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**DARTMOOR STEP
DANCING**

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Introduction

These notes were originally prepared for workshops by Ann-Marie Hulme and Peter Clifton at the Reading Traditional Step Dance Group Festival and the Newcastle Weekend 1985.

The material comes from a number of sources. Insofar as Leslie Rice is concerned, visits were made by Clifton and Hulme in March 1978, August 1982, December 1982 and August 1985, and by Ann-Marie Hulme and Chris Metherell in January 1988.

A film (8mm) was taken by Paula Earwaker during one of these visits and a lengthy video recording was made by Metherell during the January 1988 visit.

Where Bob Cann is concerned the steps are derived both from field recordings and from a document in the collection of the late T.M. Flett, which gives notations for the Treble Cross Step and an alternative break.

Thanks are due to both Bob Cann and Leslie Rice for their patience and kindness without which the publication of these notes would have been impossible.

Leslie Rice.

Leslie Rice first entered a competition at the age of seven in 1919. Les' uncle Albert Crocker was a famous step dancer and whistle player. Les says he learnt 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 1930's. Recently he has run weekly classes; one of his pupils won the contest at Dartmoor in 1985.

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 dance by watching his uncles and aunts on both sides of the family. His father, grandfather and great-uncle stepped, and Bob's sister won first 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 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.

Competitions.

Competitions were important attractions at many fairs and fetes (or revels) held at such places 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 p.m. and would go on as late as 7.00 p.m. 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 1920's and 1930's 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 hobnail 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 played concertina, fiddle and more recently mouth organ or melodeon. The tunes used were even-rhythm hornpipes or schottisches. For examples listen to Bob Cann's West Country Melodeon (Topic Records), especially: Uncle George's Hornpipe and Schottische Hornpipe.

Typical sequence.

A typical sequence for competition comprised three setting steps and three steps (Note: each is danced twice). For example Leslie Rice most commonly danced the sequence LR1 to LR3. In the final round he might use a more complex step such as the "Double Back Step" as the final step, in place of one of the three.

Leslie Rice's Finish

1		<u>jump=</u>	A/F:A/F
2	toe tap)		B:
&	heel swivel tap) THT		B,B:
a	toe tap)		B:
3	<u>flat step</u>)		A:
and		shuffle	:B,B
4			
and		<u>step=</u>	:RC
5	<u>heel drop</u>		A:
6		catch out	:RC↑,A,C ↑
7		flat touch	C:
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 a step. This is particularly evident on the 1987 film.
3. The catch out on beat 7 is sometimes danced as a tip tap in RC. Once again this is well shown on the 1987 film.

Setting Step LR1.

1		touch	:B
2		<u>step</u>	:A
3	touch		B:
4	<u>step</u>		A:
5		touch	:B
6		<u>step</u>	:A
7	touch		B:
8	<u>step</u>		A:

Step is three times through off same foot and finish.
Repeat all off the same foot.

Notes.

1. Les Rice says to 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		<u>step</u>	:A
2	touch		B:
3	<u>step</u>		A:

This necessitates a pause on beat 4 immediately preceding the finish.

Step LR1.

1		<u>step</u>	:A/F*
and	<u>step</u>		B:
2		<u>step</u>	:A
and	heel tap		C:
3	<u>step</u>		A/F*:
and		<u>step</u>	:B
4	<u>step</u>		A:
and		heel tap	:C

Notes:

1. The first beat is emphasised with almost a drop onto the foot.

Setting Step LR2.

8		toe tap) TH	:B/C
and		heel tap)	:B/C
1		<u>flat step</u>	:A
2	toe tap) TH		B/C:
and	heel tap)		B/C:
3	<u>flat step</u>		A:
4		toe tap) TH	:B/C
and		heel tap)	:B/C
5		<u>flat step</u>	:A
6	toe tap) TH		B/C:
and	heel tap)		B/C:
7	<u>flat step</u>		A:

Six times through off the same foot and finish. Repeat all starting on the same foot.

Step LR2

1		<u>step</u>	:A/F
and		<u>step</u>	XE/F:
2		<u>step</u>	:A/F
and	heel catch out		XE↑,XC,A/F↑
3	<u>step</u>		A/F:
and		<u>step</u>	:XE/F
4	<u>step</u>		A/F:
and		heel catch out	:XE↑,XC,A/F↑

Six times through off the same foot and finish. Repeat all starting on the same foot.

Setting Step LR3.

1		toe (R) tap	:XE
2		<u>step</u>	:A
3	toe (L) tap		XE:
4	<u>step</u>		A:
5		toe (R) tap	:XE
6		<u>step</u>	:A
7	toe (L) tap		XE:
8	<u>step</u>		A:

Six times through off the same foot and finish. Repeat all starting on the same foot.

Step LR3.

1		<u>step</u>	:A
and			F*:
2		<u>step</u>	:A
and	heel tap		F/G:
3		<u>step</u>	A:
and		<u>step</u>	:F*
4		<u>step</u>	A:
and		heel tap	:F/G

Six times through off the same foot and finish. Repeat all starting on the same foot. The way Les naturally does the heel tap out to the side is to describe a very small circle: tapping out and fractionally forward on the way back into place.

Setting Step LR4.

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

Notes: Alternative versions of this step are with Toe Heel, and Toe Heel Toe in place of the toe tap on beats 1 & 3 (See setting steps LR3 & 5 for timings).

The foot is not turned out, and should not hit the outside of the box.

Step LR4. (Albert Crocker's Double Back Step)

See additional notes attached.

Setting Step LR5

8		toe tap)	:A/B
&		heel tap)THT	:A/B
a		toe tap)	:A/B
1		<u>flat step</u>	:A
2	toe tap)		A/B:
&	heel tap)THT		A/B:
a	toe tap)		A/B:
3	<u>flat step</u>		A:

Six times through off the same foot and finish. Repeat all starting on the same foot.

Step LR5

A

1		<u>step</u>	:A/F
and	<u>step</u>		XE/F:
2		<u>step</u>	:A/F
and	heel catch		XE/F;XC,A/F↑:

B

1	<u>shunt</u> =(forward)	B:B
2	<u>shunt</u> =(back)	A:A
3	<u>shunt</u> =(forward)	B:B
4	<u>shunt</u> =(back)	A:A
5	<u>shunt</u> =(forward)	B:B
6	<u>shunt</u> =(back)	A:A
7		:A/F
and	<u>step</u>	XE/F:
8		:A/F
and	heel catch	XE/F;XC,A/F↑:

C

7	<u>shunt</u> =(forward)	B:B
8	<u>shunt</u> =(back)	A:A
1	<u>shunt</u> =(forward)	B:B
2	<u>shunt</u> =(back)	A:A
3	<u>shunt</u> =(forward)	B:B
4	<u>shunt</u> =(back)	A:A
5		:RC
6		:RC↑,A,C↑
7		:C

Step is A A A A B A A A C and finish.

, , , , , , , ,
R L R L = L R L =

Repeat all off the same foot.

BOB CANN'S STEPS

Setting Step BC1

1		tap	:B
2		<u>step</u>	:A
3	tap		B:
4	<u>step</u>		A:

Six times through off the same foot and finish. Repeat all starting on the same foot.

Notes:

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		<u>step</u>	:A/F*
and	<u>step</u>		XC:
2		<u>step</u>	:A

Twelve times through off the alternate feet and finish. Repeat all starting on 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.

Step BC3

A

1		<u>step</u>	:A/F*
and	<u>step</u>		XC:
2		<u>step</u>	:A
3	<u>step</u>		A/F*:
and		<u>step</u>	:XC
4	<u>step</u>		A:

B

1		<u>step</u>	:A/F
and	<u>step</u>		X/C:
2		<u>step</u>	:A/F
and	<u>step</u>		C:
3		<u>step</u>	:A/F
and	<u>step</u>		XE/C:
4	<u>step</u>		:A/F

Step is A B A B B B and finish.

, , , , ,
R R L L R L

Repeat all off the same foot.

Bob Cann's Finish

1		heel tap	:B
and		tap	:A
2		heel tap	:B
and		tap	:A
3		heel tap	:B
and		<u>flat step</u>	:A
4	heel tap		B:
and	catch in		B↑,A,RC↑:
5	<u>step</u>		RC:
6		<u>flat step</u>	:A
7	<u>flat step=</u>		A:

Additional Steps November 1989

Treble Cross Step (from Tom Flett's Collection - probably Bob Cann's)

Quadruple pas de basque. Three times through

Break (from Tom Flett's Collection - probably Bob Cann's)

1		<u>step</u>	:A
and	<u>step</u>		B:
2		<u>step</u>	:A
and	<u>step</u>		E:
3		<u>step</u>	:A
and	<u>step</u>		B:
4		<u>step</u>	:A
and	touch		C:
5	touch		RC:
6	<u>step</u>		A:
7		<u>step=</u>	:A
8			

Albert Crocker's Double Back Step

Please note that the following step is a suggestion for how Leslie Rice may possibly have wanted the "Double Back Step" to go. His various attempts at dancing this step have been analysed, as well as his hand descriptions of the pattern. However this cannot be said to be definitive.

A			
8		toe tap)	:B
&		heel tap)THT	:B
a		toe tap)	:B
1		<u>step</u>	:A
2	toe tap)		B:
&	heel tap)THT		B:
a	toe tap)		B:
3	<u>step</u>		A:
4		toe tap)	:B
&		heel tap)THT	:B
a		toe tap)	:B
5		<u>step</u>	:A
6	toe tap (pick)		RC:
7	touch		C:
B			
8		toe tap	:A/B
&		ball tap	:B
a		heel tap	:B
1		toe tap	:B
2		toe tap (pick)	:RC
3		<u>step</u>	:A
4	toe tap		A/B:
&	ball tap		B:
a	heel tap		B:
5	toe tap		B:
6	toe tap (pick)		RC:
7	touch		A:

Step is A A B A
 , , , ,
 R L R L

