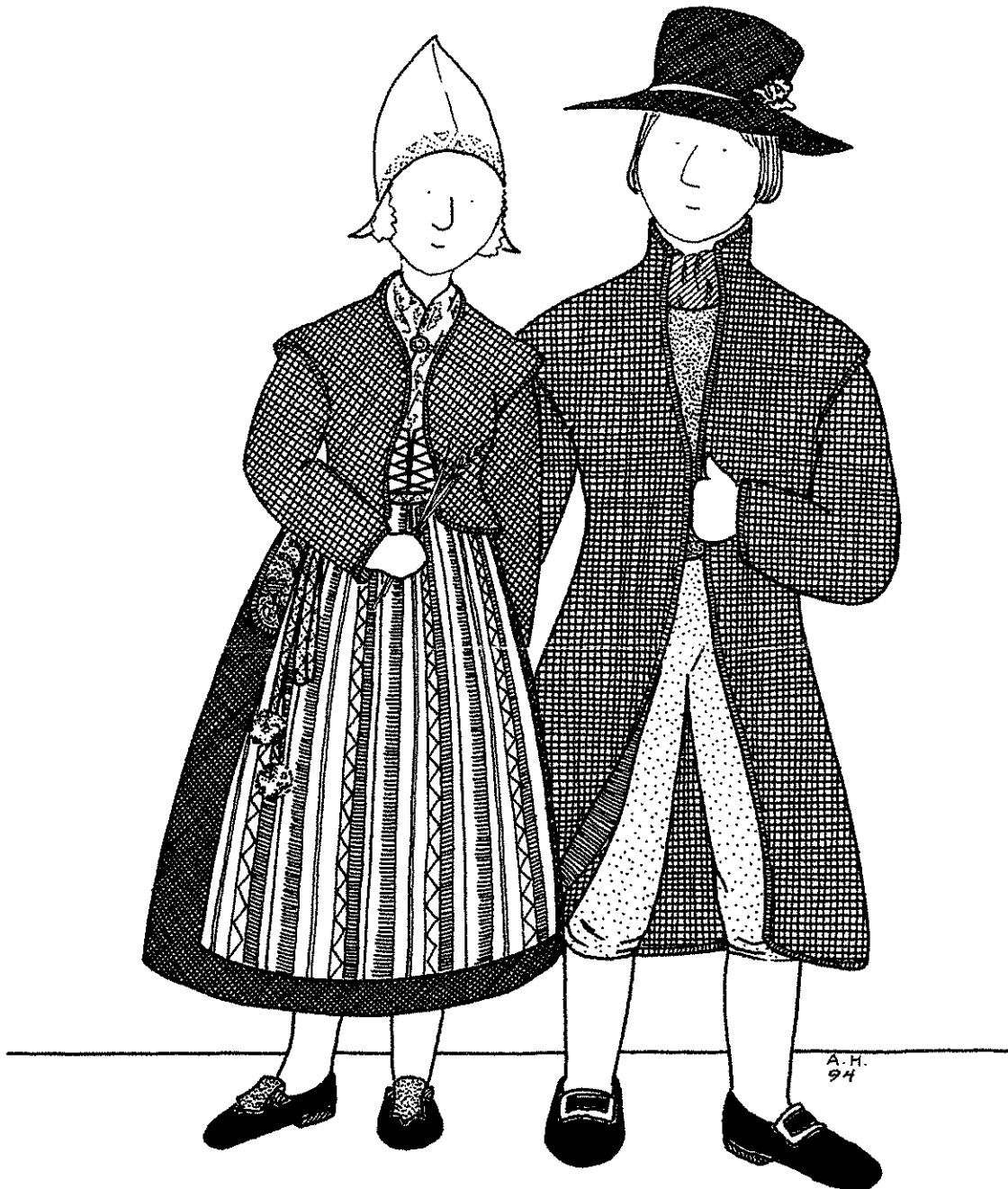


SIFD NEWS



Leksand
Sweden

JAN 1995

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

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The typing is done by Lily Avery. The printing, packaging and posting is done by Doug and Maureen Wells.

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The demure couple in their Swedish costumes on this month's cover was drawn by Sister Anna Huston.

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Lily Avery (SIFD NEWS Editor), Alan Morton and George Sweetland are ex-Officio.

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C.C.P.R. DIAMOND JUBILEE FESTIVAL

The first meeting for group tutors will be held on Sunday, 29th January, in Chappel Fields School, just round the corner from Lyndon School, Daylesford Road, Sheldon, Solihull, starting at 2.00 p.m. Rehearsals for all participants will be on Sunday, 26th March, Sunday, 25th June, and Sunday, 17th September, at Lyndon School.

There will be a rehearsal at Cecil Sharp House on Saturday, 1st July, especially for those in the opening and closing items. As the opening item involves wearing very short white skirts and waving pom-poms, I said I didn't think our participants would be quite the right age group, but if anyone is very keen to do this, let me know - there must be six of you. The closing item will be a few representatives from each group in their own demonstration clothes.

The dances for the Romanian item will be Hora Mintita, Jianna, Hora de la Primavera and Hora Femeilor, adapted slightly. Ideally, I would like at least six men with strong voices, and who are good dancers, to open the proceedings.

If anyone has any queries, please 'phone me as soon as possible on 081 642 3629. For anyone not attached to a class in the London area, these dances will be taught as part of the Tuesday class.

FRANCES HORROCKS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Lily,

Can I, through the SIFD NEWS, thank all those who made the Newport International Folkdance Group's 20th anniversary celebrations such a success? First, there was Sue Oates and Judith Morgan, backed by the Committee and members of N.I.F.D. The work they put into the evening was unbelievable and it was all "on the house". Then there were Kath, Irene and Derek from London who, with Margery Latham, had been at the opening of the group back in 1974.

Thank you too to Nick Green for being such a splendid M.C. along with his musicians. Golly, they were good, and the wonderful demonstration by "Martisorul" was a joy to watch and certainly had the P.I.F.D. members who had travelled to Newport for the party, spellbound. Thank you too, Hilda and Roger Sturge from Bristol who also came along with some of their members, and Sister Annunciata who, as Headmistress of the local convent school, had offered me the use of their hall if I would start an international group and who came all the way from Cornwall for the occasion.

On the local (Newport) front, Judith and Sue brought in the Welsh Folkdance Group and a Welsh clogging group, both of whom gave lively demonstrations. They also managed to contact many people who had been connected with N.I.F.D. from the early days. There were apologies too, in particular from Sybil Chapman who was the first "guest" teacher to visit Newport in May 1977 when she taught us Hungarian dances.

The evening was a true celebration and I must confess to being very proud of them and more than a little pleased at being persuaded to start the group all those years ago. One other point I must mention: as well as the lavish hospitality of the evening itself, N.I.F.D., with true Welsh generosity, hosted as many dancers and musicians as needed it, and there were quite a lot. Again, thank you all, and bless you for making it "a night to remember".

SUE CLARK
22 Church Road, Roch,
Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire

Dear Lily,

A word in defence of "The Place" which I was surprised to read in last month's SIFD NEWS that you, and apparently some others, found "scruffy and uninviting" and therefore not conclusive to drawing in good numbers.

I personally feel it has a lot to recommend it. It is central and easy to find. The studios are a good shape, and light and airy, and have well-sprung floors. If I have a grumble, it is that it is difficult to find anything to sit on! Cloakroom facilities may not be terrific, but I have never found them dirty, and the canteen is quite adequate. (I must have been unlucky, as I found the changing rooms and toilets (downstairs) disgustingly filthy; and the canteen is closed on Sundays when we hold S.I.F.D. Day courses, anyway. L.A.).

It is also extremely reasonable to hire, which is such an important point. At a Jacy Tacy session in the Spring we were unable to obtain a studio there and had to hire one (admittedly larger, but a poor shape) at Holborn Centre for Performing Arts. Facilities were very similar to those at The Place but it cost almost three times as much. I would add that at our recent November date at the latter we had very good numbers.

Every good wish to you and the others producing our "NEWS" for 1995.

BETTY HARVEY
30 Regent Square, London E3 3HQ

PODEGRODZIE SONG & DANCE GROUP REVISITED AFTER 21 YEARS

Podegrodzie is a village a little way from Nowy Sacz in South Poland, and I went there all those years ago to study the truly authentic dances of that area. These consist almost entirely of polkas and waltzes danced on the flat of the foot. On that previous visit the group was divided almost equally in two parts, one of very young people who did the more energetic dances, and the other of the elderly, and all the dances were interspersed with frequent song. I was particularly enchanted on that occasion by the beautiful old costumes and vivacity of the dancing of the old folk.

The present group consists now almost entirely of younger members, though some of them appeared to be nearing their middle years. They still have just four elderly couples they told me, but none was there on the evening of my visit, which was a disappointment. Maybe in another decade or so the balance will even up again if some of the now younger members still want to maintain their old traditions.

Anyhow, the group is certainly flourishing, and have just won "gold" at the September Festival in Zakopane, and in 1992 they became Laureate of European Award in Folk Art. They told me they are at present working on customs surrounding the ancient wedding ceremony in their region, but they chose to show me instead part of their very polished arrangement of dances for Harvest Festival. The speed and accuracy of these was incredible, and the singing and the playing of the small orchestra was likewise splendid; everything flowed and linked together so very naturally. This, of course, all comes with years of practising just these polkas and waltzes, many of them very similar, and nothing else. I couldn't help thinking however once again of how bored most of our S.I.F.D. members would become doing only this. Not only do our dancers expect to learn dances from all regions of a country, but from many different countries as well. Following on from this thought inevitably is "how can a high standard be attained in all this variety, especially as to style?". However - back to Podegrodzie!

I had a small chuckle to myself when noticing absolutely all of the girls were dancing in slacks. (It was an exceedingly cold night and the hall was unheated). "Jacy Tacy" girls will remember how fierce I was with them if they did this when rehearsing in bygone days, the swinging and sometimes the holding of the skirt being quite important to the dance. Footwear likewise seemed to be just about anything these days.

Anyhow, it was a marvellous evening for me to see this group again and check on several of the dances we have known and enjoyed over the years. There was a time a few years ago when I heard that with the coming of freedom from Communism, and all the ensuing changes, a number of the dance groups had disbanded or amalgamated with others. This was partly due to the fact that they were no longer funded by state or local authorities, and had to find their own finances as, of course, we have always had to do. Now again, as I've heard from several areas, a number have reconstituted themselves. This is good news that they are determined to keep the rich and varied Folk Art alive in Poland.

BETTY HARVEY



BALKANPLUS - JANUARY (See "What's On")

This month there will be a teaching session before the main dance, from 5.30 to 6.30 p.m., of some of the dances to be included in the evening programme. There will be no extra charge for this, so do come along and be sure of being able to join in later. This is also an excellent opportunity for newcomers, so bring a friend and fulfil a New Year's good deed.

FRANCES HORROCKS & JOAN GUEST - M.C.s

ZIVKO FIRFOV FOLKLORE GROUP - Songs & dances from Serbia, Macedonia and Croatia.

Dates for our Spring Term (all Mondays) :-

January 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th
February 6th, 13th, 27th (20th being half-term)
March 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th
April 3rd

Meetings are now held at the Abbey Community Centre, 34 Great Smith Street, London S.W.1. The format of the evening is as follows:-

6.30 - 7.00 General Dancing
7.00 - 7.30 Work Session
7.30 - 7.45 Break and Announcements
7.45 - 8.15 Work Session
8.15 - 8.30 Singing
8.30 - 9.00 General Dancing.

Hope to see you again soon!

JANET GILBERT (Group Secretary)

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VIDEOS FOR SALE

It has come to our notice that both Llangollen Festival and Sidmouth Festival produce videos of their festivals and we have acquired a list of videos for Sidmouth going back to 1988 and also copies of old cine films transferred to videos going back to 1968 but the quality of these must be suspect as some of the soundtracks have been lost.

This year's (1994) Sidmouth videos are as follows: Festival Compilation £25; English Folk & Morris £15; Solo Jig Competition £10; International Dancers £15; Sidmouth Morris Dance Competition £10; First Night in the Market Place £6; Saturday/Sunday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday Night at the Arena £15 each. "Meet The Teams" £10 each - Swedish Viking Dancers, Rokva Ensemble from Georgia, Formosa Aboriginal from Taiwan, Clann na Gael, Kalarryles from Greece, Great Western Morris, Appalachian Dancers. If anyone is interested in these 1994 Sidmouth videos, contact J.K.L. Video Film Service, 58-60 Temple Street, Sidmouth, Devon EX10 9BQ. Tel: 0395 512805.

Two videos (VHS/PAL/SECAM only) are available from Llangollen. The Folkdance Competition £11; The Essence of Llangollen £11 (inc. p. & p.). Cheques payable to L.I.M.E. Both available from Music Office, Llangollen International Music Festival, Llangollen, Clwyd LL20 8NG, Wales

DENNIS & MARGARET BELFORD

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"MAGHREBDANCE" - workshops for women only. Maghreb dance comes from North Africa and includes traditions of Berber, Arabic, African and Andalusian elements. Workshops will be led by Amel Tafout, with live drumming by Salah. For all levels.

April 8th Andalusian Scarf dance and scarf techniques
July 8th Berber "Kabyle" Dance and hip shimmies

at Soho Laundry (Shared Experience), Studio 2, 9 Dufour's Place (near Marshall Street and Carnaby Street) London W.1. 1.00 to 5.00 p.m. £20 (concessions £18). Contact: Amel Tafout, 081 6531 767. Booking for workshops must arrive one week before the workshop. Cheques (non-refundable) to Amel Tafout, 66A Church Road, London SE19 2EZ.

WEST MIDLANDS MOVEMENT AND DANCE ASSOCIATION FESTIVAL/SHARING DAY
19TH NOVEMBER 1994, SOLIHULL

Every two years or so, the W.M.M.D.A. organize an occasion when all "musical activity" groups and classes enjoy a Festival at which they, and the public, can see each other's work. In years past, the Central Hall in Birmingham was the venue, with massive audiences of 3,000 plus. (The most memorable occasion being the night of the Birmingham pub bombings in 1974). Over the years, finance and a change in interests has forced the Festival to be reduced in size and outlay. This year, in the lovely theatre-hall of Langleys Comprehensive School, the West Midlands Branch of the S.I.F.D. "flew the flag" for our Society. We were asked to open the event and also to be the first to perform after the interval, so that both parts of the programme started with FolkDance. Our two items, of six minutes each, and the R.S.C.D.S. item at the end, certainly produced lovely contrasts to the leotard-ed movement and K.F. groups!

The first item was a group of twelve girls and women, in costumes of five different regions of Hungary, who danced a linked sequence of girls' dances from Kalocsa and Somogy. The item was most successful....shapes opened and closed as they should, feet emphasised the walking beat at the start of the second part, and the compère made much of difficult steps being made to look simple when danced well, and also the fact that many items of costume were antique, and all were genuine!

Our second "appearance" was of eight couples who danced two Swedish dances, Sik Sak Scottis and Födeldags Vals, in a multitude of lovely costumes to make a truly International impression. This was prefaced by the compère who had bothered to translate the title of the second dance into Birthday Waltz, and dedicate it to a performer in another team whose birthday it was! How she found out, I don't know! These two six-minute appearances were intended to show two different aspects of our activity.....the formal and the less formal, and this they did, most successfully.

It's not easy drawing a team from three different groups in the Branch, with only one team rehearsal beforehand. It means all the groups have to work hard at the basic material before members volunteer to join (or are press-ganged into) the team for the performance. On the day in question, a full morning Dress Rehearsal was held, so that all performers had a chance to see each other's work, which was not possible at the afternoon's performance.

Although we had some last-minute changes to the two teams (due to work commitments etc.) the teams danced exceedingly well and our own Society "parent body" can be sure the standards of the S.I.F.D. are being well maintained, and exposed wherever possible here in the West Midlands. A very big "thank you" is due to all the team, and to our supporters who loyally bought tickets and enjoyed the performances. One or two new members now see what they're aiming for!

SYBIL CHAPMAN
West Midlands Branch S.I.F.D.

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FOLKDANCE HOLIDAYS IN CZECH AND SLOVAK REPUBLICS, 1995

June 30th to July 10th 1995. SLOVAK FOLKLORE ADVENTURES visiting two of the best Slovak folklore festivals, Vychodna and Detva, with trips in the footsteps of folk culture in Western Slovakia and the High Tatras.

July 29th to August 5th 1995. SUMMER FOLKDANCE WEEK in Benesov u Prahy. One week workshop of Czech, Moravian and Slovakian folk dances, and performance of folklore ensembles. Video tapes of the workshops and dance/music manuals provided for participants.

Special group trips, according to individual wishes, can also be organized.
Enquiries: Jasan Bonus, Dvorana, Spanielova 38/1275, 163 00 Praha 6, Czech Republic.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Feb.4th MUSIC FROM THE BALKANS at The Museum of Mankind, Burlington Gardens, London W.C.1. A special event linked to the display of Balkan costume at the museum. Dunav Balkan Group will play for listening and dancing. 11 a.m. to 12 noon and 2.00 to 3.00 p.m. Admission free.

Feb.4th WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH SPRING DANCE, 7.30 to 10.30 p.m. at Coleshill Community Centre, Temple Way (off Station Road), Coleshill. Please bring food for American supper. On No.90 'bus route from Birmingham; easily accessible from M6/M42 motorway network. If in doubt about best approach, ring 0675 462497.

Feb.4th/5th WEEKEND SEMINAR in Barnet, North London, with Yemenite-Israeli choreographer and teacher, Israel Yakovee (first time in Europe). £8 Saturday evening only (8.30 - 11.30 p.m.). £15 Sunday only (11 a.m. to 6 p.m.). £20 Saturday and Sunday combined ticket. Send s.a.e. for application form and further details, to Yossi & Janine Shalev, 3 Coppetts Rd., London N10 1NN. Tel/Fax 081 883 7085.

Feb.18th/19th WEEKEND OF MACEDONIAN DANCE with Martin Ihns. Revision plus new dances. At The Place, London. Further details later. Enquiries: 0702 206613.

Mar.10th/12th BALKAN DANCE COURSE with Bianca de Jong at Freshwater Bay, Isle of Wight. Details from Cathy Meunier, 115 Chetwynd Rd., London NW5 1DA. Send s.a.e.

Mar.11th/12th BULGARIAN DANCE WEEKEND with Eddy Tijssen, in Ipswich. Saturday 2 to 6 p.m. Sunday 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Further details from Sally Fletcher, 106 Westerfield Road, Ipswich IP4 2XN. Tel: 01473 252824.

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GREETINGS FROM LEEDS

Members of Loidis International Folkdance Group send New Year greetings to all our folkdance friends both North and South.

New friends have been made by the members attending York Summer School. It was the first time that Ian and I have been able to attend a Summer School, which was most enjoyable, especially as we met so many friends from the S.I.F.D., some of whom we have known since the early 60s.

On 17th September Loidis held their 11th anniversary workshop and dance. This was a great success and our thanks go to Janet Woolbar and Frank Flanagan for the dances they taught during the workshop, and to Dawn Webster and Marina Wolstenholme who joined Pat Webb and Ian as M.C.s for the evening dance. Our thanks also to Wilf Horrocks who, by playing for Loidis for the first time, maintained links with Ian and myself via Woodvale back to 1956 when Ian first met him at Eltham & Sidcup Y.H.A. Group.

Happy New Year to you all, and of course happy dancing.

JEAN WILLSON

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MUSIC

With my music this month, on p.10, I am going back in time again. At the 1981 Sidmouth Festival, one of the items I recall seeing was the "Rainbow Dancers" performing their variation of a Circle Waltz to English music. The variation was necessary because they were all, men and ladies, in wheelchairs! Some were the propelled-by-hand type and some electrically controlled. Watching them, I was so fascinated and overwhelmed by their wonderful performance that it brought tears to my eyes, and later that day, with their "dancing" and the tremendous effort involved still vividly in my mind, I wrote this music. It was a way of putting my thoughts on to paper. Whether a Circle Waltz could be danced to it I don't know, but I hope music enthusiasts enjoy it.

WILF HORROCKS

BEXHILL INTERNATIONAL FOLKDANCE GROUP survived its first year and is now well into the second. We have a nucleus of members who have remained loyal from the beginning, having attended every single meeting, or only missing when on holiday. Others have since joined us along the way, some experienced and others trying folk dancing for the first time. This has been augmented by visits from people who have been on holiday locally and have looked for some folk dancing while they are in the area, and we have had visitors from overseas, one or two from New Zealand and another from Canada (duly reported in the "Ontario Folk Dancer"!).

Our programme of dances is very varied - truly international - and dances are taught by Heather Edwards and myself, with a very welcome contribution from Rowena Martin, who is also a teacher. We meet on the first and third Thursdays of each month in a very pleasant Church Hall in Little Common, 8 to 10 p.m. Come and join us if you are in the area. You would be very welcome. For exact location, contact Heather Edwards on 01424 222382, or myself.

LILY AVERY (01424 845866)

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KOPRIVSHTITSA FESTIVAL, AUGUST 1995 (exact dates to be confirmed).

B.B.F.S. tour, in co-operation with INTERCHANGE (C.A.A. ATOL No.2429) fully bonded - 15 days. Sofia 1 night, Koprivshitsa 4, Borovets 8, Sofia 1.

Dates: Either 2nd to 16th August or 7th to 21st August 1995.

Prices: a) £532 for group of 25+, or b) £545 for 15+. In U.S.dollars (as at 8.12.94) a) \$831, b) \$851.

Prices include:

Scheduled flights Heathrow/Sofia/Heathrow

Accommodation: 10 nights 3-star hotels (Sofia "Bulgaria", Borovets "Rila") with twin rooms, private facilities, half-board. In Koprivshitsa Village 4 nights in private houses, 2/3 bedded rooms sharing facilities, bed & breakfast basis.

Transport in Bulgaria: Modern coaches for all transfers including daily to/from festival if required or short trips to nearby villages; two full-day trips from Borovets to Blagoevgrad, home of "Pirin Ensemble", and to Bistritsa, home of "Bistritsa Grannies" near Vitosha.

Admission to the Festival (last time it was £20 extra)

Visas (full valid passports required)

Special room for courses at Rila Hotel

Guide/Interpreter throughout

Leaders: Judy Greenwell (group of 15+) or Judy and Dr. Donald Kenrick (group of 25+)

Optional extras: a) courses in dance, music and song with expert Bulgarian instructors (20-25 hours) £30; b) guided walks near Borovets from £2 per walk; c) single room supplement (hotels) £59.

Compulsory extras: U.K. Airport Tax £10; Insurance via B.B.F.S. £20.

Not included: Lunches and 5 dinners (approx at £2).

Please note: Early booking is necessary as number of places is limited, especially in Koprivshitsa. Further details from Ita Purton, B.B.F.S. c/o Finsbury Library, Basement, 245 St.John Street, London EC1V 4NB. Tel: 071 837 2304. Please send s.a.e.

SYBIL NEWTON

WORKSHOP & PERFORMANCE AT THE HELLENIC CENTRE

Anyone who has ever visited the old L.C.C. gym at 16-18 Paddington Street, London W1 in the past could hardly fail to be greatly impressed with its transformation into a smart, welcoming, beautifully re-decorated and re-furnished home for the Hellenic Centre. From the top floor rooms of wardrobes, through the comfortable lounge, spacious cloakrooms, balcony cafe area, well-equipped kitchens, to the lovely basement ballroom area which lent itself so well to the Leventis Collection Exhibition. The excellent floor has been stripped, sanded and re-varnished, to provide a large all-purpose area, very pleasant for the high-quality workshop given by Maria Koutsoubas. Her specialisation is in Greek Dance and Anthropology as she prepares her PhD from a background of P.E. and Dance, so it was not surprising that her full notes contained a lot of interesting information, even if the lack of step notes was disappointing, but as few could have been helped by Labanotation scripts these were not included (tape and notes still available, £5).

It was lovely to have Natassa Lemos introducing Maria and staying to dance with us. (So glad her fingers are completely recovered). Served drinks, cakes and biscuits in the interval were lovely, as were similar refreshments mid-way in the excellent performance. It was wonderful to see all the Lykion costumes in use again and it brought back countless happy memories for Sula and me. It was a very full, colourful programme which delighted the audience filling the ballroom. A great pleasure to see Natassa on stage again too. It was a kaleidoscope of dances from all regions and met with a deservedly most enthusiastic response. Special mention must be made of the fantastic musicians brought over from Greece to give the performance real lift. My only (very minor) criticism is the very short solos from these talented men. I was expecting that they would be given a spot on stage for us to appreciate them fully. They were indefatigable enough to have enjoyed that, I'm sure. Sotiris Kountenamis (percussion) felt moved to come and join the dancers at one point as the men "showed off" in turn.

The weekend was a christening and window on the Hellenic Centre that Lykion can be justly proud of. Everyone I spoke to was most impressed and full of smiles and praise. Remember, you don't have to leave it there; you too can come and dance with Lykion. Full details from Mrs. Marianthi Styliano, 081 368 8893, or Mrs. Maria Wenneker, 071 229 4613. Classes at lunch-time on Tuesdays, and on Saturdays in the afternoon for children, adult beginners, adult intermediate. Classes begin again after Christmas on 17th January 1995.

Seasonal greetings to everyone - especially Lily Avery and her hard-working reliable helpers too. We really couldn't manage without our excellent Newsletter could we? HUGE THANKS, LILY AND TEAM.

DIKI GLEESON

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BALKAN DANCE HOLIDAY, 30TH SEPTEMBER - 7TH OCTOBER 1995

If the idea of a Balkan Dance Holiday, with lots of fun and laughter, comfortable surroundings and plenty of good food appeals to you, why not try an H.F. Special Interest holiday? This year the venue is the newly-acquired Abingworth House in West Sussex. All accommodation is en-suite, and the house has delightful grounds with tennis court, putting green, croquet lawn and a heated outdoor swimming pool.

Cathy Meunier will teach a selection of popular Balkan dances from our ever-widening repertoire. The course is for about 15 people and can therefore be tailored to suit the interests of participants. Afternoons are free to explore the surrounding countryside and you can, if you wish, join one of our guided walks, or simply relax around the house. As this is a new venue and one of H.F.'s top houses, places are likely to get booked up quickly, so if you are interested, 'phone for a Special Interest brochure on 0181 905 9388 (24 hours).

CATHY MEUNIER