The Hornpipe

GEORGE S. EMMERSON

TODAY THE WORD "hornpipe" is popularly associated with a dance for sailors. "Popularly", that is, outside of Ireland, for the Irish have a native hornpipe of their own which, for all its similarities, is very different in character, musically and choreographically. The *Sailor's Hornpipe* is performed to common-time tunes of a particular cast, most bearing the word "hornpipe" in their title—viz. *College Hornpipe*, *Fishar's Hornpipe*, *West's Hornpipe*, *Aldridge's Hornpipe*, etc. This is the class of tune familiarly recognized as "Hornpipe" today, which, for convenience here, we shall call the *Jacky Tar* class of hornpipe (see *Kerr's Merry Melodies*, etc.).

The *Jacky Tar* class of hornpipe tune is characterized by staccato quaver runs punctuated by the stressing of the second and third beats within the bar at regular intervals. These intervals are not the same in every tune, but the phrases always end with this double stressing: "pom! pom!" Since the first beat of the bar is stressed anyway, the tune's phrases seem to end: "pom! pom! pom!"—often on the same note. The effect is brilliant and exciting. The reader is doubtless very familiar with examples of this class of tune.

The three strong beats at the end of phrases is claimed to be an Irish characteristic, and certainly it is present in the *Irish Hornpipe* so-called; but the Irish hornpipe tune is slower and very jaunty, with a rhythmic characteristic comparable to that of the Strathspey. As a dance it is a pure step-dance, that is, the technique of the dance lies in the beating of rhythms by the feet, with those steps we know as "trebles", "brushes", "shuffles" *etc.*

While the *Sailor's Hornpipe* we know employs like steps, it is much more of a character dance, a "high" dance performed in soft shoes and bearing a strong relationship to the Scottish "high" dances. The Irish are not at all interested in this dance, and, in any case, despite Nelson's Irish ancestry, the British Jack Tar exerts no claim on republican Irish sentiment.

Nowhere is the *Sailor's Hornpipe* more assiduously studied today than in the Scottish Highland Dance schools. Dance teachers regard it as an excellent means of cultivating nimble

foot movements and rapid changes of balance. But what were called jigs and hornpipes were certainly basic fare in Scottish dance schools in the 18th century, alongside the Highland Reel and, in the centres of fashion, the Minuet!

The Triple-time Hornpipe

At this point, however, we must note that prior to the middle of the 18th century, if we judge from the music collections in print and in manuscript, the tunes called "hornpipes" in Scotland and England were not of the same category as the *Jacky Tar* variety which usurps the name today. Indeed the *Jacky Tar* class of hornpipe tune comes into prominence only towards the end of the 18th century. The earlier "hornpipe" was a peculiar syncopated limping-gait of a tune in triple-time—3/2 or 6/4 or 12/8 —a rhythm which Purcell and Handel regarded as peculiarly English. Stenhouse has written (*c.*1824), that tunes of the category of 3/2 hornpipes had been played in Scotland "time out of mind, as a particular species of the double hornpipe", and that James Allan, one-time piper to the Duke of Northumberland had assured him that this "particular measure originated in the borders of England and Scotland".[1] This suggestion is supported by the large number of triple-time hornpipes embraced in the standard repertoire of the Northumbrian "small-pipes" and among Border songs. Examples are: *Go to Berwick Johnnie,*[2] *The Dusty Miller* (*JEFDSS* **4**, 16), *Jockey said to Jenny*, *Robin Shure in Hairst*, and many more.

The rhythm peculiarly lends itself to comic or jaunty verses, and many a nurse has dandled the baby on her knee to *Dance to y'r Daddie* or *Wee Totum Fogg*. The words give out the characteristic rhythm of the triple-time hornpipe:

> Dance to your daddie,
> My Bonnie laddie,
> Dance to your daddie, my bonnie lamb;
> And ye'll get a fishie,
> In a wee wee dishie,
> An' ye'll get a fishie when the boat comes hame!

and:

> Wee Totum Fogg
> Sits upon a creepie:
> Half an ell o' gray
> Wad be his coat and breekie.

Although no other class of tune is designated "hornpipe" in the 17th-century music collections, there existed among them a class of common-time tune which was recognized as characteristically Scottish and which can be found, in the late 18th century, alluded to as a *Double Hornpipe*. These Scottish double hornpipes are never so called in the printed collections. The tune associated today with the dance *Seann Triubhas*, namely *Whistle o'er the lave o't* (*Kerr's M.M.* **1**, 11), is a familiar example of a double hornpipe of this kind. Another is *East Neuk of Fife* (*Kerr's Caledonian Coll.*, p. 30).

The Scottish Measure

A slightly different style of Scottish double hornpipe—though the difference is not dramatic—was called the *Scottish Measure*, a term which first appears in print in Playford's collection of Scots tunes (1700)—"Full of the Highland Humours", as he put it. Prior to this, tunes of the character of the Scottish Measure appeared in English publications (there were no like Scottish publications in the 17th century) simply as "Scots tunes", particularly in the various editions of *Apollo's Banquet*. Two examples are *Dumbarton's Drums* (Ex. 1) and what we know since Burns' day as *Corn Rigs* (*Kerr's M.M.* **1**, 24).

Ex. 1

DUMBARTON'S DRUMS

(Scottish Measure)

Slowish

D. G. MacLellan, who came of a dancing family, describes the Scottish Measure, in his book published in 1950,[3] as "a twasome dance of the Lowlands", but does not declare his authority. The earliest of the very few recorded allusions to the Scottish Measure as a dance that I have discovered occurs in a Covent Garden playbill dated 24th April 1749, advertising a performance of *The Beggars Opera:*

> "*A New Scotch Dance* in which will be introduced by Particular Desire the *Scotch Measure* and the *Highland Reel* by Froment and Mad De La Cointrie."

A year later, we find "*The Scotch Measure* and *Highland Reel* by Froment", with no partner mentioned, which items continued to be repeated at intervals between 1750 and 1757.

Then at the Haymarket Theatre, November, 1775, Fishar performed a dance called *The Scots Measure* in a presentation of *The Gentle Shepherd*, but no partner was advertised. These items do not clarify the matter, although the use of the word *the*—*the* Scots Measure—suggests that the dance was an established character of Scottish dance, as *the* Highland Reel, for instance. Nevertheless, the above playbill references are the only allusions to the Scottish Measure as a dance that have come to my attention prior to the description of a dance of the name in the Hill MS, *c.*1840. The Hill MS does not note that the dance is a dance for two, although Tibbie Cramb re-created it as such.

Couples dances in the traditional idiom were certainly known in the Scottish countryside in the 18th century, and there are allusions from that period to what was called a "Twasome" and the "Strathspey Minuet". It is surely a dance of this kind we see being executed in the painting catalogued in the Pennycuik House collection in 1724, as "a Highland weding by de wit". De Witt is known to have spent some time in Scotland between the years 1673–1687, and his painting must therefore be expected to belong to this period. It is a strangely austere picture, reflecting something of the crudity and simplicity of Scottish life along the Highland line. There is a mixture of Lowland and Highland dress styles among the bystanders in the picture, who are watching a man and woman dance *vis-à-vis* to the music of the bagpipe. The dancing man carries a sword, which surely distinguishes him as one of the upper class, and the woman wears shoes, tied with

ribbons, albeit they are crude-looking shoes. Women of the lower orders rarely wore shoes in those days. The attitude of the dancers suggests that they are stepping to each other. The piper is dressed in tartan and wears trews, another gentlemanly distinction at that period.

Here, certainly, we have a twasome dance, and a hornpipe style of dance at that, from all appearances. It is conceivable that this was performed to the category of Scottish hornpipe tune which became identified as "Scottish Measure" (or was it a Scotch Jig?). Since a bagpiper provides the music, we can discount the possibility that a court dance is being performed.

We are left to ponder whether the word *Measure* in the term "Scottish Measure" refers to the rhythm of the class of tune of that name or to the dance, as in "treading a Measure". Pavanes and Basse Dances were referred to as "the Measures" in Elizabethan England, and were couples' dances. Could it be that the characteristic Scottish twasome received the name *Scottish Measure* by analogy with the courtly "measures"? Certainly, the Scottish Measure, *as music*, suggests nothing so sedate (*The White Cockade*, *Whaur Gadie Rins* and *Duke of Perth* are Scottish Measure tunes which may be familiar to the reader).

The "double hornpipe" tunes of Scotland are to all appearances, the ancestors of those tunes we call hornpipes today, tunes of the class of *College Hornpipe* and *Jacky Tar* (Ex. 2), to which, as mentioned earlier, the Sailor's Hornpipe is danced. This was the new style of hornpipe tune which first became noticeable towards the end of the 18th century, and which, it has been suggested,[4] was created by Thomas Arne with the two instrumental dances of this kind he composed for his version of Purcell's *King Arthur* in 1767.

Ex. 2

JACKY TARR

The Irish hornpipe, of course, belongs to the same family, and, indeed, this class of dance music in the British Isles reminds one of the selective processes of the evolution of species in Nature. Darwin's finches in music! In time, with migration, a certain mixing of the breeds of British hornpipe tunes has become noticeable, particularly between the Irish and Scots, but the original rhythmical distinctions persist.

The Hornpipe on Stage

When Nancy Dawson, at the height of her celebrity as an entr'acte dancer, went over to David Garrick at Drury Lane to dance in his production of *The Beggar's Opera*, she was replaced at Covent Garden by Mrs Vernon who danced to a "New Hornpipe" composed by Thomas Arne (24th October 1760). The occasion demanded something special as a counter-attraction to the popular Nancy, and one wonders if this "New Hornpipe" of Arne's was the first of the new genre of common-time hornpipe.

The tune to which Nancy Dawson danced to fame in *The Beggar's Opera* was, it seems, that which bears her name in many publications; a tune which will be known to most readers of these pages. It is, or was, familiar in Scotland as the tune of "Who'll come intae ma wee ring?" and among other English-speaking peoples as "Here we go round the Mulberry Bush". It enjoyed an immense popularity in its day, was introduced to other plays and set to variations for harpsichord as *Miss Dawson's Hornpipe*. But—musically, it is not a hornpipe, it is a jig!

This brings us to the fact that in earlier times any step-dance fell under the definition of hornpipe, whatever the music. The hornpipe clearly was the ancestor of the modern tap-dance and it was very popular on the 18th-century stage. The 18th century was the great age of Harlequin and Columbine and of dances in that vein. These dances were performed as entr'acte entertainment during the performance of plays and at the close.

Sometimes the dances were in character with the play—as in in *The Beggar's Opera*, there would be a hornpipe and a country dance, and in *Love in a Village*, a country dance or peasant dance, and in the few performances of *The Gentle Shepherd*, something in a rural and Scottish vein. But perversely enough, one could find the French Minuet or Louvre danced after a patriotic play entitled *Britannia*!

The first mention of a hornpipe in the playbills of the 18th century would appear to be that from Drury Lane, 10th June 1713—*Hornpipe by a Gentleman for his Diversion*—a single performance which was not repeated. At Southwark Fair, the rural connotation of the hornpipe was emphasized (September 1717) when "Esq. Timothy's Countryman" performed "The *Lancashire Hornpipe* with much applause". Then in the 1720s, one Tom Jones made a speciality of a *hornpipe* and performed it at several theatres. After this, the word "hornpipe" appears regularly on London playbills, and it is not until after 1740 that one finds it at all associated with a nautical theme. Certainly, Nancy Dawson's hornpipe in the 1760s was in no way related to sailors.

The Hornpipe and the Jig

The distinction between the jig and the hornpipe as dances is a fine one, and the slightest evidence of what may have been taught in this vein in the dancing schools is of considerable interest. Not much of this evidence survives, but we have a tantalizing glimpse of a jig and hornpipe as taught by a dancing master in a Southwest Scottish town around the year 1755. This is given us by a contributor to *Notes and Queries*[5] who communicated some of the contents of manuscript instructions written by his father's dancing master. It was entitled: *The Dancing Steps of a Hornpipe and Gigg. As also, Twelve of the Newest Country Dances, as they are performed at the Assemblys and Balls. All Sett by Mr. John M'Gill for the Use of his School, 1752.*

There were 16 steps in the hornpipe and 14 in the jig, but the contributor did not think the instructions would be intelligible, so he makes a selection to illustrate his point. It is clear that the second, third and fourth steps of the hornpipe are—"slips and shuffle forwards", "spleet and floorish backwards" and "Hyland step forwards". Elsewhere, he says, there are directions to "heel and toe forwards", "single and double round step", "slaps across forward", "short shifts", and "back hops", which we can recognize as of the character of the modern sailors' hornpipe. He appears to give us only the last step of the jig—"happ forward and backward".

One discerning correspondent advised that a transcript of this manuscript be placed in the Advocates Library, Edinburgh, but

to our great loss, this was not done. The dancing master concerned was undoubtedly the celebrated Girvan fiddler Johnnie McGill.

The hornpipe described here is what we might call a "high" dance as distinct from the pure step-dance. Doubtless the "stage" hornpipe was of this character. The step-dances—or hornpipes—which were a living part of the English heritage well into the 20th century had more in common with the Irish strain in being purely step-dances. The Lancashire clog dance must surely have been what was otherwise known as the Lancashire Hornpipe.

Traditional Step-Dancing

In many parts of England, it was a common feature in the 19th century at feasts and wakes and on Saturday nights, for men, and women too, to take turns at "stepping" to the music of the country fiddler in the village ale-house. Many of the dancers used stepping shoes or light clogs, and a favourite surface was, as in Ireland, the top of a large table. In Ireland, the table was often soaped. Nimbleness and clatter, we are told, were essential, and often when there was no music the tunes could be identified from the audible pattern of the dancer's stepping. Here is what our informant says:[6]

> "What were the village step-dances of the earlier half of the nineteenth century like? A Nottinghamshire woman of fifty, when lamenting to me the disappearance of various forms of village merry-making described to her by her elders, said she had known a few people who were excellent step-dancers and could make the time of the dance 'come out of the floor like with the beating of their feet'. The women 'would draw up their skirts short, and pull the back of the skirt forward between their legs, to show their feet and ankles. Then you could see the steps well'.
>
> "It is assumed by those who disapprove of John Wesley that early Wesleyanism killed the hereditary amusements of English village life; but is not this rather unjust? There were still excellent fiddlers among the elderly men in the early sixties, and these fiddlers and their cronies were acquainted with old songs, dance-tunes, and games, which the younger people might have picked up too, had not changed social conditions given them tastes and ideals foreign to the traditional sports of country life".

To which another correspondent from Worksop replies:

> "There were many men step-dancers, and a few women ones, well into the later half of the 19th century in most villages, and step-dancing displays were usual incidents at feasts and wakes. On Saturday nights

also 'stepping' would suddenly break out at village ale-houses, when two or three men would pit themselves against each other in short spells, hardly of the nature of contests. When a lad I saw many such steppings, and step-dancers are by no means dead, though gone out of village life, maybe. A good dancer was one capable of taking any step music, or without any music whatever. Many of the dancers used stepping shoes or light clogs—the latter preferred in the clog-wearing localities. Nimbleness and clatter were essentials, with a good 'crowdy' to give the music. There were a number of men who were good 'crowdies'=fiddlers, playing from ear the tunes to which the dancers stepped. The dancing was always on wood—a floor or large table: the latter preferred as the steppings and beats could be seen to the better advantage. Some danced without the crowdy, but it was to music which they knew by heart and carried in their feet . . . When the dancing was done without a crowdy, the listeners could tell the tunes by the steps and beats on the boards. Sometimes there would be a couple of dancers on the table. When one had gone through an arranged number of steps, he stopped, the other taking his place; and this was done so deftly that there was no break in the music whilst the change was made. The old fiddlers were hard to tire, and one crowdy with intervals 'to wet his whistle', could keep it up for hours".

This, then, was the native English hornpipe of the countryside, and doubtless some of this was carried to New England. We must remember this when we consider the step-dancing tradition of the Eastern provinces of North America.

"Stepping" in social dancing was certainly familiar in the Scottish West and Lowlands in the late 18th and in the 19th centuries. Indeed, hornpipe "stepping" was familiarly employed in Country Dances wherever these were enjoyed in the British Isles,[7] although it was regarded as vulgar in the more select assemblies.[8]

In every community in which "stepping" was enjoyed there were occasions for the solo dancer to exhibit his prowess, as in the instances described above. Improvisation was a feature of every good exponent's performance, but most of the steps were preconceived and were identified by names. A folklore collector in Lunenburg Co., Nova Scotia, recorded the following interesting conversation with a subject, as recently as 1950:[9]

"One time I was at my uncle's and there was a violin player there. He asked if anybody could dance. They pointed to me and said, 'There's Reuben'.

"So he said, 'How many steps can you dance?'

"I said, 'About fourteen or fifteen'.

"He said I couldn't, so I said, 'I'll give you a different step every time and at the end of each a double back step'.

"I danced fifteen different steps and he laid a $5 gold piece down. I'd

learned to dance when I was in America. If I saw a dancer I caught on.

"These are some of the steps: Double back shuffle, cross steps, shingle, strip the willow, dodging six, hunt the squirrel, American eight, sliding step, lift your leg, rustic dance and triple shuffle".

Dodging Six and *Hunt the Squirrel* are the names of English Country Dances known in the 17th century and no doubt also in colonial America. *Strip the Willow* is a Scottish 9/8 reel.

Two of the set dances—or "bouts" as the Irish call them—which the same collector heard of at Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia, bore the names of well known tunes—the Scottish *De'il Among the Tailors* and the 18th-century English *Fisherman's* (*Fishar's?*) *Hornpipe*.

The theatrical dancer was not likely to be content to limit himself to the close stepping of the traditional hornpipe dancer, and we must not be surprised, therefore, if the theatrical hornpipe grew to embrace the embellishing contributions of trained dancers. Sir John Gallini writes in 1772 (*l.c.* [7], p. 183) that dancers from France and Italy studied hornpipe dancing in England and introduced it to continental audiences with great success, and the American dancer, John Durang, tells us how he contrived to learn what he called "the correct stile of dancing a hornpipe in the French stile",[10] from a French dancer, Roussel, who visited Durang's hometown, Philadelphia, with a touring company around 1780. The French, Durang remarks, seldom did "many real ground steps". In other words, the French dancers entertained a more balletic conception of the Hornpipe, and doubtless so also did the ballet-trained native dancers of the British theatre.

Rousel introduced Durang to the curious step called "The Pigeon Wing", but could not show him "the principle and the anatomy of the figure of the step". Nor, adds Durang, could any other dancer he ever met. He took great pride in the fact that he succeeded where others apparently failed, broke down the step and could communicate it to his pupils.

The "Nautical" Hornpipe

The *Sailor's Hornpipe* of Scottish dancing schools today is clearly of the 18th-century theatrical character-dance tradition and retains many of its features, as a comparison with the steps of the Sailor's Hornpipe performed by Durang can testify. We shall

turn to Durang's hornpipe in a moment.

Eighteenth-century London playbills testify to the popularity of hornpipe dancing. As many female dancers as male performed hornpipes, and it is evident that they were not always on a nautical theme, for the fact is mentioned when they are. The first of these occurs at Drury Lane, May 1740, when Yates, who was frequently billed to perform hornpipes prior to this is suddenly billed to perform a *hornpipe in the character of Jacky Tar*. There is no mention then or later of anyone performing *the* or *a* sailor's hornpipe. It is always a *hornpipe in the character of a sailor*—or of a Jacky Tar.

In the August following Yates' nautical hornpipe, we find at the rival Covent Garden—*a hornpipe by a gentleman in the character of a sailor*. These instances occur about 20 years before the period which has been regarded as seeing the introduction of the class of tune now associated with the Sailor's Hornpipe.

The reason for the sudden interest in the naval theme is not difficult to find, particularly when we notice that the song *Rule Britannia* was given its first performance at this time (August 1740) in a masque at the close of an entertainment given before Frederick, Prince of Wales, at Clivedon House. The words were by the Scottish poet James Thomson and the music by Thomas Arne.

The occasion of this outburst of patriotic sentiment sprang from the imperialistic fervour of the British people on the occasion of the war with Spain in dispute of access to the South Americas—the so-called "War of Jenkins' Ear".

Sailors' dances were familiar among numerous other character or comic dances on the 18th-century stage; but the practice of distinguishing hornpipes seems to suggest that these "Sailors' Dances" were not necessarily hornpipes.

At Covent Garden, April 1755, we notice "in the sailors' dance by desire will be introduced a *hornpipe* by Poitier". Poitier, whose son and daughter also danced, was French. A very similar notice occurs eight years later at the same theatre—"A *sailors' dance* in which will be introduced a *hornpipe* by Miss Twist, Miss Pitt and Miss Daw". These notices surely establish that a "Sailors' Dance" was not necessarily a "Hornpipe".

There is, however, one notice which leaves us wondering, from Drury Lane, 9th and 19th May 1760—"Hornpipe by a sailor from The Royal Sovereign". This was the year following the

"Year of Victories", the "wonderful year" of Garrick's *Heart of Oak*. The Royal Navy had restored its glory at Lagos, Quiberon Bay and Quebec, and doubtless the *Royal Sovereign* had returned to port for refitting.

Again, at Covent Garden (May 1765) we find—"A new hornpipe by Miss Snow in character of a sailor", which was repeated once or twice, and then disappears from the bills. Meantime hornpipes—with no allusion to sailors—are billed with somewhat increasing regularity.

Miss Poitier's hornpipe at this period certainly could not have been in the character of a sailor, as we may judge from the following intriguing comments which were published in the *Theatrical Review* of 1st January 1763, concerning a performance at Covent Garden in the presence of their Majesties two nights before:

> "Would any person suppose she could have the confidence to appear with her bosom so scandalously bare, that to use the expression of a public writer, who took some moderate notice of the circumstance, the breast hung flabbing over a pair of stays cut remarkably low, like a couple of empty bladders in an oil-shop. One thing the author of that letter has omitted, which, if possible, is still more gross; and that is, in the course of Miss Poitier's hornpipe one of her shoes happening to slip down at the heel, she lifted up her leg, and danced upon the other until she had drawn it up. This had she worn drawers, would have been the more excusable; but unhappily, there was little occasion for standing in the pit to see that she was not provided with as much as a fig leaf. The Court turned instantly from the stage—the pit was astonished! and scarcely anything, but a disapproving murmur, was heard, from the most unthinking spectator in the twelvepenny gallery".

In all justice to Miss Poitier's name, we must note she denied the impropriety. The press had exceptional freedom in those days.

Tunes, Dancers and "The Sailor's Hornpipe"

It is surely significant that most of the new hornpipe tunes are named after dancers who figured on the late 18th-century and early 19th-century London stage—*Fishar's Hornpipe*, *Aldridge's Hornpipe* (Ex. 3), *Richar's Hornpipe*, *Miss Baker's Hornpipe* (Ex. 4), *West's Hornpipe*, *Durang's Hornpipe* (*Kerr's M.M.* **2**, 38) and so on. The inference is plain; these are not traditional hornpipe tunes in the pure sense, but a theatrical development of the traditional stream, likewise the dances performed to them.

Ex. 3

ALDRIDGE'S HORNPIPE

Ex. 4

MISS BAKER'S HORNPIPE

T. Wilson:
Companion to the Ballroom (1817)

Arnold Fishar and Robert Aldridge were particularly active in London in the period 1762–1775. Fishar was a ballet master at Covent Garden. Aldridge "a dancer of ease", as he was described in a doggerel poem,[11] appeared at both Covent Garden and Drury Lane, but was as much esteemed in his native Dublin as in London. Some idea of the tunes to which Aldridge danced can be found in McGlashan's *Collection of Scots Measures Hornpipes Jigs Allemands etc.* (1781), where a number of items are marked "as danced by Aldridge". Aldridge would appear to have resided in Edinburgh at this date, and is noticed as founding the Boar Club with Schetky senr.[12]

John Durang[13] to whom we have already referred, has been styled the "first American dancer". He was born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, of German parents, in 1768, and made his debut with Lewis Hallam's Company in 1784. Hallam had just returned from England after an absence from the colonies encompassing

the revolutionary years. Durang's first dance with Hallam was a *Peasant's Dance* and later, in another show, he danced a comedy number *La Fricasse* and a "hornpipe".

Durang was of a theatrical family and perhaps this is how he came by his first dancing knowledge. It is apparent from his memoirs that he was substantially self-taught and picked up a great deal from observation of other dancers. Of interest to us here, is his dancing (7th November 1790) "a Hornpipe on thirteen eggs Blindfolded, without breaking one"* which recalls the fact that the tune, *Fishar's Hornpipe* was also known as the *Egg Hornpipe*. Another connection with Fishar occurred a few days later when he made his first appearance in *The Wapping Landlady*. Now, this ballet, or "Pantomimic Dance" as it was styled on Durang's playbills, was first choreographed by Arnold Fishar and was first performed at Covent Garden, 27th April 1767, at a benefit night for Fishar and the principal danseuse, Sga Manesiere. Two of Fishar's young pupils performed prior to the main ballet and the programme was billed to conclude with Fishar and Manesiere dancing a *Double Hornpipe*. It is evident from these advertisements that the term "Double" probably means in this case a hornpipe for two dancers.

The *Wapping Landlady* was a very popular comic ballet on the London stage, being presented at frequent intervals over a period of years. Occasionally something novel was introduced to it, depending, one supposes, on the dancing skills available. In the 1770s for instance, *a New Hornpipe by Six Principal Dancers* was introduced and a competitive ballet called *The Sailors Revels* on a similar theme was staged at Drury Lane at the same time.

The Wapping Landlady, it should be explained, was on the theme of Jack Tar ashore—"come ashore Jolly Tar" indeed!—The characters were described as—Jack (in distress), the Landlady, A Milk Woman (or Orange Woman or Nosegay Woman), supported by sailors and sundry women. The theme is Jack in trouble ashore, particularly with his landlady. It was doubtless a topical situation with the conclusion of the Seven Years' War.

Again, we do not know how Durang came by this ballet, for he was never in England. Perhaps William Francis, a Dutchman who

* This was known as the *Egg Dance*. The dancer steps in and about the eggs. [See next article. *Fishar's Hornpipe* was known to the Norfolk fiddler, Walter Bulwer, in 1962, as the *Egg Hornpipe*—Ed.]

settled in Philadelphia in 1772 and who is noticed specializing in rustic and comic ballets after his return from a visit to England (1787–93), is the source. Certainly, Durang danced in Francis's ballets, which included such items as *Scots Pastoral Dance—The Caledonian Frolic* (*c.*1795), and went into a teaching partnership with him (1794–*c.*1806).

In 1796, Durang was engaged by John B. Ricketts, a Scots immigrant, to direct the pantomimes at the circus Ricketts had established in Philadelphia some six years before. Durang remained in this capacity until the enterprise was destroyed by fire, 17th December 1799.

Durang has a special claim on our attention through his identification with the "Sailor's Hornpipe". This became his recognized forte, even when the zenith of his dancing days was behind him. Can we doubt that this dance was prominent in *The Wapping Landlady*? It is clear from Durang's Memoirs that some city dancing masters (he specifically mentions one in Boston) were making a speciality of a hornpipe in the character of a sailor when he was not yet out of his teens. Certain it is, however, that the *Sailor's Hornpipe* became synonymous with the term "hornpipe" in the 19th century, and the *College Hornpipe*, to which it was predominantly performed, the musical motif associated with sailors in the popular mind. Only Durang, however, of the early performers of this dance, has left any identifiable record of his steps. This was published by his son Charles[14] who followed his father as dancer and actor:

PAS DE MATELOT

A Sailor Hornpipe—Old Style

1. Glissade round (first part of tune).
2. Double shuffle down, do.
3. Heel and toe back, finish with back shuffle.
4. Cut the buckle down, finish the shuffle.
5. Side shuffle right and left, finishing with beats.
6. Pigeon wing going round.
7. Heel and toe haul in back.
8. Steady toes down.
9. Changes back, finish with back shuffle and beats.
10. Wave step down.
11. Heel and toe shuffle obliquely back.
12. Whirligig, with beats down.
13. Sissone and entrechats back.

14. Running forward on the heels.
15. Double Scotch step, with a heel Brand in Plase (*sic*).
16. Single Scotch step back.
17. Parried toes round, or feet *in* and *out*.
18. The Cooper shuffle right and left back.
19. Grasshopper step down.
20. *Terre-a-terre* (*sic*) or beating on toes back.
21. Jockey crotch down.
22. Traverse round, with hornpipe glissade.

Bow and Finish

"Each step takes up one strain of the tune. There are a variety of other shuffles, but the above are the principal, with their original names".

The following was published by a Boston dancing master[15] in 1858, as the steps of *Sailor's Hornpipe*, "Music—Durang's Hornpipe". It differs slightly from the above, from which it is obviously derived, but in other respects it amplifies it:

"Double shuffle and gliding step round—heel and toe back, finish with back shuffle—double shuffle and gliding step round—slide shuffle right and left, finishing with beats—repeat first change—pigeon wing going round—repeat first change—rocking step forward on the toes—repeat first change—wave step down—repeat first change—changes back, finish with back shuffle and beats—repeat first change—wave step down —repeat—heel and toe shuffle obliquely back—repeat &c—whirligig, with beats down—repeat &c—sissone and entrechats back—repeat &c—running forward on the heels—repeat &c—double scotch step, with a heel brand in place—repeat &c—single scotch step, back—repeat &c—parried toes round, on toes in and out—repeat &c—cooper shuffle right and left back—repeat &c—grasshopper step down—repeat &c—beat on the toes back—repeat &c—Jockey crotch step down—repeat &c —traverse step round, with hornpipe gliding step, bow and finish".

The tune, *Durang's Hornpipe*, was composed in 1785, by Hoffmaster, a talented German musician and prominent member of New York's artistic circles, who had the striking peculiarity of being but three feet tall.

A study of the steps of Durang's *Sailor's Hornpipe* reveals it to be the dance we would recognize today; but the absence of nautical motifs is puzzling. Apart from (7) "Heel and toe haul in back" and possibly (10) "Wave step down", there are no allusions to the characteristic actions of the sailor's occupation. Where are "climbing the rigging", "rowing ashore", "land ahoy!", "pay day", "hauling in the line"? They may be there, but if they are, it is not easy to identify them.

I think we can take it that the nautical motifs were introduced in varying degree by various dancers. One would distinguish his hornpipe as *The Binnacle Hornpipe*, another as *Jacky Tar*, and

give his own slant to the basic hornpipe technique. What we see today, is the natural selection of this wide range of steps, not a traditional dance of sailors.

The affinity with the Scottish high dances is plain and the relationship of both to the hornpipe taught by Johnnie McGill in 1755 is also plain. *Senex*, the notable Glasgow reminiscer, recalls dancing "Jacky Tar" in Campbell's dance classes (*c.*1790) at The Tontine Assembly Hall. It has been with us ever since.

Real Sailors' Dances

There remains, however, the nagging suspicion that if there was not a traditional sailor's hornpipe there must—on the basis that where there's smoke there's fire—have been at least some kind of step dance or jig which became familiar among sailors, or, more likely, that sailors resorted to the performance of step dances as recreation on a ship becalmed or in a long spell of fine weather. What more natural than a jig or hornpipe to fiddle or pipe in the confines of the main deck? Captain Cook is said to have encouraged this recreation on his long voyages[16] in the 1770s. It is perplexing that there is practically no reference to the practice in the naval or seafaring journals and memoirs of the period. The only reference I have so far encountered, and that quite by accident, is in the diary of a young Scottish lady, Janet Schaw, who describes the activities of her ship during a spell of fine weather near the Azores on a voyage to the West Indies in 1774:

> "The effect of this fine weather appears in every creature, even our Emigrants seem in a great measure to have forgot their sufferings . . . and if we had anything to eat, I really think our present situation is most delightful. We play at cards and backgammon on deck; the sailors dance horn pipes and Jigs from morning to night . . . "[17]

There is no reason to believe that the sailors danced hornpipes or jigs that were any different from those they knew ashore or that the fiddler who accompanied them did not play the music of the country fiddler. A few specific common-time hornpipe steps were taught British naval cadets in the 19th and 20th centuries as part of their drill, but it is doubtful if this drill pre-dates Trafalgar.

There is an alleged reference[18] by Pepys to learning in 1668 the tune of the "Seaman's Dance" which I have so far failed to locate.

A tune of this name, however, is in the Blaikie MS, 1692. There is some suggestion of a sailors' jig or *Jig of the Ship*, said to be a tune of the 17th century, which, one is ready to accept, may have been the tune of the sailors' jig performed at Drury Lane (30th June 1712) "by a gentleman for his diversion"—possibly the same "gentleman" who performed a "hornpipe" at the same theatre a year later, and to whom we have already alluded.

Purcell, however, introduces a "Sailors' Dance" to his *Dido and Aeneas* (1688) which is a jaunty tune in common time to a rhythm which does bear a resemblance to the Jack Tar style of hornpipe. But Purcell does not call it a hornpipe—nor a jig. Certainly Purcell had written "Scotch Tunes" which were in imitation of the Scottish Measure, and it is probable that Arne was led to compose his new hornpipes under the inspiration of some of these tunes by Purcell, for Arne was very familiar with Purcell's music; but it remains conjecture.

If one goes back to Shakespeare, one may or may not wish to attach significance to the skipper in *The Tempest* making a "caper" at one point in the play, or to the "Twelve Skippers in red capps, with short cassocks and long slopps wide at the knees of white canvass striped with crimson, white gloves and pomps, and red stockings" dancing "a brave and lively Daunce, shouting and tryumphing" after the manner of the sea, introduced by Campion[19] into one of his masques around this same period. I am inclined to accept the latter as no more than a ballet of roistering skippers.

The Word "Hornpipe", some Early History and Conclusions

The word "hornpipe" is English, and as well as being the name of a species of dance, it is the name of a particular style of rural shepherd's reed pipe. In the Celtic tongue it is called the *piobcorn*. In the Scottish Lowland tongue it was called the *stoc'n horn*. There must be some significance in the fact that the Celtic-speaking peoples do not use their word *piobcorn* for the dance or its music. The Irish use the English word, "hornpipe", for this purpose.

The obvious conclusion is that the English were the first to use the word "hornpipe" of dance and music, and the word has been adopted by the Gaelic-speaking people to describe their own dances of the same style, although the Scottish Gaels do not describe any of their native dance forms as hornpipes.

The earliest notices of the hornpipe in English literature allude to it as a round.[20] An English traveller, Henry Spelman, in 1609 likens the dancing of American Indians to "our darbysher Hornepipe, a man first and then a woman, and so through them all, hanging all in a round".[21] And we read in Barnfield's *Shepheards Content* (1594) how a shepherd

> " . . . leads his Wench a Country Horn-pipe Round
> About a May-pole on a Holy-day".

Spenser[22] paints a delightful picture in the following:

> "Before them yode a lusty Tabrere,
> That to the many a Horne pype playd,
> Whereto they dauncen eche one with his mayd.
> To see those folks make such jouysaunce,
> Made my heart after the pype to daunce".

The English counties conspicuously associated with the word "hornpipe" in the 16th and 17th centuries were Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Lancashire.

An English ballad,[23] probably of the late 16th century describes a hornpipe at a wedding, the like of which was never seen "I trowe, in all the northe lande". All are urged to dance for company and the first to break the stroke must pay the piper a penny.

> "Now play us a horn pype", Jocky can say;
> Then todle lowdle the pyper dyd playe.
>
> . . . .
>
> Halfe torne, Jone, haffe nowe Jocke!
> Well dansyde, be sent Dennye!
> And he that breakys the first strocke,
> Sall gyve the pypar a pennye.
>
> In with fut, Robsone! owt with fut, Byllynge!
> Here wyll be good daunsyng belyve;
> Daunsyng hath cost me forty good shyllynge,
> Ye forti shillynge and fyve.
>
> Torne rownde, Robyne! kepe trace, Wylkyne!
> Mak churchye pege (? peek) behynde;
> "Set fut to fut a pas (pace)", quod Pylkyne;
> "Abowt with howghe (hey) let us wynde".
>
> "No, Tybe, war, Tom well", sayd Cate;
> "Kepe in, Sandar, hold owte, Syme.
> Nowe, Gaff, hear gome abowt me mat (? Matt);
> Nyccoll, well dansyde and tryme".

"A gambold", quod Jocky, "stande asyde;
  Let ylke man play his parte.
Mak rom, my masters; stand mor wyde;
  I pray youe with all my harte".

Hear ys for me wightly whipte,
  And it wear even for the nons;
Now for the lyghtly skypte,
  Well staggeryde on the stonnys.

"Be sweat sent Tandrowe, I am weary", quoth Jennye,
  "Good pypar, holde thy peace;
And thaw salt have thy bryddys penny".
  Then the pyper began to seas.

I swar be God, twyxt this and France,
  Ye sal all undarstande,
Ther was not sene syck anothar dance,
  I trowe, in all the nothe lande.

In all the nouthe land, my Jocky,
  As it pleanly doth apear,
Was not syk anothar weddyne
  This fyve and forty year.

Finys, quothe Wallys.

A dance of men indeed; continuous, winding, sustained, hearty. In the 16th-century play *James IV*, Slipper, after dancing with some others, says: "Nay, but my friends, one hornpipe further! a refluence backe, and two doubles forward! What! not one crossepoint against Sundayes?" This is one of the only allusions to hornpipe technique that we have from this early period. Remember, of course, if Playford is any guide, these English hornpipes were of the "triple-time" variety.

A quotation from a passage published in 1609 is referred to by Chappell,[24] in which the peculiar dancing or musical attributes of the various English counties are set forth:

> "The courts of Kings for stately Measures; the city for light heels and nimble footing; the country for shuffling dances, Western men for gambols; Middlesex men for tricks above ground, Essex men for the Hay, Lancashire for Hornpipes, Worcestershire for bagpipes, but Herefordshire for a Morris dance, puts down not only all Kent, but very near (if one had line enough to measure it) three-quarters of Christendom."

In Westmorland, Anne Gilchrist tells us (*JEFDSS* **4**, 19), hornpipes were danced both solo and in rows in the 19th century and had many special steps known by curious names. The

itinerant dancing master would teach each pupil a special step which remained the exclusive property of that pupil and was exhibited during the dance at the country assembly when all the dancers advanced down the room side by side in a row.

By the 1680s, Isaac and Beveridge, the Court dancing masters started to devise longways country dances of a distinctive kind to triple-time hornpipe tunes.[25] These were called "maggots"—from the Italian *maggioletta*, a plaything—which were often named in honour of someone and which became quite a vogue. These dances passed to France and, according to Rameau, exhibited more boisterousness and crudity than dancing finesse. The triple-time hornpipe Country Dance did not survive long into the 18th century.

It is intriguing that the triple-time hornpipe tune can more easily be modified into jig than into a quadruple-time form. The Irish hop-jig rhythm (in 9/8) seems to fall between the triple-time hornpipe and the jig. It has a similar bob-wheel rhythm, and it is satisfying to notice that a tune of this kind (although marked 9/4) is to be found in *Apollo's Banquet* (1697) described as a "hornpipe-jig"—a very appropriate classification, one thinks. The syncopation of the hornpipe is missing from the 9/8 jig, only the bob-wheel rhythm is shared.

We see the hornpipe, then, as a "country round" and a solo step dance. The question arises—do both uses of the word come from the musical instrument? The herd-boys and shepherds of the British Isles emerge in the middle-ages with this instrument, but it must find its origins in a greater antiquity. It is, essentially the keyboard—or "chanter" of the bagpipe. If the horn-piper danced, he would be constrained to beatings of the feet, and there would be some air or airs more suitable for this than others. A characteristic dance tune could well have emerged in a pastoral region of the country. This would exclude most of Scotland, and the facts do not refute this if it is the triple-time air we are referring to.

However, another origin of the use of the word "hornpipe" in dance has been propounded. It is suggested that the word comes from a ritual harvest dance called "Herne Pipe": Herne being the god of harvest, "gerne" or "grain" being other forms of the word. W. G. Raffé in his dictionary,[26] styles this as a pre-Saxon ritual performed to pipe and tabor and employing "the long-remembered tummy-patting motions signifying delight after a good

meal". His authority for this is not quoted, nor have I discovered it. He states, however, that some of the Cotton MSS carry pen-pictures of dancers performing the "Herne-Piping".

Now, anything pre-Saxon in the British Isles is most likely to be Celtic, particularly in England. "Herne" is a Germanic word. Certainly the Celtic root for corn is *gran*, Latin, *granum*, while that for horn is *corn*, Latin, *cornu*. The etymology of the Gaelic word *Piobcorn* is clearly to be sought in horn and not in grain. Whether horn should be tied to the horn-of-plenty—the *cornucopia*—frequently attributed to local deities of abundance, is anybody's guess. The fact is that it is used of bony projections from the head of goats, cows, sheep etc., as we all know, and that these have been used as musical instruments called horns—or with a reed, what is called in the *Complaynt of Scotland* (1548): "ane gait horn and ane reed". Cow-horns were used by the Scots in the middle ages. How the dancers in the Cotton MSS can be said to be performing the "Herne-Piping" is not evident. In any case the MSS are Saxon and do not pre-date the 8th century.

The evidence does not support the "Herne-Piping" theory, much as I would like to accept it.

It is perhaps significant that we can quote evidence, as above, that the Derbyshire Hornpipe was a social round and that Steele in *The Tatler* (No. 106, 1709) can have Florinda dancing "the Derbyshire Hornpipe in the presence of several friends". The suggestion here is that the two forms, communal and solo, co-existed, as indeed they do today, although the dance "in the character of a sailor" has appropriated the name "hornpipe" to itself.

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