

REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

JUNE, 1959

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INTRODUCTION.

At the Annual General Meeting of the S.I.F.D. in 1958, a motion was adopted which in effect instructed the Executive Committee of the S.I.F.D. to consider setting up an Advisory Committee. The purpose of this new committee was to report on the organisation and function on the Society and to present recommendations for improvements, where possible, in the running of the Society.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the S.I.F.D. held in December 1958 the composition and terms of reference of the Advisory Committee were agreed.

Composition of the Advisory Committee.

Chairman	-	Jack Richardson.
Secretary	-	Simon Guest.
Member	-	Edward Brine.
Member	-	Marie Lefort.

Terms of Reference.

"The Advisory Committee shall make recommendations on the future lines of activity of the Society for International Folk Dancing and of an organisational structure which will enable the Society to run as efficiently as possible.

A final report with recommendations shall be submitted to the Society's Committee not later than 31st March, 1959 and to a subsequent general meeting of the Society, and the Advisory Committee shall then be dissolved.

In particular, priorities shall be assessed and the programme of activities suggested shall be a realistic one within the limits set by the finances and active personnel of the Society."

Meetings of the Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee met four times during the first months of 1959. In their own time members of the committee have produced some thirty-five type-written sheets of notes from which the present report is drawn.

All statements and recommendations in the report are the common opinion of all the Advisory Committee members except where specifically stated to the contrary.

REPORT.

The content of this report falls naturally into two sections as suggested by the terms of reference:-

- (A) recommendations on activities.
- (B) recommendations on organisation.

Since the organisational requirements depend on the programme of activities envisaged, (A) above will be dealt with first.

A. ACTIVITIES.

The activities of the Society were considered under the following headings:-

1. Social dancing and appropriate teaching.
2. Music, record, instruction publishing; Costume collecting and consultancy.
3. Demonstrating.
4. Teaching school teachers.
5. Acting as parent body to specialist groups.

1. Social Dancing and Appropriate Teaching.

a. General.

At present the membership of the S.I.F.D. is split into small groups and there is little of the community sense essential for the continuance of any society.

This is partly due to having too many activities for the number of (active) members and partly due to lack of facilities and atmosphere at meetings.

It is recommended that one non-specialist activity should be held each week in place of the present Wednesday and Friday classes and that the programme should be:-

- 7 pm - 8 pm Elementary instruction.
- 8 pm - 9 pm Social Dancing.
- 9 pm -10 pm Advanced instruction.

It is envisaged that members would probably attend either the first two hours or the last two. The main advantage of such a scheme is the opportunity it provides for the establishment of an integrated membership. The elementary dancers would have the chance to dance with and to emulate the more advanced members who in their turn would be able to pass on their enthusiasm and expertise.

Other points and recommendations are:-

Specialist groups should be asked not to meet on the same night as an ordinary S.I.F.D. meeting.

Excessively long periods of instruction should be avoided at ordinary meetings.

Teachers should watch their own dances being performed during social dancing sessions but should reserve comment until the period of instruction begins.

b. General Dances.

General dances should be held as follows:-

Last Sunday of each month at Cecil Sharp House.

Other Sundays at a suitable central venue.

One week-night per month possibly at Cecil Sharp House, otherwise at a central place.

The use of a full orchestra at Cecil Sharp House is considered desirable. In smaller halls and on less formal evenings the present arrangement of accordionists is satisfactory.

M.C.'s should be experienced dancers with a large repertoire and capable of leading the dances in their programme if necessary.

M.C.'s must design their programmes to cover both simple and advanced dances and to ensure that recently taught dances are

practised. The guiding principle must be to maintain the dancers' repertoire at a maximum.

In general the practice of giving instruction at general dances is not to be encouraged; however an advanced dance may occasionally be performed twice - once for those that know it and then for everybody.

c. Classes : Teaching.

At elementary level the essential requirement is for a capable, enthusiastic instructor who can "get across" to his class the basic stock in trade of the folk-dancer.

At advanced level it is desirable to use nationals of the countries concerned. These instructors may not necessarily be good teachers but the advanced student must be expected to be able to overcome this difficulty in his search for the finer points of style and feeling.

Advanced classes should be restricted to invited members. At certain advanced classes special emphasis should be laid on the techniques of demonstrating dances to audiences.

Both ordinary and advanced classes should include some of the work which has been mainly confined in the past to specialist groups e.g. Balkan and Spanish. Both classes should include instruction by specialist teachers.

The programme of classes should be fixed for a whole term at a time and published well in advance.

It is felt that the classes should be moved from the present hall. Requirements are:-

Central and salubrious district.
Good changing and washing facilities.
A good hall which is not a general right-of-way.

d. L.C.C.

The question of whether the Society should continue to run its classes under the auspices of the L.C.C. was discussed fully by the Advisory Committee. Two alternative recommendations were made.

Edward Brine
Marie Lefort

Jack Richardson
Simon Guest

That the Society should continue to operate under the aegis of the L.C.C.

That the Society should operate independently of the L.C.C. from next session (Sept. 1959) onwards.

e. Week-End Courses.

The organisation of week-end teaching courses from time to time is considered to be a very worthwhile thing especially if experts from overseas or from outside London can be engaged.

2. Music, Record, Instruction Publishing; Costume Collecting and Consultancy.

a. Books and Instructions.

It is desirable that the S.F.I.D. should continue to publish books of dance instructions as long as it is clearly understood

that these instructions are merely aide-memoires and not exhaustive descriptions of the dances.

The Society should continue to sell offprints from the books and to use these for inclusion with records.

b. Records.

It would seem desirable to issue future records on 45 rpm discs except for the fact that many schools do not possess suitable playing equipment. This question must be studied thoroughly before more records are issued.

Further recordings should be made as soon as an orchestra of sufficiently high standard is available.

No new records must be issued until the instructions are ready for inclusion.

The possibility of re-issuing, in co-operation with national groups, records made abroad should be studied especially in cases where it seems unlikely that a satisfactory disc could be produced here.

Separate sales accounts must be kept for books and records in order that the effect of sales on the Society's finances can be judged and in order that the items can be costed to show a small profit margin.

c. Library.

A library of books, records, photographs and music should be collected by the Society. Rare discs should be transcribed on to tape and preserved.

Sufficient records to provide an evening's dancing should be kept at the class meeting place for use in emergency.

d. Costumes.

The Society's policy must be to continue to collect national costumes; the aim always being authenticity. The Society already possesses too many costumes for one person to look after adequately. It is suggested that various people (specialist group leaders etc.) should keep certain groups of costumes. However each costume keeper would be responsible to the particular committee member whose duties include keeping a central costume register.

A costume keeper should be expected to have an interest in, and if possible, a specialist knowledge of his particular costumes and would arrange for loaning, mending, altering etc.

e. Consultancy.

The Society must be careful to take only those steps that will enhance its reputation and standing as an authority on Folk-Dancing. The Society should perform the office of folk dance consultants to the best of its ability whenever called upon to do so.

3. Demonstrating.

It is felt that the Society should continue to run shows at the Royal Albert Hall as long as a good standard can be kept up and as long as a comfortable profit can be made. However the Society should not feel compelled to produce a show every year.

Missing a year occasionally might have a tonic effect. Whenever possible a matinee performance should precede the evening show.

In the past the R.A.H. show has generated much ill-feeling amongst members and has thus done harm to the Society internally. It is suggested that this could be obviated in future by:-

- a. A straightforward statement of team-picking policy.
- b. Giving every member an opportunity to help either by dancing or otherwise.
- c. Keeping disruption of normal Society activities to a minimum.

For ordinary demonstrations, the following principles should be applied in selecting which requests shall be fulfilled:-

- i. It is better to refuse a demonstration than to give a mediocre performance,
- ii. Demonstrations likely to arouse active interest in the audience must receive preference,
- iii. Only those demonstrations that will enhance the reputation and prestige of the Society should be accepted,
- iv. It is impossible to give a good demonstration if the floor is slippery, too rough or sloping, or if the audience is more interested in something else.

Any demonstration carried out in the name of the Society shall be under the control of the Demonstration Secretary or his deputy.

Every effort must be made to improve the general standard of dancing in the Society in order that a large pool of members is available from which to draw demonstrating teams.

The Society's publicity literature must always be available at demonstrations.

Expenses should be charged for all except charity demonstrations. If an inclusive fee is offered then this may be accepted if the dancers' expenses can be met from it. Any excess would normally go to Society funds.

4. Teaching of School Teachers.

The Society could and should work in the field of training teachers. It is feared that unless the Society accepts this task, less competent, or reputable bodies will perform it.

The following scheme is suggested:-

- i. Training in the instruction of European dances should be provided, emphasis being laid on authenticity and the need for further study with refresher courses etc.
- ii. Classes could be arranged through county education schemes as special evening classes promoted by the Society and/or week-end courses.
- iii. Certificates of attendance could be granted to those students who, in the opinion of the tutorial staff, have satisfactorily attended the course.
- iv. The tutorial staff would be selected by the S.I.F.D. committee.

Advanced Teaching : Although in the future there may be need for advanced teacher training it is not considered necessary to cater for this now.

It must always be stressed that teachers should attend refresher courses to prevent deterioration of standards.

5. Acting as Parent Body to Specialist Groups.

It is recognised that advanced dancers often wish to specialise in the dances of one or a few countries. Unless provision is made within the Society for this specialisation these dancers will drift away and form autonomous groups.

It is recommended that if a few members wish to form a specialist group they should be encouraged to do so by active help from the Society; for example, by an initial grant of money, help with making costumes, demonstrations etc. ; always provided that the members of the specialist 1st group remain in the Society and remain loyal to it.

Should a special group wish to sever its connection with the Society then it would be expected to repay any grants etc. in full.

The Society would benefit by making and maintaining contacts with folk-dancing societies abroad. The possibility of providing funds to enable members to visit groups abroad must be considered. The Society should be represented at the Llangollen International Eisteddfod for purposes of contacting groups.

B. ORGANISATION.

The organisation of the S.I.F.D. was discussed under the headings:-

1. Executive Committee.
2. Finance.
3. Constitution.

1. Executive Committee.

Each section of the work of the Society must be the direct responsibility of a member of the Executive Committee.

When new functions are taken on, direct allocation of responsibility should be made immediately.

Where desirable a sub-committee may be appointed for any branch of work or assistants may be appointed to help the committee members, but in all cases reports to the main committee shall be the responsibility of the member of the committee nominated.

Suggested allocation of duties:-

- | | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| Chairman | : | Policy, Constitution, Overall supervision of the work of the Committee, Responsibility for S.I.F.D. Meetings. |
| Secretary | : | General administration and correspondence. |
| Treasurer | : | Finance, Accounts and Budget. |

- Committee Member : Assistant to secretary, Minutes of
Number 1 meetings and other matters agreed with
secretary.
- Committee Member : Dances and classes, Halls, M.C.'s,
Number 2 Instructors, Programmes, Week-end courses etc.
- Committee Member : Membership records, Registers and contacts
Number 3 with affiliated groups and specialist groups.
- Committee Member : Publicity, Overall responsibility for
Number 4 News Sheet, 3-monthly programme.
- Committee Member : Demonstrations, Costume register, Diary of
Number 5 Folk-dancing events.
- Committee Number : Publications, Production and sales of Music
Number 6 and Instructions, and Books and Records,
Library of books and Records and Gramophone.

It is suggested that ordinary members of the Society be asked to help in the following specific duties:-

NewsSheet - Editor, addressing envelopes, folding, stapling.

Demonstrations - Assistant to present secretary.

Librarian

Keeper of Gramophone records.

Words and Music Sub-committee.

Programme Sub-committee.

Assistant Treasurer.

The following suggestions are made about the Executive Committee:-

When a committee member cannot attend a meeting he should either ask a deputy to attend or send a written report.

No office should involve a committee member in more than a reasonable number of hours of work per week.

If sub-committees are formed they should be given:-

- a. concise and exact terms of reference.
- b. adequate expenditure grants.
- c. authority to proceed to an agreed stage without referring back to the Executive Committee.
- d. definite dates on which progress reports are to be submitted to the Executive Committee.

Any office equipment which would ease the burden of clerical work should be purchased.

Committee meetings should be limited in duration.

The Executive Committee must take the broad view and not waste its own time arguing about details which should properly be left to individuals or sub-committees.

In the interests of expediting the passage of business the procedure at meetings should be tidied up and chairmen at all levels should be ruthless in confining the discussion to the matter in hand.

2. Finance.

a. Budget.

It was agreed that a budget should be prepared annually by the Treasurer. Two alternative recommendations were made:-

- i. Jack Richardson and Simon Guest.
That the budget be submitted to the Annual General Meeting of the Society for approval.
- ii. Edward Brine and Marie Lefort.
That the budget be prepared in the following manner:
 - a. Ascertain the average net income over the past three years from:-
 - i. Membership (allowing for any trend)
 - ii. Sale of Records and Books etc.
 - iii. Royal Albert Hall Show.
 - b. Allocate two-thirds of such average income for:-
 - i. Advertising
 - ii. Costumes
 - iii. Capital outlay on new publications and records
 - iv. Administrative and NewsSheet costs.
 - c. Reserve balance for contingencies; such reserve to be transferred to interest-bearing investments after an agreed figure has been reached.

b. Financial Policy.

The financial policy of the Society should be based on the following tenets:-

Classes and dances should be self-supporting when taken together over a reasonable period.

Music, record and book sales should show a small profit to provide capital for future ventures.

Membership subscriptions should cover all general administration costs and NewsSheet expenses.

Demonstrations should be self-supporting and should provide for the upkeep of costumes used.

Profits, if any, from festivals should be used for furthering the aims of the Society in general.

Separate accounts should be kept for each of the branches of activity of the Society and the balance of each account brought forward to the general account.

Accounts should be audited annually, approved by the Executive Committee, and circulated together with a balance sheet before the Annual General Meeting.

Under no circumstances should the Society abandon its basic programme of classes and dances while there is any money in the bank at all.

PROGRAMME OF WORK AND IMPLEMENTATION OF
RECOMMENDATIONS ETC.

It is strongly recommended that a 12 months plan be instituted and the following jobs tackled in the order given:-

1. Allocation of administrative work as indicated above under "Executive Committee".
2. Institution of a programme of classes and dances as indicated above under "Social Dancing and Appropriate Teaching."
3. The completion of the second volume of dance instructions.
4. Continuance of a monthly NewsSheet with a Committee member responsible for all aspects of production and circulation.
5. An increase of membership by an increase in publicity.
6. An increase in the pool of dancers available for demonstrations.
7. Circulation of a questionnaire regarding classes, dances and other activities to all members and to those who have left the Society within the last two years.
8. Consideration of the organisational aspects of Demonstrations.
9. Production of further records and books as feasible.
10. An increase in the wardrobe of costumes according to a plan, and providing a system of accommodation for them.
11. Institution of a slightly more academic phase of the Society's work by holding lecture or discussion evenings for the study of folklore, costume, music, development of the dance, etc.
12. Institution of week-end courses with specialist tuition.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

The Advisory Committee wishes to thank those members who have submitted suggestions. Some of these suggestions have been included in this report.

APPENDIX I

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF OPERATING UNDER
THE AUSPICES OF THE L.C.C.

<u>ADVANTAGES</u>	<u>DISADVANTAGES</u>
Free publicity in L.C.C. literature.	Partial restriction of activities to teaching.
Refreshments available cheaply..	
Financial advantage to members.	Greater initial outlay for members.
Regular attendance should be assured by L.C.C. follow-up system.	Compulsion implied by termly signing.
Increased status of Society through association with L.C.C.	Reduced status of Society through association with L.C.C.
Free use of large halls for R.A.H. rehearsals etc.	That under L.C.C. regulations, the Society does not have complete control over the enrolments for its classes.
Financial security of Society due to payment of musician, free use of hall etc.	
Teachers paid by L.C.C.	Teachers paid by L.C.C.

APPENDIX II

COMPARISON OF FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS UNDER L.C.C.
WITH THOSE APPLYING DURING INDEPENDENT OPERATION.

	<u>L.C.C. Scheme</u>		<u>Teachers and Musician's fees paid by L.C.C.</u>							
	<u>PAYMENT BY</u>		<u>PAYMENT</u>			<u>GAIN TO</u>		<u>GAIN TO MEMBER ON PREVIOUS</u>		
	<u>MEMBER</u>		<u>TO L.C.C.</u>			<u>SIFD *</u>		<u>"CARLYLE" SCHEME ON</u>		
								<u>AVERAGE OF 12 CLASSES</u>		
								<u>PER TERM</u>		
<u>1 Class/week</u>										
per Term		10 0		7 0		3 0			6 6	
per Year.	1.	5 0	1	0 0		5 0		1	4 6	
<u>2 Classes/week</u>										
per Term		15 0								
per Year	1	10 0	1	2 6		7 6		3	9 0	
<u>3 Classes/week</u>										
per Term		15 0								
per Year	1	10 0	1	5 0		5 0		5	18 6	

* NOTE: Where members reside in a county other than the L.C.C. special "out-county" fees apply where no reciprocal arrangement exists between the County Authorities e.g.
 Surrey 10/- per term, 30/- per year per student.
 Essex. 2/8½ per hour per student.

APPENDIX III

COMPARISON OF ATTENDANCES 1957/1958 and
1958/1959

	<u>CARLYLE 1957/8</u>						<u>HUGH MYDDLETON 1958/9</u>					
	<u>WED.</u>			<u>FRI</u>			<u>WED</u>			<u>FRI</u>		
	Total	Cl	Av	Total	Cl	Av.	Total	Cl	Av	Total	Cl	Av.
Christmas	242	13	18.61	249	12	21.75	291	13	22.38	266	11	24.20
Easter	199	11	18.09	213	11	19.36	152	10	15.20	165	11	15.00
Summer	268	14	19.14	142	10	14.20	* 57	4	14.25	Δ 45	3	15.00
	709	38	15.65	604	33	18.30	500	27	18.52	476	25	19.04

* Carlyle average for same period 1957/58 16.8)
Δ Carlyle average for same period 1957/58 15.3) (To 1.5.1959)