

SIFD

NEWS



OCT

1995

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

EDITOR: Lily Avery (Mrs.), 16 Willow Drive, Little Common, Bexhill-on-Sea,
East Sussex TN39 4PX. Tel: 01424 845866
(Editor for this month - Heather Edwards)

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The typists this month were Heather Edwards and Lily Avery.
The printing, packaging and posting was done by Doug and Maureen Wells.

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The cover has been drawn by Leo Denhard from a photograph taken of
some of the members of Woodvale group in Norwegian costume.

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CHAIRPERSON: Jill Bransby (Mrs.), Red Gables, Benslow Path, The Avenue,
Hitchin, Herts. SG4 9RH. Tel: 01462 457791.

SECRETARY: Jeanette Hull (Miss), 24 The Homefield, London Road, Morden,
Surrey SM4 5AS. Tel: 0181 640 5267.

TREASURER: Judith Payling (Mrs.), Rosebank, 56 Quickley Lane, Chorleywood,
Rickmansworth, Herts. WD3 5AF.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY & GROUPS LIAISON OFFICER: Alan Morton, 26 Durham Road, Harrow, Middx. HA1 4PG.
Tel: 0181 427 8042.

PUBLICITY OFFICER: George Sweetland, 28 Hayes Court, Camberwell New Road,
London SE5 0TQ. Tel: 0171 701 3785.

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S.I.F.D. DAY COURSE - ISRAELI/ROMANIAN

Tutors: Fiona Howarth and Frank Dowling

Date: Saturday 14th October, 1995 Time: 10.30am - 4.30pm.
Venue: 26 Pancras Road, London NW1 (near Kings Cross Station)
Cost: £5.00 members, £6.00 non-members, concessions £4.00

The October course will be a selection of the dances taught at the Swansea Reunion
by Fiona and Frank. (Any specific requests to Fiona please on 0181 460 2305).

Frank and Fiona say:

We would like this day course to reflect the relaxed and informal atmosphere of
the classes at Swansea this Summer. We will be working together through the day
and hope to include all of the most popular Israeli and Romanian dances that we
taught. (For those who were not at Swansea, we remind you that these were old
and uncomplicated dances that many of you will already know). Everyone is
welcome who is prepared to "be reasonable and do it our way."

The November course will be SWEDISH with Janet Woolbar and Scandia.

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS AND ASSOCIATION AND AFFILIATION RENEWAL FOR 1995-6

Annual subscriptions became due on the 1st September 1995. If you have not sent your subscription, this is the last copy of the SIFD NEWS that will be dispatched to you.

If you have posted your subscription and enclosed a stamped addressed envelope for your receipt and haven't received it yet it is almost certainly in my correspondence backlog due to being away on holiday.

With regards to Association or Affiliation renewal, I refer to my letter of the 1st May 1995 of invitation to renew annual Association or Affiliation sent to group leaders that requested a return by the end of August with a final printer's deadline of 31 October 1995.

It has been found subsequently that at least six weeks notice is required by our printers to allow for completion of accurate entry to the new brochure. So as to ensure its timely production could leaders intending to renew and who, as yet have not replied, please respond by the 16 October 1995.

Thanks are due to everyone who has renewed promptly!

ALAN MORTON
Honorary Membership Secretary

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REMINDER FOR GROUP LEADERS

Kelloggs Special K - Free Class

I have had several enquiries over the summer. No group leaders have contacted me to say they do not want to take part. Please be prepared to honour the voucher and send it to me for counting and sending to Kelloggs.

If you can't remember what this is about, my number is 0181 640 5267.

JEANETTE HULL
Secretary

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DANCE STUDIES, Vol.18

Presented and edited by Roderyk Lange, Centre for Dance Studies, Les Bois, St. Peter, Jersey, Channel Islands. £8 plus p. & p.

If you collect Dance Studies, the latest one, number 18, has just been published. As with previous editions, the material presented can be a little obscure but always of interest.

For Greek dance enthusiasts, the first study is concerned with the intricate system of inter-relationships in the prevailing dance formation of the open circle in Greece. For those involved in Indian dance, Alessandra Iyet deals with the system of hand gestures in Indian classical dance. A very well documented study with excellent illustrations. The last study is on Chinese Theatre Dance in Malacca and includes the social, as well as the political issues involved.

For anyone starting a library, all the back numbers are available.

ROBERT HARROLD

By Diki Gleeson. Continued from last month...

As usual, it was quite a "Leo" week, with Jack's birthday on 29th July, then a trio - Francoise Piot, Susanne Hauert and Ruth Baumann (both regulars from Switzerland, who reminded us of Karl Klenk - he also wrote). They "made" my birthday by playing a mechanical "Happy Birthday" chime outside my door and presenting me with beautifully-wrapped presents and a lighted candle. On the 4th August it was Stan Lagden. Fiona Howarth is also a Leo, although not during that week. She organized a super,chaotic, side-splitting Leo Levi Jackson's Rag. It was a scream.

We had lots of laughs with the evening dances. Joan and Simon Guest did the honours the very first evening; Jack Richardson and Cathy Meunier did the next one, so we did have a reminder of a few of Belcho Stanev's dances and also some of Natassa Lemos's, which I enjoyed leading. Frank Dowling and Fiona Howarth shared two evenings packed with variety and zest, and Janice and John Gilliam and Margaret and Denis Belford presented lovely varied programmes. There was NO excuse ANY evening for not joining in as we had walk-throughs and talk-throughs. Janet Woolbar did a grand job with the last special evening (after a leisurely waitress-served special meal) and managed to remind us all of many past Swansea weeks and dances like "Ee Dim Dim Aah Dim Dim". Joan Guest encouraged everyone to do it properly, Aily, so I don't think you would have been displeased. All the M.C.s were just great and added considerably to our enjoyment. We are all most grateful. The traditional Polonaise, led by Joan and Simon, was extra special and must have looked really striking. Dorien Bates, our speedy wheeled Eros, undertook extra collections, signing-ups etc. (many thanks, Dorien) and led the procession of the cake in her beautiful costume, and made an excellent job of cutting it up for us. The temperatures ensured that the bar did extra trade each night, and also tea and coffee were popular and available through the evening, thanks to Michael and Edwina Holdup.

I think so many people have so many varied memories of Swansea weeks and it has been such a major part of S.I.F.D. life that in this coming anniversary year we could surely encourage more reminiscences from others? My first memories include the vast store of home-made wine that Simon Guest always brought and the after-evening-dance sing-songs. One year in particular, Joan Guest brought song sheets and with Fiona's store it was a really hilarious evening, lengthening into early morning.

Inevitably the coach trips feature large, and the games and dancing on the beach (too hot mostly this year). Plenty of laughs after the Rossili trip. I've often wondered what it would be like to be left behind miles from anywhere! Well, I just couldn't run fast enough back to the 'bus and 6 minutes late was TOO late. Sula and I had a nasty 20 minutes trying to persuade someone to run us to the main road (miles away) and eventually succeeded. Then another 10 minutes or so before a lovely local lady with an almost full car ran us to Sketty, squashed and awash with sweat. We ran "hell for leather" across Singleton Park and straight into the evening meal to find - No-one there! Panic! Could they have gone back for us? But they were all back and washing - no-one had missed us!

I'm sure there has never been such a course as this one. Anyone could come, any time, for as long or as little as they wanted, and there was so much choice of what to do each day - choice of dancing, choice of delicious food, choice of walks, choice of beach, choice of places of interest. The whole time everything was as tailor-made as possible and all the time Jack was patient, good-humoured and had it all organized, even with changes to accommodate people who changed their mind or didn't quite fit into the plans. Swansea itself is special as all the staff are always so kind and helpful and good-natured. So much space, and although the lifts at Mary Williams haven't changed, it didn't really matter if you went zooming back down to ground level when you were only one stop from home on the 9th floor, did it? It was so handy having the shop, too. BUT I

Contd...

must again, on behalf of us all, give a huge vote of thanks to JOAN Richardson. As always, behind every good man there's a sterling good woman, and I am sure that Jack would be the first to say how important Joan is; and who it was who dashed off at all hours to take or bring someone from the station etc. - Joan. I am sure that she worried and fretted in the background, trying to save Jack too much wear and tear. Joan, thank you for all you did yourself and especially for allowing Jack to give us all such a wonderful, record-breaking treat. I just hope that you can both see just how wonderful it was for every one of us. "Swansea Courses For Ever!" and always in our memories. We are really lucky to have Jack and Joan as such lively, unselfishly contributing founder members of the jolly old S.I.F.D. Thank you both.

DIKI GLEESON

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SWEDISH BYGDE DANCE WITH TOMMY AND EVA ENGLUND

Saturday 28th October - Harrow Arts Centre (Greenhill Room), Uxbridge Road, Hatch End, Middx.

Scandia group have Tommy and Eva Englund visiting from Sweden. Tommy and Eva taught at the York Summer School in 1992 and are well known throughout the international dance world. The dances will be turning dances (polskas, schottis, etc.).

Teaching session 1.30-5.30pm

This session will be aimed at dancers with experience of Swedish couple dancing to include both new dances and brushing up on those already in the Scandia repertoire.

If anyone wishes to gain experience before the day it would be worth a visit to the regular Scandia class, (2nd and 4th Tuesdays, see class list).

Social Dance 7.30-10.30pm

An evening of dancing to live music, with dances ranging from easier schottis to more complex polskas.

Harrow Arts Centre has a licensed bar which serves food at lunchtime.

Advance booking advisable (especially to assist catering for the evening).

Cost: Afternoon session £5.00; evening session £4.00; combined ticket £8.00

Tickets and further information from Liz Mellish, 10 Parkview House, Eastbury Road, Watford, Herts. WD1 4PZ. Tel: 01923 249704

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MARTISORUL IN SOLIHULL - 15/17th September

A HUGE thank you to Sybil Chapman, Grace Pittman, Pat, Celia and Malcolm Cox and all the others who came and supported our (Martisorul) Romanian dancing to Dunav's music at the Solihull Library Theatre.

Super! And so glad you enjoyed it.

DIKI GLEESON

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Heather and Lily,

Richard Mellish's letter (August News) regarding Summer School raises issues worthy of consideration. Principally that content should try to accord with the Aims of the Society. The problem is the perennial one of what is Folk, followed by who teaches it and how do we learn it. Surely we should get as close as possible to source, i.e. have ethnic teachers, perhaps even village group leaders, they however may not be teachers. Peasants (I use the word with no disrespect) are likely to learn by emulation, that is how their tradition has been transmitted. Most of us seem to expect instant knowledge, we lack the time (and interest?) for constant repetition, so dances are broken down into sequences capable of being explained shown and practised. That requires teachers, which can take us further from source.

To be popular a professional teacher needs personality, ability and repertoire. Charismatic teachers tend to become 'cult' figures and success creates a problem for them, the need to satisfy their clients with 'new dances.' Hence, the 'choreographed by me using folk dance steps dance', and our consequent difficulty of knowing what's what, plus the which version are we dancing syndrome.

There is nothing new in this, I quote the late Douglas Kennedy on English dancing: *Playford's successive editions provide a sample of the steady process of deterioration in the idiom of folk material, as found in the first edition, through the demands made by a sophisticated society on its servants, the dance schools and dancing masters. The need for a continuous supply of new material while it created much delightful melodic music through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reduced the original folk material of varied sets and formations to a featureless mass of longways dances, each with an ephemeral appeal. Nearly all appear once and disappear once."

The relevance of this, is the worth of that which is put into and obtained from Summer School. At York '94, Jan Knoppers most competently taught South American dances, providing us with good music and notes. How many of these dances have been danced since? My experience is one once! May I ask will we be more successful with dances that require emphasis on hand and arm movements? The Far Eastern countries are a gap in our knowledge, but so are India and Africa, to say nothing of some Middle East countries, most of the former U.S.S.R., North America and parts of Europe.

If the aim of Summer School is to teach, educate us and increase our social dance repertoire, surely what group leaders and teachers need is genuine folk dances, well taught by those as near source as possible, that can be enjoyed in group, class and social dances, more than once! Otherwise what we are left with after Summer School is near useless tapes and notes and our memories of a holiday.

Yours sincerely,

ROY CLARKE
33 Cedar Park Road, Enfield,
Midx. EN2 0HE

* English Folk Dancing, Today and Yesterday. Page 88.

Ed. Also referring to Richard Mellish's letter which appeared in the September News the following note has been received from Jack Richardson:

S.I.F.D. SUMMER SCHOOL TEACHERS

Members may be interested to know that Magda Ossko was our guest Hungarian teacher on three occasions - 1967 and 1969 in Swansea and 1979 in Hertford; and Jacob and Judith Barkan came twice from Israel to teach Israeli dances at Swansea in 1971 and 1973.

JACK RICHARDSON

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AN OPEN LETTER TO THE ORGANIZERS OF THE 1996 SUMMER SCHOOL

Dear organizers, Richard Mellish,

Since it is apparently a local custom to write personal letters and comments to public magazines I think it's only appropriate that I send my reply to Richard to the very magazine I read his letter in, only because I happen to be a member of the SIFD (out of sheer enthusiasm and interest towards its work) and the letter did indeed make it to my doorstep.

As to its content I would have liked Richard to honour his stated interest in the SIFD with an equal amount of research to get his facts right. As to the overall tone I can only say that it is surpassing my boundaries of what I think to be common courtesy.

As a teacher I think it is sad that ill-informed personal comments and anxieties are allowed to have an impact at all in such an instrument as the magazine. It deprives more open and willing minds of the opportunity to encounter teachers, dancers, dances and dancing un-biassed. Thinking of similar discussions within the last few years I can't help but feel that somewhere in these non-relevant discussions (authenticity when dancing international?!) are the seeds that prevent international folk-dancing in the UK and the SIFD itself from growing and flourishing. Maybe it is time to spend more time on dancing (the enjoyable art-form with folkdancing as an easily accessible and communally experienced offshoot) in comparison to the dances (a medium to produce dancing, usually choreographed but always non-authentic when done by non-natives).

As a person I am sorry Richard didn't have the heart to come up to me personally. I believe that people who did bother to get their facts right and gave me a fair chance as a person will be able to verify that I am not threatened by criticism and am always willing to discuss matters with improvement or the greater cause as goals in mind.

I'd hate to impose both myself and the Asian material on the SIFD (even when just a minority objects to only part of both me and the material). Dancing to me is so infinitely much more than a mere question of authenticity of the medium. Especially when authenticity doesn't surpass form and structure of movement-vocabulary. Furthermore this material requests an open and inquisitive mind from dancers. I think it is Richard imposing his views and anxieties on people who might otherwise still have had these delicate and valuable states of mind, so desperately needed when we are trying to evoke true authenticity in folk-dancing (feeling and emotion overlaying physical actions).

Don't worry Richard and "some members". I find myself in the lucky situation that I can occasionally decline an invitation to teach. And people attacking the most valuable assets of amateur-dancers (which I hold sacred as a teacher), as well as the essence of this art-form (that I value dearly and think of as

mine), and my teaching (which has never been called a "grave mistake" before) just happen to bring out that very wish.

I'm only human, for which I refuse to apologize.
Sincerely,

JAN KNOPPERS
Stroveer, 96, 3032 GA Rotterdam
The Netherlands

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Dear Heather,

Last weekend I was in Greenwich helping my sister-in-law at the Craft Market and, in my break-time wandering around the area, I found the Fan Museum which I found fascinating. There is a display with an audio-cassette, showing English, French, Oriental, South American, etc.

So if anybody is in the area, it's well worth a half-an-hour visit:
Fan Museum, 12 Crooms Hill, Greenwich, London SE10 8ER. Tel: 0181 858 7879.

STELLA CARTER
14 High Mead, Hockley, Essex

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Dear Lily,

I have recently returned from a holiday with Turkish friends in Antalya (S. Turkey) and Cappadocia. We went to a number of Turkish Folk Dance concerts. One was in the ancient Aspendos amphitheatre 200 AD. It was an incredible experience to see beautifully performed and quite authentic Black Sea and other regional folk dances - and- believe it or not - Whirling Dervishes danced under the stars in such a venue until 1 o'clock in the morning. Great!

It really was good to be able to see such authenticity (rather than merely cabaret-style dancing with electronic instruments as you find in some parts of the world). Tourism is doing very well in Turkey at present.

One company is planning to travel to London in November. I will endeavour to keep members in touch.

PAULINE WELCH
15 Boleyn Avenue, East Ewell, Epsom,
Surrey. KT17 2QH

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NEW NAME, NEW VENUE

What used to be a somewhat anonymous Balkan dance group meeting on Tuesdays at the Diorama in London is now....

MARTINITSA - meeting on Mondays, 8-10pm. at St. Pancras Community Centre, 30 Camden Street, London NW1 (near the Working Men's College).

For more information contact Rosette Rozenberg 0171 286 7005 or Dave Carter 01702 206613.

DANCE DISCIPLINE: NEW MEXICO WAY

This story was told by Ken Keppeler of the dance band Bayou Seco from New Mexico, U.S.A. when they performed at this year's Sidmouth Folk Festival.

In their home area where they usually play for local social dances the polka is danced in a very gentle lethargic way because, after a hard week's physical work in an area at high altitude and where it is very hot, the dancers want to enjoy their dances in a laidback leisurely fashion. At one local dance the band saw three couples, who were strangers and had come from the northern part of the U.S.A., dancing the polka in a very boisterous manner, i.e. in a way we would consider the polka should normally be danced. This irritated some of the locals and Ken saw the dance organisers take the three couples outside. The three couples came back inside and the band noticed their dancing style change completely to dancing the polka in a subdued way just like the local folk.

Ken was very curious as to why this change had occurred and at the end of the evening he asked the organiser what had happened. "Well," said the organiser, "we said to them if you do not dance properly and stop barging into our folks we will take you out again and shoot you!"

HENRY LEE

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Another item from "Dancing With Props" by Christine Hall.(Copyright reserved)

Sword

Sword dances are performed either as solos or as group dances. You can see groups of men, or groups of women, but rarely a mixed dance group. The reason is that men and women have a different approach to sword dancing. Sword dances probably originated from fighting practice; men were encouraged to practise their skill with weapons. Male sword dances are fast-paced, aggressive, and often include simulated battles with a lot of clashing blades.

The women's sword dance is lively, teasing, fun. In times of peace, women made fun of the men's sword practice by performing a parody. Women's sword dances often involve balancing the sharp blade of the sword, for example on their head or their hips, a skill which takes a long time to learn.

If you want to buy a sword, choose one which is well balanced. Be warned; swords are expensive props. There are some dances for which every dancer uses two swords; these may involve some juggling tricks.

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S.I.F.D. SHOP

For details of S.I.F.D. goods available, contact Claire Steeley, 34 Broadwater Avenue, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 3HF. For dance tapes and instruction books, contact Eleanor Gordon, 92 Norbiton Avenue, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey KT1 3QP.

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JANAVAK - Folk and Tribal Dances of India

Janavak, India's leading folk and tribal dance company, visits Britain from Ahmedabad with a stunning repertoire of dances and music celebrating the astonishing diversity of the peoples of India. All over India the people still dance - at festivals and holidays, for work or marriages, harvests or courtships. They were last seen in Britain in the Year of Dance 1993.

Performance details:

10 October	Bloomsbury Theatre, London	0171 388 8822
13 October	Stratford Town Hall, London	0181 471 1073
14 October	Bloomsbury Theatre, London (matinee)	0171 388 8822
22 October	Ashcroft Theatre, Croydon	0181 688 9291
26 October	The Band Room, Low Mill, Farndale	01751 433201
27 October	Hambleton Community Centre, Northallerton	01609 776230
28 October	Memorial Hall, Pickering	(am) 01751 476 503 (pm) 01751 475 170
29 October	Haymarket Theatre, Leicester	0116 253 9797
30 October	Stamford Arts Centre, Stamford	01780 63203
31 October	Skipton Girls High School, Skipton	01756 792115
		T.I.C. 01756 729809
1 November	Settle High School, Settle	01729 823312
2 November	Spilsby Theatre, Spilsby	01790 752936
3 November	Charnwood Arts, Loughborough	01509 231914

For further details call Chakra Hotline 0171 831 5199 (Cycle of Indian Dance Theatre in London).

From information supplied by FRANCES HORROCKS.

✓ 0111 2261 8111 7/4/95 *****
7.30 £3 b/w - JK Skipton Girls High School

LONDON TURKISH FOLK DANCE GROUP

Turkish Class - Autumn Term 1995

Ibrahim Tastaban, our leader, (who used to teach in Istanbul) is with us again this year. (He's good!) We chose Wednesdays so as not to clash with too many other classes and we meet (mainly) on 1st and 3rd Wednesdays in the month.

We should love to see new friends (and existing ones too!). We are a very friendly group, no partners are needed and we have a lot of fun!

We meet at the 1A Centre, 1A Rosebery Avenue, London EC1 (the other end of Rosebery Avenue to Sadlers Wells) 7.30-9.30pm. (and it has been known for us to repair to the local hostelry at 9.30!)

Dates we have planned this term are: Wednesdays October 4th & 18th; November 1st, 15th & 29th.

For more information contact Pauline on 0181 393 1919, Philip 0181 427 0947 or Diki 0181 363 1506. As numbers are so important to all of us, if you know of people who may find us interesting, please could you pass on the news and telephone numbers.

PAULINE WELCH

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Nov.4 ISRAELI FOLK DANCE DAY held by Nutbrook International Folk Dance Group at Stevenson Junior School, Wadsworth Road, Stapleford, Nottingham, 10.30-4.30 (coffee 10.00-10.30am.). Tutor: Marina Wolstenholme. £5 all day; morning only £2.50; concessions £2.50. The school is holding a bonfire party that night with food and fireworks so if anyone wishes to stay on, they will be most welcome. Contact: Gill Morral, tel: 0115 9393204.

Nov.10th/12th BULGARIAN WEEKEND COURSE with Eddy Tijssen at Brecon, South Wales. Beginners and Advanced courses. Full and half-day walks. For details send s.a.e. to Cathy Meunier, 115 Chetwynd Road, London NW5 1DA.

Nov.18th BALKANPLUS HALF-DAY COURSE OF POPULAR BALKAN DANCES. 1.30pm. in Studio 4, The Place, Duke Street, London. Teachers to be announced, but requests welcome. Please contact Brian Dowsett on 01992 582717.

Nov.26th REVISION OF ISRAELI DANCES AND PARTY with Anat at Stone Cross Memorial Hall, near Eastbourne, 10.30am.-5.00pm. Bring vegetarian food to share. £12 (concessions £7.50). Details and map from Rowena Martin, tel: 01323 503991.

Jan.28th 1996 ISRAELI DANCE WORKSHOP with Anat Sharabi at Stone Cross Memorial Hall, near Eastbourne, 10.30am.-5.30pm. Contact: Rowena Martin 01323 503991.

Mar.15th/17th 1996 DANCE AND WALKING WEEKEND IN DOVEDALE. Join West Midlands Group's members for an informal weekend. £70 approx. Contact: Yvonne Hunt on 01203 413854.

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KLEZMER MUSIC CLASS

Musicians in the SIFD may be interested to know that Gregori Schechter of the Klezmer Festival Band has started a klezmer class in North London.

Klezmer is essentially the music of East European Jewry and as such has many elements and influences in common with other East European folk music (as well as many elements unique to itself). This class can offer a valuable and authentic grounding in East European music for anyone wishing to play music from outside the UK.

Sessions are held on Sunday mornings about once a fortnight at a cost of £6.00. Anyone interested should ring the organiser, Susan Neale, on 0181 202 2850, or me on 01223 425648.

MIKE GILBERT
85 Fen Road, Chesterton,
Cambridge CB4 1UN

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MUSIC Another two tunes from Wilf Horrocks on p.12. Don't forget to let Wilf know if you would like the music for a particular dance. His number is 0181 642 3629.

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