

Miner who enjoys intricacies of clog dancing

North-East champion at London festival

From our London staff

Few people, even in Lancashire, wear clogs any more, but Jackie Toaduff, a 20-year-old Durham coal-miner, has three pairs. His are lighter than the sort which used to echo over the cobble stones, and he wears a pair for at least an hour a day—not to walk in but to dance.

"Clog dancing is much more difficult than you would think," he says. "Music hall and stage tap-dancing has grown out of the clog dance. But even though I have tap-danced since I was six, I prefer clog dancing. It is more intricate and more interesting."

Mr Toaduff, whose home is at South Moor, Stanley, was dancing last night at the Royal Albert Hall in the English Folk Dance and Song Society Festival.

No national competition

He is champion clog-dancer of the North-East. "I wish I could try and be the national champion," he told me, "but there is not a national competition. I suppose there are not enough clog dancers for that."

There has been clog dancing in Britain for hundreds of years—the sailors' hornpipe was a clog dance.

Mr. Toaduff, the son of a miner, was persuaded to learn when he was 14. He was so good that on a visit to Denmark with the English Folk Dance and Song Society a year later, he was offered a year's contract to clog dance at a Danish night club.

Went down pit

"But I came home and went down the pit instead," he said. "I love dancing, though, and I have given many performances in this country since."

Last night, as he danced, he had 12 medals on his black velvet costume. "There are about 60 people clog dancing in our district," he said, "and I am not the only miner. There are three or four others."

"I clog dance to any accompaniment—a violin, accordion, piano or the pipes."