

S. I. F. D.  
NEWS SHEET

MAY 1957

Journal of the Society for International Folk Dancing

Chairman: H.J. Price, Esq. Hon. Sec. Miss M.J. LeFort

Hon. Editor: J. Ungar, Esq.

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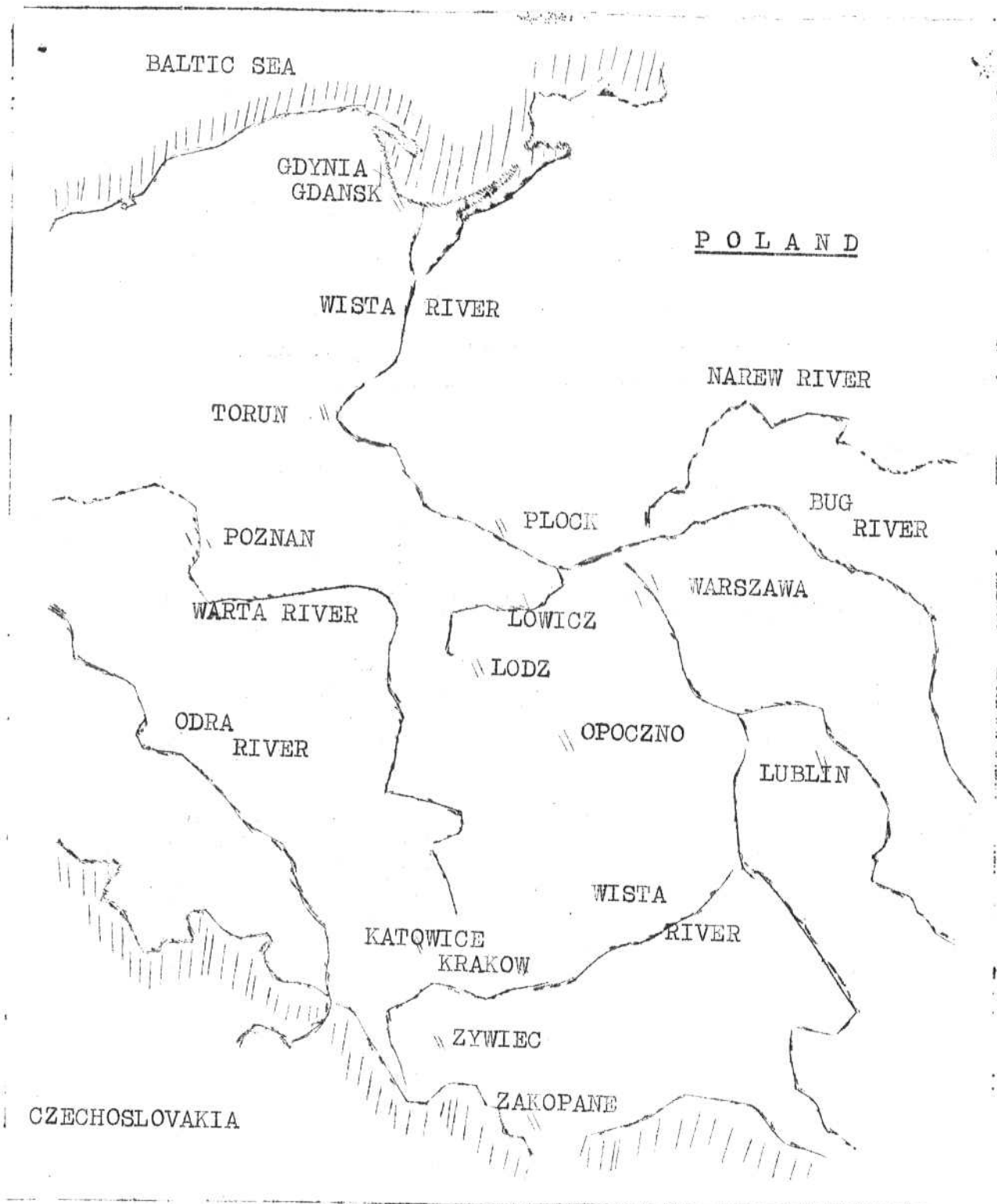
EDITORIAL

The most important event of the coming month is the half-yearly meeting, and it is hoped that it will be attended by many more members than we have lately been accustomed to see at similar events. It should be easy to appreciate the fact that the more people turn up (and early!), the livelier the discussions, and the greater benefit to the Society as a whole. What should make this next gathering particularly interesting is that in the course of reports from the officers of the Society, members should hear further details of the forming of the Croydon and Newcastle branches. This being an entirely new departure for the S.I.F.D. will, it is hoped, prove an important turning point on the upward road of expansion.

It is becoming increasingly obvious to me that these editorials may be regarded by many as unnecessary effusions, but with the increasing quantity of contributions and news of the various groups, branches and teams, I hope that they will become quite unnecessary.

Yours truly,

The Editor.



MAZOWSZE by Kostek Siemaszko

The Mazowze team appeared in London for six weeks and we had opportunity of seeing Polish folk dances, hearing folk songs and

seeing the large variety of costumes, mainly from Central Poland. It would be a good idea to know something about the Group itself.

Shortly after the war, the composer Tadeusz Sygietyński and his wife, the well-known variety artiste, Mira Ziminska, began collecting young talent from the neighbouring villages of the Mazowsze district with the aim of forming a team of folk-dancers and singers for children. The average age was then about twelve to fourteen. All these children came from peasant stock, and were eventually brought to the small town of Karolin, close to Warszawa (Warsaw). A school was organised for these children, so that apart from classes in dancing and music, they also had an elementary schooling, and later on a secondary schooling. By now all members have passed their Matriculation and have their School Certificates. At the same time they had an extensive training in music, instrumentation and dancing, with the opportunity of obtaining the Intermediate Ballet Certificate - from the folk-dance angle.

After three years, they staged their first performance in Warsaw and later on they went to various places abroad to Children's Festivals. The idea of their organisers caught the imagination of the public, and with the growing-up of the team in age and number, it was developed into a full-scale folk-dance ensemble. The organisers managed to get the best available teachers and choreographers for preparing dances and dancers for performances and formed a special team of people to deal with the question of costumes.

Originally this team was interested only in the dances of the Mazowsze region, but later on when they began to visit foreign countries they introduced into their programme certain of the best-known dances from other districts. Music and songs were chosen in such a way as to bring to the surface those songs and tunes which were least known, and in most cases, almost untouched by musicians and classical composers. Originally the solo songs were performed by the girls and boys who brought them from their own villages. Some of these are now performed by other singers as the group has expanded and others have left.

Costumes are kept strictly to originals, although the variety of colour has been obtained by choosing them from

various periods through centuries of development, as the arrangement of colours is continually changing and never remains static. Folk costumes are still in use in many districts and changes are undergone almost every day. The same applies to the dancing, which is very much alive and has a highly temperamental and individual approach characteristic of Poles. New steps and figures are continually developing.

The first dance of the programme chosen for their London visit was Treblanka (Trembling Polka) which has a characteristic trembling movement and is from the Opoczno region. The next item was the suite of three small dances from the Lublin Region: Tancoj Macha (Macha is the favourite drink of the region), Walczyk Lubelski and Oberek Lubelski. Although Oberek is danced almost everywhere in Poland, there are individual approaches to it in every district, e.g. in the way the hands are held. Later on came the Polka Sieradzka (Spindle Polka). This region was very much neglected until recently but now the choreographers and ethnographers are giving it their full attention. At the end of the first part was Krakowiak - or rather, two Krakowiaks. The first was the "Small Krakowiak" and is the real folk-dance version. The other was a ballet on the Krakowiak theme. The music for this Krakowiak was written by Mr. Sygietyński shortly before the war and re-arranged for the company a few years ago. Krakowiak was introduced into the programme as it is one of the best-known Polish dances abroad, and gives the chance to show yet another lovely costume.

After the interval came Kujawiak in which the actual dance was rather short, but which had a long introduction in which were sung characteristic songs. This dance did not come from the Mazowsze Region either, but as it had very characteristic music and costumes, it was a welcome addition to the programme. I must mention here that before almost every dance in Poland the boys tease the girls in song and are answered saucily by the girls - a kind of warming up.

The next item was composed of two dances from the Kurpie district - Powolniak and Zuraw (Heron and Crane dances). The characteristic feature of the dances of this district is the kind of running step occasioned by running in deep sand, as the country is very sandy and boggy. The next dances were from Wielkopolska, the capital of which is Poznań. These were of a humorous nature set to humorous songs and were

shown in order to introduce musical instruments and in particular one of the Polish versions of the bagpipes. The next three dances were from the town of Zywiec, which is well outside the Mazowsze district, in Slask (Silesia). These were introduced to show the only costumes remaining in Poland of the town-folk and to show the dance Chodzony, one of the folk-versions of the Polonez. Next came dances from the Lowicz region. The name 'Lowicz Maiden' was chosen after one of the songs to which they were performed. The last dance was the energetic Oberek and a few bars of Mazur were added as a Finale in order to bring the whole ensemble on stage.

All the dances were in character, but there were certain figures and steps which were under political influence, in order to show that Polish and Russian cultures are much more linked than in actual fact. Although the majority of these additions were recently removed from the programme (in Paris, even the National Anthem was omitted), they still have certain small additions of Russian and also Hungarian steps. Nevertheless, even these additions have been remodelled to bring their character in line with the Polish spirit.

#### HUGH THURSTON'S BOOK REVIEW

In the March-April issue of "The Folklorist", Hugh Thurston has reviewed the Society's "A Selection of European Folk dances" and seems to make rather heavy weather of it. We must, of course, admit to the mistake in "Sanftenberger" and the Publications Committee can only plead an unfortunate case of oversight in the correction.

On the whole, however, the general tenor of Dr. Thurston's review seems to indicate that he did not take too much notice of the introductory part of the book. We hope to publish some further views on the book and on Dr. Thurston's comments from the various people concerned in the production and publication next month.

NOTE: The picture published in last month's issue of the News Sheet was, of course, of a group of our charming friends from the Phillipino Embassy, taken at Porchester Hall last November at the dress rehearsal for the Albert Hall Show. We must apologise for the lack of a caption to this picture. This was due purely to over-eagerness on the part of our printing-room staff in wanting to speed the circulation of the News Sheet.



## RECORD REVIEW

Following on his book review, Dr. Thurston has also briefly reviewed the first five of the Society's records, and we would like to remind all members that, as announced in last month's News Sheet, a further five records are available, including the following dances:

- 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) CAMBOLINER HOLZSCHUHTANZ (Germany)  
(LAURA (Poland))
- Record 9 - (KREUZ POLKA HAXENSCHMEISSER)  
(HIATAMADL BOARISCHER) (Austria)
- Record 10 - (WALDJAGER SIEBENSCHRITT)  
(STOTTERA PASCHER VEITSCHER MASUR) (Austria)

All ten records are available from the Hon. Secretary, Marie LeFort, from Ken Ward, Margery Latham, Jack Richardson, or direct from Recorded Sound, Ltd., at 27-31 Bryanston Street, London W.1. The cost of the records is 7/6 each, with postage and packing 3/10d for one to four records, plus 2d. for each additional record. The book is available at 5/- per copy, or 4/- per copy for orders of twelve or more.

## SWEDEN AND ITS TRADITIONS by V. Cyriax

(Historical notes continued from last month)

Like England, Scandinavia too was ruled in olden times by many small kings. The local people were ruled by the head of the family, these families joined together to form parishes, and the parishes to form counties. Their elected heads not only sat in Parliament, the "Ting", but also elected the King who should "guide the country, see justice done, and keep the peace". Even way back, lawyers were very important people in Sweden. There were Bards also

who were much esteemed, and there were many excellent artisans and craftsmen.

The old records say little of gaiety, other than sporting activities and drinking contests. The people worked hard and a mode of life, more and more civilised, gradually developed, in which the peasant population formed a proud section of the community, important and independent, having very definite rights.

The country was always self sufficient, and its peoples capable, hard working, and well educated.

War with Denmark was an everyday occurrence in the olden days, until the present frontier was determined in A.D. 1560. The first hereditary King of Sweden was Gustavus I Vasa, who saved the country from the tyrannical King Christian of Denmark. He reigned long and wisely, developing his country's natural resources, and it was during his time that the religious change to Protestantism came about.

Gustavus II Adolphus was the Swedish king who fought in the 30 years' war for freedom of conscience and religious thought; he was considered the country's greatest king, and even his enemies greatly admired him.

Sweden reached its zenith as a great European Power between 1611 and 1718, having conquered lands all round the Baltic, but most of it was lost with the death of the young warrior king, Charles XII.

It was under Gustavus III Adolphus (d. 1792) that Sweden's greatest poets, painters and artists flourished. This was the time of Swedenborg and Linnaeus, of literature and art, and the increasing influence of French taste.

During the Napoleonic wars, the French General Bernadotte, of Napoleon's staff became the Crown Prince and later king. During his reign and ever since, the country has remained neutral in all the great conflicts, technical schools and colleges were built, and the arts, crafts and agriculture encouraged.

In 1814, Norway was reunited with Sweden, but seceded again as a separate kingdom in 1905.

Education has always been free and general. The people are all well educated. There are two old universities, and it is worth noting that many of Sweden's famous men came from poor or peasant stock.

(to be concluded next month)

WHERE DOES THAT ONE COME FROM? by H.C. Calpine

(continued from last month)

The most successful of these attempts to invent new "folk-like" dances took place in Germany between the first and second World wars, when the "Neue Tänze" or "New Dances" were introduced. Some of these were based on traditional forms, while others were completely new sequences.

I write of this attempt as "successful" because many of these dances continue to be danced with pleasure by groups in Germany and abroad (e.g., the S.I.F.D.) who treat them as true folk dances.

Many, though not all of the Germany dances in our repertoire, are "Neue Tänze", and are therefore only from 20 - 30 years old. They include: Manchester, Schwarzwaldler Mazurka, Kruz Konig, Hetlinger Bandritter, Postvierer, as well as, probably, Gamboliner Holzschuhtanz, Kleiner Schottische, and Hacker.

However, the record in respect of the authenticity of some of these dances is by no means clear-cut "black and white", as can be illustrated by the cases of "Manchester" and Schwarzwaldler Mazurka". Both of these dances appear in a collection called "Bunte Tanze" of which several volumes were published in the twenties and thirties by Anna Helms and Julius Blasche. The name might be translated as "colourful" dances and was chosen by the authors to avoid the suggestion that they were true folk dances. However, in many cases the dances were adapted from traditional forms, and were often set to quite genuine folk dance tunes.

Let us take "Manchester". A dance of this name, but much simpler than the version taught in the S.I.F.D. is widely known in Germany and Switzerland. In Holland, the Scandinavian countries, and in some parts of Germany itself it is called "Lot is dead" from a jingle sung to part of the



original tune, and which can be translated roughly as:

"Lot is dead, Lot is dead,  
Jülie's also dying,  
Good, oh good, now at last  
I'll inherit something!"

The dance appears under this name in the Ling series, Scandinavian Dances, Book III. A very similar dance in Austria is called Der Neukatholische, a name popularly attributed to a likeness to the forward, stop and backward movement of reformation and counter-reformation! The dance can certainly be traced back to about 1830 and probably came from Bohemia, where it appears under the name of Mansestr. It is quite a puzzle to meet such a very English name for such an un-English dance, and the Bohemian or Czech derivation does not help either, since it is just the Czech spelling of the English city name, though it also means a type of velveteen, originally coming from Manchester.

Whatever the name given to the dance, it was always performed more or less as in the Ling description, namely four steps and close forwards, eight slip steps backwards and polka. The much more elaborate form danced by the S.I.F.D. is given by Helms and Blasche as a "new" dance in contrast with the traditional form. They attribute it to a certain Paul Lütten of Wiesbaden, without however making it quite clear whether he personally devised it. This version was published in 1928.

Next, what about that delightful little dance, "Schwarzwaldler Mazurka"? Those who take our mission very seriously will probably see its history as an awful warning!!! The dance was in fact one of those arranged by Helms and Blasche specially for the upper forms of schools or youth groups, and published in 1931. However, Hugh Thurston in the last issue of "The Folklorist" identifies it with another dance, "Pfungstfreitag in der Probstei", so it is possible that it has a more respectable ancestry than at first sight appears. It was apparently called "Schwarzwaldler Mazurka" by Helms and Blasche, because they collected the melody in 1930 from a blind musician in a village in the Black Forest. Had they but known, they might have saved themselves the trouble, since the tune is actually a traditional Ländler, which had already been collected and published in Leipzig (also in London by Novello!) about 1883. This earlier collection of Swabian folk dances calls it "Langsamer Ländler" or "slow Ländler"

Finally, I would like to suggest that we should not let the doubtful parentage of these dances detract from our enjoyment of their performance. In adopting these, and other similar dances because we find them pleasant, we are following in a long tradition. If they are not already true folk dances, we shall help to make them so.

(But what about the aims and objects of the S.I.F.D.?!? Here is a nice controversial point - let us have some letters about it! Anyhow, thank you, H.C.C., for a most interesting and absorbing article. Editor)

#### NOTES AND NEWS

Best wishes to Pat Dwyer at present in Germany - she is now married, and her name is Hobbs.

Congratulations somewhat belatedly to Mr. and Mrs. David Rasbash, on the addition of another potential S.I.F.D. member to the family.

Dame Margot Fonteyn, who was one of the Patrons of our last "See How they Dance" show has recently appeared in a gala performance of Fokine's ballet, "Petrushka". The performance was attended by H.M. The Queen Mother and H.R.H. the Princess Margaret.

Clameur de Haro was raised recently in Alderney by an old lady who objected to a neighbour's rebuilding an outside cloakroom. The "Clameur" dates back to a 10th century Duke of Normandy, but is now very rarely raised. To invoke this legal instrument, the plaintiff must kneel, and in the presence of the Clerk of the Court of Alderney and two witnesses, must recite the Lord's Prayer in French and then call on the Duke, Rollo, in the words: "Haro, Haro, Haro, a l'aide, mon prince - on me fait tort!" The complaint is then registered and no further building can take place until the matter has come before the Court of Alderney.

We hope that the Hon. Treasurer will shake off his series of illnesses quickly, and that he will, before long, be his old self again.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

Towards the end of 1955 I suggested to Jack Krebs that we form a small group of dancers who will go to hospitals and sanatoria in the London area, giving shows for patients in the wards. Our first demonstration was at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in Starnore on 8th November 1955, and I think that we may consider it to have been a success. That programme was arranged by Jack and May Hendrie acted as commere. Since then we have put on a number of other demos. at various hospitals about London, and were very well received everywhere. I have, however, an increasing feeling of uneasiness, evoked by the ever-increasing number of dances being crammed into the programmes, and the consequent increase in the number of dancers present, some of whom, unfortunately, do not show the discipline necessary to ensure the smooth running of any demonstration, and talking and skylarking is distracting to dancers, musicians and audience alike. Also, if there is a schedule of dancers made out for each item, it should not be necessary for the M.C. to have to drag some of the couples onto the floor! If you want to go and dance at a demonstration, then do so! The organisers of this team would, I think, do well to bear in mind the original objects of the group and not let the programmes get too long, for fear of boring the patients; also it must be remembered that although a dance may look very well on the floor of the Albert Hall, or on a stage, it is not necessarily as interesting in the confined spaces of a hospital ward, where most of the audience are in bed, and unable to see intricate footwork. The ability of all the dancers to know properly the dances they are required to show is another point which must be checked before the demo. There are many well-meaning people, willing to come along and help to cheer up the patients, but let them be certain they know the steps and sequences they intend to dance! We can do all this and follow our aims much more effectively if we keep to say, 4 - 6 couples, and realise our limitations, remembering, as I do, November 8th, 1955.

Yours, etc., Clifford H. Beck.

(I too remember November 8th 1955, Cliff, as it was on the previous day that I left Stanmore! Your comments above are certainly constructive, and Margery and Jack will no doubt discuss them at the earliest opportunity. It should be noted, that the Hospital Demo. Team now also comes under Margery Latham as Demonstrations Secretary, and she must be consulted before any future demonstrations are taken on.  
Editor)

### MORE NOTES AND NEWS

Stanmore Orthopaedic Hospital was re-visited by the Hospital Demonstration team on April 9th. A 35-minute programme of international dancing was greatly enjoyed and appreciated by patients in two of the wards. (The Editor particularly appreciated being able to dance there as, not so long ago, he was a patient in one of the wards visited.)

Congratulations to members Enid Gibson and Tony Barber on their engagement, also to member Peter Franklin on his engagement to Miss Ann Mackenzie, who, we hope, will become a member too!

Chelsea Community Centre held an evening for Old Folk of the Borough on April 16th at which dances by the S.I.F.D. demo team and the Iberia Group were enthusiastically received by a small but appreciative audience. Additional attractions were provided by the Warden of the Centre, including Irish children dancing, a music hall turn, and a prize draw.

The Polish Air Force Association in Great Britain as thanked the Iberia Group for a demonstration in the following terms: "On behalf of the London branch of the Polish Air Force Association, I would like to convey to you and to all members of the Iberia Dance Group, our sincere thanks for your part at the annual ball of the P.A.F.A. Your wonderful dances and costumes met with great applause from our guests and members, and helped to make our ball as successful as it was.

Len and Beryl Sawyer have written to Marjory from the boat bound for Canada to thank their many S.I.F.D. friends for their gift of flowers. We look forward to hearing again from them, as we shall certainly miss two of our most faithful members.

THE S.I.F.D. COMMITTEE:

The Committee foregathered on 4th April at 381 St. John's Street for its monthly meeting. Apologies for absence were received from the Hon. Treasurer because of illness, and from the Hon. Secretary who had to be out of town for a few weeks.

It was stated that the question of obtaining a record-player with sufficient amplification is still under review. Both the Society's first book, and the set of records, are selling well. There has been a sizeable order, among others, for the book from W.H. Smith & Co.

The possibility of running a special week-end or week-long course of folk dancing with particular reference to certain countries will be brought up again at further meetings of the Committee, as there seems to be a certain demand for such a course from outside the Society as well as from members.

A long letter from Ian Hayden was read, containing numerous helpful suggestions for future programmes. These will be considered and discussed further.

There was discussion relating to the impending formation of the Newcastle and the Croydon branches of the Society, these two important milestones in the Society's history being near at hand.

Regarding the second book of dances now being prepared it was suggested that illustrations might profitably be included to show some costumes and/or embroidery patterns.

The Committee's endeavours to find permanent premises of our own are being continued with renewed vigour.

It was decided to call the half-yearly General Meeting for May 23rd at 7.30 p.m. at Imperial College.

The Committee meeting was attended by the Hon. Editor of "News Sheet" who reported that for the second month running, the contributions received exceeded the space available in the Journal. It is hoped that this highly satisfactory state of affairs will continue.



The Editor, in his capacity as leader of the Hungarian Dance Group, asked for the Committee's support for the Group. As in the case of the Hospital Demo. team and the Iberia Group, last month, this support was promised and all these groups are now under the aegis of the Society.

THE DEMONSTRATION SECRETARY WRITES.....

This month we have had a lull on the Demonstration front, at least for the dancers, and I hope they have enjoyed the rest. The clerical work has gone on and has been heavier than usual as the demands for June and July roll in. We have had six requests for July 13th already.

There was one cancellation, the C.C.P.R. National Dance Party at Eastbourne on March 16th, because of lack of numbers.

On March 23rd Bert Price and I went to Newcastle for a teaching weekend and to discuss the possibilities of starting a Branch there. A small group have been struggling along for some while and they wanted to enlarge their repertoire and put their group on an official basis. The C.C.P.R. ran this teaching course and are willing to help the group over the initial struggles. We took four teaching sessions lasting 10½ hours altogether and because all the members were so keen, and worked so hard, we got right through our book. We were all a little "glassy eyed" at the end of it but very pleased with the results. We do wish this group every success, and promise all the help we can give them. My thanks to Bert for his help both with the teaching and the discussions on the launching of the group.

On Tuesday April 16th the official demonstration team supported the Iberian group at a concert given for the old people of Chelsea. It was held at the Chelsea Community Centre where we have held so many rehearsals for the Balkan team and where Margaret Harris has held her classes since her group has been formed. It was an informal affair with the Warden in charge. Some Irish children who also rehearse at the centre shared the programme, and the warden and his wife sang two songs. Margaret's Spanish dancing was the mainstay of the evening and we filled in with two sessions of "a mixed bag". It was all very much appreciated by the audience. My thanks to the team for dancing without expenses, and for giving a demo. at such short notice.

Margery Latham.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

The Estonians under Aili Eistraat continue showing their dances and their own enjoyment of them.

The Ukrainians from Reading are continuing with their series of classes for us at Chelsea, after the success of the class last term.

The S.I.F.D. Polish Group has got off to a most promising start under the guidance of Kostek and Ziutek. They meet every Thursday evening at 7.30 p.m. at the Chelsea Community Centre in King's Road.

The Iberia Group (S.I.F.D.) is receiving further enthusiastic support from people interested in Spanish and Portugese dancing. Classes are run by Margaret Harris on Monday evenings at 8 p.m. until further notice at the Chelsea Community Centre.

The S.I.F.D. Hungarian Group will meet fortnightly in May and June at the Polish Y.M.C.A., Kensington Gardens Square, W.2. Classes will be held in May by John Ungar on Sunday 5th, from 3 p.m. - 5 p.m., and on Sunday 19th from 4.30 p.m. - 6.30 p.m. It is hoped to make a private instructional film with this group for the Society in early July.

The Balkan Dancers of the Society under Phillip Thornton will be using the advanced class on May 7th for a rehearsal for the Caxton Hall demonstration in which they will take part together with the Demonstration Team and one or two other groups.

MONTHLY PROGRAMME: MAY 1957

Motto: The more known, the less left to guess and gamble.

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

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

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

Tuesdays: May 7th: Advanced Balkan Class  
by Phillip Thornton  
May 14th: Ukrainian class by The Reading Group  
May 21st: Balkan Class by Ken Ward  
May 28th: Ukrainian Class by The Reading Group

Wednesdays: May 8th: General Class - "From Our Book"  
by Simon Guest.  
M.C. Bob Symes  
May 15th: Social Dance. M.C. Simon Guest  
May 22nd: Spanish Class: "Jota Aragonesa"  
by Charles Steventon  
M.C. Jack Richardson  
May 29th: French Class by Bob Symes.  
M.C. John Hughes

Fridays: May 10th: Swedish Class: "Daldans" & "Vava Vadmal"  
by V. Cyriax  
May 17th: Swedish class: "Ostgota" & "Vastgota"  
by V. Cyriax  
May 24th: Filipino classes by the Philippines  
& 31st: Embassy (subject to confirmation)

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

Time: 6.30 p.m. - 9.30 pm. Music by Mourrie Pfeffer  
A.N.D. Others

Sundays: May 5th: M.C. Ron Coultrup May 19th:  
May 12th: M.C. Roly Minton M.C. Mourrie Pfeffer

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

Time: 6.30 pm. - 9.30 p.m. Music by the Wallace Collection  
Sunday 26th May - M.C. Simon Guest

S.I.F.D. News Sheet - journal of the Society for International Folk  
Dancing - published monthly for members free of charge. Hon. Editor,  
J. Ungar, 35 Hatherley Ct., Hatherley Grove, W.2. Deadline for  
all contributions: 15th of preceding month. Stop Press: 23rd.