

NEWS SHEET

December 1957

Journal of the Society for International Folk Dancing

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E.13.

A Ship without a Pilot.

For the past three and a half years the News Sheet has been moulded by two capable editors who have transformed it from a miscellaneous collection of announcements into a journal with a character of its own. In so doing they have, of course, irritated those readers who have not appreciated the journalistic style of John Fraser or the exhortations of John Ungar. We owe both editors a great debt which can only be repaid by the appointment of a successor who is prepared to see that their standards are maintained or improved. Unfortunately no volunteer has yet come forward to fill the important office of Editor. Here is a task which many members could take on as some repayment for the enjoyment which they have obtained from their association with the Society.

Until the Journal acquires its Editor, it will drift aimlessly and will rapidly degenerate into a hotchpotch of notes and notices which accidentally come together at the hands of the typist. So will you not write to-day to the Hon. Secretary to offer your services?

The Committee has decided that, starting with the February issue, the News Sheet will not appear until the middle of the month. This will enable it to carry a report of the Committee Meeting and information will reach members with the minimum of delay. The January News Sheet will contain the programme for the whole of January and February and subsequent issues will give the programme for the latter half of the current month and the whole of the following month.

NOTES FROM THE FOLKLORE GROUP "LE MARAIS VENDEEN DE CHALLANS".

The "Maraichins de Challans" are the inhabitants of the northern marsh of the Vendee. Their origin dates back to the Spanish settlements which grew up on the Vendee coast in the tenth century.

The Woman's Costume has a small head-dress of white tulle with embroidery at the back and lace round the edge.

The hair is arranged in very compact style with a parting in the middle of the forehead and with plaited headbands. The hair is held tightly at the back in a net which is often decorated with pearls.

The dress is of brocaded wool or silk and has a well-fitting bodice and a long pleated skirt. Over the dress there is a silk apron (la devantiere) the top part of which is tied tightly round the body. At the back is worn a little shawl (le collet) of silk-velvet, bordered with a fringe or with wide lace, the point of

which reaches down to waist level.

The Man's Costume has a round black felt hat with a well turned up brim edged with velvet.

A small double-breasted waistcoat is worn under the jacket, which is of black wool, short and close fitting and does not button. The trousers have a flap. (Culotte à pont).

Dances. The dance of the Maraichins is original and very lively consisting of three steps forward (the second one doubled) and three backwards. In finishing, the same step is performed turning and at the same time the men lift the girls on the strong beats of the final bars.

The music, written in 2/4 time is played on the accordion and can be used either for the "courante" which is danced by couples, or for the "barrienne" which is danced by two men and a girl or two girls and a man.

The principal dances are:-

Le Branle a Deux (Couple Dance)
La Grand'danse (The Great Dance)
La Maraichine Croisee (Crossing Dance)
La Danse des Crepes (Pancake Dance)
La Guittounnelle
La Papillon (The Butterfly)
Danse de la Catin (Dance of the Puppet)
La Gavotte (Gavot)
La Danse du Mouchoir (Handkerchief Dance)
L'Angoize
La Danse du Baton (Stick Dance)

For "La Ronde au Paulaie" the dancers hold hands in a circle and after the preliminary advancing and retiring steps the couples do the turning step of the "courante" before the final movement inwards. To do this in time with the music requires very skilled dancing. This dance, sometimes performed to singing, is led by the best singer in the group.

Songs. The songs of the "Marais" are often about love. The "Maraichins" do not normally sing in chorus though sometimes the group repeats the last line after the soloist.

Amongst the numerous songs may be mentioned:-

Par dessus la verte epine
(Above the green thron) Female voice

La fille de chaudrounia
(The tinker's daughter)

La Bertaudiere	Male voice
Pendant que le moulin vire (While the mill turns)	Female voice
Quand j'etais chez mon pere (When I lived at home)	Male voice
O l'est pourtant temps de me marier (It's time I got married)	Two female voices
Helas pourquoi se marie ton? (Oh why does one marry?)	Male voice

Folk Dancing in Spain

Here is an extract from an advertisement of a folk dance festival in Spain last summer.

Great Folkloric Festival of Regional Dances
With the actuation of the
Group of Dances of the Feminine Section F.E.T.
and of the J.O.N.S. from Blanes (Gerona)

In the following program:

La Marisca

Of a very ancient origin. There is a beautiful legend about this dance that explain us an idyl between a catalan cristian lady and a notable arab who pretended a lady's love. The dance has a particular mark of distinction that makes she difference among the others of the catalan folklore.

Els Ausellets.

Dance of "carrarda" very ancient in what young people vaunt his agility. Coming from Das (Gerona).

The Infanlite Group

Petits Dancaires "Margaridoies" of Orrives will be intreated in the actuation in select repertory.

Demonstration Notes

The Swedish team danced at the Festival Hall on Friday, October 18th as part of a charity concert in aid of the Timber Trade Benevolent Association. The Opoczno Polish Group, Lucille Armstrong's Spanish Group and the Ukrainian team from Reading completed our half hour item in the programme. We were billed as the International Ballet and we represented the timber supplying countries. We had the services of a professional producer, who was responsible for the whole concert. He caused quite a bit of amusement at the rehearsal by referring to our dances as "dance routines" - very reminiscent of the Tiller girl troupes! I think the presentation of our contributions was very good, and it was certainly colourful and lively. We shared the programme with Jimmy Edwards, Freddie Bamburger, Semprini, not to mention the band of the Royal Artillery. Our dancers behaved very well in the wings, even when the Television girls danced the Can-Can, in mauve tulle!!!

Our second demonstration of the month was for the Islington Art Group on Monday, October 30th at Islington Town Hall. Lucille Armstrong's Spanish Group did two items and we sandwiched in between. There were also teams of Scottish and Irish children on the programme. Our item should have been danced by the Islington Folk Dance Group which Dorothy Weir and Charles Steventon have been helping to get on their feet, but they couldn't, unfortunately, produce a team in time. There is a whole week of activity in Islington Town Hall and we have a stall displaying some of our costumes and literature, including, of course, publicity for the Albert Hall Festival.

My thanks to all concerned in these two demonstrations, especially 'Steve' who organized the Islington one, and to Dorothy for her efforts on our behalf with the arranging of the display of costumes.

There will be no demonstrations during November as the teams are fully occupied with rehearsals for the Albert Hall.

MARGERY LATHAM.

Correspondence.

From Patricia Paice, Ontario.

Dear Marie,

This being United Nations Day, I feel it is an appropriate time to write and thank you for the copies of the book produced by the S.I.F.D. I feel this is very good value for 5/- and congratulate all

those who put their time and effort into bringing this about. And I am resolved to think more of the 'regional variations' mentioned in the introduction when next enduring an insipid version of Karapyet or the ruination of Snurrebocken. However, in passing along a copy of this book to our leaders perhaps a few improvements will appear. Considering the majority of the group's repertoire is interpreted from the written word, they have done a very good job. And I would certainly be most unhappy without the opportunity to dance, so will count my blessings.

The Workshop Weekend turned out to be a mid-week affair Tuesday to Thursday (not a good time for dancers who also go to business!). Three groups in town shared expenses and each group were hosts for one night each. We opened the workshop on the Tuesday and had a good response, almost a 100 people. The programme taught was varied and fairly simple to follow... the only dance I remember clearly was the Hungarian 'Nevante'. Vyts himself, a small slight man in his sixties, handled the evening well. But he was a disappointment as the horse whisper of Lithuanian-American was unintelligible to me and many others and he looked completely exhausted having been 'on the road' since July. He has cancer of the throat and certainly should not undertake these strenuous tours. But he does, and taught again on the Wednesday and Thursday evenings - the latter was best of all as we had nearly an hour's work on kolos with John Skow from San Francisco.

We are being visited by an Israeli dancer in November, and possibly Michael and Mary-Anne Herman in the spring. But if only we could share some evenings with the many ethnic groups in Toronto there would be less need to 'import' expensive teachers. Each group is fiercely loyal to its own nation and mistrusts any interest shown in their costumes and dances... I certainly didn't notice this with the Polish or Swedish groups in London? However, we are continuing to try and gain their respect and friendship and perhaps sometime in the future they will take one step from 'national' and become 'international', and what better place than Canada which is a melting pot of all races.

24th October 1957

NOTICES

Henley-on-Thames. There are still a few vacancies for the week-end at Thamesfield on February 2nd. Send your booking with a deposit of 10/- to Jack Richardson.

"A Selection of European Folk Dances". The Society's book which was published just a year ago is now out-of-print as the first impression of 1000 copies has been sold. The second impression is

due to appear during the month. The gramophone records are selling well too, particularly to schools, and over 800 have been sold during the first ten months of the year.

Annual General Meeting. Because accommodation is not available on December 6th, the Annual General Meeting has again been postponed until Friday, December 13th. It will be held at 7.30 p.m. in the Chemical Engineering Department, Imperial College, Prince Consort Road, South Kensington, S.W.7. Please do your best to come. The class which was to have been held on this date has, of course, been cancelled.

Bisham Abbey. The Society is holding a second Christmas course of folk dancing at Bisham Abbey (near Marlow) from 28th December to 2nd January. This is run by the CCPR, 6 Bedford Square, W.C.1., to whom enquiries should be made. Teaching and music will be by Margery Latham and Ken Ward.

An Apology. The Committee sends its apologies to those members who did not receive their News Sheets last month. This was attributable to a fault in the internal lines of communication which has now been located and, we trust, rectified.

PROGRAMME FOR DECEMBER 1957.

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	3rd December	Balkan by Phillip Thornton
	10th December	Advanced Balkan by Phillip Thornton (by invitation only)
	17th December	Balkan by Phillip Thornton
Wednesdays	4th December	Silesian Class by Kostek Siemascko M.C. Bob Symes
	11th December	Swedish Class by Dr. V. Cyriax M.C. Jack Richardson
	18th December	Italian and Sicilian Class by Margery Latham M.C. May Hendrie
Fridays	6th December	French Class by Simon Guest
	13th December	NO CLASS. Annual General Meeting at Imperial College.
	20th December	End of Term Party M.C. Ken Ward

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

Time: 6.30 - 9.30 p.m.

Music by Mourie Pfeffer

Sundays	1st December	M.C. Mourie Pfeffer
	8th December	M.C. John Hughes
	15th December	M.C. Simon Guest
	22nd December	M.C. Roly Minton