

# S.I.F.D.

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40<sup>th</sup>. Anniversary Year



Feb. 1986

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

Editor: Lily Avery, 16 Willow Drive, Little Common, Bexhill on Sea, East Sussex, TN39 4PX. Tel. Cooden (04243) 5866.

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The typing this month was done by Lily Avery. The printing, packaging and posting was organized by Doug Wells.

This month's cover was drawn by Lesley Boorer and shows a "Chapeau a Deux Bonjours" from the Bourbonnais region of France.

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CHAIRMAN: Janet Woolbar, 6 Wye Court, Malvern Way, London W.13.

SECRETARY: Audrey Whiteley, 16 De Vere Walk, Watford, Herts. Tel. Watford 21696.

TREASURER: Judith Holloway, 28 Shepherds Road, Watford, Herts WD1 7HX.

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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 S.I.F.D. by Frank Flanagan. His address is: 124 Fairbridge Road, Upper Holloway, London N.19. Tel. 01 272 5003.

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Enquiries and orders for books, records and cassettes should be sent to Joan Rackham, 16 Bathurst Avenue, London S.W.19.

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S.I.F.D. T-shirts, all white polycotton.

Old design ('Legs'), a few available in small size only - £2.50.

2nd design (Horlepiep), circular design in red & black - £3 (£3.30 by post)

New 40th Anniversary design in black line drawing - £2.80 (£3.10 by post)

New 40th Anniversary design in three colours - £3.60 (£3.90 by post)

All available in small, medium, large and extra large, from Kay Leighton, address above. Cheques to be made payable to S.I.F.D.

Car stickers from Judith Holloway (address above), 30p each.  
Please send s.a.e. 4" square.

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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.

## SECRETARY'S NOTES

My first Committee Meeting as Secretary covered a wide range of topics, as there was a lot to catch up on since the November meeting.

With our membership now standing at over the 500 mark, it was very encouraging to hear from Woodvale that, following a joint Safari into Kent with Merton Park back in the summer, they had been asked through a request to the Society to organize a teaching session at Wye in Kent. Consequently, a half-day Course and Evening Dance have been arranged at Wye College on Saturday, 1st February. Who knows - perhaps another group will be formed in that area! The importance of spreading the word about international folkdancing is even more relevant in our 40th Anniversary Year. The West Midlands Branch have shown us the way - their achievements in that area since their formation are appreciated by us all in the Society.

It was good to learn that we shall have an official presence at Sidmouth in August. We have been offered workshops and an evening dance, and Janet Woolbar and Jill Bransby will again be flying the flag or, rather, unfurling the banner, at the workshops.

A joint dance with the E.F.D.S.S. is being negotiated, and this will probably take place late in the summer.

A Happy New Year's dancing to us all!

AUDREY WHITELEY  
Hon. Secretary

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## APOLOGIA

Last month, in the article by our Chairman on page 3, I inadvertently missed out a whole paragraph from the middle of the article. I apologize to the Chairman and also to readers, and repeat below the relevant part of the article, including, this time, the missing paragraph \*. ED.

"Looking back over this time (the past five years), the Society has moved into several new fields of activity and has encouraged the growth of international folkdancing in many parts of the country. As the new Committee starts its term of office, we are about to embark upon a milestone in our history, namely the celebration of our 40th anniversary, an occasion for jubilation but also a challenge.

\*The old Cockney song says, "We've been together now for 40 years, but it don't seem a day too much". I hope this is true of us. If you have read the Treasurer's accounts for last year you will see that the dances and day courses showed a substantial loss, although the membership of the Society has increased. Forty years ago there were fewer people to please and a more limited choice to offer them. Few people have tastes so catholic that they like all dances presented to them, or have the memory or ability to perform them, but there is a difference between being selective and being exclusive. Folkdancing is essentially a social activity which should contain something for everyone - in variety of style and formation, and in degree of difficulty. Unless we are prepared to tolerate and support such a variety the international society will not survive.

So if you enjoy your dancing, introduce somebody new, try something new yourself. Make a New Year resolution to support your new Committee in their efforts to provide an interesting and varied diet of dancing for your enjoyment. We are always pleased to receive constructive suggestions but only the support of individual members - THAT MEANS YOU - can make the Society a success.

JANET WOOLBAR  
Chairman

ARMENIAN STATE FOLKSONG AND DANCE ENSEMBLE  
ROYAL ALBERT HALL, 18TH/19TH NOVEMBER, 1985

There were people who thought they had seen this Company before, but they hadn't. Those who were in England before are the State Dance Company; these are the State Folksong & Dance Ensemble. (They have the same in Azerbaidshan; one State Dance Company and one State Song and Dance Company). This misunderstanding may have been one of the reasons for the disappointingly poor attendance. When sold out, the Royal Albert Hall holds 6,000; the estimated attendance on the evening I was there was 1200! Another reason, I am sure, was the prices which were far too high for a Company unknown here. I am sure lots of people have no idea where and what Armenia is. A third reason might have been too little advertising.

To carry on grumbling; the programme (very expensive) was, like that for the State Dance Company, yet again very confusing. The performance seemed to have only a nodding acquaintance with what was printed in the programme. For instance; the first song seemed to have been omitted; the opening number was a "Cycle of Ethnographic Dances" but there was no indication as to when this actually finished; for a very long time songs and dances followed each other without interruption, choir singing sometimes accompanying the dancing, sometimes dancing accompanied by the orchestra, sometimes a choir and orchestra performing together without any dancing. Also, it was not clear when "solo" referred to solo dance or solo song, and as non-Armenians cannot distinguish between female and male first names, and the photographs in the programme had no captions, it was very difficult to find out who did what when.

Among the dances I could identify was a Ukrainian Boys' dance, very well done, but can't a State Dance Company afford the correct Ukrainian red boots instead of having them dance Ukrainian steps in Ukrainian clothes but wearing black soft Caucasian boots?

There was a very funny enchanting couple dance in which the girl throws away her worn-out shoes, and when she goes off the shoes follow her! Then the boy gives her new ones, and they pinch, so he has to carry her. Another of the dances was rather puzzling. I couldn't understand the story at all but perhaps it is a very wellknown one to the Armenians.

In the second half there was a Russian dance with all the Company, very good, and a Ukrainian folk song, billed as "Folk song and dance", but there was no dance; instead, something I have never witnessed before, boos from some of the audience! The Shepherds' dance (which I identified by the fur hats worn by most of the men) was a mass dance with solos, one man doing "on point" steps, which are typically Georgian. The programme said "Soloist, Albert Sarkissian", but as there were any number of solos, which one was he?

A great number of items seem to have been left out or exchanged for something else, but we did get the apparently inevitable Sabre Dance, here much better choreographed than by the other Companies who have been here. For the Armenian audience, the highlight of the Show was bass singer Henrick Alavertian, People's Artist of Armenian SSR, who drove his compatriots wild with cheering.

I do not want to sound too critical; the dancing was beautifully done, the girls very beautiful and graceful, the costumes enchanting, and all dances brought out to their best advantage by excellent lighting. Yet I kept feeling I was seeing the same beautiful floor patterns and hand/arm movements again and again. One lyrical dance for ten girls and one soloist is wonderful, two very enjoyable, three nice, but four, five, six..... A friend who was with me and who had never seen Caucasian dancing before, was entranced and enjoyed it all very much indeed as, I am sure, did all Armenians who were there. It is therefore just my bad luck that I am not an Armenian and I have seen lots of Caucasian dancing before, both here and in the USSR, so, I am afraid, I cannot help being rather critical.

JENIA GRAMAN



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR....

Dear Lily,

Some More Personal Thoughts On the SIFD

I've read with interest the correspondence in the December issue. I don't wish to dwell on the subject of authenticity - no doubt this debate will continue until the end of time. My own view is that there is nothing wrong in putting together a new dance; the important thing is that the dances continue the traditions and style of the area. This can allow for the influx of "foreign elements"; this has always taken place due to movement of people and re-settlement. We are already familiar with some successful German and Israeli dances, and few realize that most of the Swedish dances were put together just over a hundred years ago. Nevestinkso (Yugoslav bride's dance) is a wellknown example, although there are many authentic smaller bride's dances. It needs knowledge, understanding, skill and feeling to compile a folkdance. Few arrangements for the stage reveal these qualities.

The object of a dance in our context is to get people of all ages and social background together to enjoy movement - this may be light-hearted or deeply moving. It should be accessible, and dances which have sets and set figures can present a barrier, hence the popularity of "lines and circles". I think the stress today is too much on teaching dances and not on teaching people first to dance. Lines and circles can accommodate dancers of varying experience and capability, and also the inevitable "wallflowers".

At the official celebration for Yugoslav National Day Celebration held on 30th November 1985, at which the "Zivko Firfov" group were again present, as it has been for fifteen years or so, the Ambassador remarked that his country was going through yet another crisis, and they would do what they always did in times of crisis - go back to their roots and think through their development and identify the wrong turnings. Perhaps the S.I.F.D. needs to go back to its roots and find a solution to its present dilemmas.

I am one of the longest surviving members of the S.I.F.D. Though not an active one now, I do maintain an interest and care about its wellbeing. I got caught up in the "specialising" trend some years back, and this initially took up all my dancing time; now my dancing is restricted, and I have many other interests to cater for. As an outsider looking in, I'm conscious of a lack of buoyancy, adventure, and a perpetuation of the same image by virtually the same people who ran its affairs fifteen or more years ago. The "Elders" are necessary; it is they who should maintain the style and traditions of the dances, but younger members are essential to provide the life blood. The present climate does not seem to encourage this.

In the early 1950s, the S.I.F.D. existed as an independent body with a well-organized and flexible class and social dance structure. The regular Sunday dances were crowded, and the monthly dances at Cecil Sharp House were also crowded and abounding with dancers in costume. There was also the excellent, lively and inventive band. The age group was mainly young and Y.H.A. orientated. Most hostel weekends involved dancing, not only at the hostel or village hall but on the way there and back, on the platform of a railway station, or while waiting for a 'bus. We were dance crazy! No-one had transport, and we travelled in groups. Often on a "demo" Saturday we travelled on public transport in costume. There was an overall feeling of unity and belonging. Perhaps we were not too fussy about style, but when the occasion needed it, it was not lacking. There were sufficient knowledgeable teachers around - either nationals or people who were well versed and approved by a national. Self-appointed experts there were none. The transition to the Evening Institute, for financial reasons, destroyed this pattern overnight and did much to fragment the international structure of the classes. Affluence in the shape of private transport and higher expectations of weekend accommodation affected the hostel weekends. The annual Shows at the Royal Albert Hall ceased because of increased costs and the smaller Shows which replaced them did not really take off. Some smaller two-group Shows did, however, work very well.

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The Margery Latham Memorial Dance was a great success, and in a way reminded me of events which were once accepted as the norm. Some good things are happening - the day courses, the Swansea course, but I don't get the feeling of unity and excitement - just a lot of people dancing in isolation. A lot of criticism is hurled at so-called specialist groups but these groups - Swedish, French, Yugoslav, Spanish etc. did much to enrich the repertoire and maintain standards. One cannot browbeat people into joining the Society - considering the number of years it has existed, its membership is nothing to rave about! But taking the total of "group" membership gives a vastly different picture.

The Society has to change its image from what has become a kind of "afternoon tea dance event" to "an earthy folkdance" one. It must attract younger members, but not at the expense of jazzing up, or modifying its dances. There is no reason why there should be an age barrier. At festivals abroad one can see village groups dancing as a mixed-age group. The Yugoslav group (Zivko Firfov) have done some work in the field of reorganizing its class/demo structure and have attracted some younger dancers. They fit in well and have a say in the running of the group. After the loss of a good proportion of our "older nucleus" due to family reasons, it was necessary to find a way to fit everyone in - both in the class and in demonstrations - and to enable as many as possible to attend our participation at festivals and demonstrations which usually became a kind of "family" excursion.

I cannot offer a package solution for the Society, but image is important. May I suggest a new "logo", and banishment of the terrible yellow and orange headed paper. How many dancers now take the trouble to wear a costume at a dance, or even make one? Could not the NEWS be photocopied thus allowing for an artistic layout and varied type and possibly photographs. Editorially it is fine, but the image is lacking in impact. Dance is now a very competitive commodity, and the Society has to package its goods and promote a hard sell policy. It needs to pick itself up and give itself a good hard shake!

I'm being direct, but I'm trying to be objective, and I am sincere in my wish that the Society gets itself going again. Perhaps people will say, "What on earth is he talking about?". "We're okay". I'm looking in from the outside, as would a prospective member. Get some projects going to get people involved, get rid of the growing "inward looking" trend. I don't want to blow the trumpet of the Zivko Firfov Yugoslav group but, to name a few projects; our large costume collection is well on the way to being catalogued and boxed, its archives are being compiled, we are planning to video every dance we have, as an urgent conservation measure. The singing group has been re-established, with hopes for a new instrumental group. Other small groups no doubt have similar projects - why not the S.I.F.D.? It has money to finance projects, to sponsor travel for people to study at first hand dances on location. Invited teachers do not necessarily produce the required result, often just a correct and sterile dance. Folkdances must be lived, and this is learned and conveyed by observation and participation.

KEN WARD

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Dear Editor,

We would like to thank all our friends in the S.I.F.D., Merton Park, Merry Andrew and Interdance Eastbourne for their kind wishes on the occasion of our marriage in December. May we reciprocate by wishing you all a very enjoyable 1986.

ROY & VIRGINIA LE CROISSETTE  
INTERDANCE EASTBOURNE

26 Westfield Road,  
Eastbourne, Sussex  
BN21 2QU.

Dear Lily,

I would like to thank Rod and Barbara Perkins for speaking out recently in the SIFD NEWS. There are many of us who agree with them. I enjoy dancing without the benefit of extensive background knowledge, sometimes even to the extent of not knowing the country of origin or the name of the dance. Surely the most important tradition to maintain is that dancing is fun. Partner dances are very sociable if you are part of a group, but not everyone is. I sat out of at least half of the Swansea dances because I did not bring a partner with me. Perhaps my personal opinion would be less negative if I had had a chance to try them.

I have recently joined the Barlow Group and I feel they should be praised for coping with the sudden influx of students. We have not only been welcomed but they have also shown flexibility and positively encouraged our involvement. The needs of the young must be considered if they are going to be attracted to the Society. Of course, the preferences of the young should not outweigh the wishes of the other members, but surely we can work together? It should be remembered, however, that the young people are the S.I.F.D. of tomorrow, if the Society has a tomorrow.

Finally, what about the children? Catch them young, and you have them for life - I'm living proof!

Yours sincerely,

JACKY GREEN  
36 Roundwood Park, Harpenden,  
Herts AL5 3AF

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Dear Lily,

In my diary there is a beautiful photograph of eight Bulgarian women in traditional costume, singing. The caption reads, "A traditional folk festival occurs only once every five years at the Voivoda meadows about historic Koprivshitsa. Here one can listen to folk stories and witness the sights and sounds of centuries past". Rumour has reached me that the festival is to be held this year. I would be pleased to hear from anyone who is planning to go to this festival, or who can tell me any more about it.

JULIAN SINTON  
284 Broomfield Road, Chelmsford,  
Essex CM1 4DY (Tel. 0245 57427)

ED. NOTE: By coincidence, I received information about the Koprivshitsa Festival (printed on page 12) on the same day as I received Julian's letter.

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Dear Lily,

We read with pleasure the article by Lucile Armstrong on the 21st Anniversary of the Dunav Balkan Group, held at the Edison Centre, London, on 26th October 1985, and wholeheartedly endorse the contents of the first part.

In addition to the performers mentioned by Lucile we would like to draw attention to the contribution of Bulgarian songs by Dunav's friends, Gillian MacGregor and Seph Townsend, to the Turkish songs sung and accompanied on the baglamar by our friend Hussein Turkmenler, and to the lively speech made by our toast mistress, Di Waller. These "guest performances", together with the sight of such a large number of dancers performing their national dances with ease and enjoyment were greatly appreciated by the Pirin Group.

Our recollection of the birth of the Dunav goes back to the moment of parturition which happened in a cafe over a cup of coffee. Some members of S.I.F.D. will remember the I.F.M.C. (International Folk Music Centre) founded

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in the late fifties. Henry Morris and Olive were among the members of its Executive Committee which had brought together some musicians with the intention of producing a record of international folkdances. It was during refreshments after a rehearsal that one of the musicians working on the record agreed to Henry's proposal that the group should stay together, and suggested that it should specialize in Balkan music and call itself the Dunav. John had become addicted to Balkan music while travelling in the Balkans in connection with his language studies and because of being the leader of the Bulgarian Dance Group in London for some years. The Dunav Balkan Group came into existence in this way, with Henry as its leader.

The work of organizing the 21st party before, during and after the event was enthusiastically carried out by a larger team than those mentioned by name in Lucile's article - each contribution was vital to the success of the evening.

With the new young members in Dunav we look forward with confidence to another 21 years - but we intend to have more than one other party before that.

Yours fraternally,

OLIVE & JOHN BALDWIN  
27 Danvers Road, Hornsey,  
London N8 7HH



FOLKDANCE GROUPS IN HUNGARY (Continued from last month)

Amateur Groups

Debrecen (Hajdu Group). Choreographer: Laszlo Kardos. Meet at Muvelodesi Kozpont, Hunyadi U.1

Debrecen Group. Choreographer: Beres Andras. Meet at Muvelodesi Kozpont.

Tardosbanya (Vorosmarvany Group). Meet at Kulturhaz, Bartok Bela U.

Bartok Bela. Choreographer: Zoltan Varga. Monday/Weds./Friday 6 to 9 p.m. at Altalanos Iskola, Vorosmarty U.49, Budapest.

Zalaegerszeg. Choreographer: Istvan Orsovsky. Monday/Weds./Friday, 6 to 9 p.m. at Muvelodesihaz.

Pecs. Choreographer: Jozsef Bodai. Meet at Bobita Babszinhasz, Deryne U.18. Monday/Weds./Thursday

Szeged. Choreographer: Laszlo Kozima. Meet at Bocskai U.10

Pecs (Baranya Group). Choreographer: Antal Vidakovics. Tuesday/Thursday/Friday 6 to 9 p.m. at Tanarkepzo Foiskola, Ifjusagi U.6.

Debrecen (Forgorozsa Group). Choreographer: Josef Kiss. Meet at Biogal Klub, Konyvtar, Monti Ezredes U.1.

Debrecen (Bocskai Group). Meet at Janujavito Muvelodesihaz, Aprilis U.4.

Gyoma. Choreographer: Putnoki Elemer. Meet at Karona Jozsef Muvelodesihaz.

Torekves. Choreographer: Miklos Manninger. Bulcsu U.23, Budapest.

Tapiomente. Chireographer: Lajos Domjan. Meet at Nagykata Muvelodesi Kozpont.

Hegyalya. Choreographer: Ferenc Ronay. Meet at Muvelodesihaz, Boyal U. Sartoraujhely.

Konszeg. Choreographer: Laszlo Antal.

Tape. Choreographer: Jozsef Torok. Meet at Muvelodesi Kozpont.

University of Economics Group, Choreographer: Peter Varga. Meet Weds. & Friday 6 to 9 p.m. at Veres Palne U.36, EM 1, Budapest.



RAFFLE. As a result of the raffle held at the New Year's Dance on 5th January, we have sent a cheque for £30 to Save The Children Fund. Joy and I would like to thank members for their generosity, and Jean Williamson for running the raffle. CHARLES STEVENTON



BACK TO BULGARIA  
by Frances Horrocks.

Continued from last month....

Class again next morning in the local dance-school hall with a beautiful frieze of dancers above the wall mirrors. The teacher is more lacking in energy than we are, despite the previous night's disco. The poor man isn't used to teaching foreigners. Some youngsters look in to collect costumes for a show in Sofia and the cloakrooms and outside window ledges are festooned with hangers. After class we wander off on our own to explore the town, which has a long pedestrian precinct. Cathy is in and out of all the bookshops, and there are several. The record shop is closed, despite a notice to the contrary, so we start to wander back. Along the way we meet friends who tell us the shop is now open, so we retrace our steps. Other people have also heard the news, and there are half a dozen of us in the shop, all asking for different records. It is almost too much for the assistant, who grudgingly produces a record and immediately puts it away again before anyone else can see it, and is rather surprised that we actually want to buy. The lady in the souvenir shop is much more helpful, so now it's my turn to have trouble with the packing.

Outside, it's drizzling, but next morning in the mountains the snow is lying Christmas-card fashion on the pine-clad slopes, glistening in the sunshine. We get out to play snowballs, but not before the coach driver had had a go at people still in the coach. The guide heaves a despairing sigh at yet another ruined schedule and tries in vain to call us to order. We stop for lunch in a hotel where the red wine is served at room temperature - chilled, and the steaming soup turns out to be tepid. Piet suggests they have found a way of making artificial steam to deceive the clientele. On now to the Rila Monastery, a "must" on every visitor's list to Bulgaria, and deservedly so. The detail of the paintings, both inside and outside the church, and the striking architecture of the surrounding monastery buildings cannot adequately be described on paper. You'll just have to go and see for yourselves.

We spend the night in yet another sumptuous hotel in Sandanski, not far from the Greek border, but class next morning presents problems. We are due to dance in a basement room in the Culture Dome, but there are power cuts scheduled for the morning, so we have to find another room with natural daylight, which turns out to be a local school gymnasium. Three cheers for the organizers. Here I should say that Bulgaria has had a long, hot, dry summer (lucky devils!) and that much of their electricity is produced by hydro-electric power. No rain, no power - hence the power cuts for non-essentials. This is our last dance class, and at last the dances seem to hang together.

We drive on through this wine-producing area to Melnik for lunch in a folk restaurant accompanied by dancing, and where we say our official thanks and farewells to Atanas, Ivan and Toni. After, while waiting for the coach, a television van draws up and out get two ladies in full Pirin costume. Of course, one of them has been to Amsterdam a few months before, and of course she remembers Henk and Wilma and Nico and Dick. Joined by the men, an ensemble of five insist on singing for us, and despite the director's urging that the light will soon fade, two of the ladies sing again in that hard, close harmony that sends shivers up and down my spine. Glorious!

We drive on some distance now to Blageovgrad, stopping on the way to climb a steep hillside to Rozjenski Monastery. The higher one climbs, the more fantastic becomes the view of the strangely shaped sandstone cliffs of this area. It's so quiet and peaceful, the silence can be heard. Inside the church is an icon of Mary whose eyes follow you round and prick your conscience. The Pope stayed here. I wonder if he had anything troubling his conscience.

When we arrive at the folk restaurant in Blageovgrad we are met in the lobby by musicians playing Eleno Mome, and by two girls in costume offering us bread and

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wine. In between courses we dance. sometimes folk and sometimes disco. The local people also join in and Willi is propositioned three times. We are entertained by singers and dancers who are received with great enthusiasm. At the end we dance all round the restaurant, joined by a good number of other diners, and then we are all presented with a record of Pirin music. Willi bids farewell to her disappointed suitors and we drive on to the ski-resort of Borrovets for the night, arriving at 12.45 a.m. As it's "koffers in de bus" at 7.15 a.m. the same morning, we go straight to bed and awake to see patches of snow and a mist shrouding the trees.

Back now to Sofia to await our flight - which of course is delayed - and the end of another marvellous visit. I shall be packing my bath-plug again just as soon as I can. Cathy already has.

FRANCES HORROCKS



THE 40TH YEAR CELEBRATION EXHIBITION

"Dear Will, Having read your appeal from the heart in SIFD NEWS, I wonder whether any of the enclosed will be of use to you.....". That was the start of a letter from Irene Fyffe (Bert Price's sister) when she enclosed some of the most interesting photographs yet sent to me. "I wonder whether!!!". How many others of you "wonder whether"? Just give Ruby and me the chance to see these things, please. Any item from the past 40 years could be exciting. Irene actually sent a photograph from 1947. Now, has anyone got a 1946 photo?

Badges, even group badges (not T-shirts), group diaries, awards, carvings etc. I haven't nearly enough etceteras yet. Several people have promised to let me have their treasures, and I hope everyone will let me have them by the end of March, because I shall have to plan and mount the exhibition before the Dance in May. Please don't plan to bring articles to the Dance, on the night.

WILL GREEN  
202 Dunkery Road, Mottingham  
London SE9 4HP.  
Tel. 01 851 7420



"WINDOW ON FOLK DANCE"

Last month we announced the publication of Lucile Armstrong's book, "Window On Folk Dance" and stated that this could be obtained from Diki Gleeson at each Dance Day in London. Unfortunately, Diki has injured her leg and has not been able to attend dances. In her absence, Diki has said that her daughter, Sula, or perhaps Joan and Simon Guest, can act as carriers. However, if anyone wishes to obtain the book by post from Diki (Oak Lodge, Theobalds Park Road, Enfield, Middx EN2 9BN), would they please make out cheques to her, NOT to the S.I.F.D. The price is £8.95 plus 87p for 1st-class postage or 66p for 2nd class. The publishers are Springfield Books.

We all wish you a speedy recovery, Diki.



STAFFORD HOUSE WEEKEND

Applications for the weekend at Stafford House, 14th/16th March 1986, should be sent to Roy Clarke, 33 Cedar Park Road, Enfield, Middx. Stafford House is a Conference Centre, near Hassocks, a few miles North of Brighton, having good rail and road connections. Accommodation is mainly in single rooms, with some double and larger rooms. There will be dance tuition on the Saturday, a half-day course in Croatian dancing, taught by Nenad Bicanic.

## FOLK DANCE IN MODERN DRESS

In one of the issues of "English Dance & Song" Mr. Sydney Carter wrote in favour of folkdance in modern dress. Did he mean for shows? It is a frequent misapprehension heard in unexpected places, "Why not bring folkdance up to date?". Why not indeed?

First of all, what is a folkdance? A folkdance is a traditional expression or interpretation in movement, of dance figures and steps, of religious beliefs by our ancestors at some remote period of time. These movements, steps and figures were handed down because faith in their importance was vital to their performers. These rituals were believed to bring food to the community - a vital necessity. With time, some movements, steps and figures were modified as their meaning was forgotten, or misunderstood. At the same time, changes in customs, costume, footwear and climatic influence modified the style of dances according to the region where the dance was performed, as well as the influence exercised by the influx of other ethnic groups which came into the region. Hence we have different styles and interpretations of the same fundamental dances according to demands of different regions. But still the original aim and meaning of a folkdance is recognisable. The musical instruments have also helped to shape dance rhythms and styles of singing, and therefore of dancing.

Let us then keep to traditional instruments, tunes, rhythms, style, dress, steps, figures and movements if we are interested in the rich variety in interpretations, aims and rituals as well as expression, which we have inherited from our ancestors. If we allow this treasure-house to be tampered with, future generations will be very much the poorer and the inspiration will dwindle accordingly. We have already lost far too much. It is the folkdance societies' sacred duty to keep up tradition. Let the English Folk Dance Society lead the way!

When dancing purely socially and for our own enjoyment, let us dance in our modern everyday clothes, but if we perform for the public and to show the folkdances of a region, or country, let us wear the appropriate costumes, and not modern dress.

Mr. Carter mentions "Scottish Dances". A Highland Scottish dance is one creative effort. It is perfect, performed in a kilt and full Highland costume, danced to Highland tunes played on the bagpipes. It is perfection; a whole, as evolved by hundreds of generations. If you start tampering with the set-up, remove the bagpipes, then the costume, why stop short, and leave out steps and style too? Why not simply perform ballroom dances in modern dress - in jeans, if those are preferred?

Secondly; Morris dancers wear white clothes wherever they are; all Europe has ritual dancers in white (whichever regional costumes the men may normally wear) because Morris men are ritual dancers who "are spirits of fertility" and must therefore bring about the rebirth of the natural world. They should not, therefore, wear coloured clothes, otherwise this would indicate that they were living beings and not spirits. Ritual dances were created by early man because he believed in the spirits of the underworld, of plants, animals, birds, insects, fish. To him everything in nature had a spirit, including stones. By ritual dances and songs, man could influence the food production in the world and thus ensure the good of the community, by averting evil and bringing food. They painted their faces and at times their bodies, as people we call primitive today still do.

Once folkdances are altered, it is the thin edge of the wedge and there is no reason to stop intellectualising folkdances so they become physical exercises to music, and nothing more. But not folkdances.

Thirdly; there is no harm in making up modern dances in modern dress BUT LEAVE FOLKDANCES ALONE AND DON'T TAMPER WITH THEM, OR PRETEND MODERN DANCES ARE TRADITIONAL FOLK. The guitar has never been a typically English instrument. It is the fashion at the moment in this country, and it fits in with jazz, jeans, long-haired men and

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short-haired women. Let modern dances be made up by whoever wants to, but let these modern dances express something which is modern. But leave folkdances alone and don't call modern made-up dances folk because they are not, and do not represent a religious faith and belief shared by most people. They cannot be "of the people" unless the faith of the people is manifested in these dances. They are meaningless otherwise.

Mr. Sydney Carter said some years back about folkdances, "Looking back when there are better things to be seen by looking forward" and he advocated making up "folk dances". Well, look forward and show us "better things", but where are these better things? Folkdances are full of meaning and purpose. Let us learn more about them.

LUCILE ARMSTRONG

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ADVANCE NOTICE

March 15th A FRENCH EVENING at Morley College, Westminster Bridge Rd., London, 7 to 10 p.m. Joan & Simon Guest will be teaching/reviewing. More details later.

March 22nd WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH DAY COURSE OF ENGLISH FOLKDANCES by Brian Lawes at Lyndon School, Daylesford Rd., Solihull. An opportunity for updating your repertoire of English dances. Contact D. Hunt (0203 413854) for details.

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HOLIDAY IN BULGARIA

Visit the colourful national Folk Festival in Koprivshtitsa, Bulgaria. This Festival takes place only once in every five years. Over 12,000 musicians and dancers, folk arts and crafts, exhibitions etc. August 1986.

August 6th to 13th. Seven nights - £298 per person (minimum 15 persons).

August 6th to 16th. Ten nights which includes, in addition to the Festival, a folkdance course in Bourgas on the Black Sea - £364 per person (minimum 10 persons) plus £25 for the course. Non-dancers welcome.

Prices include scheduled flights, half board, and visas.

Full details of these, and other tours in Bulgaria, from British Bulgarian Friendship Society, 69 Upper Street, London N1 0NY, tel. 01 359 0507 or 01 673 2931.

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WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH OF S.I.F.D.

- Dance Groups:
- 1) "Selpar". Classes on Tuesdays, 7.15 p.m. at Selly Park School, Pershore Rd., Stirchley, Birmingham. Tutor: Sybil Chapman.
  - 2) "Heart of England International Folkdance Group". Wednesdays 7.30 p.m. at Lyndon School, Daylesford Rd., Solihull.
  - 3) "Arden International Folkdance Group", fortnightly on Tuesdays at the Village Hall, Station Rd., Balsall Common, Nr.Solihull.

International Folk Dance on Feb. 19th at Westward Club, Westward Heath Rd., Coventry.

Further details of these activities from the Secretary of West Midlands Branch of S.I.F.D., Dennis V.Hunt, 27 Baginton Road, Styvechale, Coventry CV3 6JX. Tel. 0203 413854.



## S.I.F.D. FRENCH DAY COURSE

On SATURDAY, 22ND FEBRUARY 1986, we shall be holding an S.I.F.D. French Day Course. This will be a rather special day as we have arranged for a teacher and a musician to come over from France. They are coming to England at the invitation of the S.I.F.D. and through the good offices of ROSBIF.

The teacher is Nathy Falguyrac, who will be teaching dances from the Auvergne and possibly other regions, accompanied by Dominic Paris, who will play the cabrette. Don't miss this opportunity of learning some new French dances at first hand. Time will be allowed for tape recording.

Place: Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regents Park Road, London N.W.1.  
Time: 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.  
Cost: S.I.F.D. members £3, non-members £4.

Refreshments, including lunches, available from Cecil Sharp House Canteen.

N.B. There will be no S.I.F.D. Day Course in March as we have not been able to book the hall.

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## 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Please put the following dates in your diaries.

10th May 1986. Celebration Dance at Porchester Hall, London W.2.  
Tickets £3.50. Children under 16, £2.

11th May 1986. River Thames Boat Trip, with dancing, 2 to 5 p.m.  
Tickets £4. Children, OAPs and UB40s £2.

All tickets may be obtained from Ed Whiteley, 16 De Vere Walk, Watford, Herts WD1 3BE, by post or at all main functions of the Society. Cheques to be made out to S.I.F.D.

Commemorating our 40th year, new T-shirts appeared at the Dance at Cecil Sharp House on 5th January. The design in black and white sells at £2.80; in three colours, £3.60. The circular Horlepiep design is still available at £3. If you order by post, please add 30p for postage on one T-shirt.

### Accommodation in London

May I remind you that Margaret Joyner, 113 Hartswood Road, London W12 9NG, will be able to help you to find friendly accommodation in London if you need it. Write to her after February about it.

### Group Activities

Do let me know what your own groups will be doing to celebrate our 40th anniversary. This year is a great opportunity for the many different aspects of international dancing to join together from time to time and to enjoy being part of a whole. Advertise your own group's activities in the SIFD NEWS, and visit other groups now and then.

### Victoria Embankment Gardens

About nine groups have shown interest in dancing in these London gardens, so we shall be sure of several occasions to show our dances and costumes to the general public there. We shall also have S.I.F.D. leaflets for distribution so as to let people know of the groups and classes available.

KAY LEIGHTON

PROGRESS REPORT - SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE PRODUCTION OF SIFD NEWS

The Sub-Committee (Michael Holdup, Alan Morton, John Sayers and Doug Wells) reported progress to the A.G.M. on 1st December. The Sub-Committee was set up at the previous A.G.M. with the purpose of finding ways of reducing the amount of laborious work that goes on behind the scenes to produce the SIFD NEWS. The main areas identified are:-

- (i) typing stencils
- (ii) printing
- (iii) collating, stapling, folding and envelope stuffing
- (iv) addressing envelopes

At the previous A.G.M. it was agreed that some increase in membership fee may be necessary to permit less labour-intensive methods to be used.

The Sub-Committee reported worthwhile progress. While the cheapest commercial printing would be more than three times as expensive as using the duplicator, there were organizations that recognised our charitable and educational status and would print the NEWS at a favourable rate. Two that have printed the NEWS during the year are: the G.L.C. (County Hall) and the Middlesex Polytechnic. The process used is a photographic one; working from a good typed original or a line drawing. This avoids (i) routine typing stencils, while (ii) printing and (iii) collating and stapling are done by machine, as both County Hall and Middlesex Polytechnic have printing machines that do the collating and stapling automatically. Hence, good progress has been made in areas (i), (ii) and (iii). Furthermore, this has been done without raising printing costs materially. Some improvement in the quality of the NEWS has been achieved - notice how well Lesley Boorer's beautiful front cover came out on the December issue.

This leaves: folding the NEWS, envelope stuffing and, last but not least, addressing the envelopes. We are looking into the possibility of putting the membership list on a microcomputer and linking it to a printer to address the envelopes or envelope labels. At present, the envelopes are addressed by Michael and Edwina Holdup using a hand-printing machine. Automating the envelope-addressing is likely to increase costs, and the Sub-Committee is looking for ways to minimise any increase. Another difficulty with putting the membership list on a computer file is that it comes within the scope of the Data Protection Act 1984. To avoid registration and the payment of a recurring fee, the S.I.F.D. would need to obtain the agreement of all the members to their willingness to their names, addresses and membership details as given on the subscription renewal notice being recorded in this way. The information would be kept confidential, as required to comply with the 1984 Act and be used for S.I.F.D. administration purposes only. Any member objecting to this should write to the Sub-Committee.

It is expected that if the plans described above are put in hand, stencils will still be cut and run off on the duplicator as there is a substantial output of printed paper in addition to the NEWS, such as forms, A.G.M. Minutes etc. Also, we need to be able to fall back to the use of the duplicator if the NEWS cannot be printed outside.

JOHN SAYERS

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

SUNDAY DANCES at Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London N.W.1.

Feb. 2nd M.C.s Liz Mellish & Mona Graham  
Feb. 16th BEGINNERS' DANCE M.C. Hugh Wood  
Mar. 2nd M.C.s Dave McKie & Alan Cant

7 to 10 p.m. Admission £2.20 for S.I.F.D. Members, £2.80 for non-members.

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WHAT'S ON

- Feb. 1st DUNAV BALKAN GROUP will be playing at Barbican Centre, London, in the foyer on Level 5, 12.15 to 1.45 p.m. S.I.F.D. members welcome, for spontaneous dancing. Entrance free.
- Feb. 1st DAY COURSE OF TURKISH & ROMANIAN DANCES organized by Bristol Folkdance Group at Henleaze United Reformed Church Hall, Waterford Rd., Bristol 9. Tutor: Garry Karner. 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. £3.25 (non-members £3.50). EVENING DANCE 7 to 10.30 p.m. £1.25 (non-members £1.50). Combined ticket: £4 (non-members £4.50). Reductions for unwaged. Tea, coffee, squash available. Please bring packed lunch, but Takeaways nearby. Further information from Hilda Sturge, Tel. 0272 621802.
- Feb. 8th DUNAV BALKAN GROUP will be playing in the foyer of Royal Festival Hall, London, 12.30 to 2 p.m. S.I.F.D. members welcome, for spontaneous dancing. Entrance free.
- Feb. 8th OXFORD BALKAN DANCE GROUP ANNUAL PARTY. Please note, this year admission is by ticket only. £3.50, available from Jill Loveday, 44 Richmond Rd., Oxford. Tel. Oxford (0865) 58482. Please enclose s.a.e.
- Feb. 12th & 13th CONCERT OF DANCE presented by Croydon Schools Dance Association at Fairfield Halls, Croydon. 350 children from Croydon Schools in a varied programme of dances. 7.30 p.m. £1.50-£2.50. Children & OAPs half-price.
- Feb. 19th MIDDLE-EUROPEAN (Hungarian & Czech) DANCES to be taught by Sybil Chapman to the Oxford International Folkdance Group in St.Giles Church Hall, 10 Woodstock Rd., Oxford, 7.45 p.m. to 10.15-ish. Admission £2.
- Feb. 22nd S.I.F.D. FRENCH DAY COURSE. See page 13.
- Feb. 23rd LEARN FRENCH DANCES WITH NATHY FALGUYRAC, from France. 10.am. to noon. Admission £1. Durrington High School, Boulevard Hall, The Boulevard, Worthing, Sussex. N.B. The venue has to be confirmed, so please ring Worthing 691651 nearer the date for confirmation. All welcome.
- Feb.28th & Mar.1st "THE FOLKDANCES & COSTUMES OF THE USSR" at Plymouth (workshop or morning or early afternoon, lecture in the evening) and at Mar. 1st & 2nd Exeter (lecture only, evening). By Jenia Graman. Dates & venues not yet confirmed. Full details from Ian Phillips, Little Meadow, Droridge Lane, Dartington, Totnes, Devon.
- Mar. 1st MEXICAN DAY COURSE organized by Nuthbrook Group, at Kirk Hallam Community School, Godfrey Drive, Kirk Hallam, Ilkeston, Derbys. (change of venue from Long Eaton). 10.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tutor: Robert Harrold. £3. Dances to be taught: Jota Tapatia, El Bolonchon, Mazurca Mexicana, Marieta Las Virginias, La Contradanza de Artega. Further info., Nottingham 393204.

On Feb.7th, 14th, 28th, and Mar.7th. A COURSE OF BULGARIAN DANCES, new material, taught by Cathy Meunier at Barnet International Folkdance Club, Hadley Memorial Hall, Hadley Highstone, Barnet. Cathy will be given the teaching slot (8 to 9.30 p.m.) on these dates, and the course will tend to be progressive, with some advanced material. The latter part of each evening will revert to the usual format of requested dances from the club repertoire. £1 per session.