

S. J. F. D.
NEWS

OCTOBER 1977



Troyak.
Costumes from Upper-Silesia

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

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Frank Flanagan helped with the printing last month, and the collating and packing etc. was organized by Gaye Saunte.

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This month's cover is by Dorothy Bryan, and shows the Polish dance Trojak, in costumes from Upper Silesia.

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From 1st October, orders for books, records and cassettes will be dealt with by Audrey Whiteley, and all correspondence, orders, etc. should be sent to:- Mrs. Audrey Whiteley, 16 De Vere Walk, Watford, Herts. Also from this date, the reel-to-reel tapes will be withdrawn as there has been very little demand for them.

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ALL MATERIAL FOR PUBLICATION IN THE NOVEMBER
ISSUE MUST REACH THE EDITOR BY 15TH OCTOBER

SECRETARY'S NOTES

The Committee wish to announce that the Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday, 4th December 1977, at Cecil Sharp House, at 4.30 p.m. It will be followed by the usual Sunday evening Dance. The provisional Agenda will be given in the next SIFD NEWS, so please let me have any items you wish to include. Motions must be in writing and proposed and seconded. Nominations for the new Committee are invited. Any member of the SIFD may be nominated as candidate for Chairman, Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Secretary or ordinary Committee Member, provided that each nomination is in writing and signed by two members, contains the written consent of the member to act if elected, and is received by the Secretary not later than 24 days before the date fixed for the AGM, i.e. 10th November. All proposers, seconders, nominees, must be fully-paid up members.

For some time past we have been able to store SIFD stationery and other items in Will Green's house - a facility which we appreciate very much - but Will has now found it necessary to ask us to take some of the items from him, to give him more room. Is there a member living fairly centrally in London who has a corner in the attic or some such space we could use for storage? Please contact Will Green (01 703 4008) or any member of the Committee.

In reporting the membership numbers for the first month of this new year (already totalling 184), Roland Minton mentioned he has been Membership Secretary for fifteen years. Now that he has served his apprenticeship we expect a great performance during the next fifteen years! Well done, Roland, and thank you.

EDNA FOSTER,
Hon. Secretary

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A NOTE OF THANKS

As we enter another SIFD year, I should like to take the opportunity of thanking very much the people who have helped consistently in producing the SIFD NEWS. Kelsey Blundell, who types all the stencils regularly and always on time; Frank Flanagan, who is always willing to come along and help me print the sheets; Gaye Saunte, who regularly organizes the collating, folding and posting; John Hughes, who prints the covers, provides the stationery, helps keep the Roneo in working order - services he has provided unflinchingly for many many years now - Caroline Thomas, Dorothy Bryan and Lesley Boorer, who keep me supplied with designs for the covers; and Will Green who allows us the use of his rooms to store the stationery and use the Roneo, and provides cups of tea! To all these people, many thanks. It makes my job of editing and producing the SIFD NEWS to get to you on time each month that much easier.

LILY SOUTHGATE

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WOULD ALL MEMBERS WHO CHANGE THEIR ADDRESS PLEASE LET THE EDITOR KNOW, AS WELL AS THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY.

THE BALI DANCERS "LES DANSES SACREES DE BALI",
at the Sadlers' Wells Theatre, August 1977.

A group from Sebatu, a tiny village in Bali, surrounded by paddy fields, remembered some sacred religious dances that had fallen into disuse for a few decades. Fortunately some elderly dancers remembered the old dances and taught them to the villagers, "some of these dances performed during this month come from various parts of the island of Bali. They are either religious or martial and not common nowadays, but only connected with temple ceremonials. The ritual dances are performed by everyone, and reflect the connection between man and his gods" (quoted from the programme notes).

Everything the performers did was ritual in character. First the fifteen musicians filed in, dressed in green, gold, with a red 'skirt' (sarong?) and an orange sash (coming down almost to the knees). They all went bare foot, and wore loose red breeches, and a dark circlet round the forehead. They ceremonially bowed 'to the altar', and squatted crosslegged in front of their instruments, in three rows, the huge gong - hanging from a gilt, four-poster frame and highly ornamented - being furthest away from the audience. In the front row, two long drums lay on the floor; a gong-like instrument - two clappers, like saucepans facing each other with a knob at the back - were held horizontally between the knees of the players; a tiny xylophone with two notes only, made by a metal plaque set in a magnificently ornamented long frame, was nearest to us. Behind this row sat a double-flute player, and several boat-shaped frames with a gong held vertically that was struck by little wooden spatulas (one in each hand of the players). There were three gongs in each frame. Behind them similar frames and gongs were arranged, but they had a deeper note than the others. These were struck with metal hammers with wooden handles. There were two gongs suspended from frames, one a little smaller than the other. Although these musicians had no conductor, they played in perfect unison, altering the tempo from slow to faster, working up to crescendos and suddenly slowing down, and playing softly. The music was bewitching, and when a solo dance was performed and the dancer suddenly moved, or quickened his gestures or his pace, or slowed down, the orchestra followed him with astounding precision. A 4/4 rhythm was the commonest, although variants with broken rhythms were introduced.

The first dancers to appear were "Warriors", or Baris. Four magnificently dressed "warriors" came in two by two, with a peculiar gait. Toes held well out, they took one step diagonally forward, brought the foot back to the supporting foot and immediately raised that knee high enough to place the foot above the supporting knee, toes outward, and the big toe curved up. They stood quite still for a few beats, and took another step in a similar fashion. (See photograph in the programme.) The arms were raised shoulder level, hands either together or holding a white vase with white flowers. At times the vase was held in the left hand, while the right was outstretched, the arm shoulder level, and the dancers stood immobile before starting another movement. After a couple of beats of the next bar, the foot would come down, the dancer would retreat diagonally, and repeat the whole routine with the other foot. A most ceremonial gait.

The costumes were gorgeous. A white shirt and breeches covered with a multitude of fancy ribbons of all colours, hanging from the broad collar, were dimly

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seen because of the brilliant decorations in gold, sequins, silver fringes, rich embroideries and beads. The collars also were lavishly decorated in a similar manner. The triangular headdresses ended in a high peak, curving up from the side of the face and up. These headdresses were richly decorated with gold rice - or wheat - ears, and white flowers, tassels and gold thread. As the dancers advanced, retreated and moved diagonally across the floor, the numerous ribbons billowed out, giving them the appearance of balloons. The thought of English morris men immediately came to mind. Of course, these dancers were performing a ritual dance of spring, like the morris dancers. Be they English or Continental, the idea behind the dance was the same. This was remarkable since the Bali dancers performed figures of eight, partners crossed over to opposite places, and the dance was performed facing the four cardinal points alternately - like the Spanish ritual dancers performing their 'double-cross' figures. Finally the dancers came to the front, knelt down, placed their vases on the floor - obviously in offerings to the god - and waited for the solo dancer to join them.

A solo dancer entered, and with steps similar to those of the 'warriors' advanced diagonally and retreated, but with great freedom of movement. He was a young boy and represented the priest. His costume was even more lavish than those of the other dancers, and his headdress too. He came and knelt with the others, holding a little vase of gold in his left hand, which he deposited on the floor, and all together they extracted some 'petals' (seeds?) and spread them before them with generous gestures. After this they retreated as they had come, diagonally from side to side and made their exit behind curtains. All this time the musicians played, supporting the dancers, keeping time and tempo with them marvellously.

It seemed obvious that these dancers had represented 'bringers of spring', judging by their attire, the figures of the dance, and the act of spreading petals/seeds before them. All these facets were part of rituals performed by agriculturalists. The ribbons they hung from the broad collars - or yokes - were coloured red, green, blue, etc. just like those worn by morris dancers of Europe. By wearing different colours the dancers were related to the various realms: this material world (by red for life and love, green for renewal of vegetation and hope, blue for the sky and luck, white for purity and the spirit world, black for the underworld, yellow for the sun, silver for the moon, gold - of course for the sun), the hidden or spirit world and the underworld which is the realm of the dead, and the renewal of life on this earth. To the mind of early man, the whole universe was a 'whole': one entity. The ribbons they wore created or helped this unity to take place.

The next dance was performed by four young girls dancing the snake dance. They came in in twos, crouching low and wagging their hips from side to side, the shoulders and head going in the opposite direction. This really made them look like sinuous snakes wriggling forward. Their arms were held at elbow level, the forearms moving gracefully round imitating snaky movements. This was enhanced by their hands and wrists moving round independently, fingers outstretched and curving backwards. (Orientals have the advantage over us westerners, for their fingers seem double-jointed.) On and on they came, slowly moving like snakes the while. They ended by performing figures of eight, crossing-over with partners to opposite places, forming squares, and finally

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edging towards the back-cloth in a wavy, snaky line. The snake is, as is well-known a fertility symbol, hence the necessity of dancing the snake dance - as in India, the "Naga Dance", for there they also worship snakes, as in Africa and in ancient Greece and Egypt. Until the beginning of this century, there was snake worship along parts of the northern Mediterranean coast.

This form of dance must necessitate long training, for it is extremely tiring to waggle yourself for such a lengthy dance as those girls did. Their costumes were graceful, tight-fitting bodices of gold tissue and green silk, their long skirts of similar shades but the green forming a cross pattern. Glittering jewels seemed to shimmer from the whole body and their headdresses, which were also triangular in shape (similar to the men's) but covered with white flowers. They too were barefooted, like the men.

The Solo Dancer came next, if possible even more elaborately dressed than the first one. He wore a mask representing a grinning man in full strength and vigour, large bulging eyes (presumably to indicate he noticed everything that was going on), with bushy moustache and long hair down the back, like a woman. His headdress was broad on the sides but with an upright peak, around which numerous flowers were arranged. His scintillating collar, tunic, ribbons and other 'hangings' - bands of rich material suspended from the broad collar - divided in front to reveal a long white cloth attached below the waist, that touched the floor. By the way he held this cloth, and his whole demeanour, it was patently a modern version of a phallic symbol. According to the programme notes the dancer was Prince Anak Agung Gede Oka, for whom this dance was a family tradition.

The steps were similar to those of the warriors, but he broke out suddenly into frenzies, moving sideways, backwards, forwards, turning round upon himself, gesticulating, arms outstretched shoulder high. His sudden bursts of activity were accompanied by appropriate outbursts from the orchestra which always followed his every mood. At last he went back-stage, and there on a table, set for the purpose, he removed his 'young' mask and flowered headdress to put on an old mask and a wig of white hair. From then on his movements changed to depict an old man, tottering at times, recovering, but definitely not the vigorous man he had been. To quote the programme notes: "... The art of the masked dance may well have its roots in the far distant past. It is said to retain traces of an ancient ritual connected with ancestor veneration ... The dances are not aimed at an audience, but at the gods." Yes, this form of dance was traditional, religious, ceremonial, and the dancer appeared to be representing the ages of man, after the youth had danced with the warriors, age had come on nearing death as time elapsed. Was this a "cycle of life" dance, indicating that death had to come before resurrection could come about? - in fact the 'Death and Resurrection' ritual so common in most parts of the world?

The Next Dance was performed by twelve men. First, six came on, three at a time, in gorgeous costumes as before but carrying a lance each, not flowers this time. Their white peaked headdresses wore golden ears of rice - wheat? - as decoration, with white flowers on either side of the face, and a multitude of ribbons hung from their broad collars, as the previous ones had done. Their whole costumes glittered with light and richness, gold embroidery and silks.

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The steps were quiet, similar to the first group of men, lifting their knees very high, toes well out. They kept their balance remarkably well. At times, the lances were held in the left hand, the right held shoulder high, or they would change over, the left arm held shoulder high and stretched out. Sometimes the lance was held obliquely when the front line faced back, to meet the second line. They would then kneel, get up, retreat, and advance once more quietly and ceremonially, as if to 'fight' one another, but they never did any sharp movement that might indicate a fight or quarrel. Then four rows of three men were all on the floor, they formed into two rows, crossing over to partner's place, they performed figures of eight, formed themselves into solid groups facing all one way, then another way (the four points of the compass it seemed), always repeating the kneeling position and confronting routine. They never actually fought, but seemed decorum personified, but their evolutions evidently were of the greatest importance to the rites. In fact they danced their beliefs and their wishes: luck and good crops. One was reminded of the numerous examples of twelve performers of ritual dances who represented the twelve months of the year - such as in Ibio, northern Spain, who finally execute the thirteenth man in the dance! However, here there was no thirteenth man.

The Second Dance by Girls. The four girls came on once more, this time wearing purple silk with gold tissue, and performing movements as sinuous as before, but they held a fan in the right hand, making it flutter like a butterfly. The butterfly is, of course, an eastern emblem of happiness. They also performed the ritual figures of crossing over with partner, figures of eight, and facing the four points of the compass, ending with the snake figure to go off stage.

The Baris Syat. Lastly four 'warriors' came on carrying shields on their right wrist. The shields were small, circular and decorated with red knobs. After a preliminary show and some figures, they grasped their Kriss - a short sword, the blade of which is not straight but wavy like a zigzag - and they faced each other making a mock fight in very slow movement, neither striking swords or shields. At no point was the dance intended to convey a quarrel, but only a 'duality', or the opposites - summer versus winter, like so many ritual performances depicting 'opposite parties'. If it was meant to represent a real fight, or a pirrhic exercise, all the 'fight' had gone out of it - had been forgotten...

To conclude one must mention the outstanding precision of movements, the perfect balance and composure of the dancers; their toes always pointing outwards; their arms and elbows held high to shoulder level - very tiring - the insistence on flowers and ears of rice (wheat?) on the headdresses, the repeated figures of both men and women, representing figures of eight, crossing over to opposite place; the numerous ribbons hanging from the shoulder (or collar) and, of course, the wonderful music with an orchestra so well trained that it followed the moods of the dancers, ACCOMPANYING the performers, not leading them as so many of our modern European accompanists do. The timing was wonderful especially as the sudden changes in the moods of solo dancers are unpredictable.

Yes, these dances were most revealing, enjoyable, and certainly traditional.

LUCILE ARMSTRONG

TO ALL WHO ATTENDED THE EDINBURGH COURSE

We were very disappointed when we recently received a letter from Boots Film Service containing, instead of the photographs we had been eagerly awaiting, a message saying, "Unfortunately, both your films were destroyed due to a fault in the machine", All the photographs we had taken at Edinburgh were on those films.

We could go (and we would love to) to Edinburgh again to take photographs but it would not be the same without all of you around. We would therefore be very grateful indeed if anyone who attended Edinburgh and who took photographs of any of us or of the group or of Boro, or any that you think would be of interest to us, would kindly lend us the negatives to enable us to get copies. We would be most grateful - and we promise not to send them to Boots.

NENAD and JASNA BICANIC
(Croatian dance teachers)
102 Plunch Lane, Limeslade,
Swansea, SA3 4JE

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POLISH DANCING, SATURDAY 3RD DECEMBER

Jacy Tacy group are planning an afternoon and evening of Polish dance on Saturday, 3rd December. The hall at which it will be held, together with further details, will be published next month. It is intended to teach and/or revise a number of the dances taught by Radek Kowalczyk in London and Edinburgh together with some of the other Polish dances taught at previous Day Courses. We shall be glad to hear of any special requests from members who will be coming.

Meantime, if anyone who was at Radek's classes in London and/or Edinburgh finds that he/she does not have the music for several of the dances he taught in London (but omitted from Edinburgh!), I can supply them on request.

BETTY HARVEY,
30 Regent Square,
London, E.3.
Tel. 01 980 9650

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CONGRATULATIONS to Pauline Richardson and Wayne Kimball who were married on 17th September. Our very best wishes for their future happiness.

AN OUTING TO THE PEAK DISTRICT WITH ŽIVKO FIRFOV GROUP
(TUESDAY YUGOSLAV CLASS)

The Group is interested in traditional dance and its meaning and origins, and not in arranged and choreographed 'creations', hence my interest in accompanying Ken Ward and his group when they went to perform at the Hope Valley College in the Peak District.

We travelled by coach to Sheffield on 24th June - Midsummer's Day - where Marina Wolstenholme met us with a minibus, ready to take us on to our kind hostesses, twelve miles further North. They put us up for two nights, near Hope. Marina is a splendid organizer, so there were no hitches and everyone was made welcome. Our surroundings were wonderful, for the Peak District is a Trust Park amid mountains, dales, moors, trees and villages built of local stone, dotted about in the green landscape. This was peaceful and refreshing for us, city dwellers.

The next morning, Ken Ward and Linda Swanton taught dances at the Hope Valley College to a large and enthusiastic class. This was repeated in the afternoon, to the music of accordion, zurla, clarinet, drum or bagpipe.

As it was Midsummer's Day, the May Queens were processed around the village on their floats (decorated lorries) together with their Maids of Honour. Crowds gathered on the sports ground to watch them come on towards the main stand where they took their places. Each Queen wore a long train carried by prettily dressed Maids of Honour. They had made a brave show on their floats and now in the cold wind and drizzle, they faced the weather as bravely, marching up through a prepared arena, where some majorettes had previously performed. There were six Queens - the retiring Hope Queen, the new Hope Queen, and four others from neighbouring villages. Some people arrived also in fancy dress, including two 'bulls' with horns. The Lady Mayor gave an address of welcome, but by that time it was raining and I dashed back to the safety of the college; anyway, it was time for the group to start their evening concert.

They did wonders, in the various costumes from Posavina (Croatia), Sumadija (Serbia), Lika (Croatia), Bitola and Skopsko (Macedonia), with the appropriate dances, performed correctly according to tradition. There was also some singing by the group, and instrumental interludes to show the wide range of musical material and the possibilities of each instrument. One particularly impressive set of dances was performed to no musical accompaniment. They were the Kolo and Licko Kolo from the mountainous Lika region of Dalmatian Croatia. At one moment they all leapt towards the centre of their circle, and stopped dead for an instant, repeating and continuing the dance to its normal end. This movement gave the feeling of an ancient ritual, when possibly a sacrificial ceremony took place, for either a human or an animal. This dance certainly threw one back thousands of years and gripped one with atavistic dread.

Next day, Marina took us for a round of several villages to see the well-dressing, and the May Queens. The first was Litton, where two beautiful panels had been erected, one showing a landscape with Westminster Abbey, its stained glass windows all lit up! How this well-dressing technique is performed is

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explained in a booklet by Porteous Crighton called "The Well-Dressing Guide", no date. Derbyshire is rightly proud of its artistic achievements in well-dressing. Thousands of flower petals, mosses, colias leaves, alder cones, black pepper corns, seeds, etc. are pressed into soft clay, on wooden panels anything up to twelve feet high by six feet wide. They last a week, out in the open for all to see. It was an unforgettable experience to see them. Each year the villages change their themes, either taking biblical scenes, decoration or landscapes. It was wonderful.

Castleton has other attractions - an enormous cavern and Peveril Castle - but there was no time to visit everything. It was time to go back home to London, our eyes and memories full of greenery, trees, bird-song, flowers, lovely stone villages, hills and wide expanses of unspoilt country. We were relaxed, refreshed and happy.

Thank you, Ken, for this wonderful opportunity; than you, Marina, for all your hard work organizing this trip; and thank you, our several kind hostesses, for putting up with us and entertaining us so well.

LUCILE ARMSTRONG

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A NEW CLASS IN THE CROYDON AREA

In addition to the two classes listed on page 12, Alan McLean is starting a new Hungarian & Transylvanian dance class to be held at Ashburton High School, Shirley Road, Croydon, every Monday evening from 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. under the Croydon Institute of Further Education. This is an area where most of the Hungarian emigrees live, but the class will of course be open to everyone and it is hoped to form a performing group from this class.

Alan had a very busy four weeks in Hungary this summer, visiting plenty of dance rehearsals, performances and festivals. He has learned some beautiful new dances, including a lovely Transylvanian girls' dance, and will be introducing these to his classes.

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TEA TOWEL OF FOLK COSTUMES OF EUROPE

Jenia Graman has just designed a new tea towel with 24 costumes printed on a gold (yellow) Irish linen background. These are available from Robert Harrold, 4 Breakspeare, College Road, Dulwich, London, S.E.21. Tel: 01 693 7753 (before 8 a.m.). Price: 75p plus 15p postage. If 10 or more are ordered Robert Harrold will try and arrange to meet the person concerned at one of the London evening classes or Saturday courses.

S.I.F.D. ASSOCIATED CLASSES

ISRAELI

Every Thursday at Henry Fawcett School, Bowling Green Street, Oval, London, S.E.11. 6.15 to 7.15 p.m. Beginners. 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. Advanced. Tutor: Fiona Howarth.

Every Wednesday at Kidbrooke School, Corelli Road, London, S.E.3. 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. Tutor: Gaye Saunte.

EUROPEAN NATIONAL

Every Tuesday at Charlton Manor Junior School, Hornfair Road, Charlton, London, S.E.7. 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. Tutor: Peter Oakley.

Every Tuesday at Henshaw's School, Bogs Lane, Starbeck, Harrogate, Yorks. 7.30 to 9.45 p.m. Tutors: Jean & Ian Willson. Contact Harrogate (0423) 55006 for details.

Every Wednesday at St. Alban's School, Baldwins Gardens. 6.00 to 7.00 p.m. Beginners; 7.15 to 9.15 p.m. General and Advanced. Tutor: Janet Woolbar.

ROMANIAN

Every Thursday at Pinlico School (Chelsea/Westminster Institute), Lupus Street, London, S.W.1. 7 to 9 p.m. Tutor: Alan McLean.

HUNGARIAN

Every Friday at Pinlico School (Chelsea/Westminster Institute), Lupus Street, London, S.W.1. 6.30 to 9.30 p.m. Tutor: Alan McLean.

POLISH

Every Monday at Christopher Hatton School, Laystall Street, Rosebery Avenue, London, E.C.1. 6.45 to 7.45 p.m. Beginners. 8 to 10 p.m. General & Advanced. Tutor: Betty Harvey.

YUGOSLAV

Every Tuesday at Hugh Myddelton School, Corporation Row, Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C.1. Beginners 6.30 to 8.30 p.m. Advanced 8.30 to 9.30 p.m. Tutor: Ken Ward. NEW MEMBERS ARE ASKED TO SEE KEN WARD BEFORE ENROLLING FOR THE ADVANCED CLASS.

SUNDAY DANCES

- Oct. 2nd Cecil Sharp House, Regent's Park Road, London, N.W.1.
M.C. Roland Minton.
- Nov. 6th Cecil Sharp House, Regent's Park Road, London, N.W.1.
M.C. Charles Steventon.

7 to 10 p.m. Admission: 50p members, 75p non-members.

At the Cecil Sharp House Dance on November 6th, a demonstration of a special programme of Polish dances will be given by Syrenka Group.

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WHAT'S ON

- Oct. 3rd/15th ONDEKA-ZA. Programme of traditional Japanese theatre, dance, music. Sadler's Wells Theatre, London. 7.30 p.m. Tickets 60p to £4.00.
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- 7th/9th WEEKEND AT CHARNEY MANOR
- 8th DAY COURSE OF BASQUE DANCES. Hugh Myddelton School, Clerkenwell. 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Tutors: Joan & Simon Guest. Fee: £1 for non-members, 50p for members.
- 16th HARPS, HORNPIPES & HURDY-GURDIES. Music of Troubadours and Trouveres and Dances from the Court of King Henry VIII played on 25 different instruments; 18th century sonatas and European Folk Dances showing how the old instruments have died out or still survive as folk instruments. Purcell Room, London. 2.45 p.m. Tickets 80p to £1.40.
- 21st DANCES OF KOREA. Performed by Dr. Won-Kyung Cho. Free concert at Horniman Museum, Forest Hill, London. 7.45 p.m.
- 21st/23rd WEEKEND AT COWLEY MANOR
- 28th BANDURA MUSIC OF THE UKRAINE. Performed by Volodymyr Luciv. Free concert at Horniman Museum, Forest Hill, London. 7.45 p.m.
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Nov. 5th INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE run by Woodvale Group at Borough Green Village Hall, 7.30 to 11 p.m. Musician: Wilf Horrocks. M.C.: Ernie Nolan. Tickets 65p including refreshments. Licensed bar.
- 5th HALF-DAY COURSE IN AUSTRIAN DANCES. Watford Central Library, side entrance. 1.45 to 4.45 p.m. Tutor: Margery Latham. Fee: 35p.
- * Oct. 29th DAY COURSE FOR PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS. (See page 9.)