

10/4/81.

Today Alice Smith, Julie Jemma, Ed Wilson + myself went into Co Durham.

We just visited Fattfield + Hamaton to try to find 'Billy Finlay's Troupe'

Alice S + myself visited Mrs Bella Gougham of

Hawthorn Terrace.
Hamaton.

She was ~73-5 and was Billy Finlay's sister (younger). Billy Finlay had been sent by his father to learn from one of the Ellwoods in Stanley. This would have been around about WW1, or just after. Billy taught many people including Bella herself and her brother Abie who was killed in a motorcycle crash some years ago. Billy taught Bella in ~1920 and they gave many concerts for charities between the wars. Bella's father was Scots. He could not clog dance but the whole family was musical and several played instruments or sang + this was part of the troupe's act.

They danced three rhythms - waltz, hempipe + one other. They danced on the spot - I got the impression of straight arms by the side, but when talking of the waltz she said that they moved about. She often danced duets with her brother(s). They only performed the steps off one foot. (at least as far as I could gather). They danced to a variety of instruments but Bella particularly mentioned the piano. They used to speed up on the last step.

Billy wore a dark suit with a stripe down the trousers, ? straw hat + white spats (she may have had top hat!)

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Apart from his immediate family, Billy also taught :-

Etta Cumson. (maiden name - wanted).

Mary Colpits (formerly Appleby)

Molly Alexandria. of Wornhill, Fairfield.

Molly can or could still dance - she + Bella danced at an over 60's do 2 yrs ago - Bella fell + hurt her legs + is now unable to dance any more.

She wore flat clogs - like shoes with no studs or use to the toe.

Billy Finlay's daughter is Doris Hawkes, although she never learnt from her father + only started dancing after his death.