

25/2/81.

This afternoon myself & Ed Wilson visited Mrs Irene Cowte of :-

189 Mary Ave
Birtley
Tel.

She was a pupil of Johnson Ellwood. She told us of the competitions which Johnson ~~had~~ organised. These lasted a whole day, sometimes two days. She told us that the competitors were graded by age with competitions for solo, groups ($\approx 3-4$), pedestal and tap. There was also a junior (15-18 yrs) + adult belt. Johnson called this the '4 Northern Counties Championship'. For the last two - 10 steps + double shuffles.

She first entered in 1954 at the age of 18. At first she said this was at Boldon Colliery but later she showed us her medals & this gave the place as Durham. The 1956 competition was in Newcastle.

Some competitions were held in the Rainbridge + Westgate Halls although she was unable to remember any details.

She last entered in ≈ 1961 age 16, when Hylton Pomeroy won the junior belt for the 2nd time. He went on to win this outright in the next yr. Hylton was $\approx 15/16$.

The competitions were always held in November.

In 1962 she began to dance semi-professionally with Hylton. She performed in the procession celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Slaydon Races. & then performed regularly at Balmbra's music hall. They did a double Clog dance on pedestals and followed this with a tap routine. A few years later she fell out with Johnson over this & seems not to have spoken to him since.

She could not remember who any of the judges in the competitions were, and only one competitor in the adult competition - Jean Johnson.

She said Nat Johnson had taught waltz & tap-in
scottish steps in taps but never in clogs.

When she danced with Hutton they were known as
'Ellwood + Daley' although after her argument with Johnson
they changed this to 'Hutton + Irene'. She once got
into trouble for learning Mary Ellwood's special steps!
Both she + Hutton used to make up their own steps.

Her clogs were of no flat soled, shoe type. She said
that they were easier to dance in than ours as it was
easier to move less in them, it being desirable to
keep the body still from the waist up.

She danced for us - I think 'Apollo 10's of both feet'
& 'Military Kreles'.

She knows Doris Hawkes very well and said that
she would try and arrange some joint sessions. She
also said that she would be happy to teach us, beginning
on Wed 11th March.

She was a founder member of the Northumbrian
Traditional Group.

We then went to see Freddie Foster of:-

Northumberland Pl.
Birtley.

He had learnt to dance from Mr Benymann - he
thought his Christian name was Jack.

He bought his clogs in Newcastle.

Benymann had taught him 6 or 8 steps, to
the tune of 'Swanee River'.

He had no names for his steps but called
a toe, drop heel a 'cram'.

He could only remember 3 steps which he said
he had learnt in 1927 at the age of 8. In
addition he thought that one of the steps he had
forgotten had a swanee movement in it.

Step 1.

1. Step
- a
- 2
- a
- 3 Step in posⁿ
- 4

Pause.

} shuffle - straight fwd, str. foot.

Step in posⁿ

6x through off alternate feet + break.

Break.

1. Step
- a
- 2
- a
- 3 Step
- a
- 4
- a
- 5 Step
- 6
- 7 Step - posⁿ.

} shuffle - str. fwd.

Step ~ 1' behind posⁿ

} shuffle - str fwd

Step ~ 1' behind posⁿ

Step slightly fwd of posⁿ

Fred's timing was rather difficult to assess but the above probably represents a fairly accurate analysis.

All Fred's shuffles were straight - no foot turning.

Step 2

1. Step

a

2

+

a

3. Step behind, lean w/st.
4. hop

+

a

} shuffle.

toe } in posⁿ, ft turned out.
drop heel

} shuffle.

6x off alternate feet + break.

alternatively the step on st 3 may have been a toe,
 drop heel, giving the more complex rhythm t.+a.3.
 Fred was uncertain about this but turning his foot
 behind with great emphasis.

Step 6 or 8 - his final step.

1. Step

+

a

2. Step

+

a

3. Step

+

a

4. drop heel

+

5. kick R heel w/ toe L-R.

a

Step in rear st.

5

+ kick R heel w/ toe R-L.

a

toe } slightly fwd of posⁿ
drop heel

brush kick L heel w/ toe R-L.

Step in rear st.

kick L heel w/ toe L-R.

Step

Step.

drop heel

6

heel

+ a

7

heel toe

toes click.

+

a

8

heel

toe

heel click.

3x through off alternate feet + break.

Always do same break.

Rhythm for last pt of step 6 may have been
6+a 7+(a) 8.