

Clown: Since I'm the hero pray let me go first  
Most women do know me indeed  
My rapier hath caused many belly to swell  
But never a drop do they bleed.

(The last man do sing first, and so depart and the next. Xeu)

## Lancashire Clog Dancing

THE SUBJOINED CONTRIBUTIONS from Mr Steele and Mr Sherry are presented as a follow-up to Julian Pilling's "The Lancashire Clog Dance" (*FMJ*, 1, 158-179, 1967; available also as *Journal Reprint* No. 15). Mr Pilling's comments are added at the end.

EDITOR

### 1. Seven Lancashire Steps

SAM STEELE†

MY FATHER'S CLOGS were of reddish leather, with very narrow toes, lace-up and with hollowed-out heels, each covered with a brass plate and containing a little bell. He always insisted that the music needed was a Schottische. While teaching us youngsters he would sing the two forms of the tune given below (Schottische I & II, p. 00). pp. 121-122).

His father was a local champion clog-dancer, reputed to be able to dance on a three-legged stool with a pint of beer on his head. My father told me this to emphasize that dancing was done on the spot and from the waist down with arms hanging down at the sides. My mother tells me that it was common for competition judges to sit underneath the stage, thus concentrating entirely on the sound of the dancing. She also tells me that my paternal grandfather knew Dan Leno well and taught him some steps, and in return Dan Leno taught him the "Seven Lancashire Steps". Two of my sisters and I learnt most of these but I am afraid I cannot recall all of them, nor the exact order. I also remember some steps in jig time and some "Dutch Dance" steps, usually done to "Zuyder Zee" or "Yip-i-addy". Other waltzes used were "Lassie from Lancashire" and the waltz tune given on p. 00.122.


The seven steps described below include some of Dan Leno's "Seven Lancashire Steps" but I cannot be sure that they represent the complete series.


The steps are danced on the ball of the foot unless otherwise stated.

The semicircular movement which Julian Pilling (*Journal* 1967, p. 167) calls a shuffle we always referred to as a "tap". The term "shuffle" was reserved for a forward and back "brush" and a

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“beat” with the same foot. “Beat” indicates that the foot takes the weight of the body.

*I.e.* rhythm for a tap and a beat: 

rhythm for single shuffle: 

We also did a “double shuffle”:

1 } forward and back right  
 & }  
 a hop on left  
 2 } forward and back right } = single shuffle  
 & }  
 a beat right

There was also, in waltz time, a treble shuffle which I could never master.

All steps are danced first on the left foot through to the break, then on the right foot to the break.

*First Step*

1 beat left  
 & } tap right  
 2 }  
 & beat right  
 3 beat left  
 4 hop on left with right foot held forward

N.B. Danced on left foot, *i.e.* weight stays on left foot almost throughout.

Repeat on R foot, L foot, R foot, L foot, R foot; then 2-bar break:

1 beat left  
 & } tap right  
 2 }  
 & beat right  
 3 beat left  
 & } tap right  
 4 }  
 & beat right  
 5 beat left  
 6 hop on left  
 7 right foot down  
 8 — (rest)



*Second Step* (Cf. J. Pilling's 4th step, p. 169)

As *First Step* but tap done round supporting foot and two beats with legs crossed.

Repeat as in *First Step*.

Break as in *First Step* but tap (& 2), two beats (& 3), tap (& 4), two beats (& 5) all done with legs crossed.

*Third Step*

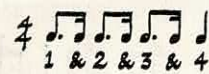
1 beat left  
 & } tap right  
 2 }  
 & hop on left  
 3 tap right toe behind  
 & hop on left  
 4 tap right heel in front

Repeat as in *First Step*.

Break: 1 beat left & hop left  
 & } tap right 5 tap right toe  
 2 } & hop left  
 & hop left 6 tap right heel  
 3 tap right toe behind & hop left  
 & hop left 7 tap right toe  
 4 tap right heel 8 — (rest)

*Fourth Step*

1 beat left  
 & } tap right  
 2 }  
 & beat right behind  
 3 beat left slightly forward  
 & swing right forward, striking left heel with right in passing  
 4 hop on left



Repeat as in *First Step*.

Break as for *First Step*.

*Fifth Step*

1 beat left  
 & } single shuffle with right foot  
 a }  
 2 }





& } tap left  
 3 }  
 & beat right  
 4 beat left

Repeat as in *First Step*.

Break: 1 beat left

& }  
 a } single shuffle right  
 2 }

& }  
 a } " " left  
 3 }

& }  
 a } " " right  
 4 }

& }  
 a } " " left  
 5 }

& }  
 a } " " right  
 6 }

& } tap left  
 7 }

& beat right  
 8 beat left



*Sixth Step*

We learned this by repeating:

Go to bed Tom,  
 Go to bed Tom,  
 Go to bed, go to bed, go to bed Tom!

Bars 1-2:

1 beat left

& } 2 quick beats with ball of  
 a } right foot on spot



2 beat left

3 }  
 & } repeat above on right foot  
 a }  
 4 }  
 5 beat left



& }  
 a } single shuffle right  
 6 }

& }  
 a } " " left  
 7 }



& } 2 quick beats with ball of right foot on spot  
 a }  
 8 beat left

Bars 3-4: as bars 1-2, beginning on right foot.

Bar 5: 1 beat left

& }  
 a } single shuffle right  
 2 }

& }  
 a } " " left  
 3 }

& } 2 quick beats with right  
 a }  
 4 beat left

Bar 6: as bar 5, beginning on right foot.

Bars 7-8:

1 beat left

& }  
 a } single shuffle right  
 2 }

& }  
 a } " " left  
 3 }

& }  
 a } single shuffle right  
 4 }

& }  
 a } " " left  
 5 }

- & } 2 quick beats with right
- a
- 6 beat left
- 7 beat right
- & } 2 quick beats with left
- a
- 8 beat right

4  $\frac{4}{4}$   $\frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{3}{8}$  |  $\frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{3}{8}$   
 1 & a 2 & a 3 & a 4 & a 5 & a 6 7 & a 8

Seventh Step

Bars 1-2:

- 1 beat left
- & } tap right
- 2
- & beat right
- 3 beat left
- 4 slight jump, landing on both feet
- 5 small step to left with left foot
- 6 swing right foot across, striking left toe with right heel in passing
- 7
- & } "crunch" (right toe, left toe, right heel, left heel)
- a
- 8

Bar 3: 1 } kneel right—right toe behind, right knee down

- 2 } .. left —left .. .. left .. ..
- 3
- 4

Bar 4: 1 strike right knee with right hand ("dusting")  
 2 right foot down } rising up  
 3 "dust" left knee  
 4 left foot down

- Bar 5: 1 beat left
- & } tap right
  - 2
  - & beat right
  - 3 beat left
  - 4 hop on left

- Bar 6: 1 } as bar 5 beginning on right foot
- &
  - 2
  - &
  - 3
  - 4

Bars 7-8:

- 1 } double shuffle on left foot
- &
- a
- 2
- &
- a
- 3 } .. .. right ..
- &
- a
- 4
- &
- a

5 beat left

- & } tap right
- 6

& beat right

7 beat left

8 — (pause)

SCHOTTISCHE (I)



## SCHOTTISCHE (II)



## WALTZ (unnamed)



## 2. Notes on Clog Dancing

SAM SHERRY

MY OWN FATHER was a very good dancer being particularly neat and light on his feet. He was self-taught as far as I know, having watched dancers at the Parthenon Music Hall in Glasgow as a youngster in the 1850s. He used to take a board under a secluded railway bridge on the outskirts of Glasgow, after finishing work in a shipyard, and practise the steps he had seen. He eventually became a dancer and comedian on the halls by the way of talent competitions, and was a contemporary of Dan Leno, Little Tich and the other famous people of the hey-day of the Music Halls. I believe he did once enter for the Dancing Championship, which I think was held in Blackburn or Leeds, although I cannot be certain on this point. As a boy I was more interested in getting out to play than in practising, although we had to do at least one hour per day, and I did not pay much attention to the "Old Man's" reminiscing. I am the youngest of a family of nine (5 boys, 4 girls) and my father was getting on by the time I was old

enough to take notice. All the family were taught to dance but eventually only three of us—Jim, Peter and myself became "speciality dancers". We also learned acrobatics and were taught music (violin or piano).

Dan Leno was famous for his double shuffle—I heard this after I left home to travel with my older brothers and never heard my father mention it, but it was talked of as something almost beyond the capabilities of ordinary dancers (is this how legends begin?), but I note that both Sammy Cash (*Pilling Reprint*, pp. 13-16) and Sam Steele list it as a normal routine step. I think Leno was Champion on more than one occasion, but according to father the "Daddy of them all" was a man called Jimmy Haslam (we had an uncle of that name so I've never forgotten it) who introduced many of the variations and additions to what were probably fairly elementary steps from the industrial regions, and who, I believe, won the Supreme Honour in several successive years. Thus the rather sophisticated tap dancing of the 1920s (Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly) developed, helped by exchanges across the Atlantic when American Vaudeville blossomed.

I think buck dancing was the American equivalent of clog, with its own variations, but winging was certainly American and was introduced to this country during the first decade of this century. Harry Scott, of the famous Scott & Whaley duo, was extremely good at the wing, according to my brother Jim who saw him either during or just after the first War. The wing is simply 3 quick beats in triplet time—the first a scrape as the foot flicks sideways, followed by beats at the outer and inner positions. For practice the weight is taken on the opposite foot, but in action the weight remains on the foot which wings, the other foot being in the air.

I remember being taught what my father called the "first three Lancashire steps", supposed to contain the basis of step dancing. Number one is the same as Sam Steele's *First Step*; I think number four of Sammy Cash's is the same but done cross-legged. I know that cross-legged steps were part of Lancashire clog, but we did not use them, as this style is cumbersome when done in 2/4 time which was the tempo we used. I still dance to this time—this was probably a Music Hall development.

The style was 6 bars followed by a 2-bar "finish". This was not called a "break" by Dad—a "break" was a change of step during