

S.I.F.D. NEWS.

JULY 1978



Russian Khorovod

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

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Frank Flanagan and Dorothy Bryan did the printing last month, and the collating and packing etc. was organized by Gaye Saunte.

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CHAIRMAN: Simon Guest, 65 Crescent Road, New Barnet, Herts. Tel: 01 440 4862.

SECRETARY: Edna Foster, 33 Orchard Avenue, Southgate, London N.14.

TREASURER: Dennis Wood, 16 Barnfield Close, Old Coulsdon, Surrey.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Roland Minton, 10 Benyon Court, Balmes Rd., London N.1.

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Enquiries and orders for SIFD books, records and cassettes should be sent to Mrs. Audrey Whiteley, 16 De Vere Walk, Watford, Herts.

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This month's cover is by Dorothy Bryan, and shows dancers from Khorovod, Russia

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WOULD ANY MEMBERS WHO CHANGE THEIR ADDRESS PLEASE NOTIFY EDWINA AND MICHAEL HOLDUP, 16 NETHERBY GARDENS, ENFIELD, MIDDXX.

SECRETARY'S NOTES

At the June Committee Meeting we spent a great deal of time discussing how best we could fill the gap left by Margery Latham's passing. Although we are fully aware of the major functions she carried out on our behalf, we will not discover how many 'background' jobs she did until we find some matters not attended to. However, Janet Woolbar has agreed to look after the costume wardrobe for us, and as Janet previously helped Margery in this respect she is familiar with what is involved.

A more complicated job is that of Demonstration Secretary. The Committee have received an offer, and Simon Guest is discussing the matter in detail with the person concerned; the matter is by no means settled, and if anyone would be interested in acting as Demonstration Secretary we should be pleased to hear from them. We feel we should now regard the function as one of co-ordinator, not necessarily the jobholder to attend and dance at all demonstrations but to be able to pass enquiries to the nearest reliable group and ensure the booking is carried out at the required standard.

Roland Minton reported at this meeting that membership has reached 400. This is the highest ever, and a suitable note on which Roland can hand over the job of Membership Secretary to Dorothy Bryan (as previously reported).

EDNA FOSTER
Hon. Secretary

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ARNOLD MEADS

It is with great sorrow that I report the death of yet another fellow dancer whose membership dates back to the early years of the Society. Arnold was one of a group of about six of us from Imperial College who were active during the first few years of the existence of the Society. He was a regular M.C. at both Carlyle School and at Inns of Court Mission, and was a Committee member during the year 1948/49. It was he who made our very first recordings - of Estonian dances with the small band led by Gladys Gaskell (nee Noble) - and made many of the "soft" copies of our early collection of records. Those who took part in the dances on the Rector's lawn at Imperial College will remember him and the spotlights he used to fix on the roof of the Chemical Engineering Department to illuminate our activities.

Arnold moved to Scotland in the autumn of 1950 and following his marriage to Marian (nee Hill) at the end of the year, developed an interest in Scottish dancing, though they did both attend the international group in Glasgow with Kathleen Ramsay and Conrad Lesser. When they returned to the South several years ago they maintained their interests in Scottish dancing and it was immediately following a Scottish dance demonstration at a geriatric hospital that Arnold suddenly collapsed and died at the early age of 51. Our sympathy goes to Marian and family - John, Brian, Roy and Catherine.

JACK RICHARDSON

Arrangements are in hand to hold a residential Summer Folk Dance Course in 1979 on the lines of previous courses at Swansea and Edinburgh.

The venue will be Balls Park Training College at Hertford, and the dates will be 28th July to 4th August 1979.

More details will be published when available. Make a note of the date NOW.

DANCING DURING THE SUMMER BREAK

Most classes and groups close for the summer period. However, Canons Group have announced that they will be meeting on Fridays, 28th July, 4th and 11th August, at Canons Community Centre Hall. All SIFD members will be welcome. Dancing will be from 7.45 to 10.15 p.m., and the Hall is situated in Wemborough Road, at its junction with Honeypot Lane, Stanmore; three minutes from Canons Park Station (Bakerloo Line), just across the traffic lights.

DAY OF DANCE FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCERS

On Saturday, 5th August 1978, Canons Group will be holding another Day of Dance for all international folk dancers, at the Village Hall, Sarratt, Hertfordshire, a few miles from Watford.

There will be dancing in the afternoon, 3 to 5 p.m., and in the evening from 7 p.m. onwards. Tickets from Ken Poyton, 72 Dalkeith Gardens, Stanmore, Middx. (01 958 5785) or Joan Goodman, 13 Woodgrange Close, Kenton, Middx. (01 907 9857)

Full day, including tea	-	£1.00
Afternoon " "	-	60p
Evening only	-	50p

Tickets and leaflets will be available at the Cecil Sharp House Dances.

RAINMAKERS END OF SEASON PARTY

Rainmakers (Stevenage International Folk Dance Group) will be holding an end-of-season party on 14th July at 8 p.m. Music will be to their band, "Cloudburst". Visitors will be welcome; wear your costume. Catholic Church Hall, Albert Street, Old Stevenage, Herts.

THE SCHUHPLATTLER

Meaning, origin and recent developments of the Alpine slapping dances.

From the wealth of Austrian folklore I have deliberately chosen this particular subject, as this is probably its most widely known phenomenon, and at the same time, by being hackneyed and commercialized by the tourist industry, the one that is most frequently misinterpreted and misunderstood.

The schuhplattler has its origin in the occasional improvised slapping, jumping and stamping done by the men in the course of a "Steiriseher" or landler dance. These were nothing but the spontaneous expression of joy, of the lad's pride to be dancing with his pretty partner, or the showing off of his skill to impress the girl. There were no established rules or sequences as to the number, type or order of jumps, slaps, etc. At a suitable point of the landler the boy who felt like it, and had the skill, put in his "solo", either following his partner, who continued in the circle of other couples, or in the centre of the circle, meeting one or more other men, demonstrating rivalry or solidarity, as the case may have been.

Here is a description of this free-courting dance: "In its ultimate perfection it is the spontaneous outburst of enthusiasm. The art and ingenuity put into these solos by the lads, defy every attempt of verbal description. They never repeat themselves. When a dancer, between turning the girl and slapping his thighs and soles, felt in the right spirit, he jumped on the table and stood on his head, drumming the boldest rhythms with his boots on the ceiling". A typical, if exaggerated, report of the opening of a newly-built mountain hut says, "There they danced frightfully. The floor was strong, it stood up to it; only the ceiling was danced through.....!"

In all this, the dance is at once recognized as a form of courting which would not make sense without girls. In fact, there is today a considerable number of dances where the Schuhplattler is sandwiched between landler, round dance or promenading parts.

Dancing and jumping and slapping figures can be found in almost all mountainous parts of Europe. Wolfram mentions the Norwegian dance, "Roraas Polsk" as an example. The Schuhplattler proper, however, has its cradle in a limited region on the rivers Inn and Isar, comprising parts of Upper Bavaria, Salzburg and Tirol. It is said that in the old days in Bavaria, the Schuhplattler as a dance of its own was danced by one couple. Later, group or "mass" plattlers became popular. The originally eight-bar landler develops into a sixteen-bar form: frequently sixteen bars of plattler are followed by eight bars of round dance.

In 1883 the first "Society for the Preservation of Folk Dances and Costumes" was founded in Bavaria and the movement spread rapidly throughout the country and into the neighbouring provinces of Austria. With the growth of the "Trachtenverein" movement the Schuhplattler spreads all over the alpine territories, often superseding and displacing the less spectacular older dances. The names of many plattler forms and figures now traditional and at home in Austria still bear the names of their Bavarian origin; Haidauer, Bayrischzeller, Haushamer, Toelzer, Reit im Winkler, etc.

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Naturally, the Schuhplattler soon becomes the favourite number of public performances, and at this stage the girls, being more or less inactive, are left out. By now every Schuhplattler form has its precise number, type and order of jumps, slaps, etc. performed by all dancers at the same time. Here, for instance, is the sequence of the "Haidauer" :-

- Unterimtaler Eingang (entry figure)
- Circle anti-clockwise (eight bars)
- Circle clockwise (eight bars)
- Plattler (sixteen bars) consisting of four sequences of "slap of six" front left, slap of six back right, knee jump and high jump, finally kneeling down on right knee
- Star anti-clockwise (eight bars)
- Star clockwise (eight bars)
- Plattler again.

Eventually the plattler groups of the various societies prided themselves in inventing ever more intricate and difficult slaps and figures; traditional dances where plattler had never been known before, even folksongs, were "plattled". It is understandable that most folklorists do not recognize this type of Schuhplattler as genuine folk dances. Wolfram quotes an old Salzburg peasant musician, who had still known the old tradition and followed the whole development, as saying, "The Schuhplattler with lads only is nothing but society stuff. Once when a lad was a devil he made a few jumps and afterwards he caught hold of his girl again, but all that of his own accord. From the one that knew it better, the other one copied it, and then they said, "Let's do it together;" and that's how the group plattler started".

But that is only one side of the picture. It is true, the "society stuff" has caused many older, simpler forms to be forgotten and lost, but the living soul and spirit of the people has assimilated the new "invention" to such an extent that one can already today call the "modern" schuhplattler a genuine tradition. Wolfram thinks that the Schuhplattler as a highly skilled men's dance can take the place of the ancient sword dances and similar dances, almost completely lost in the alpine countries, since there is a true demand for masculine dance forms to express energy, skill and controlled force.

Prof. Horak mentions that everywhere the young villagers unconsciously mould and reshape the "modern" Schuhplattler forms to bring them in line with older local styles "under the same natural law by which a melody grows into a folksong". He tells us about the woodcutters who on rainy days practise their plattler skill in their mountain huts, rehearsing new sequences to show off to their sweethearts at the next village dance. At the same time, however, he warns that "if this develops into exhibitions for a paying audience, the acrobatic, theatrical performances seen on such occasions have very little to do with folklore". But we can be optimistic. As Prof. Wolfram put it; "From powerful primitive vitality springs form after form. Old ones die, new ones are born or, when they come from foreign parts, are assimilated and remoulded. It has always been like this, and as long as the creative spark is alive in our lads and lasses, there is every hope that it will remain like this in spite of all modern developments."

Written by K.H.STREIGEL in 1957
(Acknowledgement to "THE FOLKLORIST")

MAGDA OSSKO IN BIRMINGHAM

As announced in last month's SIFD NEWS, Magda Ossko will be visiting England this summer for a holiday and will be spending some time in the Midlands. Magda has kindly offered to teach some Hungarian dances in Birmingham during her stay, and the Midlands Branch of the SIFD will be organizing a half-day course to be followed in the evening by a general International Folk Dance.

The course will be held on Saturday, 19th August, from 2 to 5 p.m. at the junction of Franklin Road and Watford Road, Cotteridge. The Dance will run from 7.30 to 10.30 p.m. Visitors from outside the Midlands are welcome, but if you intend to come will you please contact Rod Perkins, 3 Linnet Close, Bournville, Birmingham B301X (Tel: 021 471 1373) so that some idea of numbers can be obtained.

The cost will be: Course 60p (SIFD members 50p)
Dance 50p (SIFD members 40p)

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HUNGARIAN DEMONSTRATION

It was a great pleasure to have Kathi Tribe and her group with us at Cecil Sharp House at the beginning of June. They gave us a very polished display of Hungarian dances, most of which were originally taught by Magda Ossko - dances which, to use Kathi's words, were so well chosen for performing by "us English". Magda would have been very proud of the standard of both the performance and the costumes; perhaps she will be able to see the group dance when she visits this summer.

JACK RICHARDSON

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FOLKDANCE SEMINARS

Members travelling abroad this summer may be interested in the following:-

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| July 22nd/30th | Hungarian Folk Dance Seminar in Sarospatak, Hungary. |
| August 6th/13th | Hungarian Folk Dance Seminar in Szeged, Hungary. |
| July 29th/Aug. 5th | 7-day Folklore Tour through Southern Hungary. |
| July 9th/18th | Macedonian Folk Dance Seminar at Otesevo, Yugoslavia. |
| July 26th/Aug. 14th | Folklore Tour through Macedonia. |
| Aug. 6th/11th and
13th/18th | Summer Camps at Oaxtepec Resort Centre, Morelos, Mexico,
where Mexican dances, Clog dances, Greek dances, El
Salvadoran dances and Israeli dances will be taught. |
| Aug. 21st/29th | Bulgarian Folk Dance Seminar in Burgas, Bulgaria. |

The Editor has limited details of all the above, but full details may be obtained from Folkraft-Europe, Rue Saint-Norbert 6, B-1090 Bruxelles, Belgium.

A SELPAR SAFARI

On Saturday, 10th June, the Selpar branch of the S.I.F.D. set off for a safari through the Vale of Evesham. The day was fine but cold as we started out on our journey, with a programme on the "chessboard" between the main car park and shopping centre in Droitwich, and we thought gratefully of the hot coffee we had enjoyed at the "Dunky Do-Nut" as we shed our coats for our first appearance. On a Saturday morning, the precinct was very busy and the dancing area sheltered enough to make watching possible on such a chilly day. We warmed up with several Israeli dances and followed with a very varied programme, accompanied by accordion, violin and tambourine. Afterwards, there was just time for a quick walk round the picturesque old streets near the market and a visit to one of the old brine pumps (which used to pump the waters up from a bed of rock salt far below ground) before driving through beautiful country to Evesham.

The weather was warmer now, much more pleasant for the spectators, and we danced by a busy shopping street, working up an appetite for lunch. After this, a short sit by the river Avon rested our legs, then we strolled around some of Evesham's ancient buildings, the best of which is a 15th century timbered Hall, now beautifully restored.

Another lovely drive took us to that most beautiful of Cotswold villages - Broadway. Here we danced on the Green, in the bright sunshine, and attracted a great deal of attention. The village was full of tourists from all over the world, and from the comments of the many who came to speak to us, we gave a great deal of pleasure. A group from Israel passing by in a car stopped, got out, and came to join us, staying right to the end. Many photographs of us will be shown in New Zealand, Australia, U.S.A., Japan, Germany and other places. One American family told me we had "made their day", and one Israeli lady said that the village was beautiful to begin with and our dancing had made it more beautiful still. This seemed to sum up the reactions of most people and made everything seem so worthwhile.

Following our successful Broadway run, we next appeared at "The March Hare" where the landlord, realizing that we had a strenuous evening ahead of us, laid on some excellent food. We renewed our strength with vast quantities of scampi, chicken pate, salad and chips, plus varying quantities of liquid, and then we felt fit enough to start again. We danced on the pub terrace for nearly two hours non-stop. By the end of the evening we had the visitors joining in, and it was remarkable that nobody actually did fall into the fish pond, though there were many near-misses!

Erev Ba brought to a close a really happy day, one filled with laughter and enjoyment, that will be remembered with pleasure by spectators as well as performers. Such days do not just happen by accident, however. A lot of work goes into them, and I should like to thank Selpar and especially Sybil Chapman, who planned and organized the day, for inviting me to share in their folkdance Safari.

MARINA WOLSTENHOLME

SIFD AFFILIATED GROUPS

BARLOW INTERNATIONAL FOLKDANCE GROUP meets every Tuesday at Wilbraham Road United Reformed Church Hall, Chorlton, Manchester 21, from 7.30 to 10 p.m. Further details from Alan Williams, 47 South Drive, Manchester (Tel. 061 881 7744) or Philip Lloyd, 268 Upper Chorlton Road, Manchester (Tel. 061 881 3613).

BARNET INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE CLUB meet every Friday from October to June at Hadley Memorial Hall, Hadley Highstone, Barnet, 8 to 11 p.m. Further information from Janet Heathfield, Tel. 01 368 5345.

CANONS FOLK DANCERS meet every Tuesday at Park High School, Thistlecroft Gardens, Stanmore, Middx (nearest station Canons Park) from 7.45 to 10 p.m. during term time. Further details from Joan G. S. Goodman, 13 Woodgrange Close, Kenton, Harrow, Middx. Tel. 01 907 9857.

FOLKESTONE DISTRICT NATIONAL DANCE GROUP meet every Tuesday at South Kent College of Technology, Kingsnorth Gardens, Folkestone, Kent. 7.45 to 9 p.m. Leader: Mrs. O. Field, "Schlupfwinkle", Cannongate Road, Hythe, Kent. Tel. 0303 67737.

HARROW GREEN FOLK DANCE GROUP meets every Wednesday during term time at Daneford School, Turin Street (off Bethnal Green Road), London, E.2. 7 to 9.15 p.m. General International with some English. Tutor: Kelsey Blundell plus occasional guest teachers. For further information contact the Secretary: Alex Beauclerc, Tel. 01 701 3785.

HAVERING INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE GROUP meet every Thursday in term time at Harold Wood Primary School, Recreation Avenue, Harold Wood, Romford, from 8 to 10 p.m. Further information from Miss Doreen Grew, 31 Marlborough Road, Brentwood, Essex.

KAROMA FOLKDANCE GROUP meet at Frankland Mount School, Whitley Bay, every Wednesday afternoon in term time at 1.45 to 3.15 p.m. Tutor: Kaye Lewis-Poole, 50 Antonine Walk, Heddon-on-the-Wall, Newcastle. Tel: Wylam 2495. Further information from Brenda Ross, 26 Waterloo Road, Wellfield, Whitley Bay. Tel: Whitley Bay 534597.

KENSINGTON SLAVONIC DANCERS (Czechoslovak dancing) meet every Wednesday (Beginners) 7 to 9.30 p.m. at Fox School, Notting Hill Gate. Tutor: Mrs. E. Fromings. Enquiries Tel. 01 699 8597. Also every Thursday (Advanced) 7 to 9.30 p.m. at Isaac Newton School, Ledbroke Grove, W.10. Tutor: David Wells.

RAINMAKERS INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE GROUP meets every Friday from 8 to 10 p.m. at The Catholic Church Hall, Albert Street, Old Stevenage, Herts. Enquiries to Roy Bowtell, 9 Beech Drive, Stevenage, Herts.

WOODVALE INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE GROUP meet every Tuesday at Borough Green Village Hall, 7.30 to 10 p.m. Chairman: Jan Bryce, "Windy Nob", Staleys Road, Borough Green, Sevenoaks, Kent. Tel. Borough Green 882457. Secretary: Heather Dobson, 8 Holmesdale Road, Sevenoaks, Kent. Tel. Sevenoaks 57455.

WYCOMBE FOLK DANCE CLUB meet every Monday, except public holidays, at Guildhall, High Wycombe, Bucks. 7.45 to 10.15 p.m. March and August alternative meeting place. Leader: Terry Reid, 3 Selwood Way, Downley, High Wycombe, Bucks. Tel. High Wycombe 37758.

SUNDAY DANCES

July 2nd Cecil Sharp House, Regent's Park Road, London N.W.1.
M.C. George Sweetland

August 6th Cecil Sharp House, Regent's Park Road, London N.W.1.
M.C. Roland Minton

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

On 2nd July Alan McLean's Pimlico School class will show us Romanian dances. Alan will also lead us in some of the dances he taught at his own Day Course in May.

No demonstration is planned for 6th August.

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WHAT'S ON

July 1st HAMA'AGAL ISRAELI DANCE PARTY at Henry Fawcett School, Bowling Green Street, Oval, London. 7.30 p.m. Tickets £1 including refreshments. Further information from Fiona Howarth (01 460 0468)

July 4th/9th LLANGOLLEN INTERNATIONAL EISTEDDFOD. Opening concert by the Bulgarian State Folk Song & Dance Ensemble DOBRUDJA.

July 8th S.I.F.D. TEACHER'S EXAMINATION. Hugh Myddelton School, Corporation Row, Clerkenwell Green, London E.C.1.

July 14th INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE PARTY organized by Rainmakers Group.
See page 4.

July 14th/16th WEEKEND AT EASTHAMPSTEAD PARK. There are some vacancies. Late bookings to Roy Clarke, 33 Cedar Park Road, Enfield, Middx.

July 28th/30th WEEKEND AT DUNFORD. Late bookings to Jack Richardson, University College of Swansea, Dept. of Chemical Engineering, Singleton Park, Swansea SA2 8PP.

August 5th AOTEAROA MAORI GROUP and the National Band of New Zealand, at Central Hall, Westminster. Tickets £1, £1.50 and £2 from Central Hall, Storey's Gate, Westminster, S.W.1. Tel: 01 930 4259.

August 5th DAY OF DANCE organized by Canons Group. See page 4.

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ALL MATERIAL FOR PUBLICATION IN THE AUGUST ISSUE MUST REACH THE EDITOR, IN WRITING, BY 15TH JULY