

S.I.F.D. NEWS

JULY 1971



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This month's cover is by Eddis Thomas.

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SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

Officers of the Committee:-

Chairman:	Bert Price, 22 Sunnysdale Road, London, S.E.12. Home: 01-852-0509	Secretary:	Dorothy Bryan, Flat 1, Braunton Mansions, 28 Rosebery Avenue, London, E.C.1. Home: 01-837-2438
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Treasurer:	Harry Whitaker, 29 Sherbrook Gardens, Winchmore Hill, London, N.21. Home: 01-360-4965	Membership Secretary:(ex-officio Member):-	Roland Minton, 131 Holly Street, London, E.8.
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Demonstration Secretary:	Margery Lathan, 14 Beechwood Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey. Home: 01-876-7055 Office: 01-930-7022 Ext.3447
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BADGES S.I.F.D. Badges for lapel, scooter and car, @ 17¹/₂p, 37¹/₂p and 62¹/₂p respectively can be obtained from our Membership Secretary, Roland Minton.

RECORDS Our records are available from Magnegraph Recording Co., Ltd., 1 Hanway Place, London, W.1. Price 85p each plus postage.

BOOKS Our books are published by Pergamon Press and are available, to order, through any bookseller, price 50p each.

Discounts are obtainable on records and books purchased by members for their own use. Full price should be paid at the time of purchase, and then discounts can be claimed by applying to Frances Horrocks, 112 Kingston Avenue, North Cheam, Sutton, Surrey.

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SECRETARY'S NOTES

The last Committee Meeting was held on the 6th June and attended by all Committee Members.

Matters Discussed:

Membership: 319.

Silver Jubilee. It was agreed to charge an entrance fee of 10/- to the Silver Jubilee Dance. Jubilee Booklet: The response has not been very good but Lily Southgate who is editing it, has had a few contributions to start work on and closing date for contributions was 30th June, as announced last month.

Safari. The response was far greater than we anticipated. We had to draw the line at 70 and about 20 people had to be told we were full.

Children's Dance. Will Green and Alan McLean seem to have this well under control and the response has been very good indeed.

Swansea. All three groups are now covered and applications are slowly coming in.

All the old 78" records have now been sold.

Other matters discussed: Publicity, demonstrations, half-yearly General Meeting.

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I, like so many others, arrived home from the Safari dead tired after having spent an exceptionally enjoyable day. I should like to thank Peter Oakley on behalf of everybody who was there for marking out such a lovely route. The "Bull" was one of the loveliest places I have seen; Finchingfield really delightful; Maldon had something for everyone; and the "Green Man" at Herongate an ideal finishing place. Will Green had been over the route with Peter, and then again to put up posters and publicity, and did a splendid job. Roland Minton excelled himself as M.C. and as usual Ian Willson and his group put life into the party. Caroline Thomas and Harry de Caux provided the music to make dancing possible and worked terribly hard.

I must say I sat back and admired the dancers' stamina. They just kept going. The children had a whale of a time. Grant, the little blonde angel (?) had three fizzy and one still drink and didn't even have to stop the coach on the way home!

I think everyone had a lovely day and the weather was very kind to us. I should like to say sorry to the people who were too late to book, but next time I hope you will remember to book early.

DOROTHY BRYAN, Hon. Secretary

FOLKDANCE SAFARI

It went well - even the weather.

Probably someone else will write a report of the successful Safari but I want to say a few words on the publicity aspect. It must have been a success because people want another safari - this year!! Talk has already been heard about repeating the event, perhaps in September. Shall we??? BUT - who is going to do the work??

As your publicity wallah, I am satisfied. The best way to tell the world that international folk dancing is enjoyable is to show them how much you enjoy it, and this we certainly did - and so did the several hundred people who watched. They will remember us when they have forgotten the Morris Dancers. And didn't the children work hard! They gave out nearly one thousand leaflets, and with help from one or two adults they collected for us. Roland will tell you how much.

In addition, thousands of people who didn't see us, read or heard about us because there was at least one mention of the event on radio, and several issues of local papers mentioned us in advance, and a report will be in at least two.

My job as publicity secretary is easy if you all get busy and do something. The more you do, the more I can tell the world that you are doing it, but if you plod along (doing worthwhile dancing of course, but nothing more venturesome) it is not news. SO - Lesson One in publicity for your local group - DO SOMETHING, then you can tell the world you are doing it - and if you do it well, all the better.

May I say that one of the reasons why this event went so well was the reasonableness and self-discipline of the people who came. Everyone who came seemed ready to try to make the thing an enjoyable day for everyone, and there were no laggards, no grumblers, no people wanting something we couldn't supply, and everyone came when called. What an easy thing it is to organize willing people.

WILL GREEN

CHILDREN STILL WELCOME

Many people have told me they are very likely to bring children to Millbank School on Saturday afternoon, 3rd July, for the children's special event. Enough have definitely told me they are coming for me to say that we are nearly booked up. Please DON'T arrive on spec, but please tell me, at 01-703-4008, that you are bringing children and I will tell you whether all the numbers are made up. We can take about 70; over 60 have said definitely Yes. The price is 10p for children; adults (who will either help or keep out of the way) free. Cold drinks will be available.

WILL GREEN

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

University College, Cardiff

Dear Lily,

The theatre critic of the FINANCIAL TIMES, in his review of Dora Stratou's Greek Dance Group (quoted in the June SIFD NEWS together with a brief editorial comment) states that the group's "authentic" dances are not suitable for the theatre. Those who were unable to see the performance deserve to read the opposite view, lest they should be discouraged from seeing the group at the next opportunity.

It is clear that personal taste in styles of dancing is involved, as well as authenticity versus choreography, but I have rarely enjoyed a folkdance performance so much, on stage or off. The whole presentation had that effortless quality that looks natural but indicates careful preparation. This is essential even for an "authentic" performance; where does "presentation" stop and "choreography" start? The dances were interspersed with songs and instrumental music; the continuity was good; the costumes, instruments and rhythms were fascinating and varied; and the music and dances were excitingly and excellently performed (judged by my inexperienced ear and eye). The programme notes were interesting and informative. It is true that most Greek dances are line or circle dances, but I myself found great variety in the dances and the steps. The atmosphere was intimate, but perhaps I should not have felt this if I had been sitting further back; the only drawback was that one could not leap on to the stage and join on the end of the line! I would gladly have sat through the whole lot again. Never before have I taken the trouble to thank the director personally after a stage performance.

I am not a member of the Welsh Language Society; I do not go round Wales in the dark attacking English roadsigns with green paint; I am just an Englishman who likes to see Welsh words spelt correctly! Hence these belated corrections to the misprints in Sue Clark's article in the January SIFD NEWS (made with her approval and delayed originally by the postal strike). The word "twmpatl" could perhaps be Mexican, but the Welsh equivalent of "barn dance" is "twmpath dawms"; "twmpath" means "hillock" or "tussock". The Llangadfan Dances are so called because they are recorded in a letter (now in the National Museum of Wales) written by William Jones of Llangadfan (1729-1795). In this letter he describes three dances similar in style to certain English dances, and various other figures. Y Ddafad Gornïog (The Horned Ram) is a simple Welsh dance, collected at Corwen, that used to be popular at weddings. Sue's brief notes give the bare bones of the dance, but more details (too long to give here) would be required for an authentic Welsh performance; otherwise it would become nothing more than an uninteresting version of the Circassian Circle.

JOHN RIGBY

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

One of our members has pointed out to me that, having printed a review of the Dora Stratou Greek dances from the FINANCIAL TIMES, I ought, in all fairness, to print a contrasting view from an equally eminent critic from the OBSERVER which I give below.

"At Sadler's Wells the Greek Dances of Dora Stratou fall like spring rain on a heavily trampled arena. In the last few years we have seen many folk companies who take a country dance, tart it up in satin, lace it with virtuoso acrobatics and serve it as a cabaret entertainment. From behind the Iron Curtain, in particular, have come troupes which make the Gopak look as though it had been born at the end of Vladivostok pier.

But what this large company (Dora Stratou) offers has every appearance of authenticity. The dances are kept within the bounds possible to village performers - and, in fact, some of them look like real rustics having an evening off. The steps are, as in all real folk art, intensely complicated but within a narrow range, constantly surprising us by unexpected twists and odd rhythms. The musicians make sounds which have surely echoed across the valleys for centuries. And the successions of costumes - superb, infinitely varied and ravishing in colour and design - add up to a display which any fashion boutique might envy.

The programme suggests the devoted research which has gone into the making of this rare assembly and its links with classical Greece. We are reminded of Turkey and Egypt, of Russia and the East, of Attic vases and Etruscan tombs. This is the real thing, as rare as unpasteurised milk."

ED.

FOLKDANCING - AUTHENTIC or CHOREOGRAPHED

Having read our Chairman's very diplomatic and impartial on the above subject in May, and in June Lily's quotation from the Financial Times about the Dora Stratou Greek dancers, I should like to add a few observations.

Clement Crisp was quite right in his remarks about this group needing to be seen in its own environment to come over well. I was lucky enough to do so at the open-air theatre in Piræus, having just landed after that wonderful journey down the Dalmation coast, on to Corfu, and through the breathtaking Corinth Canal. The magic was all there then in the soft warm night with dramatic lighting on the dancers. However, I expect I was full of slivovitz and not retsina on that occasion as it was a Yugoslav ship I was on! I could certainly have watched entranced for very much longer then, though I don't think even in that atmosphere and place could they have got away with that rather awful 'Rain' dance!

However, to get back to our - the S.I.F.D. - problem of authenticity at all costs, or choreography when we give stage performances; surely we must aim at as much of the former as is possible without turning our backs altogether on the latter. We simply cannot afford, when we give public shows, to aim only at the committed folklorists and not the larger and generally interested public. May I also point out that for some countries it doesn't necessarily

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mean you are 'tarting up' the costumes for stage use directly you sew a sequin on them. Likewise again, dances can be exciting of step and shape, and be difficult to execute, whilst still being authentic. By now you will have guessed that I am referring to some of my beloved Polish dancing which is by nature extrovert and often showy with its speed and many fast turns, its leaps and its lifts. I wish some of those dancers who nutter "choreographed" directly the dance isn't in a simple circle with eyes downcast and feet not too many inches from the ground could see an Oberek at a country festivity in Poland!

So, as our Chairman advises, let us get on with the dancing and enjoy both kinds if we can, the simple social and the more specialised and difficult types suitable for entertaining others. However, if some dancers like and approve of only one kind, let them remember to 'live and let live', and not be too critical of the other. The Society would probably be non-existent if it didn't have both.

BETTY HARVEY

ED. NOTE. I hope readers will not think I am belabouring the topic of authenticity versus choreography, and in particular the Dora Stratou Greek Group, in this issue by including three items on this subject, but three different members have taken the trouble to put their points of view and I do feel, anyway, that it is a subject of interest to all.

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P O L I S H P A R T Y

Saturday, 17th July

Hugh Myddelton School, 7 - 10 p.m.

Come and join in the general dancing, watch some very informal demonstrations, meet Zbigniew Strzalkowski, who will be teaching Polish dances at Swansea this year, and have some refreshments!

Admission by supper ticket - 30p.

Please come in costume.

There will only be a limited number of tickets available at the door, so get yours in advance from any member of the Polish class.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Betty Harvey (teacher of the Polish class) has moved and is now living at la Charlwood Place, S.W.1. Tel: 834 3980.

AFFILIATED GROUPS

KENSINGTON SLAVONIC GROUP meet at Fox School, Kensington Place, Notting Hill Gate, W.8., from 7 to 10 p.m. every Wednesday and Thursday evening and would be very pleased to welcome new members. The Group perform Czechoslovakian dances and are taught by Mrs. Hedda Jolly-Klingerova.

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GUILDFORD INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCERS meet on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Thursday every month from 8.00 to 10.00 p.m. at St. Nicolas Small Hall, Millmead Terrace, Guildford, Surrey. General European dancing. Beginners welcome. Meetings 15p weekly. Full details from John Driver, 77 Long Gore, Farncombe, Godalming, Surrey.
Telephone: Godalming 6259 (Home); Wormley 2122 (Work).

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BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE GROUP meet every Thursday evening at Handsworth Wood Girls School, Church Lane, Birmingham 20, from 7.15 to 9.15 p.m. as an Evening Institute Class. Secretary: Miss P. Baker, 27 Vernon Avenue, Birmingham 20.

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WOODVALE INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE GROUP meet at The Church Hall, Quarry Hill, Borough Green (near Maidstone) every Tuesday from 7.30 to 10 p.m. New members welcome, age 15 upwards. Under 18's 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ p; over 18's 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ p. Refreshments included.

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FOLKESTONE DISTRICT NATIONAL DANCE GROUP meet every Tuesday evening at the South Kent College of Technology, Folkestone. Full details from the Secretary, Mrs. Evra Jordan, 62 Marine Parade, Hythe, Kent.

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INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE SOCIETY OF SUSSEX meet every Thursday evening during University term times, from 7.30 to 10 p.m. Meetings are held at the University of Sussex, Falmer (on the Brighton/Lewes road) in the Old Refectory, Falmer House. Secretary: Miss Janet Liddell, Falmer House, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, Sussex.

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HARROW FOLK DANCE CLUB meet during term time, as an evening class on Mondays at Pinner Park School (Melbourne Avenue entrance) off Headstone Lane, Harrow, Middx., 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. and out of term time as a Club (usual admission 15p, students 10p). Enquiries to Harrow Folk Dance Club, 29 Tenby Avenue, Harrow HA3 8RU or telephone 01-907-7354 or 01-863-1594.

AFFILIATED GROUPS....Contd.

BARLOW INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE GROUP meet every Tuesday evening throughout the normal school terms from 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. at Barlow Hall Evening Centre, Barley Avenue, Manchester 21. International Folk Dances are also run regularly during the season usually on the second Saturday of each month at Barlow Hall Evening Centre. Further information from the Secretary, Miss Elaine Duffett, 185 Brooklands Road, Sale, Cheshire.

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HAVERING INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE GROUP meet at Crowlands Youth Centre, Romford on Thursdays, from 8 p.m.

HUNGARIAN DEMONSTRATION

At the Cecil Sharp House dance on Sunday, 3rd July, a demonstration of the following dances will be given by the Balaton Group.

Tapei Darudobogo (A mixed dance taught by Magda Ossko)
 Sarkozi (A girls' dance from South Hungary)
 Huszar Verbunkos (A men's recruiting dance)
 Vanyai Csardas (A csardas from North Hungary)

Tiszahati Csardas
 Tardona (A girls' dance)
 Gencsi Verbunkos (A men's recruiting dance taught by Magda Ossko)
 Tatabanya Csardas (A csardas for everyone to join in)

KENSINGTON SLAVONIC DANCERS

On Friday, 7th May, the Kensington Slavonic Dancers entered the senior section of the Walthamstow Festival. They danced a Slovak Rhapsody (which is a potpourri of Slovak dances including a Czardas, Valas, axe dance and a singer in between). This programme was most enthusiastically received by both the audience and adjudicators, and with this entry they won the 1st Prize with 97 points and the Walthamstow Music Cup. (For times of meeting of this Group, see page 8).

FRENCH - TURKISH

The French and Turkish classes now meet on alternate Thursdays. 8 to 10 p.m. Pimlico School, Lupus Street, Chelsea, S.W.1.

Turkish on the 1st and 15th July; French on the 8th and 22nd July.

INTERNATIONAL MUSICAL EISTEDDFOD, LLANGOLLEN, WALES6th to 11th July 1971

"There is no doubt that the Llangollen Festival is becoming the most important rendezvous for folkdance groups in the world, and though at the present time primarily for the singer, we prophesy that before long the vivacity, colour, costumes, and camaraderie of folk dancers generally will supersede in importance the prim, prosaic, and haughty singer en masse, and be the sole bringer of crowds to this delightful Welsh countryside.

The biggest daily attendance is that which comes to see the folkdancing demonstrations held generally during the morning of the first day, but the ratio of the time allotted to folkdancing as compared with the singing is infinitesimal. Again, whereas the entrants for the singing competitions seem to be unlimited, there is a definite limitation to the folkdance groups that are accepted, not because of their quality, but to prevent the encroachment on the time required by the singing groups. The whole conception, therefore, appears to be that the folkdancing, which as a whole is a complete divertissement, is the sugar-coating to the pill of listening to the same droned-out choral set pieces. The adjudication in itself is an anachronism in that this monotonous set piece is supposed to be necessary in order to make comparison favourable, yet with folkdancing there can be no set piece. Surely the judgment of the mechanics of either presentation is the only yardstick that can be used and therefore if the set piece were eliminated, listening to more local music and the wider variety of choice would greatly enhance the entertainment value. Consider the parallel of folkdance groups from far and wide having to dance the English "Newcastle" for their first item and being adjudicated thereon with fairness!"

The above is quoted from a 1956 edition of "The Folk Dancer". As the Eisteddfod is with us once again this month, it seemed appropriate to reprint it. The prophesy voiced in the first sentence above did not, unfortunately, come true and the pattern remains the same, with hardly any folkdancing compared with the singing events. However, it is still well worth the trouble to go to Llangollen, making sure you arrive in good time for the start of the competition for parties of not more than 20 dancers demonstrating two well-contrasted traditional folkdances of the dancers' own country, which starts on the Wednesday morning. Also, be careful not to miss the instrumental folk solo or group of not more than six musicians, held on the Thursday afternoon. There is so much going on that it is easy to be in the wrong place at the wrong time and so miss such items as the group of male singers from Sardinia last year who gave a performance of the most marvellous folksinging I have ever heard to a marquee only about a quarter full. So buy the official programme and go through it carefully. The costumes are gorgeous and there is plenty of opportunity to examine them, and also the folk instruments, at close range and take photographs.

Unfortunately, the S.I.F.D. do not participate in this wonderful festival because the rule is that competitors must be performing dances from their own country and we could hardly pose as true Poles, Swedes, Yugoslavs etc. However, one of our affiliated groups, Harrow Green, will be participating this year by doing some English dances. We wish them every success in the competition but are sure they will enjoy themselves whatever the result.

LILY SOUTHGATE

PROGRAMME FOR SOCIAL DANCES

		<u>Musicians</u>	<u>M.C.</u>
Sunday, 4th July	Cecil Sharp House	C.S.H. Band	Roland Minton
18th July	Dance Centre	Cliff Beck & Wilf Horrocks	Peter Oakley
1st August	Cecil Sharp House	C.S.H. Band	George Sweetland

Time: 7 to 10 p.m. Admission: Cecil Sharp House 25p members, 35p non-members.
Dance Centre 20 p members, 25p non-members.

Cecil Sharp House: No.2 Regents Park Road, N.W.1. (Nearest Underground Camden Town)
Dance Centre: 12 Floral Street, W.C.2. (Nearest Underground: Leicester Square)

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On Sunday, 4th July, at the Cecil Sharp House dance a demonstration will be given by the Balaton Hungarian Group. (See page 9).

WHAT'S ON

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- July 4th SIFD HALF-YEARLY GENERAL MEETING. 5 p.m. CECIL SHARP HOUSE
- July 3rd Children's Dance, 2.30 to 4.30 p.m. Millbank School, Erasmus Street, S.W.1. 10p children, adults free. Bookings - Will Green 01-703-4008.
- 5th KAPOS Dance & Music Ensemble from Dombovar, Hungary. 7 p.m. Beecham Grove Hall, Watford.
- 6th/11th International Musical Eisteddfod, Llangollen, N. Wales.
- 7th KAPOS Dance & Music Ensemble from Dombovar, Hungary, 7.30 p.m. Bishops Park Open Air Theatre, Hammersmith.
- 9th KAPOS Dance & Music Ensemble from Dombovar, Hungary, 7.30 p.m. Chingford Assembly Hall.
- 17th Polish Party - See page 7.
- 19th/31st RAJKO Hungarian Gypsy Company of Musicians, Dancers, Singers. Mondays to Fridays, 7.45 p.m. Saturdays 4.15 and 7.45 p.m. Tickets 50p to £1.40. Queen Elizabeth Hall (Festival Hall)
- 22nd/24th The Balalaika Dance Group presents Songs and Dances from the U.S.S.R. at The Place, Duke's Road, off Euston Road, W.C.1. 8 p.m. Tickets 50p, 75p, £1.00 from The Place. Tel: 387 0161

NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE WILL BE EDITED BY SYLVIA FULTON.

ALL MATERIAL FOR PUBLICATION MUST REACH HER BY THE 15TH JULY.
