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Editorial

Not a bad year for clog and step dancing as a whole. Several important new dancers have come to light whose steps will enhance the repertoire available. One thinks immediately of Marion Cowper who is perhaps the 'find' of the year. The 'Campaign for Real Reels' commenced this year with the intention of 'putting the stepping back into traditional dancing' (see review in this issue), and in view of the continued interest in this type of dance and its usefulness to performers we shall widen the scope of this magazine to cover this field.

A few old teams have gone, but several new teams have come on the scene to take their place. We have held over the list of teams normally published in this issue until April, due to the lack of space.

And what of 1984? A new clog weekend is planned in Lancashire to be held in February, continuing the trend of making traditional dancers available to a wider audience. Following the success of the first film of Pat Tracey, a second is in the pipeline and may be completed this year. If 'Pat Tracey Rides Again' is anything like Part 1 it will have been well worth the wait. A film of the Orchard family of step dancers is planned, together with videos of Marion Cowper and Mrs Viona Marhoff.

Who knows who will suddenly spring up full of new steps and information? My feeling is that in view of all the work currently going on in Lancashire, it is there that any really exciting discoveries will be made in 1984.

I have to announce that Ann-Marie Hulme has resigned from the Academic Services committee of EFDSS. She has done sterling work in promoting an interest in clog and step dancing, particularly as regards filming. In their wisdom the EFDSS have invited your truly to replace her - do they know what they are letting themselves in for?

One final point. I have no reviews of either the recent Ivy Sands Video nor the 1983 Newcastle Weekend. All other reviews I am able to write if no one else will - even if the result is not always greeted with universal joy - but these two I can't write. Would someone please oblige?

NORMAN ROBINSON - 17 STEP ROUTINE

Much interest was caused at the last Newcastle Weekend by a lengthy Lakeland routine performed by Ian Dunmur.

The steps he performed were collected from Norman Robinson, one of Tom Flett's major informants. Norman used to perform a 17 step routine as a clog solo, and I feel it appropriate to present details of this routine for anyone interested in performing it. Page references are given throughout to Traditional Step Dancing in Lakeland (J F & T M Flett. EFDSS London 1979) together with notes on the steps where it is felt that this is appropriate.

Norman Robinson. Clog Routine

Collected by T M Flett 5, 7 & 8 January 1960.
(TRAD 1 p46 - 61a)

Shuffle Off = Version 1 (p 27)

On steps marked (*) Robinson used a modified form of shuffle off not published in the Flett's book. This was identical to Version 1 above, but with a shuffle with the L foot on beats 4 & a of bar 8. i.e. the next step seems to begin with a preparatory shuffle.

"The order of the following steps is probable inaccurate." (Flett written up notes Trad 1 p 49)

N.B. Norman Robinson's names for steps are given in brackets.

Step 1 = Single Shuffle. Version 1 (p 29)

* Step 2 (Double Shuffle) = Treble Shuffle. Version 1 (p 31)

Note use of slow double beat rather than a fast "flutter" to change feet.

* Step 3 (Treble Shuffle) = Double Treble Shuffle. Version 1 (p 32)

Note. This differs markedly as regards foot positions from the step as usually taught and performed. Note to step 2 applies also.

* Step 4 = Double Treble Shuffle. Version 2 (p 32)

Notes to step 3 apply.

* Step 5 = A Long Sidestep. Version 1 (p 34)

Note. This step is repeated in mirror image with the other foot. The only step in the routine to do this. Travel sideways, away from shuffling foot during step.

Step 6 (Hagworm Crawl) = Hagworm Crawl (p 51)

Step 7 (Single Crunch) = Single Crunch. Version b (p 41)

Note. Norman Robinson's method of crunching is given on p 38 (Version III). Note particularly the foot positions on bars 3/4.

Step 8 (Double Crunch) = Double Crunch. Version d (p 41)

Step 9 (Knock Toe & Heel) = Knock Toe + Heel (p 58)

Note method of rolling given on p 57 (Version III)
No shuffle off.

Step 10 = Wiggly Twist (p 50)

Note. On bar 8, beats 4 and , of previous shuffle-off:
"hop twice on L, begin to carry RF round in a ronde towards a closed crossed position."
Shuffle off at end.

* Step 11 = Kicking Step.

The notation given at p 48/9 is somewhat confused. Flett collected this step in the first pattern given on p 49 with heel beats: ie the version which includes single crunch.

* Step 12 = Kicking Step. Last version on p 49.

Note. Version collected included heel beats.
Bar 6, beats 4 and are:

"Spring onto the balls of both feet in 1st position and immediately bring heels to floor (keeping toes on floor)"

Step 13 = Flatter, Cross over, Knock Heels & Crunch. (p46)

Note. Step 13 had two alternative shuffle offs. Flett's written up notes do not mention the heel click at bar 2 beat 2, and it is the R foot which is raised and performs the crunch at beats 3 & a 4 .

Step 14 = Crow Walk (p 53)

Step 15 = Slip step (p 54)

No shuffle off. According to Flett's written up notes Step 14 was always followed by Step 15. In which case the Note on the back treble on p 53 seems to be in error.

* Step 16 = ? Closest published step is Back Treble + Kick (p 50)

Step 16 is 1 and 2 and 3 of this step repeated with alternate feet for 6 bars ending on bar 6 beat 4 with "spring onto the balls of, both feet in 1st position" and shuffle off.

Step 17 = Swivelling Crunch sequence b. (p 44)

Clog Terms from a 19th Century
Local Dialect Glossary

The following are all taken from:
J W Brockett. A Glossary of North Country Words. 1825.

Clogs

a sort of shoes, the upper part of strong hide leather and the soles of wood, plated with iron often termed cawkers.

Cross the Buckle - Cross owre the buckle

a Peculiar and difficult step in dancing - Newc[astle]
To do it well is considered a great accomplishment.

"Bob hez thee at lowpin and flinging,
At the bool, football, clubby and swinging,
Can ye jump up and shuffle,
And cross owre the buckle,
When ye dance? like the clever Bob Cranky"

Song. Bob Cranky's Size Sunday

Hagworm

the common snake.

Knack and Rattle

a quick and noisy mode of dancing with the heels.

"He jumps and his heels knack and rattle,
At turns of the music so sweet,
He makes such a thundering brattle,
The floor seems afraid of his feet."

The Collier's Pay Week

Sandgate Rattle

a peculiar step in vulgar dancing consisting of a violent and very quick beating of the toes on the floor.

Shuffle and Cut

a superior step in vulgar dancing.

(The glossary also mentions the 'Rapier Dance' and the 'Sword Dance', although these have not been quoted above.)

It is most likely that other local dialect glossaries contain similar information and the editor would be pleased to publish any information sent.