



NEWS

AUGUST

1981



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SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

EDITOR: Lily Southgate, 31 Barbrook House, Chatham Place, London E.9.
Tel: 01 985 0428 (evenings Monday to Friday).

The printing, collating and packing is organized by Douglas Wells and family.
The stencils this month were typed by Lily Southgate.

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A FIXTURE DIARY for organizers to check for duplication on dates, and also to confirm those arranged by them, is kept on behalf of the SIFD by Frank Flanagan. His address is:- 124 Fairbridge Road, Upper Holloway, London N.19. Tel: 01 272 5005
Suggested time to ring - between 5 and 6 p.m.

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

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SIFD T-shirts, small, medium and large, available at £1.90 each from Kay Leighton (address above). Cheques and Postal Orders to be made out to SIFD.

This month's cover is by Lesley Boorer and shows a 19-century peasant costume from North Russia.

S.I.F.D. MEMBERSHIP 1981/82

Members are reminded that their current S.I.F.D. membership expires at the end of this month. Renewal forms, with remittances, should be sent to Dorothy Bryan (address on page 2).

Affiliated Groups

Your affiliation expires at the end of this month. If you wish to renew it for the coming year, please apply to Frank Flanagan (address on page 2).

Associated Classes

Your class association has to be approved by the Committee for next year's classes. If you wish to renew your association, please apply to Frank Flanagan. Please note that the teacher of the class has to be a fully paid-up member of the S.I.F.D. and approved by the Committee as a teacher.

After the group/class membership has been approved by the Committee, would all group/class secretaries please note that if you wish your group/class to be listed in SIFD NEWS you must send details direct to the Editor. To be included in the October issue (and repeated each month thereafter) details must reach the Editor by 15th September. All groups will be listed in the September issue to cover the interim period.

CHANGE OF TELEPHONE NUMBER

Would readers please note that Jack Richardson's telephone numbers at University College, Swansea, have been changed. The new numbers are:-

Swansea (code 0792) 205678 Ext.316
Swansea (code 0792) 205216 (direct line)

LOST - A notebook

If anyone has picked up, at a Day Course, or other teaching session, a notebook containing notes on the dances we have learnt, for which they cannot find an owner, would they please contact Joan Richardson at 34 Mayals Avenue, Blackpill, Swansea SA3 5DB.

FOR SALE

A Philips reel-to-reel (not cassette) tape recorder. In good working condition. Four tracks, four speeds, fast wind and rewind. £10. Please apply to Editor.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR....

Dear Lily,

TOON OR TEEN?

When recently in Holland, I told my Dutch friend about a Dutch folkdance that I knew, viz. Hakketoon. She looked rather puzzled and did not understand the title. When I described the dance to her (heel and toes etc.) her face cleared and she said, "You mean hakketteen" - teen meaning toes.

When back in England, I spoke about this to my friend and teacher, Gaye Saunte who, in turn, was also puzzled because she herself had spoken to some Dutch people about this dance and they seemed to understand what she meant.

Can anyone help clear this question? Was my Dutch friend right, or were the other Dutch people who knew something about folkdancing right, and did they perhaps know something that a person with just a knowledge of Dutch but not of folkdancing would be unaware of?

Sincerely,

JUDY INGRAM

1 Liskeard Gardens,
Blackheath, S.E.3.

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Dear Lily,

I have read with interest and some despondency the recent correspondence concerning the dancing skills of various members of the S.I.F.D. I find it poignant to read that an enthusiastic established folkdancer should actually feel she needed to crawl "under a stone" when considering her own ability. I am of the opinion that dancing is for sharing and enjoyment.

In this "The Year of the Disabled" (and may I add to that "disadvantaged" for that can be equally disabling), it has been my pleasure to see the children at Gaye Saunte's school, which is in an educational priority area, dance enthusiastically at various functions. This month they have been invited to take part in the Schools' South Bank Show.

The school in which I work is for delicate children, many of whom are severely disabled, spending much of their time in hospital, in plaster casts or wearing callipers. Folkdancing is the one physical activity in which they can all participate - no-one is excluded. Circle dances are particularly suitable because they help each other balance, and many children have been helped socially too. They have been invited to take part in a concert at County Hall sponsored by the Committee for The Year of the Disabled.

Leo's courage has motivated mine on a different matter, on which I would like to express my view. May I make a plea for Frances' request regarding the classes at the Swansea Course to work both ways? I, and I know other dancers who consider themselves Intermediate standard, have been inhibited by the presence of Advanced dancers at Intermediate classes. The teacher thus gets a false impression of the standard and alters the pace of the teaching, and those who learn more slowly miss out.

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Finally, I would like to say that I was originally introduced to the S.I.F.D. by Irene Fyffe, who at a personal crisis in my life invited me along to a folkdance class. My immediate reaction was to think to myself, "I reckon they'll be a funny lot". Some of them were! But I am very grateful to Irene for that initial introduction and for all the hours of enjoyment I have since had from dancing and from the wealth of friendships I have made.

I look forward to seeing you and other friends at Swansea soon.

Yours very sincerely,

SHIRLEY ROGERS

"Comfrey", 7 Ridgeway Drive,
Bromley, Kent.

Dear Lily,

Recent correspondence has been stimulating, enough for me to join in. Firstly, in July's NEWS we have the plea for teachers at the Swansea Course to be given the authority to remove from the class, gently and tactfully, anyone who is obviously not up to standard. This has dangers, apart from "What standard?". The Swansea Course has been widely advertized and is open to the public. In my opinion, to remove people from a class on this course without it being stated as a possibility before bookings (by payment of deposit) were accepted, could be regarded as a breach of contract, and anyone so treated would be entitled to ask for compensation or a refund.

In the May and June editions we also had the question of exclusion and elitism raised; the exclusion in this case being related to demonstrations. This combined correspondence leads me to question, is exclusion and elitism becoming a factor within the SIFD, so that we are at risk of creating a society within the Society? Exclusion can work in various ways; there is the non-advertizing of functions, say weekends away, and when functions are advertized there is the "full up" to the unwanted, method. Rumours exist of an "invitation only" group, with what truth I do not know, but they give the impression of a secret society; not a Mafia or Freemasonry since crime or religion are not involved, but they create a similar response since members do not know what is going on, or if the person they are talking to is involved.

Some of the members affected by exclusion as described work for the SIFD, which leads me to wonder if those who practise exclusion are saying to the others, "We want your subscriptions and work, but not your dancing or company". If secret exclusion becomes commonplace and accepted, then the SIFD could risk heading for, to quote from Philip Thornton's letter of April 1980, "a period of schisms and breakaways". Is this really what we want?

The question of exclusion from demonstrations is a different matter, since the public or other paying organization are involved. It is not just a matter of adherence to folk tradition; the standard must be the highest possible, in traditional presentation, costume and dance style. The organizer's dilemma is how to achieve this with what may be limited resources. This is not the time for

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comment on that, but if it is felt that exclusion might be necessary, then this should be stated before commencing rehearsals, or admission, if it is a "demo" class. Members are entitled to know where they stand.

Exclusion is, by its nature, restrictive and divisive. Restrictive in that it can prevent those with an ability from developing it, which limits the spread of expertise and does not help raise the standard of dancing in general, and limits the repertoire. One hears the comment that so-and-so is not interested in, say, Balkan or Israeli dancing, when the truth could be that so-and-so has been put off finding out, or developing what interest they have.

I am not unaware of what Frances describes as "magic" in dance, or that our teachers who give generously of their time, and certainly help beginners, need to be able to relax and enjoy their dancing, or that some dancers could be classified as perpetual beginners, which makes life difficult for their partners. I also would not like to see "grading" of dancers, which I understand exists in some organizations; this also can create problems. What I am asking and hoping for is open-ness, co-operation, and understanding between members and groups so that we make the SIFD a better organization than it is already.

Sincerely,

ROY CLARKE

33 Cedar Park Road,
Enfield, Middx.

Dear Lily,

On 1st July, Frances and I with some friends from the Merton Group went to see a display at Fairfield Hall, Croydon, by the Virsky Ukrainian State Dance Company. It was their first visit for many years.

This was unashamedly a stage show, with perhaps predictable and familiar dance routines displaying episodes of folk life, but without doubt it was quite outstanding. A kaleidoscope of colour incorporating twentyfour lovely girls who danced with charming and graceful movements, twentyfour men who danced, jumped, leapt, flew, twisted, turned and przedka-ed with absolute precision, and apparently no effort, together with an orchestra of sixteen excellent musicians who ably assisted the dancers in keeping their perfect timing.

In my opinion, a truly stunning performance and one which left me physically exhausted! I shall look forward with pleasure to another visit from the Virsky Ukrainians.

Yours sincerely,

WILF HORROCKS

53 Southway,
Carshalton Beeches,
Surrey.

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Dear Lily,

I most certainly agree with Frances' comments on limiting the number of dances taught at Courses, as 15 to 20 seem to me to be too many to ensure their retention in the repertoire. Her second suggestion of a compulsory division into "sheep and goats" is more contentious, as it would obviously be a subjective choice.

I do take the point that Social Dances should be a chance for teachers and more advanced dancers to relax and enjoy taking part for its own sake, and not have it marred by more than the regulation number of left feet. It does, however, occur to me that there may be other factors involved, particularly related to circle dances. The Interval "taped session" at Cecil Sharp House is a very useful way of individual groups being able to perform their "special" dances for the entertainment of others. But when the Balkan music started last Sunday and I joined in, I found I only knew one dance in the programme and I was, as they say, "put out". Considering it afterwards, I imagine it must have been a session for the Barnet group, which is a good idea since it attracts more people from there to the Sunday Dance. I wonder, though, if it would be possible to announce this in advance, i.e. who will be organizing the "interval session", such as Ha'Arigal, Barnet Group, Merton Group, the French Group or whatever, so we would know what to expect, and people such as I would not spoil their enjoyment if we don't know their repertoire.

There are two choices in circle/line dances; to barge one's way into the first dozen or so dancers in the line, who know what they are doing, or join at the end where chaos usually reigns. If you know a dance, it is possible to hold the line, but otherwise it is a nightmare situation. If a note could appear in the NEWS in advance it might avoid this difficulty.

I cannot get to Barnet often, and some of the dances last Sunday were very attractive, so that I wondered if it might be possible for Brian Dowsett to come down to take a class at the Chequer Centre on a Friday, to give us poor deprived Londoners a chance to learn them.

Yours,

GEORGE SWEETLAND,
28 Hayes Court,
Carberwell New Road,
London S.E.5.

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MONTHLY CLASS AT CHEQUER CENTRE

There will be no class at Chequer Centre on 31st July, or during the month of August. We hope classes will be resumed next term but have not yet had confirmation of the booking of the hall. Dates and programmes will be announced in due course.

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N.B. WHEN COMPLETING ENROLMENT FORMS, WOULD MEMBERS PLEASE WRITE/PRINT LEGIBLY AND ALSO STATE MR./MRS./MISS SO THAT WE MAY ENSURE THAT ENVELOPES ARE ADDRESSED CORRECTLY.

6TH EASTBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL

I was delighted to read in the "Secretary's Notes" in July's issue of SIFD NEWS that the Society has been asked to participate in the 1982 Eastbourne International Folk Festival. I've been meaning to put pen to paper to recount the very enjoyable Spring Bank Holiday weekend my husband and I spent at the Eastbourne Festival this year. It might be appropriate to write now, and hope to inspire further support from SIFD members for next year.

We camped on a wet and windy field late on the Friday night. The next morning we appreciated the warmth and pleasant interior of the College (actually called The Brighton Polytechnic - a worrying moment when arriving there for the first time!). We launched into John Lagden's Playford session and wove our intricate way through various "Maggots" and "Assemblies". John plays the piano and calls the dances at the same time. He can even sort out a set individually, as well as keeping the dance going for everyone else, and not miss a note. A real master!

The next session we attended was John Chapman's Square Dancing. The delightful band "Arden Folk" were playing their usual brand of lively music. We "wove the ring" and "swung our partners up and down" etc. for an enjoyable hour and a half under John's expert tuition. He also included some interesting new Contras (American longways). One I especially remember was called "Joy" that summed up the feeling of moving in harmony with other dancers that whole weekend.

After lunch, we joined Eddy Tijson's Israeli session. Eddy came from Holland but was a keen international dancer. He taught Ma Navu, Vai Nikehu, Debka Udd and Dror Yikra. The latter was a very pretty and fluent version but different from the one normally danced at Cecil Sharp House. Eddy is a beautiful dancer and a very patient teacher. By 3.30 p.m. we felt saturated by dances (8 Playford, 7 Squares and Contras and 4 Israeli!), so we walked along the icy sea-front to blow the cobwebs away.

In the earlier part of the evening we attended the International Dance, which seemed to be suffering from lack of live music and central control. We really would have appreciated the SIFD musicians to get the dance going with a swing. I feel sure the SIFD could make the International side of events as lively and well-organized as the English side of things. A great opportunity next year.

On the Sunday morning I had another desperate decision to make as to which workshop to attend. As an International and English dance enthusiast and a band musician I felt torn in three directions. I decided to attend the "Arden Folk" Musicians' workshop, which was so good that I stayed all the morning until 1.15 p.m.

In the afternoon the French group, who had come from Dieppe, took a session, teaching us some of their dances - Le Pouëtaise 1784, Branle Bachannle, Le Saison des Niches (apparently danced for hours on end in the Springtime), Polka (du pied, du pied - we touched feet in this one, or attempted to) and Pas de Patineurs. Then, for a bit of light relief, they learned the Dorset Four Hand Reel from us.

In the evening, we whirled through a few more square dances with John Chapman and "The Arden Folk" before returning to a very cold tent and little sleep.

On the Monday morning I joined in the reprise session for the International Dancing with Eddy Tijson. It was good to go through the Israeli dances learned at the previous session. I also muddled my way through the Balkan dances taught at a

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previous session (unattended by me) - Ivanitsa from Yugoslavia, Lajdusko and Pravo Trakijsko Choro from Bulgaria, Syrtos from Greece, and Sirba from Romania. Rod and Barbara Perkins had these dances memorised very well at this stage. (It was nice to be able to put the faces to the names read in SIFD NEWS!). Eddy did a lively Horlepiep from Holland which was imported by sailors and originally only danced by men. We also danced another slightly different version of Hakke Toone and a lively dance for one man and two women. I then had to dash off to collect my children, dumped in Surrey en route down, so missed seeing the other Dutch dances that Eddy taught.

For me it was a marvellous festival with such good workshops. The only problem was choosing which to attend, but how marvellous to have such a choice! Good luck to the SIFD for their future involvement at the festival.

JILL BRANSBY



LINGUA FRANCA

Alan Holland has had the thought that it is nice to be able to read dance instructions in the language of the country of origin, and of course it is useful to know them when you are trying to teach people who can't speak English. As a bit of encouragement to those who at least can get by in French, he has sent the following instructions for "L'Etoile", the bourree in 2/8 time.

L'ETOILE)Poulligny Notre Dame)

Normal: 8 couples, en chaîne, tous les garçons d'abord, les filles ensuite.

- A. Promenade en arc de cercle en pas de bourree lateral.
- B. Enrouler sur pas frappés.
- C. Se lacher les mains et placer pour le garçon la main droite sur le conde droit du garçon devant, et il faut donner la main gauche à sa fille, qui donne sa main droite et avance en pas de promenade SAM.
- D. Idem mais en pas frappé.
- E. On se redonne les mains, le premier garçon donne la main gauche à la dernière fille, et la première fille mène la danse. On deroule et promenade en arcs de cercle en pas lateral.
- F etc..... Reprise de la danse, les filles d'abord, les garçons ensuite.

SAM - sens des aiguilles d'une montre.

SIAM - sens invers des aiguilles d'une montre.

Two useful abbreviations cropping up often in dance instructions, even spoken ones; pronounced as read.

DANCES OF THE U.S.S.R.

GEORGIA

"The Ukrainians - Oh, yes, I've seen them on T.V. Aren't they wonderful - all those beautiful tall girls gliding around in white dresses"! That's what I heard the other day. Oh dear; they were not Ukrainians at all, of course, but Georgians.

Georgia is one of the three major republics in the Caucasian Mountains, the other two being Armenia and Azerbeidshan (of which later). It is hard to imagine any two peoples more different from one another than the Ukrainians and the Georgians. The Ukrainians, a Slavonic people, live mainly on the wide plains, while the Georgians are a race apart, live in the mountains, and their language and writing are related to no other in the whole world, not even to the other approximately 180 ethnic groups who live in the Caucasian Mountains. Yes, you have read it correctly; 180 peoples who often speak languages so different from each other that people from neighbouring villages cannot understand one another. But that, as Kipling used to say, is another story.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the dance style of the Georgians is unique too. This is the only country in the world where the men dance on their toes; but not as our ballet dancers do, in blocked shoes on the points of their feet, but in soft knee-length leather boots that bend when they turn their toes under towards the sole, so that they stand on the first joints of their toes.

The men's style is different from the women's; apart from the very basic forward step: 1-2 1-2 (as ordinary walking), there is not a single movement that is the same for men and women. Even the arm movements are different (easy to show, very difficult to explain). The women's basic hold is: arms held well away from the body, elbows, slightly bent, hands slightly dropping, hands always below shoulder height, one arm diagonally forward, other arm out to side. Men's basic hold (called Gazireh): upper arms out to side, shoulder height, fists clenched and bent downwards from wrist, one arm straight out to side, lower part of other arm across chest. From this position the men move their arms in wide sweeping gestures, while the women only move their arms slowly up and down.

The women have really only two steps (as they are wearing long dresses, any complicated steps could not be seen anyway). One step is the walking step, as above, the other a running step counted 1-2-3. On 1, step forward on whole sole; on 2, and 3, step forward on halfpoints. The men have a number of sometimes very tricky basic steps. What they have in common, men and women, is that the steps must be absolutely smooth, no wriggling, no wobbling, and for the women no jumping. The body must be absolutely straight at all times. When men and women dance together they do not touch, except on the very rare occasion where the man takes the woman's arm (not, as here, where she takes his arm), but on any other occasion his coat must not even touch her skirt. I once saw the leader of the Georgian State Dance Company tell her 'solo' couple to stay behind and do the dance again - his coat had touched her skirt at one time!

The girls' costumes have, mostly, very long very full skirts, which help the illusion of being on rollers, and the men, mostly, wear the costume that was adopted by the Cossacks who settled in the North of the Caucasian Mountains. These became the last Czar's crack regiment and bodyguard.

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The dances of Georgia are those of a mountain people; in contrast to the Ukraine with her immense steppes, which encourage wide leaps and bounds, the dancing space in the mountains is limited, and sometimes even treacherous; that is why in Georgian dancing the man always walks a bit in front of the woman; he is testing the ground, ensuring her safety.

The best known dance is the couple dance "Kartuli". It consists of five parts; first he dances up to her, then she dances round, he following; then he dances again, then she, then both together. This is the general idea, but in actual folkdancing (as opposed to strictly choreographed professional performances) there is much improvisation. It is she who sets the pace and decides what to do and when to do it, and the man has to follow her lead.

With this dance Nino Ramishvili and Iliko Sukhishvili won 1st prize in a Folk Dance Competition many years ago, and then formed their own Company which later became the famous Georgian State Dance Company. During the last twenty years this Company has been in Britain five times, and has been seen often on television. The last time it showed the dancers of the Company dancing with village people, which shows how faithfully they represent the actual folk style.

To end with, I would like to mention that traditionally women have always been honoured and respected in Georgia. To give just one example; if two men were fighting it was enough for a woman to throw her headdress between them - they had to stop immediately'. Would that this custom were to spread all over the world!

JENIA GRAMAN

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SELPAR'S SAFARI

A few of us from Nutbrook International Folk Dance Group were able to join Selpar's safari on 20th June. We enjoyed the informal, friendly atmosphere engendered by this gathering, where people spread over a wide distance were able to meet and dance together. We learned many new dances as well as meeting up with some dances we practise on club nights.

We started off at Youlgreave where we danced to keep warm. It didn't seem possible it was nearly Midsummer. Fortunately the rain kept off, though. We moved on to Tideswell and danced in a large car park next to the Cathedral of the Peak. Everyone seemed very happy and there were plenty of costumes around to lend a bit of colour to the occasion.

From there we moved to Litton, where we were finally beaten by the weather.

I would like to thank Selpar for organizing this very enjoyable day. It was very pleasant to have a day out made interesting by the dancing and the well-dressing. Thank you, Selpar.

GILL COULTON

SUNDAY DANCES at Cecil Sharp House, Regents Park Road, London N.W.1.

August 2nd M.C. Roland Minton

September 6th M.C. Wilf Horrocks (musicians' choice of dances)

7 to 10 p.m. Admission: 75p for SIFD members, £1.00 for non-members.

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WHAT'S ON

July 31st to August 7th INTERNATIONAL FOLKLORE FESTIVAL AT SIDMOUTH. Details from Festival Office, 10 Richmond Road, Exeter EX4 4JA.

August 17th to Sept.5th BALLET FOLKLORICO OF MEXICO. Royal Festival Hall, London. 7.30 p.m. Saturday matinees at 3 p.m. Tickets £2.50 to £7.50.

August 24th to 26th AKLOWA. Traditional African Drummers & Dancers. Queen Elizabeth Hall, London. 7.45 p.m. Tickets £1.50 to £2.50.

August 27th to 29th KASATKA COSSACKS. Traditional Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian and Moldavian songs, music and dances. Queen Elizabeth Hall, London. 7.45 p.m. Tickets £2.40 to £4.60.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sept. 12th RAINMAKERS INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE CLUB will be holding a Celebration Dance to mark their 5th Anniversary, at Springfield Community Centre, Old Stevenage, 8 to 10.15 p.m. Refreshments available. Admission by ticket (50p) from Mrs. S.Leavy, 10 Orchard Road, Hitchin, Herts. Tel: Hitchin 52502.

Sept.25th/27th WEEKEND AT URCHFONTE MANOR, near Devizes, Wiltshire. Details from Roy Clarke, 33 Cedar Park Road, Enfield, Middx.

Dec. 24th/28th A "FOLK" CHRISTMAS HOUSE PARTY at a Bournemouth Hotel. Full details from Peter Mayes, 8 The Sanctuary, Eastbourne BN20 8TA.

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ALL MATERIAL FOR THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE MUST REACH THE EDITOR IN WRITING BY

15TH AUGUST

