



English  
**Folk**  
DANCE & SONG SOCIETY

Vaughan Williams  
Memorial Library

# Stepping On

**A conference on stepping in dance**

**Saturday 16 & Sunday 17 November 2019**

Cecil Sharp House, London NW1 7AY



Supported by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

**#SteppingOn**

# GENERAL INFORMATION

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## Conference partners

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Historical Dance Society (HDS), English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), Instep Research Team (IRT), University of Roehampton Dance Department.

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## Conference sponsors

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English Folk Dance and Song Society, Instep Research Team.

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## Conference Committee

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Dr Anne Daye (HDS), Katy Spicer (EFDSS), Laura Smyth (EFDSS), Malcolm Barr-Hamilton (EFDSS), Michael Heaney, Peter Barnard (HDS), ProfTheresa Buckland (University of Roehampton), Toby Bennett (IRT).

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## Conference organiser

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Toby Bennett.

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## Registration

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Please collect your name badge from reception on arrival.

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## Refreshments

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Tea and coffee will be provided in Kennedy Hall throughout the day, free of charge. Lunch will be provided in Trefusis Hall, downstairs.

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## Recording and photographs

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Audio and video recording of all sessions will be made and kept at the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library for study purposes. If it is made available online at a later stage, we will seek relevant permissions.

The conference organisers may take photographs during the conference for publicity purposes. Please let Malcolm Barr-Hamilton know if you do not wish to be photographed.

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# WELCOME

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## English Folk Dance and Song Society

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On behalf of the English Folk Dance and Song Society I am delighted to welcome you to Cecil Sharp House and to Stepping On, our first conference to focus on percussive folk dance. As a (retired) tap dancer myself and one who has dabbled in Lancashire Clog and Appalachian Stepping since joining EFDSS, I am fascinated by these traditions that enable the performer to be dancer and musician in one. I am looking forward to learning about the range of traditions from across the UK and beyond and to understand more about the roots of such dance forms.

We have been most fortunate to work again with the Historical Dance Society and also Instep Research Team and the University of Roehampton Dance Department to plan and deliver this conference. I would like to express my enormous thanks to the organising committee without whom none of this would be happening – Peter Barnard, Toby Bennett, Theresa Buckland, Anne Daye, and Mike Heaney, and my colleagues in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, Laura Smyth and Malcolm Barr-Hamilton. Also grateful thanks to Instep Research Team for their support of the conference.

I wish you an enjoyable and enlightening two days.

➤ **Katy Spicer**

Chief Executive & Artistic Director  
English Folk Dance and Song Society

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## Historical Dance Society

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Looking at the mouth-watering agenda for the weekend of the ‘Stepping On’ conference I am reminded that the first dance I ever did in public was a Hornpipe. My teacher had to specially request the details of this decidedly male dance from the Royal Academy of Dancing as the other two hundred of her students, all girls, were learning a polka with a birdcage. I had started learning this dance but as it began ‘...from the corner with birdcage held aloft and with the other hand holding the skirt’, I felt it was not for me.

I am very sorry not to be able to join you for what looks like being a fascinating event. I love the dances of our Islands and their history and meaning, and you appear to be endeavouring to cover the lot in just two days! Good luck, and have a marvellous, marvellous time.

➤ **David Bintley CBE**

Patron of the Historical Dance Society

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Alexandra Fisher

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## IN SEARCH OF STREET DANCE – NEW THOUGHTS ON STEP DANCE ANALYSIS BASED ON TWO LANCASHIRE CLOG DANCERS

This paper focuses on aspects of the author's ethnographic research in Chorley, Lancashire from 2003 and puts forward a new basis for the analysis of clog and step dance material. The paper calls into question the revivalist view that stepping styles can be distinguished by regional identity – a useful promotional tool but perhaps a barrier to much meaningful research.

In identifying two basic genres of step dance – the Stage style and the Street style, the paper acknowledges the findings of previous researchers. The analysis centres on two clog dancers – one who was taught 'The Lancashire Clog Dance' in the 1930s (Stage style) and the other, who had picked up stepping from watching men on the street in the 1940s (Street style).

The paper examines the style and social context of each dancer and establishes each 'genre' by relating their characteristics to existing step dance material. The Stage style is found to be the most familiar 'clog dance' style but the Street style proves more difficult. The author's consequent 'stepping-journey' visits many parts of Britain and Ireland and finds some surprising links with other Street stepping styles.

The conclusion returns to the two Chorley clog dancers, highlighting their significance and how their dancing can contribute towards our understanding of step dance as social history.

➤ **Alex Fisher** works as a Community Clog Dancer based in central Lancashire and is a longstanding member of The Instep Research Team. She has an MA in Dance Studies (Univ of Surrey) – her dissertation: *Clog Dance. Revival, Performance & Authenticity – An Ethnographic Study* (2000) focuses on clog dancer Jackie Toaduff. A visiting university lecturer, she has given papers at the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention (2006) and at the Instep Research Step dance Symposium of 2010. Alex works with many schools in the NW and has collected many memories of 'clog culture' from the communities she meets.

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Sherry Johnson

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## ONTARIO OLD-TIME STEP DANCING: SEARCHING FOR ROOTS

While the step dancing currently performed at Ontario fiddle contests, and now called Ottawa Valley step dancing, is the most well-known style in Ontario, when I started dancing in 1974 in southwestern Ontario, I learned a very different style, now called the Ontario old-time style. Little is known about this style, and indeed, it is almost forgotten. Discovering the history of the old-time style has been one of my research goals ever since, about 15 years ago, I read in an article about step dancing in England a perfect description of one of the first old-time steps I learned. Unfortunately, it was not relevant to the work I was doing at the time, and I've never been able to find the reference since. But it planted a seed in my mind about finding some direct links between the Ontario old-time style and step dancing in England. My further research confirms that relationships do exist. In this presentation, I will discuss my findings to date and invite feedback from the many experts in the audience who may be able to recognize and identify steps, parts of steps, and even movement preferences in Ontario old-time step dancing that are similar to styles with which they are familiar.

➤ **Sherry Johnson** has been step dancing and playing fiddle for over 40 years; she continues to teach, judge and perform. She is an Associate Professor in Ethnomusicology at York University where her research examines issues of gender and "tradition" within the Ontario fiddle and step dancing contest community.

## THE ENGLISH FOLK DANCE AND SONG SOCIETY'S SPONSORED RECORDED MUSIC OUTPUT: WHAT WENT ON?

Using a small selection of folk dance recordings of performers associated the English Folk Dance and Song Society, Sean will investigate variations in speed. Writing in the *Complete System of English Country Dancing* published in 1820, Thomas Wilson suggested that to perform country dance figures and steps correctly the accompanying music must be played at an appropriate tempo and that the correct speed for a tune in 6/8 time should be performed at 104 beats per minute (or 52 bars a minute). However, E. Klopp writing in *The American Prompter and Guide to Etiquette* published in 1896 suggested that the tempo of 6/8 tunes had increased to between 116 and 136 beats per minute. While Cecil Sharp's 1909 *Country Dance Tunes* suggests that the playing speed for *We Won't Go Home Till Morning* is 88 beats per minute and *Pops Goes the Weasel* is 120 beats per minute. EFDSS recorded output had similar differences in tempo.

The Society used its influence by suggesting and endorsing which bands and tunes were recorded, and was it complacent and complicit in substituting faster tempi for steps. This made some specific steps difficult or impossible to perform.

Expect some foot tapping music!

➤ **Sean Goddard** *lives in Brighton, Sussex and has been involved in various aspects of folk dancing all his life: as a caller, dancer, morris dance teacher and barn dance band leader. Currently Sean is completing an MA By Learning Objectives at the University of Brighton where he is researching the history of English Country Dance.*

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**Chloe Middleton-Metcalf**

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## HORNPIPE STEPPING AT BARN DANCES AND CEILIDHS IN ENGLAND

At non-specialist dances it is unusual for any dance detail, including footwork, to be taught. The teaching of hornpipe stepping is a notable exception to the general trend. The hornpipe step as taught by folk dancers in 2017–2018 is a simple single step, or step-hop/hop-step usually to slow music in 4/4 time.

In this presentation I will explore the re-emergence of hornpipe stepping in the 1970s as part of a wider re-Anglicanisation of English social dance. I will consider the impact of the English 'ceilidh' movement and the influence of individuals from outside the established folk-dance scene, which was typified by folk dance clubs and membership of the EFDSS. Many of these new keen ceilidh adherents were active morris dancers with a knowledge and practical awareness of footwork/stepping. I will then compare the hornpipe step as it is taught today to the record of stepping documented in Sharp's *Country Dance Book*, and to two film clips of social dance, Sam Bennett's *Ilmington Dancers* filmed in 1926, and Northumbrian dancers captured in the film *Any Man's Kingdom* (1956).

➤ **Chloe Middleton-Metcalf** *is a TECHNE funded PhD student based in the dance department at Roehampton University. Her thesis working title is English Social Folk Dance Identities and Repertoires. Focusing on non-specialist dance events and post-1945 developments this research combines oral history, archival research, and dance ethnography to look at how the contexts and repertoire of English folk dance events have been utilised, constructed, and understood by adherents. Founder of the English Folk Costume Archive, she has an ongoing interest in folk costume and material culture. Further information about her various research outputs can be found at [roehampton-online.academia.edu/ChloeMetcalf](http://roehampton-online.academia.edu/ChloeMetcalf).*

## FINDING OUR FOOTING: A DISCUSSION OF THE EVIDENCE FOR A SOCIAL DANCE STEP VERNACULAR TO THESE ISLANDS

The instruction to ‘foot it’ and the term ‘footing’ are found in social dances for England, Scotland and Ireland. What do they refer to? Are they simply a way of saying ‘dance in place’ or did they reference specific steps? Were certain steps vernacular to these islands, in contrast to fashionable French steps, and, if so, did they originate in England and Lowland Scotland, or the Gaelic world of Ireland and the Scottish Highlands?

The paper will consider the available evidence for footing from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. A key document will be Francis Peacock Sketches Relative to the Theory and Practice of Dancing, published in Aberdeen in 1806, in which ‘footing’ for the strathspey and reel is presented as a Highland vernacular form. Peacock’s footing steps will be compared with similar steps by C. C. Lang and T. F. Petersen, German dancing masters writing 1765–1791, described as English footing. The discussion will then widen to sample the use of the term in country dances and cotillons across the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, including examples of ‘Irish footing’ in 9/8 jigs. Based on experience of reconstructing dances from the period, this paper will argue for the existence of vernacular steps in social dancing, intrinsic to dances in jig and hornpipe metres, alongside the duple and compound duple metres familiar across all Europe.

➤ **Anne Daye** is a researcher and teacher in historical dance, with a special focus on dancing in the British Isles. Anne’s doctoral thesis of 2008 presented new thinking on the Jacobean court dance theatre extending understanding beyond the texts. Post-doctoral research and publication includes further investigation of dancing at the Elizabethan and Stuart courts and in the public theatres. Anne reconstructs and teaches country dances (17th to 19th century), cotillons and reels deepening understanding of our dance culture. Dance and music books are published by the Historical Dance Society, for which Anne is Director of Education and Research.

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## Siobhan Butler

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### THE MOVEMENTS, MOTIFS, AND INFLUENCES OF THE MULLAGH SET DANCERS

The Mullagh Set Dancers were an award winning Set dance group from the areas around Quilty and Mullagh in West County Clare, Ireland. While they were well-known in their locality, they reached national and international recognition during the set dance revivals of the 1970s and 1990s and were frequently featured in television programmes honoring the rich intangible heritage of rural Ireland. Their dancing was regarded as unique due to their heavy percussive “battering” while performing the sets, despite the percussive stepping being a regular occurrence in their local parish. With the changing practices of set dancing in the last 30 years, the influences of the Mullagh Set dancers have reached beyond the social dance community and is now primarily seen in the solo dance form of “sean-nós”. This 20 minute presentation will include a brief history of set dancing in County Clare, along with video samples of the Mullagh Set dancers, an evaluation of the dancers who have been directly influenced by them, and an exploration for how Set dance “battering” now has a place in solo and sean-nós dance practices.

➤ **Siobhan Butler** is a performer, teacher, and researcher of sean-nós dance based in County Clare, Ireland. She has performed and collaborated with many leading traditional artists including Kevin Burke, Cherish the Ladies, Nic Gareiss, John Whelan, Damien Connolly, and Patrick Ourceau & Tony McManus to name only a few. With over 24 years of dance experience, Siobhan’s expertise in Irish dance traditions is showcased through in-demand workshops, demonstrations, and lectures, which are held internationally. Siobhan is a graduate of Goddard College, where she received a BA in Anthropology in 2015. In January 2018, she was awarded a MA in Ethnochoreology from the University of Limerick for her research and dissertation entitled, ‘Willie Keane (1927–1998) as an Icon for a Dance Identity in County Clare, Ireland’.

**EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT WELSH CLOG DANCING BUT WERE TOO AFRAID TO DANCE**

The tradition and customs of Welsh clog/step dancing. This is one of Wales' unbroken traditions. When the religious revivals of the 18th and 19th centuries virtually wiped out traditional, and what we call in modern times folk music, clog dancing survived in the gypsy communities. Dancers such as Hywel Wood, from the well known Romany family in Wales, was dancing well into the 1950s and 60s. At the beginning clog dancing was a man's world and a way to show off dexterity, strength and skill. Then came the women. The two became different traditions. Why? A history of the Welsh step dance tradition and how it has developed in the last 30 years and why has it been seen so little in the UK as a whole. These and other questions answered with a talk, discussion. Huw Williams will take you on a journey through Wales step dancing tradition. From the slate quarry workers of Blaenau Ffestiniog to the stage at the National eisteddfod.

➤ **Huw Williams** began dancing when he was fifteen and has been described as the 'public face of clog-dancing in Wales'. He was the first dancer to introduce syncopated rhythms into the tradition and many of the steps he developed have become standard repertoire for Welsh clog dancers. His accolades include solo champion dancer at the National Eisteddfod and also won the duet and group competitions more than a dozen times. He toured Europe and North America with the band Crasdant and in a previous incarnation was a singer song-writer working alongside Fairport Convention and Ralph McTell. His clog dancing pupils have included comedian Rory Mcgrath and hurdler Colin Jackson. Yes I know... don't ask...

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**Annabelle Bugay**

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**COMPETITION, CONSUMERISM, AND CONFORMITY: A STUDY OF THE MANIFESTATION OF AMERICAN IDEALS IN COMPETITIVE IRISH DANCE CULTURE**

Following the success of Riverdance in 1995, Dr. John Cullinane (2001) recorded that in North America there were over 500 Irish dancing teachers officially recognized by An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha, over 160 competitions per year, as well as over 50,000 people learning Irish dance. Competitive Irish dancing has remained a popular sport in the United States. What was once an activity to encourage camaraderie between Irish immigrants in America has become an extravagant and elite sport. Dancers from the United States are now willing to frequently travel across both the country and the globe to participate in competitions. Likewise, competitors are willing to invest thousands of dollars into new costumes and accessories to reflect each year's fashion trends. Because the majority of Irish dancers are from the United States, Irish dance has evolved into an expression of the American ideals of competition, consumerism, and conformity. Drawing personal experience as a competitive Irish dancer from the United States, as well as interview material and historical research, this paper discusses how both traditions and current trends in competitive Irish dance are not a reflection of Irish culture, but rather an expression of the blending of Irish and American cultures in a post-Diaspora world.

➤ **Annabelle Bugay** is an American step dancer and pianist. She spent her childhood and teenage years competing at the championship level of Irish dance before discovering her passion for percussive step dancing, social dancing, and playing the piano. Her interests have brought her to live in Ireland, and most recently Cape Breton, Nova Scotia where she is currently studying for her Bachelor of Arts Community Studies double major in Music and Folklore.

# PROGRAMME

## SATURDAY 16 NOVEMBER

9.30am	Registration and Refreshments
10.15am	Welcome
10.30am	<p><b>Chair: Malcolm Barr-Hamilton</b></p> <p><b>Alexandra Fisher</b>—In Search of Street Dance – New thoughts on step dance analysis based on two Lancashire Clog Dancers</p> <p><b>Sherry Johnson</b>—Ontario old-time step dancing: Searching for Roots</p>
11.30am	Refreshments
12noon	<p><b>Chair: Michael Heaney</b></p> <p><b>Sean Goddard</b>—The English Folk Dance and Song Society’s sponsored recorded music output: What went on?</p> <p><b>Chloe Middleton-Metcalf</b>—Hornpipe stepping at barn dances and ceilidhs in England</p>
1pm	Lunch
2pm	<p><b>Chair: Derek Schofield</b></p> <p><b>Anne Daye</b>—Finding our Footing: a discussion of the evidence for a social dance step vernacular to these islands</p> <p><b>Siobhan Butler</b>—The Movements, Motifs, and Influences of The Mullagh Set Dancers</p>
3pm	Refreshments
3.30pm	<p><b>Chair: Alex Burton</b></p> <p><b>Huw Williams</b>—Everything you wanted to know about Welsh Clog Dancing but were too afraid to dance</p> <p><b>Annabelle Bugay</b>—Competition, Consumerism, and Conformity: A study of the manifestation of North American ideals in Competitive Irish dance culture</p> <p><b>Kathryn Tattersall, Ru Rose and Jon Davison</b>—From Family to Team: the transmission of Pat Tracey’s clog steps and the formation of Camden Clog</p>
5pm	Finish
7.30pm	<b>Step Ceilidh Party</b>



SUNDAY 17 NOVEMBER	
9.30am	Registration and refreshments
10am	<b>Chair: Theresa Buckland</b>
	<p><b>Heather Blasdale-Clarke</b>—Steps in Australia: The history</p> <p><b>Simon Harmer</b>—Whistling Billy’s Barefoot Hornpipe – A presentation on the process of creating a hornpipe sequence from named steps in Henry Mayhew’s London Labour and the London Poor (1851)</p>
11am	Refreshments
11.30am	<b>Chair: Anne Daye</b>
	<p><b>Mats Melin</b>—Exploring the notion of the Scotch Reel as a solo dance</p> <p><b>Heather Sparling</b>—A History of the Scotch Four: Early Step Dancing in Cape Breton</p>
12.30pm	Lunch
1.30pm	<b>Chair: Peter Barnard</b>
	<p><b>Pat Ballantyne</b>—Are these steps percussive? Reflections on an interpretation</p> <p><b>Samantha Jones</b>—Dancing Hands and Rhythmic Voices: Transmission Methods in Irish Step Dance</p>
2.30pm	Refreshments
3pm	<b>Chair: Toby Bennett</b>
	<p><b>Lisa Sture</b>—Dartmoor Stepdancing: Yesterday, Today &amp; Tomorrow</p> <p><i>Panel discussion—English and Cornish Step Dance: Revival and Continuity</i>  <b>Carmen Hunt, Janet Keet-Black, Jo Harmer, Katie Howson, Kerry Fletcher, Les Bennett, Lisa Sture</b></p>
4.30pm	<b>Closing Comments and discussion</b>
	<b>Prof. Theresa Buckland and the conference team</b>
5pm	Finish

## FROM FAMILY TO TEAM: THE TRANSMISSION OF PAT TRACEY'S CLOG STEPS AND THE FORMATION OF CAMDEN CLOG

In this presentation/demonstration we will explore how the clog steps danced by the Tracey family from East Lancashire, popularised by the late Pat Tracey during the height of the clog dance revival in England from the 1950s onwards, were transmitted, adapted and evolved over the ensuing decades. How did a set of individual steps, danced by individual family members, come to be taught outside that context? How did the virtuosic individual style of Pat Tracey translate to the newer team approach of clog dancing? And how have the trustees of that tradition continued to maintain and pass on the embodied knowledge of steps and style? Responses to these questions will lead us to explore issues of change and variation in the evolution of folk forms as they re-emerged in the modern English folk revival. Drawing on our embodied knowledge of the tradition and its transmission through the formation of Pat Tracey's team, 'Camden Clog', we shall explore how traditional knowledge evolves and maintains itself within the specific material contexts and circumstances that clog dancers have found themselves in.

➤ **Kathryn Tattersall** *was born in Lancashire into a family of mill workers and miners, and was entrusted by Pat Tracey with the preserving and passing on of the Tracey family tradition of clog dancing originating in East Lancashire. She has led Camden Clog since the early 2000s, originally founded by Pat Tracey in the late 1980s*

➤ **Ru Rose** *began clog dancing aged 5 and had her first lessons with Pat Tracey at 6, finally joining Camden Clog aged 18. She is a three time Old Heel and Toe world champion, the principal dance style of the Tracey family.*

➤ **Jon Davison** *is a specialist in performance practice as research at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, and began learning Pat Tracey's steps from those entrusted with the tradition at Camden Clog. He has also been a musician since age 4, with a special interest in folk traditions of the British Isles and North America.*

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## Dr Heather Blasdale-Clarke

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### STEPS IN AUSTRALIA: THE HISTORY

From the earliest days of Captain Cook's explorations in the Pacific and the beginning of white colonisation, Australia's history abounds with step dancing. It was fashionable on the stage, in dance schools, and in the community, and musicians around the country played for people to dance "a bit of a step".

The first white settlers to Australia brought with them their popular culture and this was quickly established, with dance featuring as a favourite pastime. As the colony developed there was a significant gender imbalance though this did not abate the enthusiasm for dance. There are plenty of stories about men gathering in pubs to dance (and drink) and as the Gold Rushes brought even more men to the colony, dance competitions became prevalent. This coincided with the clog dancing craze in Britain with many migrants bringing steps to the new land, and dancers from the Antipodes travelling to compete in the old. Prime examples of this are Harry Macklin Shaw, the boy from Lancashire who became the clog dancing champion of Australia and the forbear of Craig Revel-Horwood; and the darling of Sydney, Bella Perman, who competed for the championship of England in 1898.

Dr Heather Blasdale-Clarke examines the story of step dance in Australia and the vestiges that remain of a once vibrant culture.

➤ **Dr Heather Blasdale-Clarke** *is a dance teacher and historian specialising in early Australian colonial culture and step dance. In 2018 she completed doctoral research into the intriguing topic of early Australian convict dance. By combining a comprehensive understanding of the many dance traditions relevant to early Australian history, she is able to bring a deep insight to this fascinating study. Heather is the Australian member of the Instep Research Team, frequently presents workshops and seminars, and regularly publishes articles on her website [colonialdance.com.au](http://colonialdance.com.au)*

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Simon Harmer

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## WHISTLING BILLY'S BAREFOOT HORNPIPE – A PRESENTATION ON THE PROCESS OF CREATING A HORNPIPE SEQUENCE FROM NAMED STEPS IN HENRY MAYHEW'S LONDON LABOUR AND THE LONDON POOR (1851)

Reflecting on a brief clip of stoker Ted McKenzie dancing on the deck of the Terra Nova during Scott's Antarctic Expedition (1910-13) I pondered the question, 'What did sailors actually dance on board ship?' This led me to search for references to and illustrations of sailors dancing. These illustrations offered a wide range of possible answers to my question. It struck me that if they were dancing a hornpipe it was very different to how I was taught to dance hornpipe steps in clogs in the late 70s. A description of hornpipe steps from the 1850s in Henry Mayhew's London Labour and the London Poor provided a starting point for creating a dance piece reflecting my research together with step dance styles that have attracted and influenced me over the years from a range of sources. The presentation will explain the process I went through and acknowledge the people who helped before concluding with a performance of the steps.

➤ **Simon Harmer:** *I have been teaching and performing a range of step dance styles for over 30 years. I learnt English clog steps from Graham Cole at Cecil Sharp House in the late 1970s and continued learn from a range of different teachers and performers but most particularly from Alex Boydell. In 1990 I began dancing and choreographing with Chequered Flag, performing a repertoire of Appalachian clogging and steps from Quebec, Ontario and Cape Breton Island. More recently I have enjoyed improvising with southern English steps and I have developed an interest in Street and Hip-Hop Dance.*

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Mats Melin

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## EXPLORING THE NOTION OF THE SCOTCH REEL AS A SOLO DANCE

This presentation is exploring the possible relationship in dance structure between the Scotch Reel and older Scottish solo dances. A number of early forms of the Scotch Reels featured a two-parted dance structure involving a circle/reel and a stepping sequence by the dancers. This binary structure is also apparent in older solo dances such as Dannsa nan Flurs and other dances found in Cape Breton Island in the 1950s. Here the solo dancer dances a circle, known as the 'Reel' alternated with percussive footwork, and this pattern is repeated throughout the dance as in the social form of the Reel. Thus, the dancer does one circle and one stepping sequence off the one foot. In Ireland, in the early twentieth century, this structure is also found in solo dances, where the dancers were said to dance 'single' off the one foot only, with no repeat on the other foot, and with a circle danced in between each single step. Today, aspects of this practice are found in Irish dancing with some solos starting with a 'lead round', and some Scottish solo dances start with a circle step. Are these features related and if so how is the core questions of this paper.

➤ **Mats Melin:** *Swedish born traditional dancer, choreographer, and researcher Mats Melin has worked professionally with dance in Scotland and Ireland since 1995. He held the position as Traditional Dancer in Residence for four Scottish Local Authorities. He is an office bearer for Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland. Mats is an Ethnochoreologist and a Lecturer in Dance at the IrishWorld Academy, University of Limerick, and course leader for the MA Ethnochoreology and MA in Irish Dance Studies.*

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## Heather Sparling

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### A HISTORY OF THE SCOTCH FOURS: EARLY STEP DANCING IN CAPE BRETON

I will trace the evolution of the Scotch Fours in Cape Breton, a precursor to today's improvisatory solo step dance. I will draw especially on the ethnographic research conducted by Barbara LeBlanc, who researched vernacular dance in Cape Breton in 1986, as well as on contemporary YouTube videos of Scotch Fours being performed. LeBlanc interviewed dozens of people involved with vernacular dance, including musicians, dancers, and callers; men and women; youth and seniors. Many of LeBlanc's interlocutors described vivid memories of Scotch Fours being performed: some elderly interlocutors remembered them being danced in their youth, while younger interlocutors describe their revival. What little documentation of the Scotch Fours exists indicates that the form has changed, shifting from a participatory social dance to one that is presentational in orientation (Turino 2008), practiced today primarily as an historical re-enactment by dancing specialists rather than as an informal social dance. And yet practitioners generally believe that they still perform the Scotch Fours as they were practiced when first brought to Cape Breton by Scottish settlers. I will consider how the Scotch Fours changed despite efforts to maintain them "as they always were," and what is at stake in believing that they remain unchanged.

➤ **Heather Sparling** is the Canada Research Chair in Musical Traditions and an associate professor of ethnomusicology at Cape Breton University. She researches Scottish Gaelic song in Nova Scotia, Atlantic Canadian disaster songs, and vernacular dance in Cape Breton. She has a particular interest in the relationships between language and music, and in memory, memorialization, and cultural forgetting. She is a fluent Gaelic learner and is learning to play the fiddle.

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## Pat Ballantyne

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### ARE THESE STEPS PERCUSSIVE? REFLECTIONS ON AN INTERPRETATION

In 1805, Francis Peacock, an eighteenth-century Scottish dancing master, wrote down descriptions of some steps he had seen danced by native Highlanders.

Ten years ago, I was keen to establish a link between Cape Breton style percussive step dance and Peacock's steps, in an effort to identify a possible Scottish origin for Cape Breton step dance. Peacock had explained that the steps he described could be performed in numerous variations, as long as they fitted with the music and pleased the performer. This concept of musical improvisation is a key factor in present-day Cape Breton step dance and suggested a possible link between the two styles. I was optimistic that I would be able to identify enough commonalities between Peacock's descriptions and some, or many of the Cape Breton percussive steps that I knew and believed that I would have little trouble interpreting what Peacock had written. However, researching the historical background and interpreting historical dance sources, can be problematic, and an ever wider historical enquiry meant that each time I revisited my investigation, I revised my approach.

In this paper/presentation, I will reflect on my experience of interpreting these steps and consider the problems I faced as researcher and (re)constructor. The presentation will be supported by short video extracts and a demonstration of my current interpretation of these steps.

➤ **Pat Ballantyne** obtained her PhD on the history of Scottish dance from the University of Aberdeen in 2016. An Honorary Research Associate at the university's Elphinstone Institute, she teaches the dance component of the Institute's ethnography courses. She has taught step dance in schools, at feisean, and at community workshops in many locations, performed in Scotland, Europe and Cape Breton Island and plays in a ceilidh band.

**DANCING HANDS AND RHYTHMIC VOICES: TRANSMISSION METHODS IN IRISH STEP DANCE**

The ways that dance steps are communicated and passed on are integral to the formation of communities around cultural practices. Yet, the very phenomena of transmission in Irish step dance have received little direct attention. Embedded throughout many important scholarly contributions to Irish step dance research are brief mentions of the methods that dance masters, their students, step collectors, and ethnographers use for learning and remembering step choreography. This paper addresses the process of transmission in Irish step dance directly, focusing on two specific methods by which Irish step dancers learn, remember, and share their dance steps: hand dancing and dance rhymes. Dance rhymes are rhythmically organized phrases of step choreography and counts, spoke to specific rhythms or sung to tunes. Hand dancing is a form of gestural mimicry, whereby the hands or fingers are used as substitutes for the feet and legs. Speech, melody, rhythm, and mimetic movement not only aid in learning choreography, but also entrain dancers to a way of learning. Furthermore, these modes of transmission demonstrate the ways that rhythm and melody are incorporated into stepping such that dancers embody shared feelings of musicality and choreo-musical structure. Combining both ethnographic and historiographic methods, I will present an account of the role of hand dancing and dance rhymes among Irish step dancers across generations and geographic regions. Weaving together theories of memory, sensation, and embodied experience, I posit that acts of memory work, such as hand dancing and dance rhymes are a point of intersection for knowledge and experience.

➤ **Samantha Jones** is a dancer and ethnomusicologist based in Boston, MA. She is currently a doctoral candidate in ethnomusicology at Harvard University. She earned her Master's degree in ethnomusicology at Boston University and holds undergraduate degrees in music and cognitive science from the University of Connecticut. Her primary research subject is Irish traditional dance and music communities in North America. Her interests in this topic include memory, transmission, and affect. She has presented at regional and national conferences in the United States including at the Society for American Music, the American Conference for Irish Studies, and the Society for Ethnomusicology and its regional chapter meetings.

**DARTMOOR STEP DANCING: YESTERDAY, TODAY & TOMORROW**

Dartmoor Stepdancing is one of the better-known English stepdance traditions, known particularly for its annual competition at the Dartmoor Folk Festival. Some people love it, and others consider it as a 'set piece' with little room for personal expression or artistic development. I learnt to dance in this tradition from those who grew up when it was vibrant and a very popular pastime being danced in a range of social settings. The tradition is currently at a point of transition. The societal context in which Dartmoor Stepdancing exists today is significantly different to the context in which the dancers of the last generation learnt to dance, competed and danced socially. In this presentation, I will set out what my experience and research so far tells us about the historical practice of Dartmoor Stepdancing, its context, participation, influences and transmission. Then compare to today's context and practice to identify outstanding questions, development opportunities and potential future direction.

➤ **Lisa Sture** first met traditional Devon stepdancers Les Rice and his cousin Jack Rice in 1980 and soon learned to dance from Les, the champion of his generation. There was a lot of interest and she soon started to teach others, which she has continued to do. At this time she also met the stepdancing Orchard family and has danced with them ever since. When the competitions on Dartmoor were revived by Bob Cann in 1984, Lisa was the first winner and currently has won four titles. In 2017, Lisa was the co-ordinator of a project that recorded and collected information about the stepdancing tradition on Dartmoor, for which she wrote a short summary booklet, 'Dartmoor Stepdancing: Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow'.

## DISCUSSION – ENGLISH AND CORNISH STEP DANCE: REVIVAL AND CONTINUITY

In the English folk revival performance of English step dancing has been dominated by interest in clog dance steps collected largely in industrial areas of the north of England. However, according to Cecil Sharp writing in 1911, step dance was “the most popular folk dance at the present time... standing proof of the capacity of the village dancer to create and execute extremely complex and intricate movements” (The Morris Book Part 4, p10). Despite being very common at that time, step dancing has since largely died out. A few local step dance traditions continued, most notably in East Anglia and Dartmoor, but more widespread revivalist interest in these shoe-based forms has largely been absent. In recent years, however, there is a noticeable increase in interest in English and Cornish step dancing; this panel brings together some key figures of this later revival to discuss various aspects of the dance and their approach.

➤ **Carmen Hunt** specialises in Cornish set, scoot/step and social dance, running Cornish dance workshops for schools, communities, special events and festivals, calling for troyls/ceilidhs, leading ‘nos lowen’ (happy night) Cornish dances, and collaborating on community events. Carmen has performed with Cornish dance groups Asteveryn and Kemysk Cornish Dancers across the Duchy of Cornwall and at many prestigious festivals across the UK and Isle of Man, Ireland and Brittany. Carmen is a member of the Instep Research Team, and is a folk arts educator with the EFDSS Folk Educators Group.

➤ **Janet Keet-Black** Step dancing has been in Janet’s wider family for generations. She is of Romany heritage and Vice President of the Romany and Traveller Family History Society, which she co-founded. She has written numerous articles relating to the history of Romanies and Travellers and their place within the wider English society, a subject she continues to research. When time permits, she also researches step dancing in the southern counties. With Kerry Fletcher and others she set up the stepping sessions at Falmer near Brighton.

➤ **Jo Harmer** is a director of FolkActive CIC, a social enterprise which uses traditional folk music and dance to educate, build community and promote health and wellbeing. After years of dancing and teaching English clog, Appalachian clogging, and Canadian stepdancing, Jo has “come home” to Southern English tunes and informal social stepping. With husband Simon and musician Cath Watkins she enjoys creating situations in which people of all ages can enjoy this accessible stepping style. They run a pub stepping session in Hampshire, and encourage stepping within simple social dances, based on those collected from Hampshire Gypsy families 100 years ago.

➤ **Katie Howson** is a musician and social historian. She learned to play the melodeon alongside the older generation of musicians in the pubs of Suffolk, when stepping was still a common part of such informal sessions. In 2000, she and husband John Howson founded the East Anglian Traditional Music Trust, which she ran until retiring from the post in 2017. She now devotes most of her time to research. Some of this is published on her own website at [katiehowson.co.uk](http://katiehowson.co.uk) and some, including a stepdancing resource, is hosted at [www.eatmt.org.uk](http://www.eatmt.org.uk). Katie was awarded the EFDSS Gold Badge in 2010. Her current research project is investigating stepdance competitions in the early 20th century, with a particular focus on Somerset.

➤ **Kerry Fletcher** is a community folk dance artist working within British, European and American traditional dance, both percussive and social. She has been involved in the recent reviving, reinventing and reinvigorating of Southern English step dancing in Kent and Sussex. Kerry is also Co-Artistic Director and choreographer of Folk Dance Remixed, a ground-breaking company creating unique fusions between folk and contemporary hip hop styles, with live music. When she is not dancing, teaching or choreographing, she is part-time coordinator of the national Folk Educators Group at the English Folk Dance & Song Society.

➤ **Les Bennett** is a step dancer from Somerset who was introduced to Morris dancing through Victory Morris 30 years ago. He moved to Yeovil and joined Wyvern Jubilee Morris Men and took up Appalachian dancing with No Mean Feet. He is a founder member of SomerStep Clog where he teaches the steps of Dartmoor steppers Bob Cann and Les Rice and southern English heel and toe step dancing to English jigs, polkas and hornpipes. He has an interest in traditional social steps and dances collected in Somerset, Dorset and Hampshire as well as clog stepping traditions from across the British Isles.

➤ **Toby Bennett** was a clog dancer first, he started dancing whilst a student at Nottingham University and quickly went on to win the Westmorland Clog Dance Championship. He later trained in contemporary dance and ballet at Ballet Rambert School before dancing professionally in Belgium, and after that becoming a dance educator and researcher at the University of Roehampton where he eventually became head of the Dance Department. However, he never lost his interest in traditional percussive dance and in recent years has left academia and now focusses on performance as a solo artist and with folk band Stepling. He is also a respected teacher and a member of Instep Research Team.

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## Wendy Lutley

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### **POSTER: REFERENCES TO BROOM AND STEP DANCING FROM THE BLACKDOWN HILLS, DEVON/SOMERSET, ENGLAND**

The text on Wendy's poster comes from the oral history element of Folk South West's (FSW's) Sights and Sounds of the Blackdowns community folk arts project, led by Eddie Upton, with the assistance of Doc Rowe, in 1995/6. The quotes were extracted at that time, to develop shorter quotes for the project's exhibition, which covered a range of customs and links to the landscape. There were only a few references to broom and step dancing, with no detail of steps, but it provides evidence from this area, with some information on context. The photo of Mary Hawkins, broom dancing, was also extracted at that time. Unfortunately FSW's files are in storage, so Wendy has been unable to organise a copy of the video (recorded for FSW by Doc Rowe). Mary was not interviewed for FSW's project, but has confirmed more recently (pers comm, March 2019) that she learnt the broom dance from her grandfather and that he could also step dance. Eddie recalls (pers comm, Oct 2019) that when asked about a tune for her dance, Mary replied 'Cat's got the measles', for which he guessed and played the 'The Keel Row'. Wendy hopes to progress the research further. The Blackdown's landscape is typified by remote valleys, separate farmsteads and ancient hedgebanks.

➤ **Wendy Lutley** *is a retired landscape conservationist living in South Somerset. She was co-founder and co-director of Folk SouthWest in its first five years (1992-1997). Wendy grew up in the Devon part of the Blackdown Hills (now an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and still has family and friends there. She is a member of its AONB Heritage Forum and her voluntary retirement projects have included archival research for the National Trust on its Wellington Monument there. Her interest in folk dance dates from working at Halsway Manor Folk Centre when a student c 1969-71.*

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## Charnwood Clog Step Dancers

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### **POSTER: GETTING PEOPLE TO TELL US ABOUT CLOGS**

We are a team of clog dancers based in North Leicestershire. As well as dancing at fetes, festivals and pubs, we also give 'illustrated talks' – typically to WIs, community groups, history societies. Typically these are 45–60 minutes with some history about clogs and step dancing, some dances, and a workshop session if required. They go down very well, and we often find our audiences have things to tell us about clogs – we always learn more from them – real living history. We're based near Leicester, so many people still have memories of clogs locally. Other people have moved from 'the North' and have brought their memories with them. And we've been given a copy of someone's great-grandfather's Indenture in 1866 as a clogger apprentice – "who will faithfully serve his master and keep his secrets".

Our poster will include: what we've been told about clogs; how we achieve audience engagement; and we'll have copies of a typical programme.

➤ **Charnwood Clog Step Dancers** *started in Leicestershire in 1977. Members include dancers from those early days. We dance traditional styles from around the British Isles. Currently we have 7 members and two wonderful musicians. We practise and teach during the winter, and 'dance out' in the summer at pubs, fetes and festivals.*

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## Paul Hudson

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### **VIDEO: SPIRIT OF CLOGFEST**

For fifteen years, from 2002 to 2016, musicians and dancers gathered in Skipton, North Yorkshire, on the second weekend in July for Clogfest – a celebration of English step dance. They came for a chance to perform centre-stage, in front of their peers, without having to compete with Morris Dancers and festival events. Year after year, their dance and performance skills improved; more young performers took part, and they had a WALLOPING GOOD TIME.

This video captures the Spirit of Clogfest – enjoy the nostalgia.

# BROADSIDE DAY AT CECIL SHARP HOUSE

An annual one-day conference for people interested in street literature in all its fascinating aspects – broadsides, chap books, songsters, woodcuts, engravings, last dying speeches, catchpennies, wonder-tales, almanacs, fortune tellers, and all kinds of cheap printed material sold to ordinary people in the city streets, at country fairs, and from pedlars' packs up and down the country.

The day consists of short papers, presentations, displays and discussions, and is suitable for beginners and experts alike.

**Saturday 22 February 2020**

Check for timings and ticket prices: [vwml.org/broadsideday](http://vwml.org/broadsideday)

# LIBRARY LECTURES AT CECIL SHARP HOUSE

*Expert speakers guide you through fascinating topics around folk song and dance.*

## **THERE'S METHOD IN THE MAGIC** BY TABITHA STANMORE

Wednesday 22 January ⇨ 7.30pm

Magic in medieval and early modern England took many forms, but among the most common was 'practical' magic: spells and rituals which brought about useful solutions to everyday problems.



## **JOHN MALCHAIR'S 'THIRD COLLECTION OF TUNES'**

BY ALICE LITTLE

Wednesday 26 February ⇨ 7.30pm

John Malchair (1730-1812) was a violinist and artist who spent his 'leisure hours' collecting over 500 tunes.

## **MAUD KARPELES, ADVENTURER AND FOLKSONG COLLECTOR**

BY ANNA GUIGNÉ

Wednesday 25 March ⇨ 7.30pm

In 1929, Maud Karpeles journeyed to Newfoundland to document folk songs in England's oldest colony.

## **BARN DANCES, CEILIDHS AND KNEES UPS, 1945-2020**

BY CHLOE MIDDLETON-METCALFE

Wednesday 22 April ⇨ 7.30pm

Why is English folk dance not taught in schools any more? What has any of this got to do with Englishness and national identity?

One lecture £8; All four £28

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