

SIFD NEWS



'CHAMPAGNE'
REGION OF
FRANCE
MAY 1979

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

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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.

This month's cover design is by Leo Denhard and shows a couple from Chalons -sur-Marne, Champagne Region of France.

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 April Committee Meeting we were pleased to welcome Sadie Stone, who has agreed to serve on the Committee and help me to deal with the correspondence arising from our advertisements.

This meeting was the last one for Wilf Horrocks, who asked to be released from his Committee duties so that he can spend more time dealing with musical matters. As we all rely so heavily on Wilf and the band, we thought this was a good cause and agreed to his request. We are pleased, however, that Wilf will continue on the Music Sub-Committee, and plans are now being made for our next new record. A special Thank You, Wilf, for your support, and we know you won't be far away if we need you.

Joan Richardson has agreed to lead a Sub-Committee to deal with the subject of selecting a suitable memorial for Margery Latham. If you have any ideas on the subject I am sure she will be pleased to hear from you.

Dorothy Bryan reports membership now totals 396 - can we break the '400 barrier' this year? (STOP PRESS: Since the date of the meeting, Dorothy has confirmed that we have reached the 400).

The S.I.F.D. Constitution has been updated as a result of motions agreed at the last A.G.M. and copies are now available. Please send me a stamped addressed envelope (minimum size 9" x 6") for your copy, or ask me for one at Cecil Sharp House as I shall be bringing a supply with me for the next few months.

EDNA FOSTER
(Hon. Secretary)

CECIL SHARP HOUSE DANCES

The next few months at Cecil Sharp House Dances promise to be exciting. Fiona Howarth's policy of having a "flavour of the month" is proving excellent..... British Isles in March, Iberian in April, and then we shall have Danish in May, and June's flavour of Balkan will be spiced with the Dunav Balkan Band to play for us.

July was previously advertised as French, but in fact the French flavour will be considerably diluted as we shall be having a team from Birmingham to demonstrate and lead a session of mixed dances during the evening and including the interval, with Sybil Chapman in charge; our Chairman, Simon Guest will be overall M.C.

The last four months of 1979 will introduce four new ideas for M.C.s - September the Band will be in charge playing their own choice of dances; October, November and December will be in the hands of some of our lady members.

WILL GREEN

S.I.F.D. ARMENIAN DAY COURSE

12TH MAY 1979

HUGH MYDDELTON SCHOOL, 10.30 a.m.

Last summer Tom Bozigian came over from America to Hatfield Polytechnic Summer Camp, which was organized by Hillel House. He taught us several dances in varying styles, very thoroughly, and I hope to cover six of these during the day course on 12th May. The music for these dances will be available on a 12" L.P. price £5.50, which includes an instruction booklet, so members are requested not to bring tape recorders please. During the day there will be a short film of Tom teaching at Hatfield, by courtesy of Les Wallace.

I hope some people were able to see the Armenian group from France who came over for the EFDSS Show at the Royal Albert Hall in February, and will now be inspired to come along and learn some of their dances. Please bring flat shoes, packed lunch, and lots of energy.

SIFD members 50p. Non-members £1.00.

FRANCES HORROCKS

FRENCH DAY COURSE & SOIREE - 24TH MARCH

Friday evening, end of a busy working week, no food in the fridge, and lots of chores to do, were the daunting prospects facing us when we arrived home to our new/old house, still an "unfinished symphony" with jobs everywhere waiting to be done. I was very keen to head our car South down the motorway to London once again as we had heard that there was to be a French workshop and soiree in Enfield, but Rod was feeling more conscientious and guilty that we ought to be doing "jobs".

By Saturday morning I had persuaded him that the pastures in Enfield were much greener and that a day and evening dancing would put us in the right spirit for a Sunday of "work". For once I was proved right and we had a lovely day and evening in congenial company and sampling French dances we had not encountered before. Joan and Simon Guest worked extremely hard teaching us these dances and by the end of the day we all felt that we had learnt something and enjoyed every minute of it. The evening was also a memorable event, with French dancing to the "real sound", with "Big Bill" and several of his musical friends providing music on bagpipe, hurdy-gurdy and concertina, and lots of lovely food and wine.

Our many thanks to everyone who contributed to a very enjoyable day and evening.

ROD & BARBARA PERKINS

ALL MATERIAL FOR THE JUNE ISSUE MUST REACH THE EDITOR IN WRITING BY 15TH MAY.

SOME RITUAL DANCES OF MANN

Continued from last month.....

I have referred to the fact, wellknown in folklore generally, that a former serious ritual observance may survive as a children's game, and we have an example of this in Manx folklore in the wellknown song and dance, "Helg yn Dreean", or Hunt the Wren. To go into the complete history and ramifications of this custom would take far too much space here, but I would recommend anyone who would like to follow it up to read the scholarly chapter on it in "A Second Manx Scrap Book" by W. Gill, published by Arrowsmiths and available at most bookshops and public libraries. Here, I will just quote his initial summary of the custom, and add that he relates the Manx ritual, in the course of his essay, to similar observances in many countries. To quote Gill, then:

"On a certain day of the year a wren was caught and killed. It was carried round by a singing procession of men or boys, in a decorated receptacle, from house to house, its feathers, in exchange for food or coins, being distributed to be worn as protective charms or luck-bringing amulets, or to be kept in houses and fishing-boats for the same purpose. The body of the bird was afterwards buried to the singing of "dirges", formerly in the churchyard with subsequent circular dances, but latterly on the seashore or in any convenient piece of waste ground".

In the days when it was truly a ritual observance, the Wren was buried in all solemnity, by torchlight at night, to the accompaniment of singing, dancing, and keening. The song and dance were both performed by men or boys, but one of these was dressed as a woman, and another, who actually buried the Wren, either wore a mask or had his face blackened. The keening was done by the womenfolk of the neighbourhood, who had to remain outside the churchyard wall, and keep their heads covered. In its passage down the years, most of this ritual, and all of the solemnity, has been lost, but the song and the dance still survive, and the dance is now regarded by children as a game, in which form I noted it. Girls as well as boys now take part, and the "Man-woman", a figure familiar in folklore, has become an extra girl who tries at the end of each round of the dance to grab another girl's partner, the one left partnerless at the end of the dance having to "dance with the Bush" - which means carrying off the decorated pole and cage, and spinning round and round with it. The "Bush", be it noted, is still honoured in each round of the dance; but there is also a suggestion of mockery in this final carrying by the girl left over.

Another dance which savours of ritual is that known variously as the Frog Dance, the Knife Dance, and the Fishermen's Walk, in which short knives are carried in the belts of the (men) dancers, flung down in a row so that they are embedded by the point in the ground, danced around, and finally lifted in a flourish above the dancers' heads. This dance was traditionally performed at the Boat Supper, when a crew of men acted also an impromptu play depicting the putting to sea of a fishing-boat, the shooting and hauling of the nets, the coming of a storm, a man overboard, and his rescue. This play, or one of them, was recorded in 1855 by the late Dr. Clague of Castletown, and is printed in his "Cocinnaghtyn Ghailckagh"(Manx Reminiscences) published about 1911 by M.J. Blackwell of Castleton - a book which is a perfect mine of folklore.

Contd./...

Yet another ritual dance noted in description and steps but not so far revived in demonstration is to my mind older than anything else I have collected, with the possible exception of the Dirk Dance; this is the one known as "The Salmon Leap". I have heard it associated traditionally with Finn mac Cooil and the Salmon of Wisdom, a most unusual direct link with Pagan Celtic religion; and it is also connected in several references with the Ards Stone Circle in Maughold, a primitive temple popularly believed to be Druidical. It involves characters known as the King, the Queen and the Skir (Fool?) and a circle of masked male dancers called the Priests, who carry wands of rowan and/or elder wood with which they strike the Skir as he lies on his back within the circle, after which he has to leap upright and out over the linked wands (this is the Salmon Leap which gives its name to the dance) and perform a special dance with the King and Queen. The names of these characters are also sometimes given to the stones of the Circle.

Of the last dance I shall mention very little survives; but that little is interesting; partly because it employs a "stamping" step not found in any of our other dances and is performed to a curious modal air, and partly because I think it links a very ancient Celtic ritual with a custom which still survives quite strongly, at any rate in the country districts of the island - that is, the custom of going to the nearest seashore on Good Friday to gather "flitters", or limpets, and often to cook and eat them at a picnic meal on the beach.

My first informant about this dance and custom, Mrs. Callow of Maughold, said that when she was a child the whole business used to be quite a ceremony. A fire was made of flotsam and jetsam (mychurachan was the Manx Gaelic word she used) gathered on the beach, and cakes were made and baked on it or barley meal. They had to be made without the use of iron or steel, so neither a knife nor a griddle could be used, and they were mixed and moulded by hand and baked in the hot ashes. The flitters were also baked there in their shells, and then everyone ate of them and the cakes, and drank milk which had been brought with the party. After the meal, all the food and drink remaining was cast into the tide with the words, "Gow shoh as banne shih (Take this and bless us). The fires were then put out, and everyone danced over the ashes in a chain of couples, which had to wind to and fro in the shape of an S.

Mrs. Teare of Ballaugh also remembered the cooking and eating of flitters and cakes on the shore, and a dance in the shape of an S, but not the food being thrown into the sea afterwards, or the spoken invocation. Later, I got a more detailed description of the dance, with a demonstration of the two steps used, from another informant in Maughold, Mrs. Ratcliffe. The side-step is one found in several Manx dances, but the other "stamping" step, presumably used to stamp out any remaining live embers in the fires, is peculiar to this one.

MONA DOUGLAS

(Acknowledgement to "THE FOLKLORIST")

The dates for the next monthly SIFD "DEMONSTRATION/REVISION" CLASSES at Chequer Centre are:-
4th May and 1st June, 6.45 to 9.30 p.m.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR....

Dear Lily,

Here is "A Note from Newport" for you. I love having my SIFD NEWS every month, and still feel that as many members as can should be prepared to contribute in one way or another.

The Newport International Folk Dance group has been having a very busy time recently with an increasing demand for us to demonstrate at various fund-raising functions (other people's funds!). In addition we continue to dance for local Women's Institutes, Young Wives, etc.

Our most recent venture has been to work hard for the "Festival of Movement & Dance" promoted by the Welsh Sports Council. This in turn has led to promotions for the Festival and last Saturday twelve members danced in the restaurant of a large store in Cardiff. This, in its turn, led to a request by the B.B.C. to take part in the "Wales Today" programme which goes out immediately before "Nationwide". Amazingly, all twelve of our festival team managed to coax their bosses into giving them time off. It was great fun and a completely new experience for most of us. Naturally, we all rushed home to our television sets after making the broadcast, only to find the "interview" part of the broadcast had been scrapped. If any SIFD members saw the programme in Wales they must have been somewhat aghast to see an Israeli dance in beautiful new Swedish costumes. The non-existent "interview" would have explained all. We have since had apologies from the Beeb.

Several of our members attended their first day course when going to the Swedish one run by Diane and Peter Summers near Bristol. They certainly enjoyed themselves, and especially the contact with other folk dancers. Now they are looking forward to the next.

To my many friends in SIFD; if you're coming this way on your holiday, do look us up. We would love to see you.

Sincerely,

SUE CLARK

31 East Grove Rd.
Newport, Gwent.

BARLOW INTERNATIONAL FOLKDANCE GROUP, MANCHESTER

On Saturday, 7th April, we were delighted to welcome Betty Harvey and Janice Wrench for a Day Course of Polish dancing. During the day we went through five regional dances and two national dances, most of which were included in the programme for the evening Dance, so we now feel we can add these to our growing repertoire. Also, we were interested to see the Polish costumes that Betty and Janice kindly brought with them. Thank you both for a most interesting day.

PHILIP E. LLOYD

S.I.F.D. BERT PRICE PROFICIENCY AWARDS

Having successfully organized regular Day Courses, leading to Silver and Gold Badge Examinations, culminating in the S.I.F.D. Teachers' Badges last year, we are now moving on to S.I.F.D. Specialist Teachers' Badges for those members who would like to teach the dances of one particular country rather than a general mixture of European dances. The first of these Specialist examinations will be for teachers of Polish dancing and will be held in July this year. Syllabuses were sent out earlier this year, and application forms are enclosed with this issue of SIFD NEWS.

BADGE SUB-COMMITTEE

DANCE TEAMS FROM LLANGOLLEN

The Committee has asked me to book a hall for a Social Dance on Saturday, 7th July 1979, chiefly as an event to which teams from the Llangollen Eisteddfod can be invited. Tentative arrangements have been made, so please make a note of this date in your diaries. Further details will be given in the June issue.

GEORGE SWEETLAND

GEORGIAN STATE DANCE COMPANY

Sixty dancers and musicians of the Georgian State Dance Company will be appearing at the following theatres:-

May 1st LEICESTER - De Montford Hall
2nd DERBY - Assembly Rooms
3rd SHEFFIELD - City Hall
4th ST. HELENS - Theatre Royal
6th BRADFORD - Alhambra
7th to 12th NORWICH - Theatre Royal
14th to 19th BOURNEMOUTH - Pavilion Theatre
20th SLOUGH - Fulcrum
22nd to 24th CROYDON - Fairfield
25th ST. ALBANS - City Hall
26th EASTBOURNE - Congress Theatre
27th SOUTHEND - Cliffs Pavilion

May 30th to June 10th (except 4th) WEMBLEY CONFERENCE CENTRE

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, 30 Knighton Road, Bournville, Birmingham B31 2EH. Tel: 021 475 3440.

SPECIAL CLASSES FOR EXTRA TUITION IN POLISH DANCING

Friday, 11th May and Friday, 18th May.

7.00 to 9.00 p.m.

at Kingsway Princeton School, Sidmouth Street, London, W.C.2. (Off Grays Inn Road, North of Clerkenwell Road junction). Come along and 'have a go' at these informal classes.

S.I.F.D. AFFILIATED GROUPS

FOLKESTONE DISTRICT NATIONAL DANCE GROUP meet at South Kent College of Technology, Folkestone, every Tuesday from 7.45 to 9.00 p.m. Secretary: Mrs. F. Cox, 24 Darnley Close, Folkestone, Kent.

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 INTERNAYIONAL FOLK DANCE GROUP meets 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 groups 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: NottinghHill 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.

CANONS FOLK DANCERS meet each Tuesday at Park High School, Stanmore, Middx. (in term time only) from 7.45 to 9.45 p.m. Nearest station: Canons Park. Further information from the Secretary, Joan G.S. Goodman, Tel: 01 907 9857.

WYCOMBE FOLK DANCE CLUB meets every Monday except in August and on Bank Holidays, at The Guildhall, High Wycombe, Bucks. Enquiries to Terry Reid, Tel: High Wycombe 37758.

S.I.F.D. ASSOCIATED CLASSES

DANISH

Every Monday in The Drama Hall, Kidbrooke School, Corelli Road, London S.E.3.
7.30 to 9.30 p.m. Tutor: Gaye Saunte.

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

- May 5th Cecil Sharp House, Regent's Park Road, London N.W.1.
M.C. Gaye Saunte (introducing some Danish dances)
- June 3rd Cecil Sharp House, Regent's Park Road, London N.W.1.
M.C. Brian Dowsett (introducing some Bulgarian/Balkan dances)
- 7 - 10 p.m. Admission: 50p SIFD members, 75p non-members.

WHAT'S ON

- May 4th/6th HALSWAY MANOR WEEKEND
- 4th/7th EASTBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL. Enquiries to Festival Office, 8 The Sanctuary, Eastbourne, Sussex.
- 5th GREEK FOLK MUSIC & DANCES - Lykion Hellenidon of Athens. Royal Festival Hall, 8 p.m. Tickets £1.10 to £3.85.
- 12th S.I.F.D. DAY COURSE IN ARMENIAN DANCES. See page 4.
- 17th A 2-HOUR "WORKSHOP" OF TURKISH DANCES at Gateway School, Frampton Street, off Edgware Road, London. 7 to 9 p.m. Tutor: Bora Ozkok. Admission: £1. Enquiries to Pauline Welch, 01 393 1919.
- 18th AN EVENING OF ARMENIAN/JUGOSLAV/GREEK DANCES at Barnet International Folk Dance Club, Hadley Memorial Hall, Hadley Highstone, Barnet, at 8 p.m. Tutor: Frances Horrocks. Enquiries to Janet Heathfield, 01 368 5345.
- 19th MERTON FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE by Merton Park Group at ATC Hall, 192 Merton Road, SW19 (near South Wimbledon Tube Station), 7.30 to 10.30 p.m. Music by Wilf Horrocks. Tickets (limited number), Adults: 50p; Under 16: 30p from Joy Steventon, 64 Erridge Road, Merton Park, London, SW19 3JD. Please enclose s.a.e. Come in costume if possible.

S.I.F.D. SUMMER SCHOOL at Balls Park College, Hertford, 28th July to 4th August 1979. Hungarian, Danish and Israeli courses; elementary for beginners and/or teachers looking for material; intermediate/advanced for less simple dances. Cost: £79 for SIFD members, which includes all instruction and full board from tea-time on 28th July to after breakfast on 4th August; £20 for non-resident SIFD members. Application forms and full details from Simon Guest (address on page 2).