&	) shuffle		C,£	:	
a	)			:	
6		) hop	rc_	:	a
&	tap) lazy		rb	:	
a	step)		a	:	
7		) shuffle		:	3,£
&		)		:	
a		step		:	c*
8	catch out		rc),a,c/d_	:	

Notes.

1.   Created by Sam with help from Harry Cowgill, using the concept of creating a step without shuffles.

Step 10

A

1	step			a	:
and		flat step=			: C
2	swivel=	heel swivel=		a,1	: C,3
and		catch in			: 3),b,a)
3		step			: a
and	flat step=			3	:
4	heel swivel=	swivel=		3,C	: a,A
and	catch in			C),b,a)	:
5	step			a	:
&		tap) flop			: a
a		step)			: a[
6	step			a	:
&		) shuffle			: 3,£
a		)			:
7	hop			a	:
&		tap) flop			: a
a		step)			: a[
8	tap			b	:

B

1	spring			rc*	:
and		catch out			: x5),x3,e/h)
2	hop			a	:
3		spring			: rc*
and	catch out		xE),xC,e/h)		:
4		hop			: a
and	catch in		e/h),c,rc)		:
5	spring			rc*	:
and		catch out			: x5),x3,e/h)
6	hop			b*	:
and		catch in			: e/h),c,rc)
7		spring			: rc*
and	catch out		xE),xC,e/h)		:
8		hop			: b*

Step is A B A and finish

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Finish

1	spring		rc*	:	
and		catch out		:	x5),x3,e/h)
2	hop		a	:	
3		spring		:	rc*
and	catch out		xE),xC,e/h)	:	
4		hop		:	a
and	catch in		e/h),c,rc)	:	
5		hop		:	a
&	tap) flop		rc	:	
a	step)		rb[*	:	
6		) shuffle		:	3,£
&		)		:	
a		spring		:	c*
7	catch out		rc),a,d_	:	
a	click heels=		c)	:	c)
8	spring	)		:	d_

Notes.

1. Said by Sam to be a tap step which he had learned during the course of his stage career.

2. The effect of swivelling the back foot results in a distinct turn of the hips in that part of the step.

3. In the B part, the backwards movement associated with the springs into :RC* are only partly recovered by the subsequent hops into :B*. Clearly less back and forward travel could be used.