

S I F D N E W S

F E B R U A R Y 1 9 7 9

We very much regret that adverse conditions have prevented us from producing our usual cover.

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

EDITOR: Lily Southgate, 31 Barbrook House, Chatham Place, London, E.9.
Tel: Home - 01 985 0428. Office - 248 1212 Ext. 552.

TYPIST: Joy Steventon, 64 Erridge Road, London, S.W.19.

The printing, collating and packing etc. is organized by Douglas Wells and family.

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.
Tel: 01 837 2438.

DEMONSTRATION SECRETARY: Kay Leighton, 9 Barnes Rise, Kings Langley, Herts.
Tel: Kings Langley 62763.

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

This month's cover design is another in the series of Bohemian costumes drawn by Dorothy Bryan.

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

SECRETARY'S NOTES

At the January meeting of the Committee we discussed various items arising from the Annual General Meeting, the most important of which is the formation of a Sub-Committee to deal with our Long Term Planning. We have invited Jack Richardson to lead this project, and within the next few weeks two other people will be asked to assist him.

Also at the A.G.M. we were asked to consider (a) production of a record suitable for junior school children and (b) a day course for school teachers. The Committee feel there is already sufficient material on our records for children of this age, but it is agreed a course for school teachers could be helpful, and we are asking Charles Steventon and his Committee (dealing with Day Courses and Badges) to allocate a Saturday early in the next year for this purpose.

Total SIFD membership at present is 364 - higher than average for this time of year, which is encouraging.

EDNA FOSTER
Hon. Secretary

CONGRATULATIONS

Members who knew Margaret Colato will be pleased to know that she has now married again and her new name is Mrs. Margaret Webb. She is living at 22 Northwood Road, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey, and I'm sure would be interested to hear of any folk-dance groups in the Croydon area. We send Margaret our congratulations, and best wishes for her future happiness.

Newer members may not know that Margaret was a very active and leading member of the Society in the early days. She was a beautiful dancer, particularly interested in Polish and Balkan, as well as Hungarian and other European Countries, but mostly remembered as a very talented Flamenco dancer, and leader and teacher of the very successful SIFD Iberian group, "Los Ibericos". It is a great pity that the Spanish class did not continue after Margaret left, but she has always remained an Honorary Member.

SWEDISH DAY COURSE

The Folk Companions Group will be organizing a Day Course in Swedish Folk Dances on SATURDAY, 24TH FEBRUARY 1979, at Marlwood School, Vattningstone Lane, Alveston, Near Bristol, from 10.30 to 12.30, and 2.00 to 5.00 (Please note change of times from those given last month). The Course will be followed by a Dance in the evening from 7.30 to 10.30 p.m. Tutor: Sune Helgesson of Folkdans Vastanvind Laget from Gothenburg. Course fee: 75p. Dance ticket: 50p.

M.C.s for 1979

I have been asked to arrange the M.C.s for S.I.F.D. Sunday Dances at Cecil Sharp House this year, and I have tried to organize a scheme which will involve groups as well as individuals, hoping to bring forward new talent and ideas.

Each month there will be one M.C. (or in some cases more than one) in overall charge, and where possible he/she will be supported by his/her class or group. The M.C. will specify a "flavour" for the evening. This means that a few simple dances from that region, perhaps new to us, can be taught or walked through, in addition of course to the general "international" dancing. This offers to groups linked to S.I.F.D. a unique opportunity to contribute to the Society in a positive way.

The provisional list of M.C.s for 1979 is as follows:-

<u>Date</u>	<u>M.C.</u>	<u>Supported by</u>	<u>"Flavour of the Month"</u>
Feb. 4th	Fiona Howarth	Hama'agal Israeli Group	Israeli
Mar. 4th	Peter Oakley	-	Welsh, Manx and English
Apr. 1st	Charles Steventon	Merton International	Iberian
May 6th	Gaye Saunte	New Danish Class	Danish
June 3rd	Brian Dowsett	Barnet International	Bulgarian/Balkan
July 1st	Simon Guest	Ex-members of Les Escargots	French
Aug. 5th	-	To be announced -	
Sept. 2nd	Wilf Horrocks	The Band	Musicians' Choice
Oct. 7th	"The Serbian Suite" - i.e. Jean Marshall, Kathleen French, Irene Keywood	Zivko Firfov Group	Jugoslav
Nov. 4th	Joan Guest	St. James Folk Dance Group	Polish
Dec. 2nd	Frances Horrocks	"Lines and Circles"	Balkan

I hope all members will support these occasions and wish all M.C.s and Groups every success. I am sure it will be an interesting and enjoyable year of Sunday Dances.

FIONA HOWARTH

FRIDAY "DEMONSTRATION/REVISION" CLASSES

The dates for the next monthly Friday classes at Chequer Centre are:-

2nd February

2nd March

6.30 to 9.30 p.m.

GAVOTTING IN BRITTANY

Every year, during the last week in July, Quimper is given over to the skirls of biniou and bombarde (Brittany's bagpipe and oboe) and the rattle of drums, to an endless parade of coiffes and aprons for the women and knee-breeches and ribboned hats for the men - and, of course, to a vast influx of tourists who come to see the biggest folk festival in Brittany. This is the week of the Fetes de Cornouaille, where the Bretonism of Brittany can be seen at its most concentrated.

You cannot get away from a school choir practising in the streets, a biniou player droning away to himself in the shade of an ancient wall, a couple of coiffed girls eating candyfloss, toddlers trying out the steps of the gavotte. To give some idea of the numbers involved, in the grand procession through the streets of the town on the final Sunday there are 3,000 men and women in costume and 1,000 musicians, at a conservative estimate. I can think of no better way to appreciate the variety within the apparent near-sameness of Breton costume and dance than to spend the whole of the final Sunday of the Fetes de Cornouaille watching the show.

Throughout the morning the grand procession (Grand Defile a Travers la Ville) unfolds a circular tour of Brittany in sound and costume, beginning at Quimper, working clockwise through the central mountains to Brest, along the Northern coast to St. Malo, inland through Rennes to Nantes, then along the Southern coast through Vannes and Lorient, and back again to Quimper. In the main stadium of the Place de la Resistance you can watch the spectacle with an accompanying commentary; or you can try to see the show as it winds through the streets of the town - though to see much you really have to stake out a claim on the pavements well in advance.

All the participants, whether singers or dancers, wear costume. The dancers (cercles) alternate with the bands (bagadou, plural of bagad), in the proportion of about 60 cercles to 20 bagadou. The bagad is normally made up of biniou, bombardes and drums (the batterie), though there are regional variations. In Basse Bretagne (Western Brittany) the normal pattern is kept, but as you get towards the more cosmopolitan Haute Bretagne you will find hurdy-gurdies, accordions and violins. In general, the more mountainous and remote the region, the simpler the music, and the more dour the costume, tending towards an unrelieved black. Conversely, the easier the living, the brighter the colours; brilliant green in the strawberry-growing region of Plougastel, or stylish black waistcoats and orange ties in Locoal-Meudon on the Gulf of Morbihan.

As one bagad and the cercles that march behind it give way to the next in succession, there comes a curious moment when you can hear the two bands simultaneously, one retreating, the other coming towards you, which produces a strangely dis-orientating effect, made even stranger by the underlying similarity of the music played. Not the least splendid part of the spectacle comes from the banners carried by the leading man in each bagad, enormous flags straining in the wind, which must be a tremendous burden in the numerous halts that interrupt the regular flow of the Defile. While the procession winds

Contd./.....

Contd./...

through the town, often all that can be seen over the heads of the crowd are a few coiffes and these dominant banners, inscribed with the name of the band, or with heraldic devices such as the red dragon (similar to that of Wales) carried by Quimper's popular Bagad Kemper.

The afternoon's occasion is known as the Abadenn Veur, or Great Assembly. It is divided into two sections; first, the presentation of the Reine de Cornouaille for the coming year; and second, a display to show off the vast scope of the Breton dance. The display in 1976 took an unusual form; a quadruple sequence of dances, each illustrating one of the seasons of the year.

Most of the dances are described as gavottes, but not the classical gavotte made familiar by the works of Bach and other 18th-century composers. The gavotte, according to the Oxford Companion to Music is "a dance form coming originally from the Pays de Gap, in France, where its inhabitants are called Gavots. It was taken up at the court of Louis XIV..... its court and Paris popularity lasting until the French Revolution". But it underwent an extensive transfusion of vitality when it left the court for the backwoods of Brittany. From being a "slow and stately dance" as the same source describes it, in two or four time, it has taken on a great variety of forms. It may be in triple time, fast or slow, decorous or riotous; though it still retains the characteristic lifting of the feet, as opposed to the minuet, where "the feet were shuffled along the floor".

The four seasons are preceded by an introductory section, culminating in a carnival gavotte before the austerities of Lent. Here one of the dances is performed face to face, as at the time of its origin the clergy had forbidden couples to dance closely together. The Spring section begins with an Easter Passion song and ends at Whitsun, with a hobbyhorse dance reminiscent of Morris dancers, though without the bells round the knees. The summer dances cover the period from Midsummer Night (La Saint Jean), and take in the harvest (normally in July), and then the dances of the pardon month of August and early September, when the country people can take time off for the annual religious processions (pardons) to small chapel, parish church, or major centre of pilgrimage. The pardon dances are among the most spectacular of the whole Abadenn - the Ribbon Gavotte (Gavotte avec Rubans), where the men kick their feet in the air as high as possible behind their partners' heads; and the Tobacco and Handkerchief Gavotte (Gavotte avec Tabac et Mouchoirs), in which these articles are presented respectively to the best of the male and female dancers.

Autumn in Brittany was formerly the time of leisure, and hence of marriages - marriages perhaps finally arranged at one of the pardons a month or two before. So most of the songs and dances have marriage as their theme; though the longest dance of the whole afternoon celebrates the prime autumn concern of the Loire Valley, the Muscadet grape harvest. Here, in the Chants et Danse des Vendanges, is what amounts to an extract from a folk opera. The dancers begin slowly enough, but towards the end the men swing the girl dancers uninhibitedly over wine barrels, while the master of the harvest offers silver bowls of last year's vintage to those within arm's reach of the platform.

Contd/...

The winter dances include a stamping dance (Danse du Loup), without instrumental accompaniment, to warn the wolves from the shepherd's flock (the last wolf in Brittany was killed about 1870), and a Pastorale, in which eight shepherds lead on the dancers, sumptuously adorned in brilliantly embroidered costumes and carrying staffs crowned with moons and stars.

The Abadenn ends with the exhilarating Dance of a Thousand (Danse des Mille), which should perhaps be more properly called the Dance of Three Thousand. To the music of the Sonerien Du - a group of musicians who combine the traditions of biniou and bombarde with elements of pop music, such as guitar, electric piano and high amplification - all the dancers join hands and for twenty minutes or so snake backwards and forwards on and around the platform in the cheerful Gavotte des Montagnes. Those of the audience who know the steps join in, and everyone spills back across the river into the old town.

But this is far from being the end of the day. At 9.30 in the evening the indefatigable Quimperois are back in the stadium again for the Soiree des Laureats, in which all those who have been judged the best in the various events of the previous week make their final appearance before the crowd. The Queen of Cornouaille appears once more, demure in coiffe, kerchief and apron. The leading couple (duo of biniou and bombarde) are given small keepsakes. Then the leading cercles dance away into the dark.

For two more hours the alleyways of Locmaria (the oldest part of Quimper) are full of dancers, with the gavotte now well and truly in their bones, drinking cider and beer and lurching more and more unsteadily as the fest-noz (night festival) proceeds. The Sonerien Du, gathering fresh reserves of energy from somewhere, are playing their hearts out under the plane trees. Children, grandmothers and visitors of all ages join hands with complete strangers to form a chain along the dusty paths, leaving the dance after a minute or two, or continuing until they feel they are dry enough for another drink. At two in the morning the last dancers reel home, leaving nothing but piles of rubbish and an empty stadium, soon to be dismantled, in the Place de la Resistance.

(Acknowledgement to Keith Spence
and "COUNTRY LIFE")

HOLIDAY IN TURKEY

Special tours to Turkey have been organized by Bora Ozkok, well known folk dancer and teacher. Various styles of Turkish folk dance will be taught together with visits to festivals, villages, folk groups, museums, etc. The tours are from 29th May to 18th June and from 19th June to 8th July 1979. The price for the tours is quoted as from the U.S.A., but people from this country may join the party in Istanbul, from where the fee for just under three weeks would be \$1,300. Full information from: Bora Ozkok, 205 White Oak Drive, Austin, Texas 78753.

S.I.F.D. AFFILIATED GROUPS

RAINMAKERS INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE GROUP meets every Friday 8 to 10 p.m. at Stevenage Catholic Church Hall, Albert Street, Old Stevenage, Herts. Secretary: Roy Bowtell, 9 Beech Drive, Stevenage, Herts. Tel: Stevenage 2871.

KAROMA FOLK DANCE GROUP meet at South Wellfield Middle School, Whitley Bay, each Wednesday in term time from 12.30 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 (except end of July and all August) 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).

WOODVALE INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE GROUP meets every Tuesday at Borough Green Village Hall, 7.45 to 10 p.m. Chairman: Ernie Nolan, 16 Drylands Road, Borough Green. Tel: Borough Green 883380. Secretary: Heather Dobson, 8 Holmesdale Road, Sevenoaks, Kent. Tel: Sevenoaks 57455. The group breaks for four weeks during August.

KENSINGTON SLAVONIC DANCERS (Czechoslovak dancing) meet every Wednesday at the Fox School, Kensington Institute, Kensington Place, London, W.8. (nearest Underground: Notting Hill Gate) from 7 to 9.30 p.m. Beginners and Advanced. Tutor: Hedy Fromings, Tel: 01 699 8597.

BARNET INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE CLUB meets every Friday, 8 to 11 p.m. at Hadley Memorial Hall, Hadley Highstone, Barnet, Herts. Leader: Brian Dowsett. Secretary: Janet Heathfield, 29 Cedar Avenue, East Barnet, Herts. Tel: 01 368 5345.

REMINDER: 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 Flanagan.

S.I.F.D. BRANCHES

"SELPAR" (Midlands Branch of SIFD). Classes on Tuesday evenings in term time, 7.15 to 9.00 p.m. at Selly Park School, Stirchley, Pershore Road, Birmingham. Teacher: Miss S. Chapman. Further details from Rod Perkins, 3 Linnet Close, Bournville, Birmingham B30LXB. Tel: 021 471 1373.

TWELFTH NIGHT - JANUARY 6TH 1979

It must be nice to be a graduate (as the Americans say) of Invicta School. It has an atmosphere about it which makes it easy to imagine that the infants who attend here learn important things like love and caring, movement and grace.

We went to Invicta School on 6th January. It was just about the worst time of the year for a journey with the unmelted snow making driving hazardous. Because of the bad weather we had not booked to attend Gaye Saunte's day course on Israeli dancing, and we were dismayed to see four or five coaches parked outside the school. We thought that at least 200 people must have come and we would surely be turned away. On a closer inspection however we found the coaches belonged to a local firm and were only using the parking space. In fact, about 60 people attended the course and we had no difficulty in gaining admission.

We arrived just in time for the first dance, which was Hein Yerunan, a circle dance with no partners. I was soon wishing that the steps came as easily to me as they appeared to come to the others, who leapt about with great agility. Gradually however it all fell into place as our teacher guided us skilfully and patiently through the dance. Next came Harimon, a couple dance with an evocative tune. Naomi and I balanced and hopped together and perfected the arm movements until we flowed like particles in a sea of melody.

One of the dances being taught was Ahavat Hadasa which we already knew. It is a dance for women, but as women so often have to dance as men, Gaye decided that it would not hurt the men to dance as women for a change. In the first part of the dance there is a feline arching of the body. It is a movement well suited to the female figure. Naomi does not like it, although she does it very well. Three other dances were familiar to us but we did not know them so well that we could not benefit from the teaching. These were Bona Habanot, Haroa Haktana and Vayiven Uziahou. We learned that in Haroa Haktana, hands should really be held in the circle and that the swimming arm movements which were originally taught are an innovation. The arm movements are, however, perfectly in order if it is preferred.

Naomi worked very hard taking shorthand notes, and during the lunch break we puzzled over how many times a sequence is repeated, or what step came next. How easy it is to forget in just a few minutes what you were doing with such concentration that you thought you could never ever forget.

There were eight dances on the programme including Rov Berahot with its ethnic(?) cry, and Hora Neurim where the man swings the lady in a wide circle and then claps in admiration as she turns before him. I like these dances very much. We were thinking how fast the day was going when Gaye announced that as we had done so well she would teach us an extra dance. We have learned eight dances already and we go on to learn a ninth - Triple Debka - a circle dance.

After afternoon tea we finished by dancing all nine dances in succession. We could not stay for the evening dance but we stayed for more tea and a chat with some of our fellow pupils. Finally we collected our things and said Goodbye. After such a very satisfying and enjoyable day we felt that we too were now graduates of Invicta School.

DAVID RACKHAM

S.I.F.D. ASSOCIATED CLASSES

EASTERN EUROPEAN

Every Tuesday at St. Marylebone School, 74 Marylebone High Street, (off Baker Street) London. 6.30 to 8.30 p.m. Tutor: Alan McLean.

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 & Advanced. Tutor: Janet Woolbar.

At Rutlish School, Watery Lane, London, S.W.20 during term time: Beginners on Mondays 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. (Two classes 15-30 and over 30s). Advanced on Wednesdays 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. Contact: Charles Steventon. Tel: 542 3831.

HUNGARIAN (including Transylvanian)

Every Friday at Millbank School, Erasmus Street, Pimlico, London (behind Tate Gallery and 5 minutes from Pimlico Station). 6.30 to 9.30 p.m. Tutor: Alan McLean.

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. Basic Israeli Dance Course. 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. Advanced. Tutor: Fiona Howarth. New members should consult Fiona before enrolling for the Advanced Class.

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.

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.

SUNDAY DANCES

- Feb. 4th Cecil Sharp House, Regent's Park Road, London N.W.1.
M.C. Fiona Howarth (introducing some Israeli dances)
- Mar. 4th Cecil Sharp House, Regent's Park Road, London N.W.1.
M.C. Peter Oakley (introducing some Welsh, Manx & English dances)
- 7 - 10 p.m. Admission: 50p SIFD members, 75p non-members.

WHAT'S ON

- Feb. 2nd "FOLK DANCES AND COSTUMES OF THE USSR"- Lecture. Details given last month.
- 2nd KASATKA COSSACKS. Traditional Russian and Ukrainian songs, music and dances, at Fairfield Halls, Croydon, 8 p.m. Tickets £1.25 to £2.
- 3rd ISRAELI DANCE COURSE, organized by Hama'agal Group, at Henry Fawcett School, Bowling Green Street, London. (Followed by ADVANCED Israeli Course at the same place on 3rd March, and an International Dance Party). Full details sent out last month with ticket application form.
- 10th SILVER BADGE EXAMINATIONS in Bert Price Proficiency Award.
- 16th AN EVENING OF BULGARIAN DANCES at Barnet International Folk Dance Club, Hadley Memorial Hall, Hadley Highstone, Barnet, Herts. at 8 p.m.
Tutor: Brian Dowsett. Enquiries: Janet Heathfield, 01-368 5345.
- 16th/17th EFDSS FOLK FESTIVAL '79 (guest team Ensemble Folklorique Armenian Navasart from Paris), Royal Albert Hall, London. 7.30 p.m. on Friday, 10.30, 2.30 and 7.30 on Saturday. Tickets from Cecil Sharp House (sold out for Saturday evening, except balcony).
- 17th FRENCH HALF-DAY COURSE (with a little Basque) at Watford Central library (side entrance), 1.45 to 4.45 p.m. Fee: 40p. Tutors: Simon and Joan Guest.
- 24th DAY OF SWEDISH DANCES at Alveston, Near Bristol. See page 3.

ALL MATERIAL FOR THE MARCH ISSUE MUST REACH THE EDITOR IN WRITING
BY 15TH FEBRUARY