



Novgorod



Tambov



Orlov



Voronezh



Veraya, Moscow Province

S.I.F.D. NEWS

August 1973



Olonetz



Kursk



Archangel



Tula



Travelling clothes,
central Russia

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This month's cover, showing various regional costumes from
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SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

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Roland Minton.

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

THE CHAIRMAN WRITES....

The classes are now finished until mid-September and, on balance, I am inclined to think that this summer break is too long, welcome though it may be in some respects to class teachers who probably get a bit stale towards the end of the teaching year. Some of the classes are carried on for a few weeks until the middle of July but from then until mid-September our dance activities decrease somewhat and I wonder whether next year a few extra meetings would be welcomed for July and August? If so, please write to the secretary with your requests.

This year of course we have the Swansea Summer School for those fortunate enough to be able to attend, and at the August Cecil Sharp House dance you will be able to meet Jacob and Judith Barkan and practise some Israeli dances with them. It will be a good opportunity for you to study and to emulate their style of dancing, and I hope we shall have a big attendance on this evening.

I hope too for a big attendance at the Greenwich Fair on 8th September which should prove a very enjoyable get-together before the dances and classes get into full swing later in the month. It may be your last chance to dance freely in the open air until next Spring, so do make a particular note of the date. Wilf Horrocks has agreed to play for us and I hope for some demonstrations from many groups in between the dancing. I hope too that everyone who has a costume will bring it along and so add to this colourful event. It will be an ideal place to bring the children since, apart from the dancing, there will be other interesting shows arranged by the local authorities. The date is 8TH SEPTEMBER, at the SUTCLIFFE MEADOWS, opposite The Yorkshire Grey public house, ELTHAM. The nearest station is KIDBROOKE and all details of how to get there will be announced in the September SIFD NEWS.

This year being the 25th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel, it is perhaps appropriate that we should be including Israeli dancing at Swansea this year. It occurs to me too that a little time might be given to thinking about the origins of present-day Israeli dancing and in wondering about the past. There is no doubt that in biblical times the Jews were a dance-loving people; they danced when they were happy and when they were sad, they danced to express their emotions, often impromptu and without music except for singing or wailing, as in fact many primitive peoples still do today. Their dancing was part of life and not, as it is with us today, a social grace.

We can read in the Old Testament how David danced before the Ark, how returning warriors were greeted by dancing, how they danced around a dead herd and so on. However, since it was forbidden to make graven images or paintings of the human form, no drawings exist to give us an idea of how these dances might have looked. With Egyptian and Greek it is easier; many vases and frescoes give us lifelike details which have helped experts to reconstruct (or resurrect) old dance forms.

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After the loss of statehood and the dispersal of the Jews they seem, like the gipsies, to have adopted the dances of those countries in which they may have settled - probably a slow process over many centuries. The Yemenite Jews (those who settled in the Arab state of Yemen in South Arabia) would have changed the least, since their life style probably altered the least, as would that of the Chassidic Jews from the East, but all biblical dances are lost.

The new state of Israel, founded 25 years ago, is comprised of repatriated Jews from many countries who, filled with nationalistic verve, have made the desert bloom in more ways than one. Productive farms have been won in almost impossible situations from an arid soil; new avenues have been explored in every walk of life including silver work, pottery, song and dance. It seems logical that in their spare time the new Israelis would have composed hundreds of songs to express their joy in living, and what more logical than to compose new dances to complement these songs? Where most Western countries have merely revived old dance forms, where Eastern European countries have frozen the dances existant in the 1920/30s, Israel has evolved its own dances to suit the need of the people of the 50s and 60s. In general, all their immigrants have contributed something, the Americans as well as the Poles and the Romanians, the Arabs and the Yemenites and so on. Authentic steps which seem to have suited the mood of this new homogenous society have been taken from them all and have been included in these new dances. Undoubtedly many newly-created dances were short-lived for one reason or another but many seem to have found national acceptance and so have become established in the Israeli folk dance movement and form the nucleus of the Israeli folk dances which we teach in the Society.

As I said, the Israelis have always danced, not only in biblical times but also in the 1900s when the first pioneers came to settle in Palestine and even more so today when an inrush of peoples from every country in the Western world, and from Eastern Europe as well as from Arabia and the Middle East, have provided such a wealth of steps for the people to experiment with and such a host of dances from which to evolve their own nationalistic style and preferences. Their popularity, and no folk dancer in any country which has an inclination towards international folk dancing can deny this popularity, probably stems from the fact that the dances suit our new modern multi-national perceptions and their claim to being Israeli dances needs little corroboration, they could belong to no other people, they are modern Israeli folk dances; their Hora is Israeli, not Romanian (as is their Krakowiak not Polish); their Debkas are Israeli, not Egyptian. I find their dances extremely fascinating and a joy to perform, and I hope we can include more and more in our Social Dance repertoires.

BERT PRICE

ED. NOTE:

It is interesting to compare Bert's views on the borrowing by the Israelis of so many different countries' traditional dance steps and incorporating them into dances which they then claim as their own, with Lucile Armstrong's views on how essential it is to maintain true tradition, and keep only to steps which have evolved naturally from ethnic conditions and surroundings endemic to a specific country (See article on page 9). Perhaps Lucile could be persuaded to let us have her views on Israeli dancing?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.....

Dear Lily,

Catching your Musicians

Reading Alan McLean's plea last month for musicians to turn up and help him realise his 'five-year dream of live music', I thought that perhaps a few observations on how the Polish group has achieved its small ensemble might not come amiss, to him or to anyone else likewise struggling.

First of all, we didn't get our musicians by luck or by waiting for someone to get interested in us. Neither did we have anyone in the group wanting to play rather than dance. We had to make exhaustive enquiries and efforts for many many months before we tracked down a young violinist willing to come along and see what he could do. This meant a part of my teaching fees going towards some payment for his efforts - and in fact this continues all the time whenever we have music provided by any other than our official class pianist.

After getting the violinist a little used to our music, we then went all out to find an accordionist. Somewhere at this point Cliff Beck was encouraging and helpful, and after another long struggle we found Leigh Dyer. For a while he played with our pianist and violinist before we finally acquired a double bass player, which meant we could dispense with piano at performances and have our folk trio at last.

At this stage, having acquired this rather precarious ensemble, I decided to try and make a Polish tape to help consolidate and also to help achieve another ambition of mine, namely to get more Polish dancing into the general repertoire. The S.I.F.D. offered moral and financial help towards this project, and for this I am most grateful. I won't enumerate all the difficulties that beset us before this tape was made. One of the most irritating was finding a time and place where we could all get together for practice, including someone to help me 'prance' for rhythms and tempo, because this sort of thing cannot be mixed with normal class work. On the whole, dancers do not take too kindly to new music; they prefer the old familiar, so one does not get too much enthusiasm from that direction.

I could add that at the same time as getting decent live music one needs a really good concert or so as incentive, and to help with the cost. Again in our case we didn't wait for luck, but 'made' such a concert happen, taking considerable financial risk and incurring a load of worry and hard work en route but well worth it in the end. Of course once you have some musical interest, more is attracted, as demonstrated by Ken Ward's thriving Yugoslav music. In our case we now have a second interested accordionist coming along because he liked what he saw and heard at a concert in which we took part at the Guildhall of London last month.

My other aim, getting more general Polish dancing, hasn't, I confess, yet

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been so successful. However, if I can find from somewhere more energy to pursue and promote it I may eventually achieve it. Meanwhile I am cheered to hear of two outside demonstrations where some of our dances were used, one near Guildford and the other a performance given by children taught by one of our new members using some quite difficult dances and in costume.

Best wishes to Alan and anyone else in the 'live music' struggle.

BETTY HARVEY

THE BULGARIAN DANCERS

I suppose the "purists" will complain that the Pirin Folk Dance and Song Ensemble is just another stage show, but for sheer enjoyment the show must surely have few equals.

The Ensemble was founded in 1954, "in order to find out, preserve and develop the wealthy folklore treasury of Bulgaria." It has three principal groups; a choir of folk singers, an orchestra of folk instruments, and a dance group; but not only can the members sing, play and dance - they can also act. The programme here in England last month included a very clever puppet dance, and an item entitled "A Madcap Playing the Tamboura" in which even the donkey entered into the spirit of the story and joined in the dancing.

I could find only one jarring note in the whole show, and that was the choice of costumes for the finale - the black sequined dresses and pink headdresses seemed more suitable for a circus. Otherwise, the costumes were very rich and beautiful and the choreography was excellent. The whole show was faultless and full of fun.

Whatever we say about stage shows not being true folk dancing, they do play their part in keeping folk traditions alive and presenting them to the world; and I am sorry for all the people who missed seeing the Pirin Ensemble.

MARGARET JOYNER

THE DEMONSTRATION SPOT

It is rare that anyone replies to a request for opinion or information when it is made through these pages to you, the readers; but for once I can say that in the case of my article about the demonstration spot at Cecil Sharp House the response was good. A number of people have spoken to me personally, one has written, one or two telephoned, and you have read the published letters received by the Editor. Such a response is very very rare. In view of this response, I will continue to arrange for most first-Sunday-in-the-month dances to have a demonstration item. Thank you for the appreciation. In fact, no-one said No, though the obvious question of time to be allowed was mentioned by some people. We are going to try the system of putting the demonstration on at about 8 p.m. for about 12 minutes. This, with a couple of dances afterwards, brings us to the interval.

For the September dance we shall have as guests two young singers of contemporary folksongs, Rosaline and Richard Hone, of South London. Richard writes most of their songs, with present-day themes for his subjects. Both of them sing and play the guitar - 6-stringed and 12-stringed. I have heard them and I think you will enjoy this item.

NEXT YEAR'S CLASS LIST

I wish I could say the same about the request for information about the classes as I have about the demonstration spot. No-one, not a class member, not a class leader or teacher, has given me information or asked to be included in the next class list. Unless I have information by the 14th August I cannot include your class in a printed Class List. I need the day of the week, the times, the grade, place, and cost if any; also whether it is an I.L.E.A. class or otherwise sponsored.

WILL GREEN

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DANCE CENTRE

Although I haven't had it confirmed by the Committee, rumour has it that the Dance Centre at 12 Floral Street will be demolished early next year. This building was, some years ago, about to be pulled down but was given a reprieve under some sort of Building Preservation scheme as the building has, or had, some historical/archeological value. However, it seems that this reprieve has now been rescinded and the building will be demolished, under the Covent Garden development scheme. If any reader feels strongly that the building should be preserved, he/she is invited to write to Mr. G.R. Holland, Covent Garden Development Team, 1-4 King Street, London W.C.2.

If the Dance Centre is to be demolished, it will, of course, mean that we shall have to find another hall for Sunday dances, but no doubt the Committee will be considering this. ED.

Once again the International Eisteddfod at Llangollen provided a programme of folkdancing and singing of a high standard. The adjudication was as good and fair as ever, and this year the sun shone as well, making the scene more warm and colourful than ever.

The opening concert on the first night of the Festival was a two-hour performance by PIRIN, the Bulgarian folkdance group. They gave a very enjoyable performance on the whole and were excellent dancers but a little too stagey and choreographed. These groups tend to run one dance into another to form a 'suite', which rather loses the identity of the individual folkdances. One appreciates all the more the folkdance competition section of the Eisteddfod where one sees traditional dances, unadulterated, performed to authentic music and as far as possible in the original style. I thought, however, that the singing of the Bulgarian girls was excellent.

This year teams from Wales, Brittany, Ireland, Germany, Scotland, Romania, Denmark, Portugal, Sweden, Spain, Belgium and The Netherlands took part in the folkdance competition. There is always one team which seems to make itself more noticeable than the others, and this year, it was the Romanians. They drew large crowds eager to watch their rehearsal sessions on the field, and the men looked gorgeous in their colourful costumes with hats decorated with sparkling droplets which hung and shimmered as they moved their heads. The girls' costumes were also eye-catching, with elaborate embroidery and with one costume they wore caps of golden coins which came down low on the nape of the neck. Their dancing was very fast and energetic, particularly the popular "Calusarii", and the music infectious.

The Portuguese and Spanish dancers were also beautifully costumed - the Portuguese girls wearing tall vases of flowers on their heads for their entrance dance, "Toada". The Breton girls stood out in the crowd, with their lovely starched white lace headdresses, and the Spanish girls with their gold necklaces and earrings.

In the competition, most teams danced very well indeed, but the accolade went to Wales, with their two very traditional dances, beautifully performed. Second was Portugal and third Spain. Each team was accompanied by their own traditional musicians and, in some cases, singing too.

The competition for solo folk singers over 16 was won by a young Romanian girl who sang beautifully and was undoubtedly the best. The competition for a folk instrumental group of not more than 6 was very difficult indeed to judge as each group gave an excellent performance. First prize was eventually given to the group of instrumentalists from Belgium.

This was the 27th International Eisteddfod, and Llangollen is a beautiful setting for this unique festival, where one can see dances performed in the traditional style of the countries of origin. (I have not, of course, touched at all on the wealth of choral singing that forms the major part of the Eisteddfod). It requires a tremendous amount of work and organization and everything runs so smoothly one is not aware of the many hands working away behind the scenes. It also costs a great deal of money, and I hear financial difficulties are looming up. I should like to suggest to the Committee that the S.I.F.D. sends a donation of, say, £5. What do members think?

LILY SOUTHGATE

N.B. See also next page.

Lucile Armstrong has been kind enough to allow me to publish her remarks made after adjudicating at the International Eisteddfod, which I am sure everyone will be interested to read. ED.

LLANGOLLEN 1973

Professor Pinon and I always feel very honoured, yet humble, when we are asked to adjudicate dances and musical instruments at the International Musical Eisteddfod, for two reasons. The first is of course the great responsibility to be fair to all alike. The second is the trust laid on us, inherited from our predecessors, who set the standards of adjudication here at Llangollen. I refer now to Miss Violet Alford and her co-adjudicators Dr. Maud Karpeles and Mr. Douglas Kennedy, whose combined knowledge of folk dance, music, and folklore of Europe was unsurpassed.

Those of you who have come here for the first time may wish to know briefly how we set about adjudicating. It is difficult. First we allocate 100 marks to each group. From these 100 we deduct any fault, and the three groups who are left with the highest marks at the end of the competition are the winners, for we are only allowed to give three prizes. At times we wish we could give more!

The stress is on authenticity of tradition, for which we give 50 marks. That means, 50 marks are the maximum for the dances performed in the traditional style with steps and figures that correspond to the region where the dances come from. We judge each group according to the traditions of its own region. I stress region and not country because there usually exist many different styles in the one country.

Adulterations, embellishments, and additions are discounted and marks are deducted from the total for each change, addition or omission. Next, technique is considered, and whether the instruments used are traditional to that part of the country and usual for those dances. We take account of the music, and if that is traditional for the dances performed. Each 'change' causes marks to be deducted. For instance, a group performing dances whose accompaniment usually consists of a marine conch and drum will get full marks if only those two instruments are used. Whereas another group may introduce guitar, accordions, piano, or any modern instrument for 'effect', but will get appropriate marks deducted, however well played the music may be, because those instruments do not 'belong' to those dances. Our aim is to keep to tradition and we do not admit stage effects.

It is our purpose to preserve folk dance, music and costume as authentic as possible here at Llangollen. Why? Because we are convinced that the preservation of these treasures of our inheritance are part of our culture - and I speak here for mankind in general. It is our duty to pass them on to future generations as they were handed on to us. To understand them and study them and what they meant to our forefathers is an essential part of our guidelines for the future. Once stage effects are introduced, folk dances will be valueless, for their purpose will be irretrievably lost. Once lost, our roots will be cut and our inspiration will dry up like a cut flower that will bear no fruit. Everything runs in cycles and we need the past to refresh ourselves and to seek inspiration for the future.

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Many of you will have experienced the joy of hearing music of past centuries played on the instruments for which the music was composed. Music was composed for a purpose; a gay piece for a wedding, a lament for a death, and so on. And so it is with folk dance. A dance created for bare feet cannot be danced in clogs. A folk dance was created for a purpose in a particular region. The style of music was influenced by the instruments. The instruments were made according to what the environment provided. The style of dance was influenced by purpose, music, climate, dress, and examples from various ethnic groups. You cannot mix all these different influences and make a 'whole'. Therefore, groups who may aim at showiness and modern 'embellishments' for the sake of winning a prize will be disappointed. Stage effects are not part of folk dance.

We ask all groups, therefore, to continue to perform authentic dances of their own region in traditional style. This is worth infinitely more than any temporary glory of a prize.

LUCILE ARMSTRONG
ROGER PINON

Llangollen, 4th July 1973

AFFILIATED GROUPS

Three groups have notified me of the dates when they will be resuming after the summer vacation. They are as follows:-

BARLOW INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE GROUP will be re-opening on 11TH SEPTEMBER. They meet every Tuesday evening at Wilbraham Road Congregational Church Hall, Chorlton, Manchester, from 7.30 to 10 p.m. Further information from either The Chairman, Alan Williams (061-881 7744) or the Treasurer, Philip E. Lloyd, (061-881 3613).

WOODVALE FOLK DANCE GROUP will be closed only on 7TH, 14TH AND 21ST AUGUST and resume on 28TH AUGUST. They meet every Tuesday at Borough Green Village Hall, Borough Green, near Wrotham, Kent, from 7.30 to 10 p.m. All details from the Secretary, Mrs. Jean Willson, 55 Lewis Court Drive, Boughton Monchelsea, Near Maidstone, Kent.

KENSINGTON SLAVONIC DANCERS have closed down for the summer and will resume on 26TH SEPTEMBER, at Fox School, Kensington Place, Notting Hill Gate, London W.8., 7 to 10 p.m. They learn and perform dances from Czechoslovakia and are taught by Mrs. Hedda Jolly-Klingerova, 69a Grange Road, London W.5. Everyone welcome.

PROGRAMME FOR SOCIAL DANCES

		<u>Musicians</u>	<u>M.C.</u>
Sunday, 5th August	Cecil Sharp House	C.S.H. Band	Margery Latham
19th August	Dance Centre	Cliff Beck & Wilf Horrocks	George Sweetland
2nd September	Cecil Sharp House	C.S.H. Band	To be announced
	7 to 10 p.m.		

Admission: Cecil Sharp House, 30p members, 40p non-members.
Dance Centre, 25p members, 30p non-members.

Cecil Sharp House is at 2 Regents Park Road, N.W.1. (Nearest Underground: Camden Town)
Dance Centre is at 12 Floral Street, W.C.2. (Nearest Underground: Leicester Square)

At the Cecil Sharp House Dance on 5th August, a demonstration
of Israeli dances will be given by Judith & Jacob Barkan.

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WHAT'S ON

- July 23rd to August 11th BALLET FOLKLORICO DE MEXICO. Royal Festival Hall, 7.30 p.m.
(including Sunday). Saturday matinee 3 p.m. No performances
on Mondays. Tickets 60p to £2.50. Tel: 01-928 3191.
- July 28th to August 4th SWANSEA SUMMER SCHOOL.
- August 3rd/10th SIDMOUTH INTERNATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL. Details from
Mr. W.A. Rutter, 3 Barnfield Crescent, Exeter, EX1 1RD.
- August 11th/18th BILLINGHAM INTERNATIONAL FOLKLORE FESTIVAL. Enquiries and
bookings to the Festival Office, Arts & Recreation Dept.,
Municipal Buildings, Town Centre, Billingham, Teesside.
- August 18th UKRAINIAN NATIONAL YOUTH FEDERATION RUSALKA DANCE ENSEMBLE.
A programme of Ukrainian folk dances performed by 40 young
Ukrainians from Canada. 2.30 p.m. Admission 35p. Children 15p.
Holland Park Court Theatre, London. Tel: 01-836 5464 Ext.118.
No advance booking. Ticket office opens half an hour before
performance.

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REMINDER: YOUR S.I.F.D. MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES NEXT MONTH.