

Instep No. 1

Editor Chris Metherell

Typing: Ann Cross

Address for all correspondence:

3 Fetcham Court
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 2UL.

Tel. 863992

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to Instep. The number of people interesting themselves in clog and step dancing has shown a dramatic increase over the past few years and the time seems ripe to launch a magazine of modest proportions devoted solely to this area of dance.

The aim is to publish four times a year, providing a vehicle for dancers to air their views and share their interest with others. I feel that perhaps the most important feature is to be found on the last page. Here, groups or individuals may advertise their meetings, workshops etc., free of charge - just write and tell us - of course if you want to advertise a workshop more fully we will gladly quote you a price for a full page advertisement!! The magazine will also contain articles on dance and descriptions of steps where possible. A Letters Page would be nice - if you write them. Any information which is of interest to clog and step dancers will be included - just write and tell us.

This issue is free!

Future issues have to be paid for. We aim only to cover our costs, not to make a profit, and envisage that if a large number of people subscribe it will be possible to increase the number of pages (we also hope to obtain some advertising).

I feel this magazine will fill a gap and provide a useful service - but only if you support it. Tell us about your group - the dances you do - advertise your meetings - write us a letter or better still an article - subscribe to Instep and tell other dancers about it.

NEWCASTLE NOTATION - A RESUME

C. & A. Metherell

There is clearly a need for a standard system for the notation of step dance. Newcastle Notation represents a possible solution. This article provides a brief description of the bones of the system, as it is the policy of this magazine that all steps published in INSTEP should use Newcastle Notation. It should be stressed that this is a resume, it should enable most readers to interpret most steps with a good degree of accuracy but is in no way comprehensive. It is hoped to publish the full system shortly, however any notation can only be a tool and cannot replace learning steps from a performer. It is perhaps best regarded as an accurate aide memoire. Now to the notation itself.

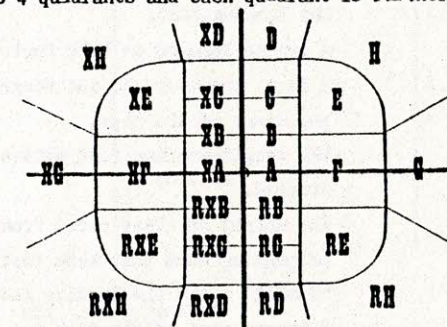
The system uses 4 columns:

Time Count	Left Foot Movement	Right Foot Movement	Modifier

The time count provides the metronome for the system. It varies with time signature like a piece of music and the time signature is stated at the beginning of each step. A distinction is made between triple time and duple time. Thus where each crochet of a bar is divided into 4 these are labelled "1 an and a", where each note is divided into 3 "1 + e".

The movements are labels for describing what each foot does on a particular beat and the modifier column gives the position in which each foot performs that movement. The area round the body is split into 4 quadrants and each quadrant is further subdivided into 6 boxes.

X Crossed
R Rear
RX Rear Crossed



The above diagram gives the positions for the right foot. Those for the left foot

would be a mirror image of the above diagram. In the modifier column right and left foot are separated by a colon. Thus standing with feet together would be A:A. The system makes a presumption that feet are naturally slightly turned out. Accents placed above the modifiers denote extra turn. Thus : \acute{A} (or \grave{A} ;) denotes foot turned out, \grave{A} : denotes foot turned straight, : \grave{A} (or \acute{A} ;) denotes foot turned in. Clearly this gives a considerable amount of leeway.

Some examples are:

classical 5th position	$\grave{A}:\acute{X}\grave{C}$
classical 4th position	$\acute{A}:\grave{D}$
"pigeon toed"	$\acute{A}:\acute{A}$
rear 5th position	$\acute{A}:\acute{R}\acute{X}\acute{C}$

Aerial positions are denoted by adding † (low aerial), †† (aerial) or ††† (high aerial) to the modifier depending on relative height.

Glossary of Movement Labels

Click	A beat made by hitting one foot against the other. It is written in the column of the moving foot. The part of the moving foot is described first. Thus: click the R side of the L heel against the L side of the R toe would be written in the L movement column: Click heel (R) toe (L).
Catch in/out	A tap made with a swing of the leg. 3 modifiers show starting aerial position, position of tap, and final aerial position.
Drop	One part of the foot being on the ground the other part (toe or heel) is lowered, ending in a flat foot.
Hop	A spring off and onto the same weight-bearing foot. "Hop" marks the landing beat.
Jump	A spring landing on both feet. "Jump" marks the landing beat.
Shuffle	2 taps, one away and one towards the body. 2 modifiers show the positions of the taps.
Shunt	The weight-bearing foot slides to new position and the heel is dropped.
Spring	The weight is transferred from one foot to the other with an upward propulsion such that both feet are in the air at the same time. "Spring" marks the landing foot and beat.
Step	A transfer of weight from one foot to the other.

Swivel	Example :A heel swivel is a pivoting movement about the heel. 2 or 3 modifiers describe the start, (middle) and finishing position/angles.
Tap	A beat where the foot is lifted up immediately afterwards.
Touch	A beat when the foot remains on the floor following the beat (no weight transfer).

Weight Transfer is signalled by underlining the movement e.g. Step. If the weight is equalised it should be followed by = e.g. Jump =

Ball of the foot All movements are presumed to be made with the ball of the foot unless otherwise stated, e.g. Toe Tap or Heel Drop.

An Arrow ↓ in the movement column starts at the time of take off and ends on the landing of a Hop or Spring.

†, ††, ††† in the movement column cues an aerial movement of the non-weight bearing foot - look at the modifier column for detail.

Perhaps the best way to demonstrate the system is to use some examples. The following are three examples of a common step (variously known as "2nd Lancers", "treble and flatter" and other more or less prosaic names).

Example: † Westmorland Style

4/4			
1	step	} shuffle	\grave{A} :
and			: \acute{E}, \acute{C}
2		} <u>spring</u>	: $\acute{X}\grave{C}$
and	<u>step</u>		\acute{A} :
3	<u>hop</u>	} shuffle	\acute{A} :
4			: \acute{C}, \acute{E}
+			
e			

6 X off alternate feet

+ suitable break

Example 2 From S. Sherry, reel time routine.

4/4

1	and	shuffle	A : C, C
2	and	step	: B
3	and	step	A :
4	and	hop	A :
+		shuffle	: C, C
e			

6 X off alternate feet + suitable break.

Variation from F. Foster, Co. Durham.

4/4

1	e	shuffle	A : C, C
2	+	touch	: B
3	e	drop heel	: B
4	+	shuffle	RXC :
e			RXC :
			: C, C

6 X off alternate feet + suitable break.

Finally an example of a Westmorland "shuffle off".

4/4

1	and	step	A :
2	and	tap	: A
3	and	step	: A
4	and	hop	A :
5	and	step	: C, C
6	and	step	A :
7	and	step	: RXC
8	and	step	A :

Madeleine Hollis

82 year old Bill Gibbons is always delighted for an opportunity to put on his clogs and do a dance, and he is in constant demand to perform at fetes, concerts, schools etc. He is thrilled at the revival of interest in clog dancing and is always happy to show his steps to anyone who would like to learn them.

Bill lives in the village of Burscough, near Ormskirk, Lancashire. Burscough is on the Leeds - Liverpool canal, and is not far from Ring O'Bells, Latham, where Bill was born. Bill went to work with his father on the barges when he was twelve, and they used to dance on the barge deck to keep warm.

Bill's father taught his children to dance when they were very small. They danced mainly to hornpipes played by their father on the melodeon. On the barges they danced to the beat of the engine. The steam engine rhythm was in triplets (bangers-and-mash bangers-and-mash): 1 & e2 3& e4) and therefore hornpipe rhythms could be danced to it. When the barge was in shallow water, the beat would slow down, and they would dance more slowly.

Originally, when the barge decks were wooden, they wore clog irons, but when steel decks came in, they changed to rubbers to avoid the dangers of slipping.

Bill now dances in wooden soled clogs with an aluminium heel plate to improve the sound of the heel beats. He dances usually to two Jimmy Shand records "Three Drops of Brandy" (hornpipes) and "The Bluebell Polka". He used also to dance to the faster "Steamboat" played by the Countryside Players.

At one time, Burscough was a canal village, and a lot of the boat people could dance. Bill's family were in demand at weddings and other festivities to dance their four (or six, or more) handed jig to Irish jigs such as "The Irish Washerwoman". They danced in their clogs, with irons on the sanded stone-flagged floors.

Bill is the only step dancer left now. He has made up most of his steps, building them up over the base of the simple stepping his father taught him.

His dancing is impromptu stepping rather than steps of fixed length. He does do set steps, though some have several variations, and the steps vary in length, in general from one to four bars. Some are in threes, danced against a four rhythm, which is extremely effective (and tricky to learn).