

February 1962

NEWS SHEET

THE JOURNAL OF
THE SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

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All applications for membership should be sent to this address.

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- Editor - John Fisher, Esq. Tel STR 8012
101 Albert Carr Gardens, S.W.16.

Press Date - 10th of the preceding month.

(This edition compiled by Ken Ward)

Now that February has arrived, we can reflect on the state of our New Year resolutions. We may be able to compliment ourselves on the fact that some still survive. We have successfully abstained from smoking and drinking and have kept peace with the neighbours, but I expect that most of us have fallen back on last year's evil ways with immense inward satisfaction.

I hope that some have thought of the Society and folk dancing in their resolutions, to increase our membership so that we can try to remove the false impressions that the general public have towards folk dancing in general. The world, I think, was perhaps a much better place before the advent of the twentieth century, with its standardisation, suppressing man's individuality and craftsmanship, and forcing an artificial way of life upon humanity.

In the past, although there were some regions suffering from oppression and dire poverty, there was an organised existence, where every costume and dance served a distinct purpose. The peasant was in contact with the earth, and thereby his Maker, who provided for him no more than was necessary to live. Our civilisation and education have unfortunately done harm - the first effect has been to make man dissatisfied with what he has, without giving him anything tangible in its place. He has become ashamed of what has always meant much to him. The peasants' instinct for natural beauty permeates even his dances, and we must try to retain this beauty by learning the dances sincerely, and encouraging respect and appreciation.

We cannot recreate the circumstances under which many of the dances that we have adopted were performed, but if we can learn to find the soul of the dance, and let its spirit control our dancing, we shall help in its preservation as a living thing. If we learn dancing purely for demonstrations and spectacle, then we are doing immense harm to our cause. Man danced because he had to do so to fulfill a long established ritual, to dispel the forces of nature, to heal the sick, to bless his fields, and perhaps as an effort to become part of the power that controlled his destiny. Dancing also took him away from the monotony of every day work, and the sober facts of his reality. The moment dancing became pure spectacle its universal spirit was broken, it disintegrated, and slowly vanished. If we exist purely to demonstrate then we are hastening the disintegration of folk dancing.

There is so much to do in 1962, and so few people to do it. When we use demonstrations to help recruitment, the spectator must

be made aware of something more than the pure excitement and skill of dancing. A comment was made recently after a demonstration of French folk dances, that something came over to the audience that was more than just the pure spectacle of dancing. The ancient spirit and vitality of the dance was recreated and radiated by the dancers, absorbed by the audience, and reflected in the atmosphere. It is this intangible quality that we must try at all costs to preserve.

Our cause depends then on a strong membership, a sincere approach to dancing for its own sake. We must find musicians who will commit the music to memory, and pour it from their souls as if it were their own music, instead of relying on musical dots. The making of our costumes must be a labour of love, a product of research, and patient application of motifs handed down from one generation to another, but with the addition of just that little personal touch which keeps folk art alive.

COSTUMES FROM DALARNA

The Nordiska Museet (The Northern Museum) is situated in Stockholm and has a superb collection of Swedish peasant costumes. This description of the costumes from the Gagnef parish of Dalarna is reproduced from one of the Museum's handbooks.

Man's Costume

JACKET: dark blue frieze-cloth, lined with white linen. It is double-breasted, with a stand-up collar and small brass buttons. The **WAISTCOAT** is of similar material and cut.

BREECHES: yellowish chamois leather, buttoning-up at the sides. Brass buttons. Hooks and eyes at the knee-slits.

SHIRT: white linen, with neck and sleeve gussets. It is elaborately gathered at the neck and has an 8 cm. high collar. There is a stitched satin pattern on the wrist-bands.

The **NECKCLOTH** ('halshinda') is an oblong piece of callico, fastened with a hook and eye.

CAP: black cloth.

STOCKINGS: dark blue woollen yarn, knitted.

KNEEBANDS: woollen yarn, woven in several colours.

WRISTLETS ('handringar'): a knitted pattern of woollen yarn.

WHOES: brown leather, with overhanging tongues and brass buckles.

ORNAMENTS: There are ornamental buttons on the wrist-bands and at the neck.

Woman's Costume

SKIRT: a black wool and linen material. It is attached to the bodice, and around the waist is a band of woven material with a pattern. At the bottom is a narrow hem.

BODICE: red frieze-cloth, with a cotton lining. It has steel "ribs", and a stitched pattern in linen yarn.

APRON: a red wool and linen material. It is gathered at the top, where it is fastened to a very long, woven band. When this is tied, two large, many coloured tassels hang down.

BLOUSE: white cotton, with a round neck-opening and a slit in front. There is no collar. The wrist-bands are decorated with satin-stitch.

JACKET: black frieze-cloth, lined with white linen. This, too, is collarless, and around the neck-opening is a narrow red stripe. The garment fastens with a hook and eye.

CAP: woollen muslin, with a printed pattern. Underneath is a red band which holds the hair in position, and at the back is a fringe of narrow red and green ribbons.

FICHU: a square of woollen muslin with a printed pattern, and a fringe in several colours.

STOCKINGS: red wool, knitted.

SHOES: brown leather, with brass buckles, and thick soles with birch-bark insertions.

SKIRT-BAG: blue frieze-cloth, with an applied pattern cut from green yellow and red material. It is worn on the right side attached to a narrow woven band encircling the waist.

ORNAMENT: The fichu is fastened by a circular brooch with pendants.

Extracted by John Fisher.

MACEDONIAN DANCERS - UNKNOWN QUANTITIES!

At the last moment it was found impossible to overcome certain problems of keeping the group "Orce Nikolov" from Skopje in London for further performances. Sunday performances are complicated by the regulations regarding costume and charges for admission. The group are probably coming to the eisteddford at Llangollen in July, and if Dr Firfov can confirm this and also details of "numbers of dancers" it may be possible to make arrangements then.

This last point is very important. On the occasion of the groups last visit to Llangollen several of us went to meet them at Victoria Station expecting about 25/30. I was shattered when 50 people were assembled ready to be conducted to Paddington Station with no previous arrangements having been made. I

obtained a party ticket for 55 people from the station-master and we travelled, luggage, instruments and provisions, to Paddington in the Underground during the rush hour. I'm glad to say that none of our citizens were killed in the ensuing fray.

The officials at Paddington had no prior notification, but kindly issued 50 single tickets, endorsing each with pen and ink! The train the group were supposed to have caught was due to depart ten minutes after the groups arrival at Victoria, but luckily there was another due to depart at 6 o'clock. Dr. Firfor then discovered his case was missing, with about 35 minutes to go I took the underground back to Victoria located the case, and returned with one minute to spare, a journey I should not like to repeat.

This was not the end of the groups' trials and tribulations, but these are for another occasion.

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AN INCOMPLETE GUIDE TO INDIAN DANCING

or HOW TO LAY YOUR HEAD ON YOUR OWN SHOULDER

Now that quite a number of the Society have seen some Indian dancing, and before you all dislocate your necks, I propose to give a short account of the four different classical schools. You will appreciate that a hefty tome could, and has been written on the many different aspects, this account will but briefly scetch in the outline. For instance, I could include whole chapters on hand gestures, costumes, make-up, music, steps, theatre presentation and adaptation etc., but I will spare you, or the news sheet would be discarded unread.

I will start with the popular BHARAT NATYAM which comes from South-East India and properly belongs to the temples of Tanjore, where delightful young ladies danced in front of the images of gods, as part of Divine worship. These young ladies were chosen from one strata of society only, and were taught by a hereditary caste of professional musicians and dancers. However, the erotic nature of the dance did not go unnoticed by the local wealthy maharajahs, who soon got down to brass tacks and employed the girls to dance at court, developing the night club, strip-teaze aspect. After things simmered down a bit, and the maharajahs had lost their money and their reputations the girls returned to serious dancing again in the temples and in the theatre.

The technique is complicated and exact, and the seeming ease with which dancers perform is merely the art which conceals art, perhaps the greatest art of all. The basic position is with the feet turned out and the knees bent. After assuming this posture, try jumping on to the toes and then back on to flat feet, meanwhile balancing a book on your head. A couple of hundred jumps will do. It is excellent exercise for the thigh muscles - guaranteed to make them ache for a week. The steps and movements have been written down in an ancient book called Bharata Sastra, which describes everything from the quiver of an erotic eyebrow down to the twitch of a tantalising toe. Another great book is the Abhinaya Darpana which describes hand gestures only, for the hands are but another voice, and when used separately or together in various combinations can express several hundred words.

Both men and women perform Bharat Natyam though preference seems to lie with the fair sex. Both wear silk trousers pleated at the waist and tight at the ankles. Over this, in the middle, hangs a pleated cloth or frill, reaching nearly to the knees. The girls wear a short blouse leaving a draughty gap in the middle, and both have many ornaments, not to mention about one hundred heavy brass bells round each ankle.

Musical accompaniment is provided by a long double ended drum, small cymbals only three to four inches across and a long stringed instrument which is plucked. There is usually a singer whose words the dancer interprets in gesture. At other times the elaborate gestures have no meaning and are purely decorative. Often other stringed and percussion instruments are added to this ensemble, although not strictly traditional.

Having read this, I hope, you will now be able to tell your friends all about it at the next performance. Don't miss next month's thrilling installment on the Kathak school.

"Bhayji".

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Letter to the Secretary

American Youth Hostels,
New York, 11, N.Y.

Dear Penny,

The A.Y.H. office in New York is located in Greenwich

Village where there are lots of little exotic shops, restaurants and theatres, New York, and especially the Village, are more Europeanized than other parts of the U.S. and I am thoroughly enjoying it.

I have been going dancing at Folk Dance House, where Michael Hermann, who is the director, leads most of the dancing. You may know of him as he makes records. They have all the international dances and kolas, Yugoslavian and Bulgarian etc. are very popular. The Israeli dances are also very popular as there are lots of Jewish people here and they are mad on folk dancing. There is also a Country Dance Society here, which I have not yet attended, which I understand does lots of English dances.

Folk singing is also very popular here and in the village there are lots of little cafes and restaurants where they have odd folk singers. We have one square dance that has folk singing and all these chaps bring in their guitars and banjos afterwards and dig out all different sorts of songs, American, English, Scottish, European, Israeli, etc., lots of fun. However we have records only for our dancing unless it is a special event; musicians for dancing are too expensive here because of the musicians' union.

I shall try to send you some literature from Folk Dance House at a later date as you might like to see what happens there.

With best wishes to all for the coming holiday season.

Yours sincerely,

IRMA FRESCOLN.

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ZVONI ZNONCE

Sta no bruji preko poljazvonce? (What's the bell which rings across the fields?) These are the words of a well known jugoslav folk song from Sevlia, and on Saturday 17th February 1962 a bell also rings for the wedding of John Fisher and Sheila Hand. Both members are strong supporters of the Balkan class, and the Sunday social dances, and John of course hides behind the title of editor of the Society's newsheet. On behalf of the members I should like to offer them both our very best wishes for their future happiness.

Folk Dance Festival - Vancouver. British Columbia

The twenty-ninth annual Vancouver Folk Dance Festival was recently held at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, and groups from many countries, but resident in Canada took part.

The Vancouver International Dancers, members of which are now old 'buddies' Len and Beryl Sawyer, performed a suite of Bulgo-Macedonian dances:

Eleno Mome - Yovano Yovanke - Nerestinsko Oro - Cestoto and Bavno Oko.

The item met with great success, and the native Bulgarians overwhelmed them with praise but in their own language.

LOS IBERICOS present "SPANISH FIESTA"

The Iberian Group of the Society, now under their new title of Los Ibericos are staging a full length show on Friday March 2nd at Hammersmith Town Hall.

Tickets priced at 2/6, 3/6 & 5/- are obtainable from Hammersmith Town Hall Tel: RIV. 3020 or from Miss Patricia Regan, 15 Milton Chambers, 128 Cheyne Walk, S.W.10. Tel: FLA 9773.

PLEASE BOOK THIS DATE IN YOUR DIARY.

NEW MEMBERS TO THE SPANISH CLASSES ARE ALWAYS VERY WELCOME.

NOTICES

FOR THE WEALTHY TRAVELLER

Acadamey Travel Limited, 17 Tottenham Court Road, W.1. offer many unusual travels, at a price, to places off the beaten track. For example trips are arranged to Albania for only £100, or to Mexico if you can find £395. A folk out tour through the Roumanian Carpathians costs a mere £94 and if China be your objective start saving now for £590.

For details of the tours apply to the above address, and for the information of the interested traveller, the Society is not arranging subsidised excursions into the exotic.

SPANISH RECORDS

There is a limited number of Spanish records still on sale. For those wishing to know details, the record (speed 33 $\frac{1}{3}$) consists of Tanguillo, Soleares, Farucca & Sevillanas, played on two guitars.

Price to Members 15/6d.
" " Non Members 17/6d.

Obtainable from Mrs. Margaret Colato, 169 Hamilton Avenue, Tolworth, Surrey. Tel: ELMbridge 6987. Orders taken (with cash) by any member of the group. Especially George Sweetland.

This record should make the "Top Ten" very shortly so buy your copy while they are still available.

For the patriotic dancer

Dances organised by the English Folk Dance and Song Society at Cecil Sharp House.

Every Saturday from Dec. 30th-May 5th
(except March 10th, April 14th and 21st.)

Doors open 6.15 p.m. Tickets at the door only.

"Folk Song Cellar" in the same building also on Saturday from Jan. 20th - April 14th (except March 10th).

Two folk dance courses organised by the E.F.D.S.S. may also be of interest to members.

Easter Course, Howth, Dublin. April 21st-28th
Summer House party, Carmarthen. August 18th-25th.
Further details from Cecil Sharp House.

FOR THE TURNTABLE

Ten records, revolving at seventy-eight per minute, and covering thirty eight dances are available from either Miss Maine of LeFort, 3 Selwyn Road, E.13. or Recorded Sound Ltd., 27 Bryanston Street, W.1.

Two new long players are also available in size 7 inch revolving at thirty-three and one third per minute. One contains a reissue of the Austrian records (78 RPM) Nos 9 and 10 which will eventually be withdrawn from our catalogue. The other record is a new issue of Israeli and Balkan dances.

Orders by post and all orders for the 7 inch records should go to Recorded Sound Ltd.

FOR YOUR FIGURE!!

Copies of our two Books entitled "A Selection of European Folk Dances" are available on application to Miss Marie LeFort, 3 Selwyn Road, E.13.

Price of each volume is 5/- plus 6d postage.

FOR THE LAPEL OR VEHICLE

Lapel Badges are now on sale and it is the duty of every member to support the sales of these attractive emblems. The design is the familiar Crossed Legs and is worked in black and green enamel. The price is 3/6d and this barely covers the cost to the Society.

Car and scooter badges are also available, the prices are:-

Car badges - 12/6d. Stick-on-type for scooters - 7/6d.

For members possessing more than one jacket or vehicle, why not buy a second badge?

Au pair

A Yugoslav girl who is a University graduate in English wishes to come au pair to England for 4-6 months from May 1962. She is an enthusiastic and expert folk dancer, and is a member of a Macedonian folk dance troupe. Inquiries in the first instance to Ruth Sharp, 15 Selsdon Road, Wanstead, E.11.

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PROGRAMME

Cecil Sharp House

Sunday February 25th 6.30 - 9.30 p.m. M.C. Ken Ward

Doors open at 6.0 p.m. Running Buffet.

Inns of Court, Drury Lane

Sunday February 4th 7.30 - 9.30 p.m. M.C. Mourie Pfeffer

Sunday February 11th " " M.C. John Hughes

Sunday February 18th " " M.C. Richard Beckford.

Classes at Hugh Myddleton School

Mon	Spanish	Beginners	7 - 8 p.m.	Margaret Colato
"	"	Intermediate	8 p.m.	" "
Tues	Balkan	General	7.30 - 9.30 pm	Ken Ward
Wed	International	General	7.30 p.m.	" "

Classes at Christopher Hatton School

Mon	Polish	General	8 - 10 pm.	Josef Walszeck
Thurs	"		8 - 10 pm.	" "
"	Spanish	Advanced	7 - 8 pm.	Margaret Colato with Pianist Denis Sobriell
"	"	Flamenco	8 - 9 pm.	Pat Regan with Guitarists
"	"	Revision	9 - 9.30 p.m.	

Classes at Central Y.W.C.A.

Fri.	International	Advanced	7.30 p.m.	Bert Price
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