

## REPERTOIRE BUILDING

One of the questions I am frequently asked is where the Newcastle Cloggies learn the material which they perform. I thought it might be a good idea to publish a list of just what is available at the present time in the way of steps and dances to learn. Each issue a different area or style will be covered beginning with -

### The North East

The Ellwood Family - innumerable steps in dotted hornpipe rhythm plus an unknown number of simple waltz steps. Opinion varies as to whether these latter are clog or tap steps. Many of the Ellwood's pupils have embellished and changed the steps they were taught thus effectively making the steps their own.

Mrs Ivy Sands - Three dotted hornpipe routines of varying difficulty.

Mr John Surtees - Small number of dotted hornpipe steps, waltz steps and three schottische steps of considerable interest.

Sam Bell - Dotted hornpipe and waltz routines.

Aylis Angus - a number of "pieces" combinable into a routine of one's own devising.

Tiny Allison - Dotted hornpipe steps and waltz routine. Also several "tap" routines of some interest.

Mrs Marhoff - steps may not originate in the North East. Single and Double Hornpipe, Heel and Toe Jig Routine, waltz steps, Musical Comedy steps and Lily of Laguna Routine.

Lily Farrell - small number of dotted hornpipe steps.

Kit Haggerty - Dotted hornpipe routine.

A number of other dancers have taught a small number of steps each and research is continuing to bring to light new material at an alarming rate. The above list is not exhaustive and I should be pleased to hear from anyone who may be able to add to it.

Of step dancing in the area little is known other than it used to be done in the country areas. A step or two have been collected for use in the Morpeth Rant and others may be just awaiting collection.

If anyone requires further information on any of the above or advice regarding where to learn any particular steps the editor would be pleased to answer any queries.

## COBBLERS AWL WEEKEND OF DANCE

### A Review

This, the second clog/rapper instructional weekend organised by Cobblers Awl, was held at Newport on 7th/8th May. Although a rapper workshop was held I will confine my comments to the clog part of the weekend.

I found the whole event very well organised, particularly as regards the accomodation provided for visiting dancers and the excellent breakfasts!

I attended the classes in Welsh clog run by Huw Williams who turned out to be an excellent teacher with the rare ability to run a class which catered for a very wide range of ability. He was also able to impart a certain amount of background regarding the origin of some of the steps which I have found most dancers of this tradition unable to do. It was a pity that the music was for the most part provided by a 120 bass piano accordian, hardly a traditional welsh instrument, but this is a very minor criticism. I know how difficult it can be to provide musicians of quality for a large number of concurrent classes.

Two other members of the team attended Sam Sherry's Jig class, about which I have nothing to say other than that one cannot have too much of this particular good thing. There really is no substitute for the straight from the horse's mouth approach.

I regret that I have a lot to say about the beginners and intermediate classes run by Mary Ford and another member of the Wessex Woods. I was personally appalled by the standard of teaching in these two classes. The Intermediate class was "Lancashire". When questioned as to the provenance of the steps the instructor was unable to give me any information except that they were "Lancashire hornpipe steps". This did not unfortunately stop her from teaching them in jig time for the entire weekend. The beginners were being taught a reasonable selection of simple steps. This is just not enough at the beginners' stage however, when the steps are really only a vehicle for the basic technique of the dance. I felt that neither instructor had sufficient understanding of what they were teaching or of how to go about running a class. As an example, neither instructor was able to explain the timing of the steps they were teaching. I was inclined to put this down to inexperience in teaching, however the two instructors gave an rather embarrassing "performance" at the ceilidh in the evening revealing that they just simply were not good enough to be able to teach at this stage in their careers. I regret having to say all this in such uncompromising terms but I'm sure Cobbler's Awl could have found someone better to take these classes. One should really only use the best instructors at this level, or indeed at any level.

Be that as it may I thoroughly enjoyed the weekend and will quite happily make the 700 mile round trip again next year.