

NEWCASTLE CLOGGIES

WEEKEND OF CLOG DANCE

NOVEMBER 17-18TH 1984

Workshops include:

- For beginners - Complete beginners Workshop
Beginners to North East
- For Improvers - Ivy Sands Double Hornpipe
Improvers North East Steps
Liverpool Hornpipe
- Advanced - Mrs Marhoff's "Toe & Heel"
@Flowers of Edinburgh
@*Sailor's Hornpipe

Note * = provisional @ = alternative Sunday only

A new feature this year is the "alternative" workshop system.
Anybody attending the workshops, may, on the Sunday only, drop out
of their chosen workshop and go to either of the special
"alternative" workshops instead - at no extra cost!

PLUS

Dance with Madelaine Hollis and Burglar's Dog

Irish Reels workshop with Barbara Slater of Clann na Gael.

Musician's workshop with Dave Shaw.

Exhibition of photographs and clog memorabilia.

Stalls, clogmakers, books etc., etc.

All workshops backed up by printed material.
No more laborious note scribbling required!

Star-studded lineup of guest dancers.

PLUS PLUS

There will be an opportunity for individuals to improve their
style by seeing a video recording of their dancing. For those of
a more adventurous nature a review and criticism session of their
video performances will be arranged.

Contact - Ed Wilson 7 Dodsworth North, Greenside, Tyne & Wear
tel 091-413-4633
or - Alice Methereill 15 Wolveleigh Terr, Newcastle.
tel 091-284-1259

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INSTEP 13.

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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.

JOHN SURTEES 1898 - 1984

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		step	:A
3	tap		XC:
4	step		A:
5	drop heel	catch out	:A, B, C/D
6	↑	spring	A:
7	flat step (ff)		C/D: A
8			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.

RINKAHHYN VANNIN

A Review by the Editor

An authoritative book on Manx dancing has been overdue for many years, as indeed has any book on this subject. Although my feeling is that this particular volume falls under the "any" section it is none the less welcome as the first publication dealing with these dances since the 1930's.

The book, which is published by a consortium of Manx dance groups, contains not only traditional Manx dances, both solo and group, but also details of the White Boy's Sword Dance and play and several pieces of dialect. Music for each dance is also included.

At first sight the book appears excellent. The standard of production is high and it is accompanied by an optional cassette tape containing enough of each tune to allow dancers to practice the dances without the benefit of a live musician. On closer examination however it readily appears that the book is seriously flawed and indeed often misleading.

Most if not all the dances have been collected by Mona Douglas, the doyen of Manx dancing. Regretably, no sources are given for the most part and one is left high and dry with dances out of their social and historical context. It is a pity that this information is missing as the background to many of the dances is fascinating and in some cases throws interesting sidelights onto not only the dances themselves but also the methods used to collect them, allowing an assessment to be made regarding their authenticity.

Perhaps a specific example is in order. The Walking of the Women is a dance supposedly performed at the Kirkmichael Hiring Fair on Michaelmas Day by girls who were available for hire. It is a particularly beautiful and satisfying dance. The dance is in alternate slow and quick tempo and is supposed to show the agility of the prospective employee! In fact Miss Douglas never saw the dance performed. She stated that the dance was collected from an old lady who "knew how to do it", but did not know whether she had ever taken part in the dance at the hiring fair. Anyone with any experience of collecting would of course view any such description with extreme caution. The music for this dance is also subject to much doubt and it is a pity that the authors have not sought to be more critical of the material at their disposal.

It must be stated however that for all its shortcomings the book is well worth buying and whatever the sources and however much the dances have been the subject of "interpretation" or "realisation" they remain a beautiful and often haunting collection.

Concealment of facts leads to speculation of the worst kind and those involved in the Manx revival would better serve their cause by a more critical scrutiny of their material rather than leave the reader to draw what may be doubtful conclusions. Rinkahhyn Vannin is available from Dave Collister, 22 Highfield Cresc, Onchan, Isle of Man and costs #5 including the cassette.

LETTER

This issue we are pleased to have a lengthy communication from Ian Dunmur, concerning his Lakeland routine.

Ian Dunmur
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So: my name appears in an article about Norman Robinson's 17 Step Routine in INSTEP 11. Someone did once ask me, after a performance, if I had learned from Norman because he thought my style familiar. I had forgotten that Norman had a 17 step routine. Quite fortuitously my, now at last standardized routine, also has 17. I thought some of your readers might be interested in a list of my steps plus a few comments.

Until last year I used to alter my routine to suit the occasion. This meant I had to concentrate on remembering the sequence instead of the steps. Having, at last, worked out how to do all the steps in JF & TM Flett's Traditional Step Dancing in Lakeland (by being pressed into it by people at workshops), I thought I would like to work out a routine to show the variety of steps learned by those children in Furness and the South Lakes up to 1920s. I will make a few comments after listing the steps. Just one point first. When Joan and Tom Flett first saw Norman Robinson dance, it was in his little parlour on Walney Island. Then they invited him to a Caledonian do in Wallasey and were amazed by his moving all around the floor. So, my routine consists of groups of relatively stationary steps joined by moving ones to take me round clockwise through three stations and back to the start.

Page numbers and Roman numerals refer to the Flett's book.

1. SINGLE SHUFFLE I changing to II p29. Shuffle off I.
2. DOUBLE SHUFFLE I p30 with jump onto both feet as seen done by Norman, before Shuffle Off I. (Compare with step 12 in Instep 11.)
3. TREBLE II or DOUBLE TREBLE V SHUFFLE pp31,32.
4. ROLLING I SEQUENCE p56 (Diddy Dixon). Ends with treble which leads perfectly into -
5. LONG SHUFFLE p33 (Fred Clifton, left of 3 boys on p92). Ends with back treble.
6. SWIVELLING CRANCH IV Sequence b p44. Shuffle off I.

7. MRS STOREY'S SIDE STEP Not in Flett. (From Late Ettie Storey "Welsh" girl on p94). Shuffle off I.

8. LONG SIDESTEP III bars 9-16 (Diddy Dixon). Moving to right. Ends with a treble - weight on right foot, behind.

9. KNOCK TOE AND HEEL using Rolling III (N Robinson) but three knocks to end (Mrs Ethel Wall) p58.

10. FLATTER OVER KNOCK HEELS CRANCH II p47 (Mrs May Rigg who insists on calling this Lancashire Clog Dancing).

11. CROW WALK p53. Shuffle off I.

12. DIDDY DIXON'S 1ST STEP p64. Ends with Treble leaving right foot in front for -

13. DOUBLE CRANCH p40 Cranch V p39. To right, to left, to right again giving normal Shuffle off I on left.

14. BACK TREBLES foot of p53 with BACK TREBLE AND KICK p50 - 2 to right, 2 to left.

15. DIDDY DIXON'S 2ND STEP p56. Ends with 2 Swivelling cranches, 2 stamps.

16. DIDDY DIXON'S 5TH STEP p49. (Kicking step without heel drops) Ends with three stamps.

17. HAROLD EDGAR'S FORWARD STEP p60. Ends with special finish to |1 2&a3 4|- a2 3 -|.

Music - preferably Soldiers Joy. A music for 17th step because it fits the finish better.

I first learned the Shuffle off from Mike Quinn, who had played for Tom Flett's dance team in Liverpool, in the early 1960's. Then, about 1964, Jennifer Millest, from Tom's team, turned up and we formed the Reading Step & Traditional Dance Group in 1965. About the first thing we did was the Lakeland steps. Jennifer used to go and get new ones from Tom. Then Tom came down and sorted out a few details - especially the spring which features in all the treble shuffles and raising your rear foot - see the silhouette on pp25,31.

Since then, Ailsa and I have visited some of the old dancers, and some of the younger ones (Bruce Wilson, Malcolm Caine) who were learning from Norman Robinson when he died in 1970. So my style was influenced by Norman but also, especially as regards the treble shuffle III by the late Mr Benson Taylor, and the cranch by Mr Bruce Milburn (left in lower picture on p94). They were both Tommy Cannon's pupils. The late Mrs Ettie Storey (B Milburn's sister) remembered a simple sidestep not given by the Fletts and also gave a vivid idea of the girls' style of dancing, as did B Taylor's sister, Mrs Polly Sprout.

Bruce Wilson stresses the importance of elevation (see p26) - leaving a lot of air - and getting your feet up behind before the taps on the &s in 1&2&3 at the start of the Shuffle off. Mr Tom Prickett, judging at the Kendal competitions, said "get your knees up higher" in the hop before Wiggly Twist and, I think also the Kicking step. Bruce Milburn explained that you must use the 5 tap cranch in Step-over-cranch in order to get your weight correct for the return. (There are other ways of doing it.) This attention to detail - positioning at the end of one movement ready to start the next - I regard as most important. It is something which does not show well in printed descriptions: neither is it too often seen in performance, especially by those whose only aim seems to be to learn (?) ever more steps. As taught by Jennifer early on, I almost always put in a preparatory double beat before starting shuffling steps; but not others. (see foot of p28).

Bruce Wilson has indicated that Norman danced at a rather slow pace, which seems, sometimes, to have been adopted as a general feature of the Lakeland stepping. I suspect it may just be that he did it slowly whilst teaching at the evening classes. I do not remember his dancing as being slow. His speed in the news film taken outside the Royal Albert Hall is about 48 bars per minute.

C Sharp House

2 Regent's Park Road, London

PAT TRACEY

will teach a selection of her

LANCASHIRE HORNPIPE STEPS

12th September and 10th October
7.30 - 9.30 p.m.

All welcome.

A Beginner's View of the Newcastle and Leyland Clogging Weekends

Chris Brady

My first introduction to clogging was at Sidmouth in 1983. Imagine struggling up to L.N.E. every morning for the Green Ginger workshops after a heavy night's dancing!! However their enthusiasm and patience made the effort well worth while, and the workshops were an excellent introduction to the challenge of clogging. (I'm looking forward to relearning the steps properly at the Cobblers Awl Weekend in May!)

At Towersey I met the Reading Cloggies and there my enthusiasm was rekindled. Well you needed enthusiasm to attend workshops on a cold and windswept stage out of doors. Anyway I joined the Reading dancers in October and have continued attending their club evenings in order to learn more of the North East style clog dancing from Sammy Bell, a true gentleman indeed, and their step dances.

My first weekend away clogging was to Newcastle, where I remember working hard to learn to clog "properly" in Peter Brown's beginners workshop. I'm still recovering but at least I have remembered most of what he taught. Camping in the Boldon Village Hall was an experience, and hilarious when some of the camp beds collapsed (I shall not name the victims), but at least beds were provided. Thank you Newcastle.

The Leyland Weekend is remembered for its hospitality. After all, since my travel plans went haywire and I had to travel up by bus, the last thing I expected was that a "search party" would be driving round Leyland looking for me. The workshops were good, especially Bert Bowden's, but I wish that his in particular had not gone so fast and it was a pity that the workshop was split into two halfway through the first session, especially since there was no-one to take the slower people. In the end, Melanie, the co-ordinating instructor, had to dash from one room to another to teach both groups at the same time. I had the feeling that the fast group was being encouraged by a few who wanted to collect every single technical detail. Unfortunately this meant that the others could not keep up with the instruction. I did notice that no-one noted Bert's introductory "shuffle" at the start of the Sunday workshop. He did a couple of shuffles, slapped his hands against his knees, put a finger in his mouth to make a "popping" sound and kicked a leg in the air (at least this is what I think he did, but why did no-one write it down?). However it was a joy to see Bert dance and at last his steps are becoming clearer with practice. Incidentally, Bert mentioned that some music hall artistes had leather pads on their trousers which they used to slap with their hands in order to complement the sounds of their clogs. Has anyone else noted this?

The Bill Gibbons set dance workshop was also of great interest, especially having seen it performed "professionally" at the Albert Hall the previous weekend. Finally, (and I will not mention the "camping") the ceilidh was one of the best I have ever been to,

and one that will be remembered for a very long time. What with Bert Bowden's puppets, the tremendous clogging display of the youngsters (sorry but I cannot think of the town they came from), and the very pleasant company enjoyed during the evening, that ceilidh was a classic. Well all I can say now is that I'm hooked on clogging, and as a refugee from Morris I'm amazed that I didn't discover the scene sooner.

This issue Instep moves into the realm of culture. I was pleasantly surprised to find in the post one day the following offerings. If there is anyone else out there with artistic leanings Instep would be pleased to publish your musings.

Said Mother to her husband, "Have you seen my bread board, Dear?
Have you taken it for firewood, for look it isn't here."
Said Father, "I'd not burn your board with store so full of logs.
I've taken it to make myself a pair of dancing clogs."

The soft, sweet bliss of quietness,
The lullaby of peace,
The golden dream of silence
When Simon's clogs will cease.

I am a little footprint pressed into the crisp white snow.
A young maid's scarlet dancing clog made me an hour ago.
I'm quite a happy footprint but there's one thing that I fear:
The sun might melt the snow away and make me disappear.

Whoever thought of dancing
In a wooden pair of shoes?
I've pulled a muscle, crushed a toe,
My shin has such a bruise.

My knee's not what it used to be,
My ankle's sore with cuts
And all my clogs are used for now
Is cracking open nuts.

Tiffany Searle
July 1984