

S I F D  
NEWS SHEET

April 1957

Journal of the Society for International Folk Dancing

Chairman: H.J. Price Esq.

Hon. Secretary: Miss M.J. LeFort

Hon. Editor: J. Ungar Esq.

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EDITORIAL

Another month has passed with its record of dancing and demonstrations, and more patient, and mainly unsung, work by Committee members, teachers and others. One rather interesting class was that on Friday, 15th March, when Aili, Heinz and yours truly combined to provide a mixed class, during the course of which 2 Estonian, 2 Hungarian and some 5 Austrian dances were tackled and greatly enjoyed by a fair-sized assembly of enthusiasts.

The attendance figures at classes and at Sunday dances still give cause for some concern, and point once again to the necessity for increasing our membership. Here is a good chance, for all those members who have kept in the background - and for those who have not - to persuade all their friends that the only way to enjoy life is by joining the SIFD!

We are, of course, always on the lookout for more information about dances and folklore, as well as for more and better costume materials, but in our zeal we should not forget to proceed with a certain amount of caution in establishing contacts: we must remember that the SIFD has to remain strictly non-political! There are numerous persons and various bodies who may or may not know more about folklore than we do, but would love to capture the SIFD for their own use - so let us steer clear of any such entanglements.

In April there is somewhat less activity by the Society, due of course to the Easter holidays, but before they commence do not forget the end-of-term party at Carlyle School on the 12th - bring costume, as well as eatables, etc.!!!

So may I wish you all a happy Easter, and may we all continue to enjoy the many new and older dances in our repertoire! Yours truly,

The Editor.



WE ARE TEN. By Marie Le Fort.

Quote from the first set of minutes, "A meeting of the International Folk Dance Group was held at the Centre, Thurs. 14th Feb, 1945". From these minutes one gathers the usual problems were attacked: finding a suitable hall, a contact with Spanish Dancers, members of the group should dance in costume at Cecil Sharp House, and a report that "Mr. D. Kennedy's opinion is that we should be wary of launching a big organisation if we have not the personnel to carry it out".

At the time these latter words were very sensible, but we have been fortunate to have had the personnel and although our membership is not very large our Society has certainly made its name a by-word in the community of Folk Dancing.

Next I come to a General Meeting of approx. 35 interested people held at Bloomsbury House 6th June. A provisional committee was formed which included the name of Mary Butterworth; later in July, Eva Grant is teamed up. These two members were responsible for the teaching and when I think of the material they had then and what we can now draw upon, I realise more than ever how hard they worked.

The above were a group of folk paving the way for the Society proper, which came into being Sunday, 2nd Feb, 1947. By this time Bert Price had become interested; also from these minutes I read 4 lists of members to be used for Demonstrations:

- List 1. To be used for Demos;
- " 2. Can be used for some dances only;
- " 3. To be encouraged as nearing standard;
- " 4. To be encouraged - showing signs of development.

(I was very thrilled to find my own name in the last group).

The first G.M. held 4th June 1947: 30 present. By this time Bert Price was Treasurer and at this meeting Irene Weller (now Fyffe) and myself were elected on Committee. At the meeting of July 25th, 1947, Henry Schuster proposed the word Society to be removed from the title - after much discussion the name was changed to "THE SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING".

At the A.G.M. 17th Sept., 1948, Bert re-elected Treasurer; myself elected Secretary; Irene, Demo. Sec.; Mary and Eva, teachers.

All this time members such as Margery Latham, Mourrie Pfeffer, Jack Richardson, David Rasbash and many more were all working hard, the Society was still suffering from growing pains, but it was not until Committee meeting 4th Jan., 1948, that we read "The Society had

another letter from Jack Richardson". One thing we could always be certain about, Jack would always keep an eye on us. Another good friend was met about this time, Eugene Jablonski from U.S.A. I remember him teaching us the first Hopak, some of us met at the Inns of Court Sunday afternoons, and we did really have to work hard to learn this dance in the short space of time he could stay with us, but I am sure we all felt very pleased with ourselves. He liked us so much, he made many excuses to pay us return visits. Aili Eistrat also came into the picture about this time. I remember going to the first class - another Sunday afternoon at Inns of Court. We all tried so hard to copy the footwork, we could not converse and the only thing Aili could say was "like a puss-cat"; she was trying to tell us not to lift our feet so high. When we tried to ask about music for the dances we were learning, the musician just tapped his head. Our next problem was to find a member who could write the music as it was played. This we were fortunate to do, and you know only too well what has been done since in this field. Here was one example of our "Aims and Objects" to make friends with peoples of other nations. We all know Aili can teach us a dance in our own language now, and we are ever grateful for her help.

About Nov. 1948, we started publishing our first 2 copies of Music and Notations, Meitschi Putz di and Kujawiak; also the new Constitution was being drafted. After the meeting of Jan. 1945, Mary asked if Philip Thornton could come along to extra classes, as she felt we were not concentrating on his dances sufficiently. From recent showing of Philip's dances, there is no lack of concentration these days. More notes, that the Secretary received letters from Jack - suggesting, protesting, complaining. Good old Jack, he never let up, and would not allow others to do so either.

I suppose I could go on like this for pages and pages, but I expect it would bore most folk, as to the majority most of these pioneers are just names, but for me it brings back happy memories. I remember only too well the first dance I went to at C.S.H. I had been coaching some swimmers in the morning, afternoon was spent in dancing at one of Jack McConachie's famous parties for the Armed Forces, and John Armstrong asked some of us if we would like to go to a dance in the evening. I was feeling a little tired but decided to go. I sat in a dream at first and then was asked to dance - I could not understand the name of the dance, but my partner apologised before we started, saying he could not yodel very well - can you imagine my thoughts. I enjoyed myself so much, I became a member there and then. It was not only the dancing that captivated me, but one short sentence on the Membership form that made me want to become a member, "AIMS AND OBJECTS" - To promote international understanding and goodwill through the universal understanding of the dance". I must say I have enjoyed watching the Group's progress and meeting so many grand people. By the way, the first dance was "Weggis", and



we did used to yodel.

In conclusion I would like to tell members the Committee have asked Mary Butterworth, Eva Grant, Irene Fyffe and Aili Eistrat if they would accept Honorary Membership. We are waiting to hear from Eva, who is in America, and the others are pleased to accept.

I know there are many more members who have helped to push us along. Joan Richardson, Joan Eames, Dr. Cyriax and others who are still with us, and I hope they continue to stay, but I also look forward to newer members to keep the Society's flag ever flying.

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GRAMOPHONE RECORDS:

We have pleasure in announcing that a further five gramophone records have now been issued by the Society. Three of these, Nos. 6, 7 and 8, are recorded by the Wallace Collection band, well-known to all of us from Cecil Sharp House, and the last two by the Austrian accordionist, Herr Maier, who played for the Austrian team at the last Albert Hall show.

Music and instructions for the dances are in course of preparation, and will be included with the records as soon as they are available. Meanwhile we are asking purchasers to let us have a stamped, addressed envelope, if they obtain the records before the instructions are ready, so that copies can be forwarded to them, when available.

- Record 1 (KARAPYET (Russia) NEAPOLITAN TARANTELLA (Italy)  
(WRONA GAPA (Poland) MEITSCHI PUTZ-DI (Switzerland))
- Record 2 (KIIGADI KAAGADI (Estonia) KREUZ KOENIG (Germany)  
(FYRTUR (Germany) HAKKE TOONE (Holland))
- Record 3 (SCHOTTISCHE (Sweden) SNURREBOCKEN (Sweden)  
(JOKSU POLKA (Estonia) SADALA POLKA (Estonia))
- Record 4 (GAMMEL REINLANDER (Norway)  
(SANFTENBERGER (Germany) KLEINER SCHOTTISCHE (Germany))
- Record 5 (KOHANOCKKA (Russia) FYRMANNADANS (Sweden)  
(DIE WOAF (Austria) SCHWARZWALDER MAZURKA (Germany))
- Record 6 (FJALLNAS POLSKA (Sweden) VIRU VALS (Estonia)  
(SCHOTTISCHE (Denmark) BOUREE POURSUITE (France))
- Record 7 (KOLOMEYKA (Carpathia)  
(HOPAK (Ukraine) KOKOTEK (Poland))

Record 8 (FYRMANNA SCHOTTISCHE (Sweden) TARANTELLA (Sicily)  
(GAMBOLINER HOLZSCHUHTANZ (Germany) LAURA (Poland)

Record 9 (KREUZ POLKA HAXENSCHMEISSER)  
(HIATAMADL BOARISCHER) (Austria)

Record 10 (WALDJAGER SIEBENSCHRITT)  
(STOTTERA PASCHER VEITSCHER MASUR) (Austria)

Records can be obtained from Marie LeFort, Ken Ward, Margery Latham and Jack Richardson, or direct from Recorded Sound Ltd., the latter's address being: 27-31 Bryanston Street, London, W.1.

Since the earlier records were issued there has been a marked increase in the price of materials, and purchase tax was raised by sixpence over a year ago; in consequence we must regretfully increase prices of the records as from 1st April 1957 to 7/6 per record. For orders by post, from Messrs Recorded Sound Ltd., it will be necessary to make an additional charge of 3/10d for one to four records, plus 2d for each additional record.

We would also remind you of our first book: "A Selection of European Folk Dances" which gives music and instructions for the first 19 dances of the first 5 records. Available at 5/- per copy, post free, or 4/- per copy for orders of 12 or more. A second volume, covering the dances included in the latest issue of records, is being prepared.

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SWEDEN AND ITS TRADITIONS by V. Cyriax.

Sweden is a large country, some 1400 miles in length, spreading well inside the Arctic circle. The scenery to be found in this land, varies from the flat countryside of the Southern parts, through lakes, forests and rivers, to the mountains of the North. Sweden's small population of some seven and a half million, busies itself with the glass and china, iron and steel, as well as timber industries, and still finds time for outdoor activities of all kinds during warm summers and cold winters. The far north of the country is in complete darkness for a full six weeks in mid-winter, but as compensation (!?) enjoys six weeks in mid-summer, when the sun never sets!

The building material for houses was mainly wood; in spite of the large amounts of granite to be found, only cathedrals and castles used to be built of stone - no doubt because wood was easier to work, and therefore cheaper.

The many rivers and waterfalls provide the country with practically unlimited sources of power, and the electrification of

railways, and most other industries bear ample witness to this.

The peoples of Norway and Sweden are of the purest Nordic stock, and it has only been in latter years that some admixture of foreign blood has occurred - no doubt the sparseness and poverty of the country did not attract many immigrants.

Swedish history begins rather later than that of most European countries - apart from archeological remains, the first Runic writings date back only to A.D.800.

When some of the more powerful people of olden days found little scope in their Scandinavian homeland, they built themselves ships and sailed abroad. These Vikings were independent, brave, but stiffnecked men, very warlike and often cruel, who ravaged the coastal parts of Europe in the 9th-12th centuries. Their experiences abroad did teach them wisdom, and they held the qualities of honesty and loyalty in great esteem. Their womenfolk were greatly respected, and while the warriors were away fighting, it was the women who looked after things at home, and often as not ruled the homestead.

The more civilised peoples of the Continent suffered much from the Viking raids, and came to believe that the only way to tame this raider was conversion to Christianity. The first missionary in Scandinavia, Ansgar, went there in A.D.830, and later St. David also spread the Gospel in these lands. David, according to legend, being so holy that he hung his gloves on the sunbeams coming through the church windows!....

(Next month: continuing with some historical notes. Ed.)

#### SIFD COMMITTEE NOTICES

At the March meeting of the Committee we were pleased to welcome back Larry Howell in place of Mary Guest.

In response to several requests, a meeting has been arranged later this month with the CCPR, Crydon Youth Centre, Surrey County Council Education Department and others interested, to discuss opening branches in Croydon and Newcastle.

It has been arranged that, provided we will not be under any obligation to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the form of Income Tax, some of our funds are to be placed in a Deposit Account with our bank.

The Costume Sub-committee wishes to draw to the attention of all members the proposal that all costumes be withdrawn from use or

hire during August so that they can be laundered and repaired. Please make sure that you haven't any oddboxes lying about at home and that everything is returned by then.

The Dance Instruction committee is holding regular weekly meetings at Margery's home. Although the Latham Menage refer to these as 'Rock and roll' sessions, the cosy atmosphere seems to be conducive to work and good progress is being made.

Margaret Harris and Jack Krebs attended the meeting to clarify the position of their groups in relation to the SIFD. Both the Hospital and Iberian groups are to receive the official support of the Society and any help which we can give them. We understand that a Polish group is also proposed.

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### HOSTELLING WEEKEND

As there is to be a large demonstration, (non-political) at Hemel Hempstead on June 15th, Saturday, it has been decided to combine a folk-dance weekend with it, at Ivinghoe Hostel. Please give your bookings to Dick Beckford.

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### INTERNATIONAL EISTEDDFOD

The International Eisteddfod at Llangollen will be held this year from July 9-14 inclusive. If the programme follows the pattern of previous years, it is likely that the Folk Song and Dance competitions will all be held on the first day, although items will be given by teams at the evening concerts throughout the festival.

### VISIT TO DENMARK

Dr. Hugh Thurston of Bristol, Editor of the 'Folk Lorient' and erstwhile German teacher in the Society, has written to tell us that he is interested in going to Denmark during the summer. He hopes to contact folk dancers there and he feels that such a trip would be more enjoyable in a group. Any members who might be interested in joining him should write to him at:

Dr. Hugh Thurston,  
Department of Mathematics,  
Bristol University,  
Bristol.



### EFDS SUMMER HOUSE PARTY

The EFDS will hold a Summer House Party at Southampton University from July 27th-August 3rd. There will be instruction in country, square, Morris and sword dancing, folk singing and instrument playing at all grades from beginners to those who feel experienced. The afternoons will be free and some outings will be organised at a small extra charge. Foreign visitors and members of the SIFD will be welcome and the total cost for full board and the course is £10.7.0.

### A LETTER TO THE CHAIRMAN FROM MR. KARMINSKY:

"Please forgive us for not attending your class on March 12th, but unfortunately pressing business prevented me doing so. My firm having been very successful at the previous week's Trade Fair...at the last minute I was requested to complete a few sample models overnight... We were looking forward to meeting you all, and were very disappointed that we could not come. Please forward our apologies to the Society and we will see you without fail on March 26th. Yours sincerely, W. Karminsky"

### NOTES AND NEWS

Our best wishes to Len and Beryl Sawyer, who are sailing for Canada early this month! We are sorry to lose them, but hope that they will meet with lots of good fortune in their new home!

Our apologies for not publishing the names of the originators of the very interesting article on the Schuhplattler! This was, of course, contributed by our Austrian experts, Heinz and Ilse Striegel.

Appeal has been made in that future nuclear power stations should be made to blend into the English landscape, just as castles and forts had been in Saxon times. This will not, we hope, result in gigantic half-timbered houses concealing reactors behind latticed windows and under plastic thatching; nor, we hope, in artfully ruined castles with plastic drawbridges on which we can safely do even a Hopak, as long as we don't fall into the moat, which will probably be used for disposal of radioactive effluents.

"The violin of the Polish Tatra mountaineer" is a new book of Polish music and songs, published by Mr. Edward Shedlak, 433, Hoboken Ave., Jersey City, New Jersey, U.S.A.

Peasant Opera: Dvorak's "The Devil and Kate", a three-act opera, based on folk tunes, was recently produced by the University College, London, Music Society with considerable success.

A ghost was seen recently by a sentry at the Tower of London, on the 403rd anniversary of the death of Lady Jane Grey. After a search-party could find nothing unusual, the Army's comment was, rather characteristically: "The Guardsman is convinced he saw a ghost. The Army says, all right, you say you saw a ghost. Let's leave it at that!"

It is useless to think of the old Romans eating spaghetti - however much we associate this dish with the Italian peninsula. It was long after that the necessary hard wheat was introduced to Italy, though it was probably known long before in China, where it gave rise to the noodle! However, it did get to Europe before Marco Polo, so someone else must have been the great discoverer, and he did not even make millions out of the patent rights!

Harrow Green classes are normally held Mondays and Wednesdays at Trumpington Road School at 7.30 p.m.

EFDSS programme: Saturday dances: Square dancing, April 6th, Michael Bell; April 27th, Maurice Gulpan - Country dancing: April 13th. Doors open 6.15 members, 6.35 others. Admission: Single: Members 2/6d. non-members 3/6d. Double tickets: Members 4/-, non-members 6/-.

#### WHERE DOES THAT ONE COME FROM? by H.C. Calpin

It is not always easy to give a straightforward answer to that simple question, so often heard at classes!

Tracing the individual history of a dance in the Society's repertoire can be as entertaining as the solution of any other "whodunnit" and the result is sometimes equally surprising!

Some people start out with the idea that all "genuine" folk dances are extremely old, and have been danced in the same form for hundreds of years. While this may be very nearly true of many ceremonial dances, especially those which originally had a religious or magical meaning, a glance through old records soon shows that it is not at all true of most social folk dances, in which fashion and change of taste play a big part, which, after all, is very natural.

Social dances are danced for enjoyment, and there is no special virtue in keeping to exactly fixed forms. Each new generation of dancers tends to get a little bored with the tastes of its parents and when Anna returns to the village from a visit to her cousins in town, where she has learnt the latest ballroom hit, or Anton comes



back from the wars with some new steps from foreign parts, then variants are soon likely to appear among the dances favoured in the neighbourhood. Thus many European folk dances exist not in one single form, well-defined and observed, but in a bewildering variety of forms, some of them so different that it is not easy to recognise them as relations.

This natural process of variation, natural process of elimination of older forms, as their popularity wanes, has in some cases - horror of horrors - been replaced by the quite deliberate invention of new "folk-like" dances, which after a while may be thought to be authentic by collectors who do not delve, for one reason or another, deep enough.

(Next month Mr. Calpin will review the German dance, with particular reference to those danced by the SIFD, and bearing in mind his above comments. Our German expert says of this coming article: "The author obviously knows a great deal about the subject. I can only comment that I am sorry most of the German dances we have learnt are of the "newer variety". This is a most interesting piece of enthusiastic research." If you want to find out what the "newer variety" of German dances is, read next month's News Sheet. Ed.)

#### THE DEMONSTRATIONS SECRETARY WRITES...

As you will have seen from the last News Sheet, under "Future Demonstrations", we have been more economical with our dancers this month. This is because these teaching afternoons do not really require a full team, and for the longer distances it helps to keep down expenses: an all-important point!

The hospital demonstration team took over at Bethlem Hospital on Tuesday, Feb.19th; another Kolo night. My thanks to them for their help!

The C.C.P.R. National Dance Party at Tunbridge, on Sat.Feb.23rd, was an occasion for a one-couple team, being also a return visit for us in this district. The children are very keen and quick to learn, and we got through quite a number of dances in our book. Sales of the book, as well as separate sheets of music and instructions were encouraging. Ken Ward and Mourie Pfeffer came with me on this visit, and we all felt that it was a good afternoon's work.

On Thursday, Feb.28th, Ken and I went to Mr. Belcher's school at St. Albans. There is a lively group here, which has been going for some time now; Mr. Belcher brings some of his pupils to our dances at Cecil Sharp House. They are very eager to learn new dances, and have bought a set of Philip Thornton's Balkan records. That was

Ken's part of the job, as he has a natural flair for this very difficult and tricky type of effort. The children certainly put in a good, hard evening's work, and by the end of it had a good, sound bit of basic knowledge. We have promised that we would give them more help later on, when they are ready for it.

The full team went to Greenfields School, South Oxhey, on Sat. March 9th, to a Parents-Teachers-Association evening. This was a great success: we had children, parents and teachers joining in the dances, and there is promise of a permanent folkdance group starting here. Again we sold copies of the book, and gave promises to help all we could.

I have also squeezed in three evenings of teaching for the Girl Guides and Rangers of Islington and Stoke Newington, to help them with the dances, which they are to do at their May Jamboree. This has resulted in a few more sales of our music and instructions, and one or two groups hope to make folk dancing one of their regular activities.

My thanks to the teams, and to Mourie who played for them, also to Ken who worked so hard, particularly with the Kolos.

MARGERY LATHAM.

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Future Demonstrations:

April 16th Cultural Evening at 41, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

May 26th Hackney Old People's Association, Hackney Town Hall.

Hospital team:

April 9th R.National Orthopaedic Hospital, Stanmore.  
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MORE NOTES AND NEWS:

From Mourie: On Feb.2nd 2 couples and a musician went to Waltham to demonstrate some of our dances to members of the Toc H Cripples Club. We danced for a solid half hour and the audience, though small, was very enthusiastic. After an interval, we gave them another 15 minutes, finishing with our usual Hopak. Although our programme was limited by the fact that we only had two couples, we all thoroughly enjoyed it.

From Bob Symes: On January 19th the demo.team made a return visit to the Brixton Toc H Old People's Party. As before, this was arranged through the caretaker at Inns of Court, who is a member of this Toc H group. We danced for three periods of about 25 minutes,



the intervals between our dancing being filled in with games and competitions for the old folk - all of them being used as good excuses for the generous distribution of prizes. One competition was for the first person to give the nationality of any folk dancer's costume: this was won by a lady who said that "fancy pants" was wearing Spanish costume. This sort of evening is hard work, but well worthwhile!

Pat Paice, in Toronto now, sends greetings to all her friends, and tells us of a considerable amount of folk dancing activity to be found in Canada, there being many national, and a number of international groups. Good luck, Patricia, and enjoy yourself!

The Hungarian Dance Group has held two more classes at the Chelsea Community Centre, in March.

Our thanks to Dorothy Weir for kindly volunteering to write up the notes about Committee meetings, and to Penny Leach for her help with the News Sheet.

STOP PRESS:

Surrey Crest

The week-end for which this event is organised is 3rd-5th May. Will people intending to go there give 10/- deposit and their estimated time of arrival at Surrey Crest to Ken Ward.

In April, there will be one Hungarian Class only, on Sunday 14th, at 3 p.m. at the Polish Y.M.C.A.

MONTHLY PROGRAMME: APRIL 1957

Motto: Punctuality is a virtue, and you have more time for fun!

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

Time: 7.30 - 9.30 p.m.

Music: Mme. Barbara Duleba

Members: 1/6d.

Non-members: 2/-.

Tuesdays: April 2nd Balkan Class by Phillip Thornton  
9th Basque Class by Peter Warwick

Wednesdays: April 3rd German Class by Joan Richardson  
M.C. Eric Owden  
~~10th Estonian Class by Aili Distreat~~  
~~M.C. John Hughes~~

Fridays: April 5th Portuguese Class by Charles Steventon  
12th END OF TERM PARTY !!!!!

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

Time: 6.30 - 9.30 p.m.

Music: Mourie Pfeffer

Members: 1/6d. Non-members: 2/-

A.N.D. Others

Sundays: April 7th M.C. Roly Minton  
14th M.C. Mourie Pfeffer  
21st Bank Holiday week-end: NO DANCE

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

Time: 6.30 - 9.30 p.m.

Music: The Wallace Collection

Members: 2/-

Non-members: 3/-

Sunday April 28th M.C. Margery Latham

Iberia Group: Spanish and Portuguese class by Margaret Harris  
Mondays, at 8 p.m., Chelsea Community Centre,  
King's Road, S.W.10.

Polish and Hungarian Groups: Anyone interested contact Margaret  
Harris for Polish, and the Editor for Hungarian.

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