

S I F D
NEWS SHEET

February 1957

Chairman: H. J. Price, Esq.

Hon. Secretary: Miss M. J. LeFort

Hon. Editor: J. Ungar, Esq.

EDITORIAL.

Compared with last month's bumper issue, this edition of our Newssheet may seem puny in size, but I hope you will enjoy it even more, because at last it looks as if the constant cry for more contributions is being answered. Let us hope that this month's "crop" is the forerunner of a veritable avalanche of material to be put in future numbers of our Journal!

From one quarter there is however still only silence, and that is from our committees! Ordinary members of the Society may well ask themselves what does the committee do all the year round, and what do the various subcommittees get up to? Let us voice the hope, - and hope springs eternal! - that in all future issues of Newssheet we shall see accounts of the doings of our elected "governing body" and its offshoots!

We have now got this first month of the New Year of 1957 behind us, and the proud number 10 is quite justified in sitting on our cover "in state"! As I pointed out last month, we have completed 10 years of activity, and have started this calendar year off with several points in our favour:

i. We have more than covered ourselves on the financial side of "See how they dance", having this time put on two shows on the same day...

ii. We have started this 32nd term of classes, including some classes which are again a new departure for us, namely, those run by our charming new friends from the Phillipines Embassy...

iii. Our demonstration bookings are once more promising to be more than last year, and Margery can now call on not only the usual team, but also the "Iberia Spanish group and the Hungarian group..."

and iv. We must not forget that as announced in last month's Newssheet, our first book of dances has been published!!!

So with such encouraging prospects let us look forward with greater confidence to this year which still lies ahead of us, and while enjoying ourselves, let us make our Society bigger and better than ever!

The Editor.

The following review appeared in the January 1957 issue of The Dancing Times:

"SEE HOW THEY DANCE" - The Society for International Folk Dancing's annual presentation of See How They Dance on December 1st at the Royal Albert Hall was far better than their earlier efforts. The various groups have worked to perfect each item, so that step, formation and pattern are clear, characteristics become evident and the dancers appear relaxed and confident.

Foremost came the Beaux of London City with their excellent interpretation of the North Walbottle Rapper Sword Dance. Not only was it beautifully shaped and finished, but their Leader and his Lady were inspired comics, whose by-play, comment and participation in the final intricate weaving held attention from beginning to end. The three dances contributed by the Manx Folk Dance Society were of particular interest because, apart from the wonderful Dirk Dance, they are so little known. Their predominant features are the light, graceful carriage of the dancers, the spaciousness of their movements and extreme musicality.

Eight charming girls from the Philippines Embassy danced first a graceful procession beating coconut shells and then the fascinating Tinikling. It represents Herons trying to escape from a bamboo trap. It is a dance requiring great skill and speed and was danced with real grace. Another dance requiring skill, was the tremendously powerful Atilogwu, contributed by the Nigerian, Augustine Ench, a primitive outburst of energy, that made much of what followed seem tame.

Performances such as these will contribute greatly to an understanding of the people whose dances are shown. But it must be noted, that several groups are now looking only to the spectacular side, and in seeking to gain applause are losing what is their native heritage. - JOAN LAWSON

Thank you Dancing Times, and thank you Joan Lawson. - All our hardworked members will be gratified to read the first paragraph, and I am sure the powers that be will take the final note of caution to heart! Ed.-

Extract from 'OVER THE HILLS' The Magazine of the Holiday Fellowship. Volume 2 Number 1 Christmas, 1956. Page 9. - obtained by R.C.W. Beckford

TOM, DICK AND HARRY AT THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

"The Hall filled quickly again and the display commenced with a dozen or more girls, gaily dressed in various National costumes, walking on to the stage and forming a colourful background. There were to be dances from many countries, and an informal note was immediately struck by the Austrian dancers, the men in white shirts and leather shorts, performing some very jolly dances. They were succeeded by some Spaniards, whose very different style of dancing with swirling body movements and dexterous footwork, accompanied by castanets, made a striking contrast, still more emphasised by the men's black and white attire. The scene changed rapidly from Spain to Estonia and thence to Hungary. Again the simple but pleasing dances from Northern Europe contrasted with the more sophisticated and precise movements of the Czardas - the Hungarians, their men with small black jack boots and their women with red, displaying a marked discipline. Their dancing, with its proud, processional air, made some of us think of the gallant way some of their compatriots were even then showing their determination to have their freedom. Two more light Estonian dances followed, one with mock snuff-box flourishes, and then a dance from Portugal introduced a rhythmic wave pattern, capturing for us memories of the seashore.

Sweden was represented notably by two pairs of lads in some challenging, sparring, hair-pulling and face-slapping figures, and by some mixed couples in a "flirting" dance. The latter excited a photographer, who flashed repeatedly. And so back to Southern Spain - con brico e energico - the men juggling with their sombreros and spinning themselves, while their partners flaunted their polka-dot ruched skirts most fascinatingly."

(Thank you Tom, Dick and Harry! And for the two photographs which accompanied this review! this certainly encouraging and gratifying to hear that our efforts are so appreciated! Also we like to know now other people see us! Editor)

An English traveller of 1910 in the Balkans had this to say:

We now found ourselves gazing upon a scene, once viewed, never to be forgotten. I have seen many weird scenes, but never one more barbarous and gorgeous. The whole oblong courtyard below us was filled to overflowing with the glittering figures of men and women, and amidst the babel of noise there arose a wailing chant. Woman after woman, girl after girl took up the melancholy wail. (I cannot, even by the wildest stretch of imagination, call it singing.) Now and then a man would join in for a few moments, only to resign in favour of the gentler sex after a short effort. It really was the most hideous attempt at music that one could imagine. Presently, as we looked more closely, we perceived that the apparently ceaseless movement had a definite object. A circle,

principally of women, was being formed, and was slowly moving anti-clockwise, still keeping up the intolerable wailing. This we soon recognised as the commencement of the Serb dance, the kollo, the centre of the circle thus formed being solid, principally of men, drinking and shouting and becoming every minute slowly but surely more noisily drunk. They were quite a study in themselves. What wild-looking types they were, with their harsh throats bellowing coarse speech, their bare necks and chests and flushed brown faces. Now and then one would suffer his hand to be saluted to some splendid female and then fall upon the neck of some male friend, as is the custom amongst the votaries of Bacchus all the world over, sharing the same bottle until it had been ascertained by every known means that it was really and truly empty.

One man produced a hand-made wooden whistle, double pipes on one thick stem, and commenced to pipe forth an endless attempt at a tune, and almost instantly the wailing circle of shufflers commenced to dance. Their attempts to trip the light fantastic step were most interesting and the earnestness displayed much to be commended. Looking closely, we were able at last to make out a recognised step: it was a kind of three-step run, mark time and back a step, then forward again; men and women howled in unison, shuffling round the circle. Now and then, a half-tipsy man would lurch through the ring, breaking the joined hands. Another man produced a local apology for a mandoline and began to jingle forth a tuneless melody that set the men in his immediate vicinity marking time like the rest. The bedrooms of the han opened on to the balcony, which became crowded with the same folk, all eagerly watching the brilliant scene below; in fact the air soon became positively and startlingly oppressive. We stood it as long as we could, for the spectacle held us enchanted, and then determined reluctantly to make our way out, pushing and shoving through the gorgeous merry throng till, to our relief, we gained the open street and could breathe in freedom again.

.....We returned to the hotel for tea, after enjoying a most enchanting afternoon, to talk and marvel over the fact that such a purely savage folk should exist today so near and yet so far from what we call our modern civilisation.

(the place referred to is Sarajevo)

from "My Balkan Tour" by Roy Trevor, published 1910

found and contributed to Newssheet
by Mary Saunders.

BOOK REVIEW

A Selection of European Folk Dances - Published by the Society for
International Folk Dancing, 1956. pages 5/- (12 or more
copies at 4/- each)

The introduction to this admirable little book of dances from ten European countries stresses two important points. It

makes it clear that dances cannot be learnt from the printed work - although this is useful as a reminder - live performance being the only satisfactory way of getting into the true spirit of any dance. This use of the infinite variety leads on to the next point, when readers are reminded of the infinite variety in dances. There are even many versions of the same dance to be found in one region. Dancing is a live art and conformity suggests something static.

The descriptions of the dances are clear and easy to follow despite the fact that there are no diagrams or illustrations. The greatest difficulty of interpretation comes in the basic steps where the rhythm is not always clearly shown.

The melody of each dance is given above the dance description which is written under the heading of musical bars. To teachers the great asset of this book will lie in the fact that each of the nineteen dances described are recorded on five gramophone records and the address is given as to where these may be bought.

The Society is to be congratulated on giving more information about well known dances to the public.

Muriel Webster
Anstey College of Physical Education

(Ed: This review will also appear in Physical Recreation, the journal of the Control Council for Physical Recreation.)

NOTES AND NEWS

EFDS programme for February 1957. - Extract from the Spring Fixture Card

Fridays, Feb. 1st and 22nd, 7-10 p.m. - Square dancing
Caller: Douglas Kennedy

Saturdays, Feb. 2nd, 16th, 23rd - Square dancing
Doors: 6.15 members 2nd : Michael Bell
 6.35 others 15th & 23rd: John Armstrong

Saturday, Feb. 9th - Country Dances

For further details application should be made to Cecil Sharp House.

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The EFDS TUESDAY MUSIC CLUB

This club, run by our friends at Cecil Sharp House, commenced on Jan. 22nd and anyone interested should write to the House Secretary, Cecil Sharp House, 2, Regents Park Road, London, N.W.1.

There is also a Dance Club on Tuesdays, held after the Music Club, and mid-week dances on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

THE DEMONSTRATIONS SECRETARY WRITES:

The demonstration on Tuesday 13th December for the Old Peoples Club was rather handicapped by the non-appearance of our musician. After some delay the organizer of the Club, who had played in the past for the Y.H.A. group, sent her daughter home for her music. The repertoire had to be limited to the things for which she had music. I was assured that the old people loved every minute of it, but I felt that we couldn't very well charge even nominal expenses. Bob Symes was deputizing for me, (as it was a Tuesday and a Kolo class night, therefore the team was chosen from non Kolo dancers,) and I am very grateful that he managed to carry it off so well under trying circumstances. My sympathy and thanks, too, to the rest of the team.

The course at Bisham Abbey was, from our point of view, very successful and very enjoyable. We had twenty-two very enthusiastic students, some with quite a bit of experience in folk dancing, but also four of five beginners. They were all so keen that we worked for seven and a half hours the first day, instead of the stipulated four to six hours, and each succeeding day we were well over the scheduled time. (I wore through one pair of shoes completely.) We taught seventeen of the dances from our newly published book, and Ken taught three or four Kolos. These latter were very popular with the more experienced dancers, but some of the others found the rhythms difficult at first. We were asked to give a short demonstration at the New Year's Eve Party and the whole class took part: half dancing Kreutz Konig and the rest doing Karapyet. We even got the other students from the Judo course to join in some of the simple dances, which they all seemed to enjoy. I felt that all the work that we put into these four days was very worth while. The dances will be passed on by some of the teachers who attended the course to their school children, so we paid particular attention to style. We acquired one new out-of-town member, and two others are hoping to join a new group which is started in Newcastle. We sold twenty copies of our book. It was a good beginning, anyway, and I hope that we shall be able to continue to help spread our membership outside the London area.

The Swedish team were invited by the E.F.D.S.S. to take part in their Albert Hall Festival on Friday, 11th January, in the presence of H.R.H. Princess Margaret. We had a quick rehearsal of Skralat in the interval, and the actual performance went without a

hitch. I think we all felt more relaxed than at our own Albert Hall show. I expect that elsewhere in the newssheet there will be an account of the whole show. I will only say that I thought the chorus items were excellent and I enjoyed every moment of the Macedonian team's dancing.

On Saturday, 12th January, a team of four couples went to the Indian Students' Association at 41, Fitzroy Square, where we did a programme of three items of fifteen minutes each: Scandinavian, Central European, and Southern European. These were all very well received. There was some Israeli and Cypriot dancing in the programme. The latter included a very intriguing dance for solo male dancer, which I should like to see again. Many thanks to all members of the teams for their support, and especially to Dorothy Weir, who transported the costumes, and to Ken and Mourie for their invaluable support at Bisham Abbey.

MARGERY LATHAM.

FUTURE DEMONSTRATIONS

- Jan. 19th. Old People's Club, Toc H, Camberwell.
- 22nd. Maudsley Hospital.
- Feb. 2nd. Swedish evening at King's Hall Community Centre, N.W.10.
- 19th. Bethlem Hospital.
- 23rd. C.C.F.R. Tunbridge Wells.

GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

The following records of interest can be obtained from "William Concerts, Ltd.," 157 Nottinghill Gate, London, W.11 (Tel. PRK 7367)-

Long-playing 33 r.p.m. - 7 inch: "Chant du Monde" Price 21/-
Performed by native singers and musicians

		<u>Number</u>
Africa	Cameroons: Monangue & His African Ensemble.....	LDY 4027
"	Guinea; Casamance: Keita Fodeba.....	LDY 4048
"	Guinea; Dahomey, Niger: ".....	LDY 4049
Argentine	Songs sung by Leda & Maria Chango Orchestra.....	LDY 4021
Basque	Songs and Dances: Chovale Basque - Oldarra P. Oyhamburie.....	LDY 4029
Brazil	Songs orch. by Jose Siqueira: Alice Ribeiro with Orch.	LDY 4026
Bulgaria	Songs and Dances. Ensemble Philippe Koutev, etc. 9awarded Grand Prix du Disque 1955)	LDY 4030
China	Mongolia: Songs of the Chinese Minorities	LDY 4039
"	Songs and Dances.....	LDY 4040

Hungary	"L'ame Tzigane" Lukaks (cymbalum)	
"	Radio Hungary Orch.	LDY 4009
"	Violin Music: Hungarian Folklore Orch.	LDY 4008
	Songs and Dances, Popular State	
	Ensembles	LDY 4038
Rumania	Dances, Orch. of popular Rumanian	
	Instruments	LDY 4028
Russia	Popular Songs, Red Army Choir	LDY 4055
"	Dances: Accordeonists of the	
	Moyseyev Group	LDY 4051
Spain	13 popular songs sung by	
	Germaine Montero	LDY 4006
Viet-Nam	Songs and Dances, Soloists &	
	Popular Ensemble ..	LDY 4046

Long-playing 33 r.p.m. - 10 inch: "Chant du Monde" Price 38/6

Bulgaria	19 Songs & Dances: Philippe Koutev	
	Ensemble	LD 8131
Spain	Guitar Flamenco	LD 4045
Hungary	11 Songs from Tzigana, Hungarian	
	Folklore orch.	LD 4002

In addition to the above list, I understand that some Israeli records are being imported from Tel-Aviv - mainly a mixture of folk and popular songs.

KEN WARD

DECORUM - WITH A DASH

The Festival presented by the English Folk Dance and Song Society in the Royal Albert Hall, in the presence of their gracious patron, H.R.H. The Princess Margaret, was considerably enlivened by the visiting Macedonian team, and, by the superlative clog dancing of Jackie Toaduff. The Society's contribution, "SKRALAT" was sympathetically received, but possibly because the audience was quite unaware of either its nationality or significance, it failed to grip attention, if one might be permitted a small quibble, the audience could hardly be aware of the separate entity of the S. I. F. D. A lay reader of the handsomely-tooled and expensive programme could be forgiven for concluding that our Society - not mentioned among the guest contributors - was merely a branch, albeit a somewhat exotic one, of the E. F. D. S. S.

Since this was my first view of an English Folk Dance Festival, and since, over the years, I had heard this show compared, production-wise, more than favorably with our international festivals, I was rather more interested in this aspect of affairs than in its aesthetic merits or demerits.

Certainly one must tip one's hat to the producers, Mr. Douglas Kennedy and Miss Marjorie Penn, for the general slickness and immaculate timing of the show: it began promptly at 7.30 p.m. and finished dead on 10 p.m., and there were no awkward lacunae between items. Other favorable impressions were occasioned by the smooth working of the lighting plot - due, in part, I under-

stand to special lighting rehearsals, a practice we must certainly adopt - the effective use of a central staircase from stage to arena, and the almost professional musicianship of the small folk dance band on stage. I was much less enamoured of the brass band whose presence I felt to be somewhat incongruous - however that may be simply due to a lifelong prejudice against brass bands of whatever calibre, and I use the word "calibre" advisedly!

As far as the actual dancing was concerned, I have already referred to the visiting Macedonians who, especially when accompanied by some fierce, primitive and exciting drumming, really lifted the show above a rather decorous if not pedestrian level. The same might be said of Toaduff's contribution. The young people's dances, "Cumberland Square Eight" "Flowers of Edinburgh" and such were greeted with tremendous applause in which one detected a partisan note from the massed Mums and Dads - natural enough and fun too.

An unusual note was struck - if that is the right metaphor - by three Belgian flag-wavers, acrobatic gentlemen whose activities I found quite refreshing in these grey days when any form of jingoism is definitely passe, if not un-American.

Unfortunately I missed seeing the "Garland Dance" specially arranged in honour of the Princess but I understand that it was very effective and most attractive. The visiting Welsh team danced well enough but with little or no fire. The balance of the programme was provided by Morris, Sword dances and items from Massed Dancers from London and the Provinces,; and a bearded gentleman, surrounded by a guitar and massed children, contributed a couple of folk songs.

JOHN FRASER

STOP PRESS!!!

Jill Weston writes from Canada: . . . I do appreciate all the News Sheets, etc., and wonder how the show went off. . . Jim and Jean Harding became proud parents of a baby boy. . . Since writing last, I have come in contact with quite a few Slovaks, Hungarians and Poles, and from these we may be able to increase the group. . . At a Slovak wedding. . . the bride danced a dance with the principal male guests, and her father with the principal ladies, - everyone else joining in as they wished, - to Polish, Hungarian and Slovak music. . . (It is good to hear from our members, now abroad, especially so many points of interest! Good luck Jill, and hope to hear from you again soon! Ed.)

Mazowsze: Another State Dance Company is now performing at the Stoll Theatre, this time the Mazowsze, from Poland, There have been excellent Press notices of this show, so presumably many of our members will go to see it?! Can we please have some of your impressions for the next News Sheet!

On the air: The following letter was received by the Secretary from the B.B.C.: "I have been given your address by the B.B.C.

Facilities Unit, and I hope that my request will not inconvenience you in any way. -Our Hebrew Service broadcast an eye-witness report on your Festival which was held at the Albert Hall on 1.12.56. You will remember that the festival opened with the Israeli "Water Dance" in which everyone participated. -One of our listeners,...of Kiryath-Hayim, Israel, who heard the programme, has since written to us expressing his enjoyment of it. -I think an excerpt from his letter will best help to explain his request: "...As an explorer and collector of Jewish and Israeli folk dances I was very glad to hear that Israeli folk dances were danced in such a distinguished festival. May I ask you to put me in touch with the Society which organise the festival, and if possible get me a programme of it, any literature and press cuttings about the festival, especially those mentioning the Israeli dances! -I wonder whether you could deal directly with this request, or else, send me the information required so that I can forward it...Thanking you, Yrs sincerely, Signed, B. B. C., N. Kivity, Programme Assistant, Hebrew Section." (We are most impressed and flattered that the B. B. C. have also put us "on the air" and also to have attracted such flattering attention from so far away! Ed.)

1957

FEBRUARY PROGRAMME

Motto: Let's dance and enjoy it!

Classes and Dances at Carlyle Girls' School,
Hortensia Road, Chelsea, S.W.10.

Time: 7.30 - 9.30 p.m. Music by Mme. Barbara Duleba

Tuesdays: 5th Feb. Balkan Class by Phillip Thornton
12th Feb. Austrian Class by Heinz & Ilse Striegel
19th Feb. Advanced Balkan Class by Phillip Thornton
26th Feb. General Class by Margery Latham

Wednesdays: 6th Feb. General Class by Joan Richardson
M.C. May Hendrie
13th Feb. Social Dance M.C. Simon Guest
20th Feb. Estonian Class by Aili Eistraat M.C. Jack
Richardson
27th Feb. Estonian Class by Aili Eistraat M.C. Peter
Heath

Fridays: 1st Feb. Basque Class by Peter Warwick
8th Feb. Portuguese Class by Chas. Steventon } These two
15th Feb. French Class } classes have
22nd Feb. French Class } now been interchanged.-

Dances at Inns of Court Mission, Drury Lane, W.C.2.

Time: 6.30 - 9.30 p.m. Music by Mourie Pfeffer

Sundays: 3rd Feb. M.C. Mourie Pfeffer
10th Feb. M.C. Roly Minton
17th Feb. M.C. Len Sawyer

Dance at Cecil Sharp House, 2, Regent Park Road, N.W.1.

Time: 6.30 - 9.30 p.m. Music by The Wallace Collection

Sunday: 24th Feb. M.C. John Ungar

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