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**Appaltappers – Appalachian Clogging Group**  
**Bashley, New Forest.**  
**Written By Jenny Pearce**

Have you been engrossed in TV's Strictly Come Dancing? Want to get fit in 2009 and have fun in the process. Have you heard about Appalachian dancing or 'clogging' as it is commonly known in America?

Appalachian dancing originated in the Appalachian mountains of North America and derived from English, Irish and Scottish step dancing. The pulsating clogging rhythms come from the hard soles shoes fitted with Appalachian 'jingle' taps that click as the feet hit the ground. Appalachian dancing can be performed to traditional country and Bluegrass music or as is the case of the Appaltappers group at Bashley Village Hall, it can also be danced to modern music.

The Bashley Appaltappers is run by experienced teacher Yvonne Cox with her husband Nigel. She has been dancing since she was 8 and was a professional dancer before she married. Yvonne has been teaching Appalachian dancing for 11 years. Her infectious enthusiasm for the dance and her explicit teaching made my introduction to the style very enjoyable. Whilst the Bashley Appaltappers are apparently the only club in the UK who dance to contemporary music, the style is very popular in Germany and the United States and a quick search on 'You Tube' will provide numerous videos of the very slick performance groups in other parts of the world.

Yvonne has taught in New York and regularly asked to teach in Germany at the annual European clog convention, as well as other special international dances, so I knew I would be in good hands when nervously attending my very first lesson. Yvonne soon put my mind at ease and ran through a couple of basic steps, ensuring everyone in the class had it mastered before moving on. A few experienced dancers had joined in to help, ensuring that wherever you stood in the class you always had someone experienced to follow. To start with, it is not necessary to have any special shoes, just a hard soled, smooth shoe will do fine. The clogging style is similar to tap dancing, but has more attitude and is less 'frilly' in my opinion, making it much more suited to both sexes. So it wasn't long before we all had a few basic steps to dance through a whole tune – song of choice – Queen's Radio Gaga!

Unlike most forms of dance, you don't need a partner, so if you do go wrong, it doesn't matter. Simply pick up the steps whenever you can. Once you know the steps, you don't even have to remember a routine, as every step is called by the instructor during the dance. The experienced dancers gave us a short demonstration and to see them all dance in a line in unison is very awe-inspiring and for me, rather reminiscent of the Riverdance troupe.

Appalachian dancing is fun for all, whatever your age, ability or gender. Why not give it a try? Hopefully contemporary Appalachian dancing will grow in this country and it would be wonderful to see it develop to the scale that it has in America and Germany. Who knows – if the demand is there, perhaps the next class might develop in Poole or Bournemouth? In the meantime, you can visit Yvonne's friendly Appaltappers classes at Bashley Village Hall. Beginners classes are Fridays 7pm-8pm and Easy Intermediate/ Intermediate on Thursdays 6pm – 7:30pm and 7:30pm – 9pm respectively.

For further information visit the Appaltappers website at: <http://AppalTappers.com> or telephone Yvonne or Nigel on 087 087 46 551.