DARTMOOR STEP DANCING

A-M Hulme and P Clifton

These notes were prepared from visits made 3/78, 8/82, 12/82 and 8/85 by Ann-Marie Hulme and Peter Clifton for workshops at The Reading Traditional Step Dance Group Festival and the Newcastle Weekend 1985.

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The steps were transcribed into Newcastle Notation by Chris Metherell.

Competitions

Competitions were important attractions at the many fairs and fetes (or revels) held at places such as Chagford, South Zeal and Whiddon Down. They were advertised before the day in the Western Gazette and took place in the afternoon at about 3.00 pm and would go on as late as 7.00 pm. There were often more than 30 competitors. A box 15 or 18 inches square and 4 inches high was placed on a farm cart in a prominent position. One musician played for all contestants continuously.

The judges were in their time respected step dancers who though elderly were required to give a short demonstration before the contest. They did not judge their home contest and were known for their fairness. Contestants registered during the afternoon and drew lots for a dancing position. Entry was free. The dancers were eliminated in a series of three heats. In the 1920s and 30s first prize was about 10/-. The contestants, some of whom travelled 20 miles or so to enter a competition, included farm workers and travellers. The usual footwear was hob nail boots. Step dancing took place at other social occasions: harvest suppers, spring revels, club walk dinners, in the pub and at family parties.

Music

Many of the old timers play concertina, some play fiddle, more recently mouth organ or melodeon. The tunes used were even-rhythmed hornpipes or schottisches. For examples listen to Bob Cann's West Country Melodeon (Topic Records) especially: Uncle George's Hornipe and Schottische Hornpipe.

Bob Cann

Bob Cann of South Tawton is respected locally and further afield as musician, M.C., storyteller and step dancer. He is an entertainer of the old school. Born 1916 into a family of farm workers and quarrymen he learned to step by watching his uncles and aunts on both sides of the family. His father, grandfather and great-uncle stepped and Bob's sister won 1st prize at Spreyton Revels. Bob's grandfather Sam played for the contests. He was succeeded by Bob's uncle George. The family parties at Christmas were annual occasions for step dancing. Bob has passed on his stepping to others and

revived the contests at his Dartmoor Pixie Festival held each year in South Zeal.

Leslie Rice

Leslie Rice first entered a competition at the age of seven in 1919. Les's uncle Albert Crocker was a famous step dancer and whistle player. Les says he learned to dance by watching others. He describes his ability as a gift. Les went on to win many contests until they ceased in the early 1930s. Recently he has run weekly classes; one of his pupils won the contest at Dartmoor this year.

Typical Sequence

A typical sequence for competition comprised three setting steps and three steps (note: each is danced twice). Leslie Rice most commonly danced the sequence of LR1 to LR3. In the final round he might use a fourth step the "double back step" (not included in these notes) as the final step, in place of one of the three.

Leslie Rice's Finish

1		<u>jump=</u>		<u>jump=</u>	A/F:A/F
2		toe tap			B:
&		heel swivel tap			B,B:
a		toe tap			B:
3		<u>flat step</u>			A:
and	)			shuffle	:B,B
4	)				
and				<u>step=</u>	:RC
5		pt			A:
		<u>heel drop</u>		catch out	:RC↑,A,C↑
6				flat touch	:C
7					
8					

Notes

1. The jump= on beat 1 is very low, the rise being only an inch or so.

2. The heel drop on beat 5 is sometimes danced as <u>step</u> .

Setting Step LR1

1			touch	:B
2			step	:A
3	touch			B:
4	step			A:
5			touch	:B
6			step	:A
7	touch			B:
8	step			A:

Three times off the same foot and finish and
repeat all off same foot.

Note.

1. Les Rice says start the repeat of the whole setting movement
as above, but has been observed dancing this on the reverse beat.
the movements thus becoming:

4			touch	:B
1			step	:A
2	touch			B:
3	step			A:
4				

etc.

Step LR1

1			step [↓]	:F
and	step			XB:
2			step	:F
and	heel tap			XC:
3	step f			F:
and			step	:XB
4	step			F:
and			heel tap	:XC

Six times off the same foot and finish and
repeat all off the same foot.

Note.

1. Beats 1 and 3 are emphasised with almost a drop onto the foot.

Setting Step LR2

&			toe heel tap		:B/C
a			heel { toe tap		:B/C
1			flat step		:A
&	toe heel tap				B/C:
a	heel toe tap				B/C:
2	flat step				A:

**Twelve times through off the same foot and finish and
repeat all off the same foot.**

Step LR2

1			step		:A/F
and	step				XÈ/F:
2			step		:A/F
and	heel catch				XE/F↑, XC, A/F↑

**Twelve times through off the same foot and finish and
repeat all off the same foot.**

Setting Step LR3

1			toe(R) tap		:XÉ
2			step		:A
3	toe(R) tap				XÈ:
4	step				A:

**Six times through off the same foot and finish and
repeat all off the same foot.**

Step LR3

1			step		:A
and	step				F:
2			step		:A
&	heel catch out				F/G↑, F/G, F/E↑
a	↑				F↑:

**Twelve times through off alternate feet and finish and
repeat all off the same foot.**

<u>Setting Step LR4</u>

1		toe (L) tap		:A/F
2		<u>step</u>		:A
3	toe (R) tap			F:
4	<u>step</u>			A/F:

Six times through off alternate feet and finish and
repeat all off the same foot.

Note. The toe (R or L) taps at beats 1 and 3 strike the edge of the
box if comfortable. Foot is not turned out.

Setting Step LR5

count				
1			toe tap	:A/B
&			heel tap	:A/B
a			toe tap	:A/B
2			flat step	:A
3	toe tap			A/B:
&	heel tap			A/B:
a	toe tap			A/B:
4	flat step			A:

Six times through off alternate feet and finish and
repeat all off the same foot.

Step LR5

A

count				
1			step	:A/F
and	step			XÈ/F:
2			step	:A/F
and	heel catch			XE/F↑,XĈ,A/F↑

B

count				
1	shunt=		shunt=	B:B
2	shunt=		shunt=	A:A
3	shunt=		shunt=	B:B
4	shunt=		shunt=	A:A
5	shunt=		shunt=	B:B
6	shunt=		shunt=	A:A
7			step	:A/F
and	step			XÈ/F:
8			step	:A/F
and	heel catch			XE/F↑,XĈ,A/F↑

C

count				
7	shunt=		shunt=	B:B
8	shunt=		shunt=	A:A
1	shunt=		shunt=	B:B
2	shunt=		shunt=	A:A
3	shunt=		shunt=	B:B
4	shunt=		shunt=	A:A
5			toe tap	:RC
6			catch out	:RC↑,A,C↑
7			flat touch	:C

Step is A A A A B A A A C and finish and repeat all off the same foot.
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     |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
     R  R  R  R  = L  L  L  =
        L     L        R
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Setting Step BC1

1				tap	:B
2				step	:A
3		tap			B:
4		step			A:

Six times through off the same foot and finish and
repeat all off thesame foot

Note.

1. It will be seen that this is almost identical to Les Rice's first
    setting step, except that the foot is tapped rather than touched on
    ground.

Step BC1

1				step	:A/F
and		step			XE/F:
2				step	:A/F

12 times off alternate feet and finish and
repeat all off the same foot.

Notes

1. This is a simple version of Les Rice's first step.

2. Beat 2 often becomes a forward shunt rather than a step .

Setting Step BC2

A	1	flat step		A:
B	and	pt		A:
	2	heel drop		A:
	&		tap	:A
	a		heel touch tup	:A
	3		toe drop	:A
	and		pt	:A
	4		heel drop	:A
	&	tap		A:
	a	heel touch tup		A:
	5	toe drop		A:

Step is A then B part 11 times through off alternate feet and finish
and repeat all off the same foot.

Step BC2

1		step	:A/F
and	step		XC:
2		step	:A/F
and	step		C:
3		step	:A/F
and	step		XE/F:
4		step	:A/F

Six times through off alternate feet and finish and
repeat all off the same foot.

Step BC3

A part = 1 and 2 of step 1

B part = 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 of step 2

Step is A A B A A B B B and finish and repeat all off same foot.
        R L R L R L R L

Bob Cann's Finish

count				
1		heel tap	:B
and		tap	:A
2		heel tap	:B
and		tap	:A
3		heel tap	:B
and		flat step	:A
4	heel tap		B:
and	catch in		B↑,A,RC↑:
5	step		RC:
6		flat step
7	flat step	
8		