

Chapter 1 : A Clog Primer & Review - Grainline Studio

Every Tuesday: Furness Tradition Slow and Steady music session. pm in the Hope and Anchor, Daltongate, Ulverston.
Every Tuesday: Furness Tradition regular music session. pm in the Hope and Anchor, Daltongate, Ulverston.

History[edit] There are two explanations of the development of the English style clog. They may have evolved from pattens which were slats of wood held in place by thonging or similar strapping. Those too poor to afford shoes wore wood directly against the skin or hosiery , and thus the clog was developed, made of part leather and part wood. Alternatively they have been described as far back as Roman times, possibly earlier. Detail showing English style clogs worn by some of the girls. The wearing of clogs in Britain became more visible with the Industrial Revolution, when industrial workers needed strong, cheap footwear. Men and women wore laced and clasped clogs respectively, the fastening clasps being of engraved brass or more commonly steel. The heyday of the clog in Britain was between the s and s and, although traditionally associated with Lancashire , they were worn all over the country, not just in the industrial North of England. In three shiploads of clogs were sent to The Netherlands due to the perceived inferiority of the Dutch clog in wet fields. Note the cast at the toe and the rebate for the leather. Sole of Gibson style English clog by Walkleys of Yorkshire. In the past the English tended to employ Welsh and West Country alder , Scottish birch and Lincolnshire willow for the soles. The traditional method of construction starts with gangs of itinerant woodsmen who would buy a stand of timber for the felling. Logs from larger trees were split; that from smaller coppice wood did not require splitting. The same stock knives were used for shaping with two more pivot knives, the hollower and the gripper bit. The latter is used to cut the rebate to hold the upper. The final operation is to finish the sole perfectly smooth by rasps and short bladed knives. A workman is shown using a small hand adze for finishing pattens with drawknives or possibly stock knives hanging on the wall behind. At the lighter end are various styles of sandals, then through shoe types to industrial, farming and army boots. When cutting either card or metal patterns are used, with the latter the knife makes a clicking sound and the term used is "clicking out". In the 20th century sprung lasts became used allowing whatever leather utilised to be tacked directly to the soles The junction is secured with brass or steel clog welt tacks nailed over narrow strip of leather the welt. Most clogs are finished off with external brass or steel toe tins to protect the toe of the clog when kicking or kneeling. Those on the leather welt strip covering the join of leather and wood are called "inners" and those covering the wooden soles are "outers". Clogs could have either or both. The steel toecap used in safety clogs is generally fitted under the leather and is another item again. Clog-irons have been mentioned above, clogs are also shod horse-shoe shaped rubber or fully soled and heeled with rubber. Woods[edit] Alder was plentiful and cheap; the tree grows next to streams. The wood is easy to work by hand, but not durable in damp conditions. Like elm it needs to be fully immersed in water for it to be durable. It is quite light, and could be cut into a thick sole without adding too much weight. According to Grew and de Neergaard it is "resilient and extremely durable when wet, [and] has been the favourite material for clog-making in England right up to the present day". However being relatively soft, it makes a poor dance clog, where sound is important. Modern machined-beech soles tend to be thinner with a shallower cast the curve to the toe. This is not a problem for factory work, but is a disadvantage for dancing and hill walking. In the former case there is less spring and in the latter case the wearer tends to cantilever off the tip of the toe which gets worn quickly. They were comfortable when standing at machinery all day, indeed the safety toecap made only fits a shallower sole with less "cast". Sycamore is light and hard with a longer grain than beech and wears well. It was the wood of choice in much of Pembrokeshire, where it was worked green. In a s government survey of rural trades and crafts it was stated that the Welsh would pay double for Sycamore. However its use was unknown in many other parts of Wales. Sycamore can be worked wet without being seasoned as it is the most stable of woods, indeed it must be if the traditional carving tools are used, as it dries too hard to be commercially viable, possibly the reason it was little used. If the clogs are only to be used on wooden floors he recommends it, otherwise the better-wearing properties of sycamore win out. Willow is another wood with good resistance to moist conditions. It can be tough and resilient. Lincolnshire willow found favour amongst

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English cloggers, and Willow was also favoured in the Trough of Bowland, but was never widely used in Wales. In a parallel example, Sycamore is a Maple, but Field Maple has far less split resistance, and Norway Maple dries out about as heavy as Beech. Closely related to the willow in the same family, Salicaceae are the poplars, including the Aspen. The Aspen is used for French sabots. Leather[edit] Kip full grain leather was a Water Buffalo hide impregnated with tallow, oils and waxes; it was made in India. Split Kip was split leather and was often used just on the heel the quarters. The presence of wax and oil made the leather hard, and necessitated a heated Half Round Bottom Glazer for shaping over the last. Kip lasts up to 40 years, but is no longer imported. Clog dance Clog dancing should not be confused with Morris dancing, which may be performed in clogs. There is a theory that clogging or clog dancing arose in these industrial textiles mills as a result of the mill workers entertaining themselves by syncopating foot taps with the rhythmic sounds made by the loom shuttles. Clog dancing became a widespread pastime during this period in England. During the nineteenth century, competitions were held, and professional clog dancers performed in the music halls. Clog dancing is a continuing tradition in Wales. Trivia[edit] The Cloggies was a long running cartoon strip satirising Northerners. The cartoon popularised the existing use of cloggie to refer to people from the Northern industrial areas, particularly Lancashire. Clog fighting and its associated betting by spectators was illegal. It is all up and down fighting here. They fought quite naked, excepting their clogs. When one has the other down on the ground he first endeavors to choke him by squeezing his throat, then he kicks him on the head with his clogs. Sometimes they are very severely injured. The most probably explanation is that if dead his clogs could be "popped" or pawned, though some sources allow for the possibility that "pop" may come from "to pop off" or "to pop off the hooks", both meaning to die. Clogs are at their best in extremes of temperature or water and the all-wooden Dutch clog was clearly inferior to our own when used in wet fields because it leaked. The hook is engaged into an eye in the work bench and allows the workman to exert great force when required.

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