SIFD NEWS



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MATERIAL FOR PUBLICATION TO BE WITH THE EDITOR BY THE 15TH OF THE MONTH PRECEDING PUBLICATION.

This month's cover is by Caroline Thomas. It depicts carnival costumes worn during the Fasching season each February in Austria.

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BADGES

S.I.F.D. Badges for lapel, scooter, and car, at 3/6, 7/6 and 12/6 respectively, can be obtained from our Membership Secretary, Roland Minton (address above).

RECORDS

S.I.F.D. records are available from Recorded Sound Ltd., 27-31 Bryanston Street, London, W.1.

BOOKS

Our books are published by Pergamon Press and are obtainable, to order, through any bookseller. price 7/6.

Discounts are obtainable on records and books purchased by members for their own use. Full details from Marjorie Bracey (address above).

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ROYAL ALBERT HALL SHOW

At a special meeting of the Committee of the Society, it was unanimously decided <u>not</u> to go ahead with plans for a show at the Royal Albert Hall in 1968. Instead, arrangements are to be made to prepare smaller shows during the year.

"SEE HOW THEY DANCE"

at Ealing Town Hall on Wednesday, 14th February at 7.45 p.m.

This is a programme of international folk dances from Austria, the Balkans, Sweden, Poland and France by the S.I.F.D., and also in the programme are some dancers from Thailand, and the Dunav Band.

Tickets are obtainable from the Ealing Town Hall

LEAP YEAR VALENTINE DANCE

Novelty Dances on Sunday, 18th February at The Dance Centre, 7 to 10 p.m.

Prizes

This will be a special Leap Year Dance. Come along, and bring as many friends as you can, to help make this as successful as our New Year's Eve Dance.

SPRING DANCE

on Sunday, 3rd March at Cecil Sharp House 6.30 to 10 p.m.

Extra musicians. Two M.C.s (Lily Southgate & Ian Willson). Guest demonstration team.

Special price reductions for junior members in parties of 6 or more.

Members and friends are asked to wear costume, to make this a colourful occasion.

Far from dying out, the traditional annual festivities practised in the towns, villages and countryside tend to increase as crafty municipal councils and tourist ministries create new ones. Italy and Spain probably have the most. Spain, where the alliance of Church and State is strongest, publishes a huge calendar of its regional festivities, an extraordinary mixture of religious and pagan rites; some gay with the dancing of the sardana; others macabre, such as that at Puebla del Caraminal, where those who feel death approaching walk through the streets enshrouded, followed by next-of-kin carrying their coffins. Strange ceremonies - but Spain has no monopoly of them. Perhaps the oddest is the ritual drinking of live fishes in red wine at Grammont, Belgium, which in 1968 takes place on 3rd March.

I have selected a few of the festivals which specifically mention folkdancing (it would be a formidable task to print them all) as these may very well be of interest to those of you who are planning holidays in these areas. I realise there are many other festivals which include folkdancing but which I have omitted, those held in Yugoslavia for instance. I would like to have details of these and any others, so if you know of any, perhaps you would let me know the place and date, and I shall be pleased to publish them.

AUSTRIA

- 5th May Zell am Ziller, Tyrol. Gauderfest fete of ancient origin, procession of local people, wrestling in the fields, brass bands, folk dancing, and great consumption of Gauderbier a strong brew. Procession of boys with cowbells.
- Sept./Oct. Styria, Burgenland, Lower Austria. Vintage festivals; fireworks, wine-fountains, processions.

BULGARIA

- 6th May St. George's Day (according to the Gregorian Calendar); the day of shepherds, their patron saint. The people fetch sprigs of beech and hawthorn from the forest and decorate the houses and sheepfolds. Banquets, dancing etc.
- June (1st week) Feasts of St. Constantine and St. Helena, celebrated in villages in the Strandja Mountains. Fire dancing ceremonies called Nestinarstvo.

FINLAND

21st June Midsummer Night Festival. Everywhere. Dancing round the maypole in Swedishspeaking Aland Islands; dancing and 'kokko' bonfires in Helsinki. Special Midsummer Night festivals at Aavasaksa and Rovaniemi in Lapland to celebrate Midnight Sun.

FRANCE

30th June Tarascon, Bouches-du-Rhone. Festival of the Tarasque; commemorates the founding of the city by the eight survivors of an encounter with a savage monster. Noisy, with the monster ejecting fire. Dancing.

GERMANY

Mid-July <u>Dinkelsbuehl, Northern Bavaria</u>. Kinderzeche (Children's Feast). Re-enactment of episodes in the Thirty Years War when the town was besieged by Swedes and saved by the children. Begins in unchildlike way with beer-sampling in the meadows. Next morning the boys' band, playing lustily, marches through the city in costume. Play in market hall; processions, sword dances.

GREECE

- April (Holy week) Great celebrations outdoors on Easter Sunday. Lambs roasted on spits, folkdancing in costume.
- 10th-20th Apr. Kalymnos Island. Dipnos Agapis, farewell dinner on the occasion of the sailing of the sponge divers. Folkdancing.
- 1st May (St. George's Day) Asi-Gonia, Crete. 'Milking of Sheep' competition; free milk for all in the afternoon; fair and folkdancing.
- 21st May Aghi Eleni. Anastenaria; dancing barefoot on live coals by adherents of the cult.

HOLLAND

25th May Urk. Vlaggetjesdag (Flag Day). Celebrations by the inhabitants of this former island in the former Zuyder Zee, to mark opening of eel-fishing season. Traditional costume.

HUNGARY

Sept. (3rd week) Gyongyos, Northern Hungary. Celebration of the vintage; gipsy entertainments and merriment.

ITALY

2nd May Coculli, l'Aquila. Processione dei Serpari (Festival of the Serpents).

Statue of St.Dominic carried through the streets, covered with live snakes.

Women wear regional costume; men carry snakes round their shoulders.

Commemorates miracle performed by the saint in which the snakes lost their venom.

LUXEMBOURG

4th June Echternach. Medieval religious dancing procession (Whit Tuesday 9 a.m.).

Starting signal sounded on enormous bell given by Emperor Maximilian in 1512.

Culminates at shrine of St.Willbrord.

NORWAY

- April (Easter) Kasasjok and Kautokeino, Finmark. Colourful Lapp weddings if any Lapps are getting married.
- 23rd June Midsummer Eve celebrations. All over Norway. Bonfires round lakes and fjords in the night-time daylight. Eating, drinking, singing, dancing. At Voss, in the fjord country, children stage rustic weddings.

POLAND

June (mid-month) Cracow. Summer festival *Cracow Days' with town en fete. Folk-dancing in national costume. On Midsummer Night, garlands are floated down the Vistula.

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FOLAND (Contd.)

Sept. (1st week) Warsaw. Dozynki; annual harvest festival, when thousands come to the city to give folkdancing displays. In September, Zakopane, in the Tatra Mountains, celebrates autumn with wild, whirling dances by Tatra Highlanders.

PORTUGAL

23rd-24th June Braga. Festival of St.John. Dancing couples jump over bonfire, and endeavour to light dried artichokes. Proof of live if it burns well.

ROMANIA

- April Spring festivities in <u>Southern Carpathians</u>. The Simbra Oilor, when shepherds leave for mountains with flocks. Dragaica dance by men dressed as women carrying swords and flags.
- 21st July Mount Gaina, Apuseni Mountains. 'Young Girls Fair', attended by thousands of peasants from regions of Hunedoara, Crisana and Aries. Begins with loud blasts on shepherds' horns.
- August (whole month) Sinaia, Bucarest, Mamaia. Festival of Romanian Folk-singing, dancing, and costume. Dances and national dress from all over the country. Biggest performances 23rd-24th August, national holidays.

SPAIN

- 7th-14th Apr. Holy week. Most important fiestas of Spanish year, held almost everywhere. At Seville, great processions organized by the Brotherhoods (Cofradias). Arrival of various images is announced by singers. Big processions in Granada and in the Albaicin district (procession of Gipsies at dawn); Arcos de la Frontera in Cadiz; Esparraguera in Catalonia; Molins de Rey in Barcelona. (Passion Plays).
- 4th-12th Oct. <u>Lugo (Galicia)</u>. Fairs and festivities of St. Froilan. Octupus festivities in which all the town turns out to eat octupus. Folkdancing.

SWEDEN

- 30th Apr. Walpurgis Night. Celebrated in every town and village in Sweden to welcome the arrival of Spring - it usually snows or rains. Bonfires to frighten off witches; dancing and singing.
- 21st-22nd June Midsummer. Dancing round maypoles from mid-afternoon until late at night.

 Girls wear best dresses to admire sunset and sunrise which occur within half
 an hour of each other.

Present from Hungary

Magda Ossko, who you will remember came over and taught us hungarian dances last summer, has sent the Society a gift as a souvenir of her visit. It comprises four long-playing records of Hungarian music spanning ten centuries, and a book written in both English and Hungarian giving the history and notes of the music. The records are fascinating and start with folk songs showing Chinese and Turkish influence, and work through Gregorian Chants and Magyar orchestral playing, right up to the work of Liszt. In her accompanying letter, Magda suggests that we might like to listen to these lovely records at our weekend gatherings, or at the next Swansea Course, or perhaps after a class. We are very grateful to Magda, and have sent her our thanks for this lovely gift.

After a period of inactivity as far as public performances are concerned, we have had a short but very active period of successful and enjoyable demonstrations and I am very grateful to everyone who participated. I am happy to report a very promising beginning to the year at class. Our numbers are consistent and we have a few extra men, although a few more would help things enormously. The standard of dancing is now consistently very good, and we hope soon to start work on new dances and items for performance. The small music group has made a very promising start and it is hoped to utilise this more at class as the number and type of musicians increase. Now for a short review of demonstrations:

22nd November

At the suggestion of Henry Morris, the organisers of a "Jugoslav Evening" at the City of London College invited us to dance. The hall was small and packed with students, and we had just enough room to give two short demonstrations of Serbian and Macedonian dances. The atmosphere very quickly warmed up, and after the demonstrations and items by the band, the audience was invited to join in a few dances. Due to the band, and the confined space, the right sort of atmosphere for the 'kolo' developed, and when the band later played at random I was amazed at the speed, liveliness, and dexterity of our dancers; in a lively Zikino the 2nd Secretary from the Embassy and the Director of the Tourist Office joined in, the latter dancing with great gusto. After some Jugoslav wine at a local pub, we went home after an exciting and very enjoyable evening.

24th November

A cold Friday evening at Euston Station found eight members of the group waiting for the Manchester train with much luggage, including costumes and Jerry's large tapan (Macedonian drum). Alan Williams of the Barlow International Folk Dance Group, in co-operation with the Manchester Education Committee, had organized a day's course in International Folk Dancing - on this occasion Balkan Dancing. This is the first of what will possibly be an annual course, and I hope the Society will give some backing as it has on this occasion, and expand its activities in the Midlands.

The course was both enjoyable and successful; having some of the group there to demonstrate and help the teaching made things so much easier for me. As far as the course was concerned, it was wonderful to have a group of people who responded so well and which included a large number of young dancers. At the evening's dance we gave several spontaneous demonstrations of Macedonian dances, which gave the audience a chance to see dancers and costumes in action - for many the first occasion. During the evening, Lt. Col. Henry Baldrey, former Managing Editor of the "Folklorist" an excellent magazine no longer in publication, presented to the Barlow Group his annual trophy for their efforts during the year in promoting folkdancing. It was nice to see Mourrie Pfeffer and Mora, who are now living in Manchester, and also Mary Thompson, an old 'Balkanite' who read of our activities in the 'Manchester Evening News'.

I am very grateful to Alan and his friends, who made us so comfortable during the weekend, and we all send our best wishes for the group's future success. The journey back was lively, starting in grand style with some kolos on the station before the train left. Vladislava, or as we know her 'Vali', kept us all in good spirits throughout the weekend.

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BALKAN DIARY cont'd.

27th November

To celebrate the Jugoslav National Day, the British Jugoslav Society gave a reception for the Ambassador and his staff at Chelsea Town Hall, and at fairly short notice about a dozen of us gave two short demonstrations of Serbian and Macedonian dances. Our dancing was again lively and spirited, helped no doubt by the excellent wine. His Excellency was beaming all over his face, and the Cultural Attache, who was very pleasantly surprised, has asked us to dance at the Embassy on a future date. Another compared our dancing to 'Kolo', the professional group in Belgrade. (The teamwork of the group is now excellent, and the dancing has now developed spontaneity and verve - despite a change of dancers on each occasion, no variation in our standard of dancing was noticed. Jerry is now beginning to play the tapan like a 'native'.)

4th December

Hickie Borman, the firm of travel agents, asked us to dance at an evening they were sponsoring at the Bull Hotel, East Sheen. The atmosphere was a little flat at first, but after some dancing in which the audience participated, things became too animated, as far as some of the guests were concerned.

The Manager of the firm was very complimentary about our dancing. He had travelled regularly in Jugoslavia and thought that we equalled many groups he had seen.

There should be nothing further to report until the S.I.F.D. Show at Ealing, but several unofficial events are scheduled. We have some new dances to sort out, songs to learn. The music group will continue to meet somewhere in 'Paddington Mews-land'. We still have vacancies for men so that we can commence work on new dances and revive those neglected during this year's activities.

POLISH

On the 20th December, the Polish Class were invited to entertain the London Recl Club at their Christmas Dance. The latter was a gay and friendly affair, and our two ten-minute sessions were very well received.

An evening of Polish dance and song was held at the Holborn School of Languages in December. The two groups concerned, "Oskar Goldberg" and "Iskria", were both under the tutelage of Olgo Jeromska and they showed a variety of dances from most regions, the Gorals excepted. On the whole, the performance was very good and the costumes were of a high standard. The usual dances, Krakowiak, Kuwaviak, Cberek, and Mazur, were all included. There was, unfortunately, the common fault of underrehearsal, but nevertheless it was most pleasant to see a complete programme of Polish dances and I hope to see our group staging a similar venture in the not too distant future.

BALAJAIKA/DUNAV

On Friday, 5th January, the Balalaika Dance Group and the Dunav Band presented an evening of music, songs, and dances at Battersea Town Hall in co-operation with the Borough of Wandsworth. It was very well attended by a most enthusiastic audience. Looking around, I saw several familiar faces and a whole host of delighted strangers. As this performance was so well received, let's hope other groups will try to get a booking here although the stage space and lighting are obviously limited.

It is some time since I have seen the Balalaika group perform, in fact some years. They have improved out of all recognition - in dancing ability, repertoire, and costumes, but there are a few criticisms I should like to make, so I will get them out of the way first. Part of the music was on tape and this came over quite clearly with very little distortion. The live music was provided by two accordions and two balalaikas, but for all practical purposes only one accordion came over. From where I sat in the balcony, one accordion was almost invisible in the wings and the two balalaikas were completely drowned, for which I blame the placing of the microphones as there were plenty available. In fact, one man spent the entire evening shifting them back and forth between items. All audiences love the men's spectacular leaps and turns, but please could we have them in time with the music? The girls managed their fast spins and turns in time so I don't see why the men shouldn't also. Despite this, their steps are most spectacular and varied.

Items worth special mention were two dances by three girls in long, flowing dresses in rich colours and beautifully decorated in gold. Also a puppet dance in jerky stylized movements in which a postman delivers a letter calling away the man of the house and then makes advances to the lady, who to her credit rebuffs him. Full marks here for make-up and costumes, and what a delightful hobby horse for the man to ride away on. Then the wrestlers dance - two small figures fighting and toppling over near the edge of the stage, but in the end revealed as one man doubled over on hands and feet. This must be a most uncomfortable and exhausting dance, requiring very good balance and timing.

The outstanding item for me was the Georgian dance performed by just one couple. The girl glided round the stage as if on wheels and the man's precise footwork was beautifully executed. The costumes were also excellent and the total effect every bit as good as the professional Georgian company that came over recently. What a pity; names of soloists were not given in the programme. These two well deserved it.

The Dunav Band performed with what we have come to accept as their inevitably high standard. They presented a varied programme both in musical style and instrumental arrangement. Music came from Bulgaria, Rumania, Greece, Albania and Yugoslavia. Our Balkan enthusiasts will know how varied music from Yugoslavia alone can be. I know a lot of hard work and long rehearsal hours go into their performances but it certainly pays off.

Different instruments were featured in different items, but solos were given by John Baldwin on mandolin playing a very tricky, lively tune from Rumania, backed by the group, and another solo accordion item was played by Susan Coppard. This was also from Rumania and was called Adio Ghiocei - Farewell to the Snowdrops. It was a rather sad piece of music which didn't really display the accordionist's talent to best advantage.

The Dunav Band were fortunate in having with them two singers, Paula Gecevic and Nadia Letsky, who sang Yugoslav songs with that magnificent hard tone typical of Eastern Europe and so difficult for us to copy. Both added liveliness and charm to the performance and a nice touch of colour from their own costumes. The audience also

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had a chance to join in singing the chorus of one song - Op Zica Zica - which they did with enthusiasm if little else. The words were printed in anglicised phonetics in the programme and the house lights raised for the occasion.

The Band also played a Bulgarian tune, Sedi Donka, which has mixed rhythms in three bar sequences and is most excising to listen to. I hope they will attempt more of these difficult rhythm pieces in future, as to me they are the essence of Balkan music. Also, how about shattering us one day with the zurla, or the Macedonian bagpipes?

Battersea Town Hall obviously has its limitations especially from a dancer's promption. Like so many town halls, the stage was built for public speaking and not for dancing. Dancers can nearly always do with twice the space available, and the Balalaika group managed extremely well. Only in their last item - Hopak - did they look really crowded. I didn't go back-stage but I imagine the wings must have been somewhat inadequate too as both band and dancers had difficulty in getting off at times.

Another drawback was the lighting. There were no movable spotlights at all, only fixed spots along the walls of the auditorium plus stage lighting. The lights were only dimmed once for the dancers and then they went down in jerks as if being turned off bulb by bulb. With this one exception, we were treated to full lighting throughout, but surely there could have been some change in main colour for the dancers and something less than full strength for the Band's love songs.

The printed programme was small but adequate. I only wish a complete list of artists' names had been given and the names of the solo dances. The musicians came off much better in this respect, especially as Henry Morris introduced each member of the Band individually.

The show as a whole was well presented and item followed item without a hitch. There were none of those long embarrassing pauses one so often gets in amateur shows and this was no mean feat with only two groups, cramped conditions, and a lot of costume-changing for the dancers. I hope more small groups and classes will follow this example in mutual co-operation and be bold enough to present similar shows in the near future.

In great expectations,

FRANCES HORROCKS

S.I.F.D. CLASSES 1967/68

At CHRISTOPHER HATTON SCHOOL, Laystall Street, Rosebery Avenue, E.C.1

Monday	7.00 to	8.00	Spanish; beginners	Felisa Victoria
Monday	8.00 to	9.30	Spanish; intermediate & advanced	Felisa Victoria
Monday	6.00 to	8.00	General European; advanced	Margery Latham
Monday	8.00 to	10.00	Polish	Betty Harvey
Thursday	7.00 to	8.00	Flamenco; beginners	Felisa Victoria
Thursday	8.00 to	9.30	Flamenco; intermediate	Felisa Victoria

At HUGH MYDDELTON SCHOOL, Corporation Row, Clerkenwell Green, E.C.1

Tuesday	6.30	to	7.30	Balkan;	beginners	Ken Ward
Tuesday	7.30	to	9.30	Balkan;	intermediate & advanced	Ken Ward
Wednesday	7.00	to	9.00	General	European; beginners	Margery Latham

On Friday, 6th January 1968, at Battersea Town Hall, our friends The Balalaika Dance Group and the Dunay Orchestra put on an excellent show.

The programme was shared more or less equally between the two participants and the Balalaika Group began with a Wedding Dance from Bukovina, an area which les at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains. The stage was full of colour from their gaily embroidered costumes and elaborate headdresses. This, together with their perfect harmony and teamwork, set the scene for the rest of the items in the programme. Remaining in the Carpathians, the men next presented a dance from Hutsel which was supposedly developed from a Scythian dance in honour of the Sun God a thousand years ago. From Carpathia, the Group moved on to Moldavia, Georgia, Siberia, and the Ukraine, and I felt that the most enjoyable dances from this section were:-

- 1) The Wrestlers' Dance from Siberia.
- 2) The Puppet Dance depicting a peasant, preparing to go off to war, his wife whom he leaves at home, and the local postman who has designs on the peasant's wife.
- 3) Rukodelnitzi a needlewomen's dance from the Ukraine. Here the girls interlace their coloured ribbons in an intricate pattern so as to demonstrate the weaving and embroidery of a carpet. I thought this was most effective.

As usual too, a polished performance was presented by the Dunav Orchestra. Beginning with a lively dance tune from Yugoslavia, Zabalka, followed by Daichevo from Bulgaria, and Podrimsko, a traditional piece from Albania. Following this, we also visited Greece, Macedonia, Croatia, Serbia, and back to Bulgaria again. Several songs were sung by Nadia Letsky and Paula Gecevic, both looking very attractive in their sparkling costumes, and Henry Morris had all the ladies in the audience swooning when he sang KAFU MI DRAGA ISPICA, a Yugoslavian lovesong. Other items of note were solos by Susan Coppard on the accordion and John Baldwin on mandolin.

The programme ended at 10.15 p.m. with a gay and energetic Hopak with the men showing off their leaps, jumps, and other trick steps to the girls. The majority of the Russian music for the Balalaika Group's dancing was live, and played by Olive Linsell on the accordion backed also by two balalaikas and another squeezebox.

For those of you who missed this show on the 6th January, don't miss it next time it is presented - and there surely must be a next time.

BARNEY SALMON

TEACHER'S CERTIFICATE

We are pleased to announce that, in addition to Frances Horrocks and Lily Southgate, Peter Oakley was also awarded a S.I.F.D. teacher's certificate at the end of last year.

CONGRATULATIONS

To Dickie and Geof Gleeson on the birth of their daughter, Sula Kate, who weighed in at 81b. 8cz. on the 9th December. Our best wishes to all the Gleesons (now four - Mum, Dad, Finn and Sula).

To 'Vali' Vuckovic and David Saunders on their recent engagement. Our best wishes for their future happiness.

PROGRAMME	FOR	SUNDAYS

Musicians

M.C.

February 4th Cecil Sharp House

Folk Band Cliff Beck Bert Price Cliff Beck

11th Dance Centre Cliff Beck Cliff Beck 18th SPECIAL LEAP YEAR VALENTINE DANCE at the Dance Centre. (See page 3)

25th Dance Centre Cliff Beck Roland Minton

March 3rd SPECIAL SPRING DANCE at Cecil Sharp House. (See page 3)

Time: 7 to 10 p.m. Admission: 5/- for non-members, 4/- for members. (N.B. The Spring Dance on 3rd March will commence at 6.30 p.m.)

WEEKENDS AWAY

22nd/24th March

HALSWAY MANOR WEEKEND. Details of this house, and how to get there etc. have been given in previous issues. Response has been good but there are a few vacancies left. Applications for bookings should be sent to Michael Clark, 14 Weldon Place, Church Crookham, Aldershot, Hants. The full cost of the weekend will be £3 (plus 6/- for Friday supper, if required), with reductions for children. Cheap rail fare is available for travel on trains leaving London at 6.30 p.m. and later, saving 25/6.

WHAT'S ON

February 14th International FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL "SEE HOW THEY DANCE" at Ealing Town Hall. Details on page 3.

16th/17th The Folk Festival 1968 of the E.F.D.S.S. at the Royal Albert Hall. This year's special guests are La Sabotee Sancerroise from France, Sumadija Yugoslav Group, and The Spinners. Tickets from the R.A.H. or Cecil Sharp House.

20th Tower Hamlets (nee Bethnal Green) Festival. International folk dance competition. York Hall, 7.30 p.m. (Children's section approx. 5 p.m.) Admission 2/6.

21st Manitas de Plata, flamenco guitarist, at the Royal Albert Hall, 8 p.m. Tickets 5/- to 30/-.

March 1st Spanish Fiesta, with Rafael de Sevilla, at Battersea Town Hall, 7.45 p.m Tickets from the Town Hall, 6/-, 5/-, 3/-.

22nd/24th FOLKDANCERS' WEEKEND AT HALSWAY MANOR. Details above.

April 5th An Easter Dance run by Watford International Folk Dance Group.

The Memorial Hall, Letchmore Heath, Watford. 7.30 p.m. Dunay Band.

Admission 6/-.

Owing to the vagaries of the B.B.C., the 45-minute film of CIOCIRLIA Folk Ensemble of Romania was not shown on 10th December as previously announced on this page. It was, in fact, shown on Christmas Day. It turned out to be well worth waiting for. So often these films of folk dancing are very disappointing, but this one was excellent and showed the patterns of the dances, the intricacies of the steps, and the agility of the men very well indeed.