

SIFD NEWS



Central bohemia, September

1978

GIFT NEWS



SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

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Frank Flanagan, George Sweetland and Will Green did the printing last month, and the collating and packing etc. was organized by Gaye Saunte.

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I, as Editor, and I am sure you as readers, are all extremely grateful to Kelsey Blundell who has typed the SIFD NEWS for us for several years now. As it has become a little more difficult for her to do this now, and in order to give her a break, Joy Steventon has kindly offered to take on the typing of the stencils. Thank you very much Joy, and thank you too, Rose Monk, who also kindly volunteered; **but a special thank you to Kelsey who has done the job so well and so reliably for such a long time.**

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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: Dorothy Bryan, Flat 1, 28 Rosebery Avenue, London E.C.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 Brian and shows a couple from Central Bohemia.

SECRETARY'S NOTES

The Committee did not meet in August because several members were on holiday, but I would like to use the otherwise 'vacant space' to make an enquiry.

We are affiliated to the Sports Council centrally, and we know that we are represented in the Eastern Region by Brenda Jackson, in North West Region by Philip Lloyd, and in Yorkshire by Ian Willson. Are any other members representing our interests on Regional Sports Council committees? If you are, we would like to have a note of your Region, and any local activities in which SIFD is represented.

EDNA FOSTER
Hon. Secretary

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SIFD NORWEGIAN DAY COURSE

My pianist, two class members, and I attended the SIFD Norwegian Day Course at Hugh Myddelton School on 10th June, and what an enjoyable day we had. My pianist and class members were very keen but a little apprehensive as to whether they would be able to cope with the pace, or would they find Norwegian dancing too difficult, etc. However, their fears proved groundless and they and I wish to thank everyone for the delightful day we had. First, everyone made us so welcome, and the cup of tea on arrival after our long journey was most appreciated. Incidentally, the route which Audrey Whiteley sent me was very clear indeed. After travelling through strange places by Tube, we were amused to walk across Clerkenwell Green which wasn't a green. The only person about by the time we arrived in the area was the local milkman, who confirmed we were just about in the right place.

My pianist particularly enjoyed her day dancing, and she and my class members were happy that they coped very well and enjoyed the dances. They particularly enjoyed listening to Wilf Horrocks playing the accordion, a real treat. Tony Parkins was so patient and thorough, and what was really rewarding was that I returned home having learned and retained six out of seven dances.

We had to depart a little early to enable us to return to our hotel, shower, change and be at the Royal Albert Hall by 7 p.m. We were staying in London for the weekend and were able to arrange this so as not to miss the SIFD Norwegian Day Course, which we particularly wanted to attend as the opportunity to do Norwegian dancing is so very rare.

Thank you again, Tony, and everyone for a most enjoyable super day of dance.

KAYE POOLE

50 Antonine Walk,
Heddon-on-the-Wall,
Northumberland.

SEARCHING FOR AUTHENTIC FOLK DANCE IN POLAND

Early this summer I set off once again to Poland to visit friends and also to see some dancing and look for more costume and music details. I feel very much that one visit to a region, returning home with probably sketchily absorbed dances, is not good enough, and for this reason I choose not to go to a completely new area each time, but to return to a different part of the same region. In this way I see the same dances performed with variations by a number of groups.

Before leaving London this time I put in motion plans to visit Lublin, going higher up on the Eastern side of this South-Eastern region on which I have been concentrating than ever before. My aim was to see again the group "ZIEMI LUBELSKIEJ" who were here in 1976 at Llangollen and at Holland Park Theatre. Whilst being a big amateur group, concentrating on stage performances, I felt they were at the same time 'earthy', dancing with great gusto and an absence of ballet movements, and for this reason I wanted to see more of them.

Whilst in Warsaw before this proposed visit to Lublin, I was asked to meet the minister concerned with all folk dance affairs. He had previously expressed interest in our group, Jacy Tacy, when told about us by P.A.G.A.R.T., the Polish State Artistic Agency. This meeting duly took place, and amongst other things I told him how much our group, and also many people within the S.I.F.D., would like to see more of the true Polish village dancers, whilst at the same time appreciating that only the larger groups can be expected to fill our theatres and halls here. Incidentally, I discovered while talking with him, about C.I.O.F., the world organization which concerns itself with standards for Folk Dance Festivals, of which he happens to be vice-president.

Anyway, he suggested then that he would like me to visit a small village called Konckowala, not far from Lublin, where there was a group called POWISLE, run by a great expert on the local dances and customs. As I had acquaintances in Pulawy, a few miles from this village who wanted me to visit them, this seemed a very good scheme. First, however, I was to visit the Lublin group, and I found it most exciting but exhausting and a little daunting. This was 'big business' dancing, with everything laid on by the State to help them with their four sections, ranging from the small children through to their main performing group. They had a magnificent new rehearsal room, large recreation hall and canteen, and more music and costume and laundry rooms in process of being built. With this went several permanent staff housed in large well-appointed offices. Their No.2 group, who were teenagers between 14 and 18 years, put on a full-scale non-stop concert for me with four or five costume changes. Their speed and expertise were breathtaking, and it was all almost too smooth and professional. I seemed to miss that roughness which I had found rather endearing when I first saw their main group over here. There was little chance for me to do anything on this occasion except watch and express admiration, but as I was their guest (or the state's guest!) with all my travel, hotel, etc. paid for, I couldn't very well complain.

Konckowala, after that, was a marvellous contrast. Again I was their guest, and they had arranged a full-length concert for me, but here was the real village atmosphere, and I could join in with their preparations - worry with

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the girl who had mislaid her headdress, feel sorry for the boy 'with two left legs' trying to keep up with the others, and agonize with their leader when the musicians muffed an entrance! Here I saw yet once more dances already seen in Lublin and in other parts of the region. With the great variations in arrangements and indeed of steps, of the regional dances found amongst groups, it is impossible to say "This is the correct version" or "that is the incorrect version". It is only after seeing several that one can identify the 'frills' as well as the basic steps and character which show up on all occasions.

However, the most interesting thing for me at Konckowala was the dancing, singing and acting of their local customs connected with the seasons. Spring had a kind of maypole dance and also "Dyngus" water pranks. Summer had the girls all dressed in white with lighted candles in flower garlands (but they didn't float them on the river or lake as I have known on St. John's nights of yore!). Autumn had the festival called "Andrzejki", with spinning, weaving and fortune-telling going on, and Winter had "Zapusty". The latter involved some extremely strange noises on the violin, and some noblemen who'd dropped by for a quick mazur, with some of the girls disappearing very smartly when the cock crowed! Similar festivals take place in many other parts of Poland of course, but these versions were the ones of that small locality only, handed on from parents to children.

This group hasn't been though grand enough to be put on the West European circuit though they have been to Hungary. I wish we could help bring such groups to those interested over here, but how to do it I don't know. I can only hope and plan, perhaps, to take some of us to see and work with this particular group in their own village next summer.

BETTY HARVEY

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NORWEGIAN FOLK DANCING

We have had a request from one of our members for information regarding where to find Norwegian dancing when in Norway. If any of our readers has any contacts or can pass on any useful sources of information on this, would they please write direct to Mrs. Nancy Willis, 66 Chesterhill, Cramlington, Northumberland NE23 6JW.

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FLYING THE FLAG

Newport Folk Dance Group want to have made a weather proof banner that they can carry on charity walks, fix to the car at carnivals, and display at their outside demonstrations. They are asking for suggestions as to where they can get one made, or for ideas as to how they could do it themselves. Would anyone who thinks they can be of assistance, please send their ideas to Sue Clark at 31 East Grove Road, Newport, Gwent.

The following poem was written by a member of Woodvale International Folk Dance Group for their 10th anniversary.

WOODVALE - A POTTED HISTORY

Woodvale was conceived in '67
When I was - oh - all of eleven
Well, to keep the record perfectly clear
I was twelve - but what's in a year?

Ian Willson and Jean, his wife
Gave the Group its early life
Though at first it had no name
It has one now of countrywide fame!

The evening meetings were in the Church Hall
'Cause in those days the group was small.
January '68 saw our first big 'do'
A success - so we had one in May too.

Our first public demo was also in May
and went quite well, so the scrapbooks say
And now we have a name for this merry troupe
The Woodvale International Folk Dance Group

1970 at Chatham Town Hall
"See How They Dance" one and all
On the stage is presented a Show
Eight other groups and us, you know.

Everyone thought it was a good do
So it was repeated in '72
Then there were eleven groups in all
On the stage at Chatham Central Hall

The French people came across that year
So that in '73 in France we'll appear
Chalons-sur-Marne is the place to go
That's the champagne region you know!

And did you know, what's more
We were twinned in '74
Also that year we were bereft
'Cause that is when Ian and Jean left.

A couple of dances are held each year
And at village fetes we will appear
Displaying dances from overseas
and wearing costumes that show our knees!

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And at the Dances over the last decade
Wilf has come along and played
"Have accordion, will travel" is what he says
He must travel a lot, the way he plays!

'76 and National Folk Day
Trafalgar Square is where we play
It's a very hot day - the hottest in town
We paddle in the fountains to help cool down!

Folk Dance Festival at Gravesend
The rehearsals drive us round the bend
The show's a success, that's what we hear
And that winds up another year.

'77 and "See How They Dance"
This really is our big chance
To show the public what we can do
And I'm sure it was enjoyed by you.

Folk Dance Festival, Chatham Central Hall
A repeat of the Gravesend 'do' last fall
The French people came again to our shore
And we dance at Trafalgar Square once more

October we host the EFDSS District event
and posing for a record cover a day is spent
'78 and it's the Borograds Pantomime
We dance for them and have a good time.

Now we're more or less up to date
Which is just as well as it's getting late
Our thanks to Wilf and Ian and Jean
And Ernie and Eileen - always on the scene.

To all the people who do the catering
And sundry others who do their own thing
To parents who give us a lot of aid
To Woodvale - and the first decade.

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A TIE AT DUNFORD

Would whoever left a tie at Dunford please let me know where to send it, or
alternatively send me the jacket which it matches!

JACK RICHARDSON, Dept. of Chemical Engineering, University College of Swansea,
Singleton Park, Swansea, Wales.

BILLINGHAM INTERNATIONAL FOLKLORE FESTIVAL

The Billingham Festival is not, of course, comparable with the International Eisteddfod at Llangollen as it is run on an entirely different basis and is not competitive. The teams are there to show the dances of their different countries to an audience who are not there to judge or criticize the authenticity but to sit back and enjoy a colourful display. The Festival has therefore to be reviewed as a spectacle, some of which is 'folk' and some not, and based on this assessment, this year's Festival was, I thought, extremely good.

For the first time, I saw the 'stilt dances' from France, where men dance unbelievably on tall stilts, performing dances like Farandol and La Gigue, and fast polkas, staying up on the high stilts for quite a long time and not once stumbling, and then, even more unbelievably dancing on one stilt! The programme notes tell us that the men in this group are shepherds from the province of Landes, where they wear stilts in the ordinary course of everyday life, owing to the marshy nature of the land. I can well believe it after seeing them, as the group included a very young boy of about 5 or 6 years who was quite confidently dancing around on stilts!

Then there were the Czech dancers, whose girls were adept at really fast turns, in perfect timing, and absolutely together, and also at very high jumps, to sit on the men's shoulders.

The Brigham Young dancers from the U.S.A. who, however much the critics, including myself, have slated from time to time as folk dancers, have to be admired and applauded for their sheer energy and enthusiasm, and their delightful-to-watch flat-footed clogging.

The Jugoslavs from Banjaluka were the most disappointing. I only saw them once in a rather short item but they just did a hotch-potch of Balkan steps and dance patterns in a very uninspiring item, not at all representative of their country's rich folklore, and their costumes were rather poor.

The Georgian dancers performed their by now familiar graceful women's gliding dances, effortlessly moving across the stage, while the men, equally graceful in their own way, performed rapid turns, jumps, leaps, sometimes on the points of their toes, for the admiration of the women and were equally beautiful to watch.

The Turkish team from Ankara were, from the short items that I was able to watch them, very good, with beautiful costumes and most exciting music on the zurna and davul. I always want Turkish dancing, the men's dances in particular, to go on and on, and the longer they go on the more excited about it I get, but unfortunately the arrangement of the programme and my own limited time there only allowed me to see a little of their repertoire.

The Swedish team were excellent, and I have never seen the Hambo danced so beautifully. Now I know what it can really look like and will endeavour to do it "properly", but I don't think I could ever manage to make it look so graceful as did this team.

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The team from the Canary Islands were from Las Palmas. Previously I had only seen teams from the other islands in the Canaries and had never seen the beautiful costumes worn by the girls in this team, "Roque Nublo", and had certainly never seen the rather odd costumes of the men. They wore white shirts with elbow-length sleeves gathered at the shoulders and billowing out into large loose puffed sleeves; short, pleated, white culottes; various coloured sleeveless jackets; and socks divided into two parts, one short white band around the calves, separated from short white socks tucked into fawn suede boots. The dances they performed were very simple but typical of the Canaries, and the singing accompanying the dances was very good indeed.

The other teams that I was able to see were an ensemble from Austria who performed some very nice little Austrian couple dances and clever schuhplattler dances, accompanied by zithers and yodelling; some solo dances from Nepal which, I'm afraid, did not mean very much to me at all as they were obviously of religious nature and needed either more detailed programme notes or a previous knowledge of this type of dancing; and lastly the Bela Bartok group from Hungary who, although stagey, were very good dancers indeed and brought the Sunday evening concert to a thrilling climax with a selection of fast, exciting dances from different regions of Hungary.

This was only my second visit to Billingham, so I do not know how it compares with most other years, but I certainly enjoyed my two days there and would like to go again as a spectator; perhaps one of the SIFD members who were there for the instruction course may like to comment on it from that point of view.

Incidentally, I have often been asked whether there are any camp sites near Billingham and have always thought there were not. However, this year, Rod and Barbara Perkins brought to my attention a camp site which is situated fairly nearby, details as follows:

Sedgefield Racecourse Caravan Park, open May to September.
T.V. Room, Showers, Wash Room. Enquiries to the Site Warden,
The Bungalow, Sedgefield Racecourse, Sedgefield, Co.Durham.
Tel: Sedgefield 21925.

LILY SOUTHGATE

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A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

On SATURDAY 2ND DECEMBER 1978 there will be a Hungarian/Polish Day Course and Party, to be organized and taught by members of SELPAR and JACY TACY, in Central London. Further details later.

S.I.F.D. AFFILIATED GROUPS

KAROMA FOLKDANCE GROUP meet at South Wellfield, Middle School, Whitley Bay, each Wednesday in term time from 12.30 p.m. to 2 p.m. Tutor: Kaye Lewis Poole, 50 Antonine Walk, Heddon-on-the-Wall, Northumberland. Tel: Wylam 2495. Further information from Brenda Ross, 26 Waterloo Road, Wellfield, Whitley Bay. Tel: Whitley Bay 534597.

BARLOW INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE GROUP meet every Tuesday at Wilbraham Road United Reformed Church Hall, Chorlton, Manchester, from 7.30 to 10 p.m. Further details from Philip Lloyd, 268 Upper Chorlton Road, Manchester (Tel. 061 881 3613).

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WEEKENDS AWAY

We are enclosing with this month's issue a list of Folk Dance Weekends planned for the coming year.

All those people who have already booked for the Polish Group's weekend at Philippa House (9th/11th March 1979) are assured of a place but PLEASE, in order to confirm the booking, will they send £1 deposit direct to Margaret Joyner at 113 Hartswood Road, London W.12. by 30th September 1978. After that date, places will be offered to people on the waiting list.

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MONTHLY FRIDAY CLASS

As previously announced, the demonstration/revision class started by Margery Latham and held each month on the Friday before the Cecil Sharp House Dance will be continuing next term. The first class will be held on Friday, 29th September, at 7 p.m. at Chequer Centre, Chequer Street, off Whitecross Street, off Old Street, London, E.C.1.

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WOULD ANY MEMBERS WHO CHANGE THEIR ADDRESS PLEASE NOTIFY EDWINA AND MICHAEL HOLDUP, 16 NETHERBY GARDENS, ENFIELD, MIDDX. AS WELL AS THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY.

S.I.F.D. - ASSOCIATED - CLASSES

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. Advanced.
Tutor: Betty Harvey

EUROPEAN NATIONAL

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

JUGOSLAV

Every Tuesday at West Square Branch of South Bank Institute, St. George's Road, London, S.E.1. 6.15 to 8.15 p.m. Beginners and Intermediate. 8.30 to 9.30 p.m. Advanced. Tutor: Ken Ward.

ISRAELI

Every Wednesday at Kidbrooke School, Corelli Road, London S.E.3. 7 to 8 p.m. Beginners; 8 to 10 p.m. Advanced. Tutor: Gaye Saunte (Tel: 01 318 0237).

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. New members should consult Fiona before enrolling for the advanced class.

EASTERN EUROPEAN

Every Tuesday at Stanhope Institute, St. Marylebone School, Marylebone High St. London (opposite Royal Academy of Music at junction of Marylebone Road). 6.30 to 8.30 p.m. Tutor: Alan McLean.

ROMANIAN (including Transylvanian)

Every Thursday at Millbank School, Erasmus Street, Pimlico, London (behind Tate Gallery and 5 minutes from Pimlico Station). 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. Tutor: Alan McLean.

HUNGARIAN

Every Friday at Millbank School (address as for Romanian), 6.30 to 9.30 p.m. Tutor: Alan McLean.

SUNDAY DANCES

September 3rd Cecil Sharp House, Regent's Park Road, London N.W.1.
M.C. Simon Guest

October 1st Cecil Sharp House, Regent's Park Road, London N.W.1.
M.C. George Sweetland

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

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WHAT'S ON

Sept. 4th/9th PACO PENA'S FLAMENCO COMPANY. Sadlers Wells Theatre,
Rosebery Avenue, London, E.C.1. Tickets 75p to £4.00.
7.30 p.m. Wednesday matinee 2.30 p.m.

9th SIFD LITHUANIAN DAY COURSE. Hugh Myddelton School,
Corporation Row, Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C.1.
10.30 to 4.30 p.m. Tutor: Mrs. V. Juras
Admission 50p SIFD members, £1 non-members.

12th PACO PENA'S FLAMENCO COMPANY. Fairfield Halls, Croydon
8 p.m. Tickets £1.25 to £2.50.

14th/23rd CARACALLA DANCE (THE BLACK TENTS OF ARABIA) Bedouin Arab
dancers. Sadler's Wells Theatre, Rosebery Avenue, London
E.C.1. 7.30 p.m. Saturday matinee 2.30 p.m.
Tickets 75p to £4.

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REMINDER Subscriptions for membership are now due. If you have not already done so, please complete the membership form sent out last month and return it with the appropriate fee to Dorothy Bryan (address on page 2).

Forms for completion have been sent to Affiliated and Associated groups/classes and should be returned to Frank Flanagan. Affiliated and Associated groups and classes who wish to be listed in the SIFD NEWS must send details to the Editor as well as to Frank.

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