

INSTEP 13.

Editor: Chris Metherell
Address for all correspondence

15 Wolveleigh Terr
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 1UP
tel 091-284-1259

Next Issue 1st January 1985. Copy Date 1st December 1984.

EDITORIAL

After a long delay Instep is back again, and will be appearing at four-monthly intervals from now on.

I'm pleased to report that I have received several offerings in response to my pleas for articles and as a result in this issue we even have a poetry page!

I understand that the promised booklet from Reading Traditional Step Dance Group on Sammy Bell and his steps is nearing the end of the pipeline and look forward to reading this long-awaited publication. Regretably, the even longer awaited booklets on Bill Gibbons and Sam Sherry's Waltz Routines in the Newcastle Series seem to be jammed firmly in the system and show no signs of being ready even in the distant future. Not I hasten to add through any fault on the part of the Newcastle Series - we're still waiting for the manuscripts from the author!

I have heard a rumour - and it is only a rumour - that there will be some sort of competition at this year's Dancing England - I have no details to pass on as yet - maybe it's just a figment of my fevered imagination.

My impression, and I have no hard and fast information to back this up, is that the rate of increase in those taking up clog dancing is finally levelling off. True one still sees many new faces but not in such droves as one used to two or three years ago. It may even be that the number of dancers, and I don't include those who turn up to one festival workshop a year, is approaching an equilibrium condition. Time will tell.

And now for something completely different. I believe that there may be a residential weekend in Newcastle next year at Easter devoted to Traditional Scottish Dancing, both of a group and solo nature. Once again no details yet. Watch this space.

It may interest some of you to know that the EFDSS are marketing video copies of many of their films - if you fancy a copy for yourself details are available from Cecil Sharp House. I also hear that the Reading group are considering doing the same for their products.

We regret to record the death Mr Surtees earlier this year.

John was well known to clog dancers on Tyneside for his enthusiasm for the dance, and in particular for his own favourite waltz routine.

John was born in 1898 in the village of Beamish, Co Durham. He was the youngest of a large family, several of whom were clog dancers who had learnt their dancing from Jimmy Ellwood. When John took up dancing seriously however he went to Jack Burrell for lessons and with a few exceptions it is these steps which he performed and taught to many dancers in the last years of his life.

John will always be a particularly special person for me. He was the first dancer from whom I ever collected seriously. I well remember sitting in my car outside John's house in Billingham discussing collecting tactics with Julie Jarman in September 1982 before summoning enough courage to go and knock on his door. John and his wife were most welcoming and it was not long before John put his clogs on and conducted a lesson in his back parlour. And we were not the only ones. Many a clog dancer has been the recipient of John's enthusiastic instruction. His particular fancy was for waltz stepping, which he performed with a verve which belied his advancing years, and he has left us a number of his favourite steps to remember him by. All his steps are published in the Newcastle Series.

No account of John's later years would be complete without mention of his involvement in the revived North East Clog Championships, which he helped to judge until only two years ago. He once told me that his only objection to modern clog performances was that the dancers did not put a special "finish" at the end of their routine. John always used a finish, taught him by his Uncle Billy when he was a youngster, for the last two bars of any hornpipe routine. It was thus particularly pleasing to see this finish used by a dancer at this year's N E Competitions. I'm sure John would have approved.

Uncle Billy's Finish

1			tap	:XC
2			<u>step</u>	:A
3		tap		XC:
4		<u>step</u>		A:
5			catch out	:A, B, C/D
6		<u>drop heel</u>		A:
7		↓	<u>spring</u>	C/D: A
8		<u>flat step</u> (ff)		C:

Note.

This was always used as the final two bars of the dance, and thus is always performed off the right foot.

COMPETITION ROUNDUP

Northern Counties Championships.

Durham August 4-5 1984

Although I only attended on the day of the senior competitions, the turnout for these must have been a great disappointment for the organisers, entries being well down on last year. This was especially noticeable in the Open where the usual large number of entrants from Green Ginger were missing.

The judges for all the senior competitions were Mary Jamieson, Helen Frost, Margaret Hickman and Vera Aspey. You may well ask who Mrs Frost and Mrs Hickman are. The answer is Mary Jamieson's daughters. I suppose you could say it was a "family affair".

I only saw the Open Competition all the way through and so cannot comment on the others. I'm sure that all judges believe that their views on how the dance should be performed are correct, but, and I know I've said this before, if a competition is going to claim any sort of respectability, the organisers should at least try and get judges representing a cross-section of the styles found in the NE rather than concentrating on one alone.

Results:-

Novice.

1. Sheila Crosby.
2. Lisa Watling.
3. E. Simcox.

Pedestal.

1. Brenda Walker.
2. Jane Metcalf.
3. Roy Simcox.

Open.

1. Brenda Walker.
2. Jane Metcalf.
3. Ann Harper.

Morpeth Competitions April 28 1984.

These were held on the above date. There was a reasonable entry for one of the children's classes. The rest had so few entries that in no case were there more than two. I feel that there is no point in reporting further.

Lancashire and Cheshire Competitions.

Fylde Sept. 1st 1984.

Once again I must record that entries were well down on last year. There were 4 entrants for the junior competition and the same four children, plus one other dancer made up the competitor list for the novices! The situation became completely ridiculous when the Open took place, as the entrants for this consisted of Chas Fraser, the reigning champion, plus the two UNPLACED entrants from the Novices.

The waltz competition was however all that the other competitions were not. The number of entries (6) was three times that of last year. The standard was high, and the judges must have had a difficult job separating the places. I enjoyed it.

The judges were, for the record, Mary Jamieson, Jane LLOYD, Pat Tracey, Don Watson and Sue Bousfield (Open & Waltz). An Appalachian clogger helped to judge the Junior and Novices. I did not catch his name.

For all but the waltz competition, the majority of the dancers were from the North East. As many of you will know, the rules for the Lancashire competitions are that no heel beats are allowed. What a pity that the NE dancers had not made more of an effort to dance new steps. What in fact all they did was to dance steps from the NE, missing out the heel beats, leaving NE dancers in the audience wincing every time they did it.

Junior Championship.

- 1= Solomon Walker.
R Adamson.
2. Tiffany Walker.
3. D Skull.

Novice.

1. Tiffany Walker.
2. R Adamson.
3. Solomon Walker.

Open Championship.

1. Chas Fraser.
2. D Skull.
3. Linda Downham.

Open Waltz.

1. Jane Metcalf.
2. Brenda Walker.
3. Sheila Crosby.