

READING DAY OF DANCE 1984

I am pleased to report that this turned out to be another first class day.

I attended Colin Smith's class on the Earl of Erroll. Colin had gone to some trouble, firstly to recreate the dance in the form in which it was originally taught in the nineteenth century and secondly to produce a good set of notes to accompany the class. This dance really is an object lesson for all those who are content with second best. I have, in the past, learnt this dance on at least two occasions and found it both difficult and rather uninspiring. The version which I learned on both occasions however turns out to be a considerably bowdlerised version of the original, changed and "improved" by past dancers. (It is this version which is commonly seen and which has been published several times.) Colin's dance, taken from a copy of the original notes, proved to be delightful, well constructed and repaying the effort put into learning it.

Colin Smith is to be congratulated both on his teaching and on his restoration of a particularly pleasant step dance to the modern repertoire.

I cannot comment on any other workshops as I wasn't there, but I heard reports from several different sources. Some of the afternoon performances by both one or two of the guests, and it must be said, one or two of the instructors, were a little embarrassing, but, one does not have to be a magnificent performer to teach well and that is what the instructors were there for. The highlight of the whole day for me, and I know for many others, was the short demonstration given by Ronnie Collis. Ronnie is a professional performer who does a clog routine on a pedestal, which is about as inadequate a description of his performance as would be a description of the Sistine Chapel as having a "painted ceiling". Quite frankly it was worth going to Reading just to see his one and a half minute performance, a view I know was shared by many others I spoke to. Can we have a class by Ronnie next year please?

I've thought of another highlight. In the evening, some of the Reading team performed a set of south country steps in an absolutely captivating manner, completely capturing the mood of the steps - perhaps they will teach those next year too?

WORKSHOPS

FEB

16/17 Lancashire Weekend
Melanie Barber 07744-742690

Bill Gibbons
Pat Tracey
Sam Sherry
Teresa Hindle
Bert Bowden

APRIL
27/28

Yorks Dance Centre Workshop
0532-462121

Pat Tracey

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No 14

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Next edition 1st May 1985

EDITORIAL

Rather than review the past year in traditional New Year style, lets look forward to see what goodies are in store for 1985.

The EFDSS are to launch a "short video" programme to complement their 16mm filming activities and applications are invited from anyone wishing to make a short video recording of a traditional subject. Believe it or not, funds are available. If you have any ideas and fancy trying your hand just write either to the EFDSS direct or to me and I'll pass your letter on.

The second film of Pat Tracey is still in production and may be finished this year. A video of Mrs Marhoff is "in the can" and awaits editing before release. Several books are in the pipeline and even the long awaited booklet on Sam Sherry's waltz might materialise. Pigs might fly.

A new competition will take place within a few days of you reading this. This time the venue is Derby, and the competition will be

A new competition will take place within a few days of you reading this. This time the venue is Derby, and the competition will be held under the auspices of Dancing England. It will be rather different from any other current competition, and the organisers hope, a lot better. The competition will take the format of a go as you please, up to four performers on stage at one time, at least part of the performance must have some "step" content and the whole lot must last for less than five minutes. Music must be live. What is perhaps most important of all about this competition is that it is to be judged on the basis of entertainment value. Firstly, a panel of eminent judges will select the three best "acts" during the afternoon heats. These threefortunates will then get a chance to perform during the evening ceilidh when the judges will be - yourselves! The act which gets the most applause wins. Sounds fascinating.

Still on the competition front, the jungle drums tell me that the Kendal Festival may be intending to revive the ill-fated "Westmorland" competition this year. I shall keep you informed.

Finally, this issue includes not only an article by Jane Mickleborough but also copies of several fascinating archival documents from her collection.

CLOG SOLES

Jane Mickleborough, clogmaker.

What makes a good pair of clog soles?

Wood obviously, but that seems to be where agreement ends. Having made clogs for some time now, here is what I have gleaned from all over concerning soles. Mostly unresearched (I don't have the time), writing this poses as many questions as it answers.

Traditionally soles were hand-cut in alder which was easily hand-cut, straight grained, waterproof and did not split. In Lakeland birch was used as an alternative. 30-40 year old trees would be cut in spring by the block cutter. Rough blocks were rived from boles cut into four lengths, childrens, womens, middles and mens. The blocks were stacked in chimney shaped piles to season and were sold to clog makers having been rough-shaped. A skilled sole cutter could cut a pair of soles in 45 minutes, using only his eye to gauge size and shape.

Different areas had characteristic sole shapes - notably Nutters in Nelson. This firm raised the instep and claimed that having once worn Nutters one would not (or could not?) wear any others.

Clog knives were used on a low bench with their end hook threaded through a rotating eye. Three knives were used, a stock knife for most of the shaping, a hollower to cut the concave top surface and a gripper, a V shaped gouge, to cut the grip round the edge of the sole.

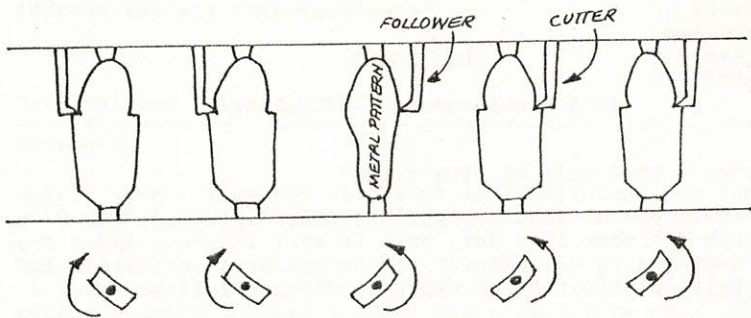
Alder as well as being light, was easy to cut and would slowly wear to the shape of the foot. Ash was occasionally used to make dancing clogs but being hard was extremely difficult to hand cut. It made a good tap when dancing, whereas alder does not make a good sound as a dancing clog.

The first patent for a machine to cut soles was taken out in 1818 but by the turn of the century very few soles were cut by machinery. By 1921 however, many clogmakers were using machine cut soles and uppers, following a revival in clogs during the First World War.

Frank Walkley (Clogs) Ltd in Hebden Bridge are the last surviving sole cutters in this country. The original machinery, used when the mill was owned by J Maude and Son, is now no longer used. These machines require lengthy re-setting for each different size, strength and toe shape, making short runs (200 pairs of one size is the minimum run needed) uneconomic. Much of the skill and knowledge needed to set up and use these machines successfully has now, sadly, been lost.

The soles that are currently made are cut on copy lathes originally designed to make golf club heads. These machines are able to overcome the problem of turning a concave shape. Two parts are cut at once - a process which takes no more than twenty minutes.

SHAPES AND STRENGTHS OF SOLES STOCKED.		MEN'S												WOMEN'S					BOYS'				CHILDREN'S												BOOT SIZES.		CLOG SIZES.		Remarks.																				
		11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3																								
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A metal pattern in the centre guides the cutters on either side to shape the blocks rotating in opposite directions. This gives two right hand and two left hand soles in one go.

This metal pattern has to be thicker in some dimensions to allow sharp corners to be formed. When the machines were first used the most common sizes were the first metal patterns to be made - 5, 7 and 8. These first patterns were not very satisfactory, having too low a cast.

Subsequent patterns for other sizes are an improvement, but unfortunately the person who developed the skill of making the patterns has retired, and we are left with unsatisfactory shaped soles in the most popular sizes.

I understand that Walkleys are now trying to make better pattern blocks in these sizes. Sadly, it has become impossible to get the old Maude's soles in any but the largest and smallest sizes.

Once cut, the soles are tumbled with wax in drums and the grip is cut around the edge with a spindle moulder.

Walkleys' soles are cut from beech, which is hard and gives a good sound in a dancing clog. Some few remaining Maude's soles were cut in Sycamore, which is light with little figure or grain, and which gives a silky smooth finish. Sycamore blunts woodworking machinery quickly, but is pleasant to work with, being easier to adapt to shape by hand and nail into. Sycamore is harder than alder and sounds better for dancing.

Clog soles appear to have had marked regional variations, and the clog soles asked for by dancers varies too. Lancashire clogs seem to have a high cast - the curve-up of the toe. Dancers in the North-West prefer the high cast to aid them in the "off the toe" styles of dancing. Modern soles do not generally have a high enough cast and neither do they have sufficient heel height.

North Eastern dancers demand clogs with almost no cast and a very high heel.

Does a dancing style really require a particular shape of sole? Did sole shape develop regionally under the influence of the dance? Probably not. Or has the dance been influenced by the locally available shape of sole?

Answers on a postcard please.

DEAR SIR,

At a Conference held in Manchester, on November 10th, the following Machine Clog Sole Manufacturers were represented :—

J. MAUDE & SON	....	....	....	Hebden Bridge.
SNAITH CLOG SOLE Co.	....	....	....	Snaith.
R. E. CHAPMAN	....	....	....	Liverpool.
REMER & Co., LTD.	....	....	....	Liverpool.
H. BRASSINGTON & SONS	....	....	....	Inchicore, Dublin.
YORKSHIRE CLOG SOLE Co.	....	....	....	Selby.

It was decided that the prices should be made uniform, viz. :—

Men's sizes, 9-11's, @ 6/- per doz. ; 13's @ 6/6 per doz.

" 12's @ 6/3 " 14's @ 6/9 "

Women's sizes 5, 6, 7, 8 @ 8/- "

Boys' sizes, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 @ 4/- "

Children's @ 3/- "

Men's London Soles @ 6/6 "

Women's " @ 5/6 "

Brewers ... @ 8/- "

Washers @ 9/- "

The above prices will come into operation at once, and will be strictly adhered to.

Yours faithfully,

TERMS { 5 % Cash.
2 1/2 % One Month.

From

John Maude & Sons, Limited, Hebden Bridge,
and
British Clog Sole Manufacturers, Limited, Snaith.

15th September, 1939.

CLOG SOLES.

In view of the government control of timber supplies and prices, and the additional costs of production brought about by compulsory War Risks Insurance, Air Raid Precautions Measures, etc., the Directors of the above two Companies regret that it will be necessary to increase the selling price of their products.

It is not possible at the moment to say exactly what increases will have to be effected, but new price lists are now in course of preparation and will be forwarded to customers with as little delay as possible.

In the meantime customers should kindly note that all orders received after Saturday, the 16th instant, will be subject to the new price lists.

JOHN MAUDE & SON LTD.,

CLOG SOLE WORKS,

HEBDEN BRIDGE,

YORKS.

With a view to assisting us in making out a case concerning the importance of the Clog Trade in these days of National Crisis, we shall be obliged if you will kindly answer the following questions:—

During the year 1939 we supplied you with _____ pairs of Clog Soles.

(1) Do you supply any Clogs for Naval or Army Services? If so, give what information you can.

(2) Do you supply Clogs for Munition Workers? If so, please state class of workman.

(3) Are you supplying Clogs for Industries which are engaged in work of National Importance (apart from Munition Works)? If so, name the Industries

(4) Have you any Contracts for Hard Wood Clog Soles? If so, will you please give particulars?

(5) In your opinion what are the advantages of Clogs as footwear for Workmen employed in the heavy industries?

(6) Any other remarks (write overleaf if necessary)

Signed _____

Date _____ 1940.

Address _____

Assuring you that any information you give will be treated as strictly confidential.

LETTERS

Rose Cottage
Sulhampstead Abbots
Reading
RG7 4ED

To the editor of Instep,

I was reading one of the articles on dancing in volume IV of Every Woman's Encyclopaedia (London c.1911) and found a reference to "saylor from Latin salio - to bound or spring" as a mediaeval word for a dancer. The Oxford English Dictionary gives, among other gems:

sail, sayle, saile, saille, sailly - to dance
sailour, saylour, saillour (Old French sailleor
from saillir - to dance) - a dancer.

I therefore ask the question - does "Sailor's Hornpipe" mean "Dancer's Hornpipe" rather than "Hornpipe of one who sails a ship"? Have generations of Jack Tars been misled?

Ian Dunmur

(Any Jolly Jack Tars like to comment - Ed)

COBBLERS AWL

4th ANNUAL INSTRUCTIONAL W'END

11th and 12th MAY 1985

Brynglas House, NEWPORT, Gwent

WORKSHOPS ~ Absolute Beginners Clog ~ Mary Davies
(Intermediate Clog ~ To be finalised)
Advanced Clog ~ Sam Sherry (Jig)
Beginners Welsh Clog ~ Cliff Jones
Advanced Welsh Clog ~ Huw Williams
Rapper Dancing ~ Tony Foxworthy

PLUS ~ Musicians Workshop (FREE!), Ceilidh with Parsley Hay, Stalls, Films, Lecture on Welsh Clog, Creche.

Outdoor and indoor camping available Fri. and Sat.

For full details and booking form send s.a.e. to
Nessa Sawicka, 59 Redlands Rd., PENARTH, S. Glam. CF6 1WE



'ORIGINALITY - THE STEPS OF SAMUEL BELL

M Cherry 1984

A Review by Julie Jarman

This is the third booklet produced by Mike Cherry in his originality Series, following "Clog Steps By Mike Cherry" and "Clog Steps for Beginners" and it is certainly a welcome addition to material published on clog dancing. For the last six years Sammy Bell has been in contact with the Reading Step and Traditional Dance Group, of which Mike is a member, and this booklet contains notations for Sammy's Basic Hornpipe steps, Exhibition Hornpipe steps and Waltz Routine, together with some background information.

It is a pleasure to read such a well produced booklet with plenty of margin and a good sized typeface. It is particularly handy for the step notations, making these easy to read and leaving room for personal comments to be added.

The first section is made up of transcripts of interviews with Sammy Bell which cover his childhood in the North-East, how he was taught to dance and the competitions he entered. All too often, booklets produced by collectors are based on THEIR presentation of someone's life and history and it was refreshing to hear Sammy telling it "in his own words". I felt this gave me not only the background to the steps but also helped me to catch something of Sammy's personality. However the transcripts do not cover everything of interest and it would have been useful to have an extra section providing more information. In particular Sammy mentions Eddie May, George Golightly and Dickie Farrell, other dancers not as well-known as Jimmy Ellwood, who also taught Sammy and it would have been nice to have heard a bit more about them. Details which help to provide a context are also missing such as how the 2/6 Sammy paid for a lesson compared with other teachers at the time, (most dancers I have spoken to seem to have paid a shilling) and more details of the "big competition" held in Stanley in 1935.

A small point perhaps, but it would have been helpful to point out that there is a film of Sammy dancing his steps and to give details of where this can be obtained.

To turn to the notations of the steps themselves, as I have mentioned before they are easy to read and on the whole the steps are well notated. I was able to work out the routines without much difficulty but there were a few things which I found confusing. The numbering down the left hand side of each page seemed to have no point as it was not related to the timing or the number of beats and I found it confusing. The definitions are not quite clear enough. For instance there is no distinction made between a beat which takes the weight of the body and one which does not, both being notated as "step". Also the notation of "kicks" would be unclear to anyone unfamiliar with the movement.

Each step is written out in full with the bars numbered, which is very useful (Step 4 of the Basic Hornpipe is the only exception and is consequently less clear). In other words the notation provides a valuable aide-memoire for people who have already learnt the steps but not enough detail of foot positions or clarity to allow anyone to dance the steps accurately from this booklet.

I think that this booklet provides interesting and useful reading and is a must for anyone fortunate enough to have learnt some of Sammy's steps.



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FILMS**

PLEASE NOTE:

Single copies are relatively expensive to produce. If more than one copy of a cassette is required at any one time, a reduction in the price per copy can be made. Please enquire for further details.

Copies of these cassettes, and some others, are now available for inspection in the Library at Cecil Sharp House.

The original films are still available for hire, and details may be had from the Librarian.

Formats available:

VHS/Betamax/U-Matic

The following films produced for the Society are now available on

VIDEOCASSETTES

SAM SHERRY
LANCASHIRE STEP DANCER
Colour Sound 25 min 1978

Jig, Waltz and Exhibition sequences
each shown complete in full-length and close-up
with introductions by Sam Sherry

EFDSS Members Price £34.50/Non-Members £40.25*

BILLY BENNINGTON
NORFOLK DULCIMER PLAYER
Colour Sound 28 mins 1979

Examples from Billy's repertoire
covering his various styles of playing
together with some reminiscences
and a demonstration of his jig-doll

EFDSS Members Price £34.50/Non-Members £40.25*

DICK HEWITT, 'THE NORFOLK STEP-DANCER'
WITH PERCY BROWN, MELODEON
Colour Sound 17 mins 1979

Hornpipe, Waltz and March routines
with reminiscences and commentary by Dick
and demonstration of basic technique

EFDSS Members Price £31.05/Non-Members £36.80*

KINORA REELS
933, 934, 935, 937, and 939
B/W 5 mins Silent 1912/1983

Copy onto film of Kinora reels made c. 1912
showing Cecil Sharp, Maud & Helen Karpeles & George Butterworth
dancing extracts from Morris and country dances

EFDSS Members Price £27.60/Non-Members £33.25*

TOM PRINCE
KING OF THE 'TINA
Colour Sound 25 mins 1984

Shows Tom, the Champion English Concertina Player
playing for Morris, Rapper and Country Dance
and includes Three 'Concert' pieces

EFDSS Members Price £34.50/Non-Members £40.25*

* PRICE UPDATE: Prices given on the original handout are for EFDSS members and are exclusive of VAT. The above prices include VAT.