

FEBRUARY

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

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The typing is done by Heather Edwards. The printing, packaging and
posting is done by Doug and Maureen Wells.

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This month's cover design was drawn by Lesley Boorer specially for our
Silver Jubilee Anniversary Year and we shall be using it every month
throughout the year.

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S.I.F.D. DAY COURSE - FEBRUARY

The February Day Course will be CHINESE with Robert Harrold. Many of you will
already know that Robert, who has been a great supporter of the Society for
many years, is a highly respected teacher and examiner for the I.S.T.D. He
has been responsible for the increasing emphasis on authenticity in the
National Dance syllabus of that organisation and has had many articles on folk
dance published in the major dance magazines.

A couple of years ago he ran some courses in aid of UNICEF, teaching some of
the Chinese dances he had been taught in Hong Kong and Taiwan during his many
trips there as examiner. Quite a few people said at the time that they would
have liked to attend one of these days but, for various reasons, were unable
to do so. I have therefore prevailed upon him to teach them to us. These are
all simple, social dances, very accessible. He will also teach a Korean and a
Japanese dance.

Date: Saturday, 10th February, 1996
Venue: Trefusis, Cecil Sharp House, Regents Park Road, London N.W.1
Time: 10.30am.-4.30pm.
Price: SIFD members £6.00, non-members £7.00, concessions on request.

There will be no day course in March.

MAGGIE O'REGAN

S.I.F.D. COMMITTEE NOTES AND COMMENTS

Annual General Meeting

The full minutes of the AGM will follow later. This is a very brief summary.

Motion 1 was passed, so the following objective is now part of the Constitution:
"3(d) To encourage playing and performance, research and collection of International Folk Dance music with respect to traditional style."

The committee was elected unopposed and the accounts accepted. See the SIFD organisation chart in this News for the Committee's names and roles, and a list of some of the other people who keep the Society going.

The debate on issues of authenticity and choice of Summer School teachers was interesting and constructive, giving those who plan courses, books and news-letter articles some useful guidance on what members would want.

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WANTED - Chairperson and Minutes Secretary

The post of Chairperson is still open, but the Committee is still meeting, planning events and generally trying to run the Society.

The Secretary is finding it increasingly difficult to take minutes as well as participate in meetings and keep up with the SIFD's correspondence and, due to changes in work commitments, has less time than when she originally volunteered. Is there anyone who can take notes and type and would be willing to attend a 3-hour meeting once every two months? If you have use of a word processor but no easy access to a good printer, don't worry, the Secretary can take most types of disk. Call 0181 640 5267 to offer your services.

JEANETTE HULL
Executive Secretary

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In our fiftieth year the Society is in a critical situation. For the first time it is without a Chairperson or even the prospect of one. Since, in the SIFD it is an executive position, this lack could be disasterous. At times our Secretaries have undertaken some of the Chairperson's work, but one person cannot be expected to fill both positions.

As I read it, the problem is largely that of a falling membership in the London region, which is not uncommon in other societies. Whereas once we had a total membership of some 200 to 300 in their twenties and thirties living, more or less exclusively, in London, we now have a London membership of around 100, many in their fifties and sixties and even older, most of whom live on the periphery of the area.

Out of that number must come the two dozen or so who are currently involved in running the Society and a further large proportion are those who have done more than their share in the past. A commitment of 1 in 2 is very high, so that while the above figures are not precise, it must be clear why we have problems in administration.

Four years ago, when these first began to become obvious, we were very lucky in that Jill Bransby was prepared to step into the breach, and this is perhaps the right place for me to express my own appreciation of the fact that not only did she have a particularly heavy workload during her term of office, but she was also prepared to face the journey of some 60 miles to and fro from Hitchin so often.

Continued.....

To me, it would seem that the long term solution must be to make our primary aim an increase in London membership of some 100 or so, with additional groups to cater for them. I am aware this is a hard task but it must be simpler than working out a complex plan of devolution, the only other possible answer.

But the most pressing problem is filling the vacancy of our Chairperson for 1996. Do you not know someone, living within reasonable distance, who would be suitable and willing to take the job? He/she does not necessarily have to be the best dancer or teacher in the Society, and it is my opinion that it is to our advantage if he/she is not, since good teachers are thin on the ground and should be left to do what they excel in.

Harry Whitaker springs to mind as a good model of a capable Chairman though, as he was the first to admit, he was not even a moderate dancer. He ran the Society efficiently for a number of years.

Administrative and organisational abilities together with having the welfare of the Society at heart are surely the chief requirements at this time. So, I repeat, do you know someone who has these qualities and could rescue us?

GEORGE SWEETLAND

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INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE SUMMER SCHOOL, YORK 1996

The College of Ripon and St. John at York has been booked for the Summer School from the evening meal on Saturday July 27th until after breakfast on Saturday August 3rd 1996.

The tutors will be Ahmet Luleci (Turkish), Timmy McCarthy (Irish set dances) and Marie-Claire Viala (French).

The accommodation fees charged by the college this year are as follows:

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---------|
| Non-resident | - | £6 |
| Bed and breakfast | - | £181.00 |
| Bed, breakfast and evening meal | - | £254.00 |
| Full Board (apart from afternoon tea) | - | £305.00 |

It is expected that the course fees will be:

| | | |
|------------|---|-----|
| Dancer | - | £70 |
| Non-dancer | - | £20 |

SIFD members paying before April 1st will obtain a £10 reduction on the course fee.

Application forms will be sent out with the SIFD News as soon as possible.

Please contact us with all your offers of help with the Summer School!

Dawn and Paul Webster, Greenacres, Broadstreet Common, Nash, Newport, Gwent.
NP6 2AZ. Tel: 01 633 272 662.

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MUSIC for Polskdans (Denmark) and Potku Mazurka (Finland) from Wilf Horrocks on p.10. Don't forget to let Wilf know if you would like music for a particular dance. His number is 0181 642 3629.

BALKANPLUS

Don't forget that Balkanplus has moved, not only the place but also the date. The next dance will be on Saturday February 10th at Trefusis, the downstairs hall at Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regents Park Road, London NW1. The cost is now £3.00 but there is no change in the hours, 7.00-10.30pm. There will be a short interval to quench one's thirst in the bar or cafeteria. Please make sure all your friends know so they don't turn up in the wrong place - better still, gather them up and all come together to celebrate a new start.

At the last dance in December Fiona played some tantalising snatches of music, a few bars to set toes a-twitching and the name of the dance on the tip of one's tongue. How many did you recollect? Come along in February and dance through the answers.

The Romanian Dans Ce Sucitoare is also on the programme, so if you have your own favourite pair of sticks bring them along. I will have an assorted bag for those who are lacking in this respect. Many of the dances will be revised at the MARTINITSA Balkan Dance class held on Mondays, 8.00-10.00pm. at St. Pancras Community Centre, Camden Street, NW1, close by the Working Men's College. Be exposed to the programme beforehand and astound your friends with your knowledge of the dances on the night.

New Balkanplus T-shirts are now available, same design (the Macedonian drummer), same price, £6.50, different colours. The design is now a white print on black, dark green and burgundy on a good quality tubular body so there are no seams to get in a twist, and with a re-inforced non-baggy neckline. Sizes M, L, XL. Orders to Frances Horrocks, tel: 0181 642 3629.

Just prior to the Balkanplus Dance, Robert Harrold will be teaching Chinese folk dances, also at Cecil Sharp House, so you won't have further than a flight of stairs to go from one event to the other. What an appropriate choice of Day Course as this is so close to the Chinese New Year celebrations. The last time I had the pleasure of learning some of these delightful little dances was at a session in aid of UNICEF, which reminded me of Robert's video "Looking at Folk." This is a compilation of folk dances, beautifully arranged and narrated in Robert's own mellifluous tones showing differences and similarities in the steps and styles of different countries. The video is also in aid of UNICEF and shows rare footage of the late Audrey Hepburn and her tireless work for under-privileged children of this world. This is a video well worth having. Perhaps Robert will have a few copies with him on the 10th.

FRANCES HORROCKS

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Lily,

Thank you for publishing the information about the new book "Romanian Traditional Dance" in the January SIFD News. Unfortunately one error crept in which should be quickly corrected. For "blank cheque" read "bank cheque" - or banker's draft - a cost effective method of paying in foreign currency.

Yours sincerely,

BRIAN DOWSETT
Larchwood, 75 Fordwich Rise,
Hertford, Herts. SG14 2BW

S.I.F.D. BEGINNERS-PLUS DANCE, 24th FEBRUARY 1996

The venue for the "Beginner-Plus" Dance has changed. This is due to a double booking of the upstairs hall at Cecil Sharp House, so our booking in the downstairs hall was cancelled by the Cecil Sharp House administration! The dance will now be on the same date but at the Working Men's College, 44 Crowndale Road, Camden, NW1, two blocks east from the south end of Camden High Street near Mornington Crescent, though the Underground Station is closed at present.

Though the dance is being planned with newcomers in mind, i.e. almost all dances will be taught, there should also be some interest for more experienced dancers. The M.Cs. will be Jill Bransby and Jeanette Hull and the band will be Jacobs Ladder. Notices about the dance, from A4 posters down to pocket size reminders, will be available at the February Sunday Dance, so please take a supply to hand out to anyone who might be interested. Also please help publicise the dance by putting a poster in your local library or any other place where it may be seen. (Please note that the materials supplied at the January dance have now had to be changed). We must all do our best to attract new members if the Society is to continue to be a healthy organisation.

If you need more information or additional posters 'phone me at 0181 340 4683. We hope that many established SIFD members will also support the dance and will help encourage newcomers. We have tried to select a date with few conflicting activities so we hope to have a good turnout of SIFD members.

CASPER CRONK

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LONDON TURKISH FOLK DANCE GROUP

We had quite a historic and interesting visit at our group recently - Gengiz Karahan from Istanbul who used to lead our group along with his brother, Atilla, about 23 years ago (in the days of Lucille Armstrong). He was visiting London for a few days - and even brought a large box of Turkish delight (and some costume material we needed). Needless to say, he was a very popular guest!

The next meeting was our very well attended end-of-term party with lots of exotic food and Ibrahim leading the dancing in his usual enthusiastic and lively style.

To round off the term, twenty of us converged on the Sultan Ahmet restaurant for a tasty Turkish meal followed by Turkish and international dancing until after midnight! Our thanks to André Hobro from Coventry who was in London for the weekend and called some interesting dances for us.

Our thanks also to Ibrahim for his enthusiastic leadership of the group. Any new members would be welcome to join us on alternated Wednesdays at 7.30pm. at the 1A Centre, Rosebery Avenue, EC1, For further details or if you would like to go on our mailing list, 'phone Pauline on 0181 393 1919, or Philip on 0181 427 0947, or Diki 0181 363 1506.

PAULINE WELCH

ORIENTAL DANCING WORKSHOP WITH CHRISTINE HALL - 16th MARCH 1996

In a way Christine does not need any introduction as she has been writing bits in the Newsletter before, but I thought people would like a bit more information. She is a member of the SIFD as well as the Great Britain-China Centre and the Arabic Dance network. She has lived and worked in N.E. China for many months and while there studied many of their traditional dances, in particular those of the Han and Manchu peoples. She is an experienced teacher.

This workshop will be organised on a taster basis to offer some flexibility and allow it to meet majority preferences:

Belly dancing (and the men are not excluded from this!) is a good effective way of toning those tummy muscles and much more fun than boring old sit-ups, etc. This will include a focus on variations of the Egyptian Camel Walk. Bring a large scarf to tie round your hips to enhance the effect and put you in the mood.

Egyptian veil dances. Christine will show you how to whirl the 3-yard long veil to achieve some stunning and mysterious effects with consummate grace. If possible buy and bring your own veil - about 3 yards in length and 1 yard wide. Choose very thin, soft, fluid material, which can be transparent, such as georgette.

Chinese ribbon dances are lively and breathtaking when performed by a group and could be a very unusual extra to your group's next performance! Again bring your own ribbon if possible - 6 yards long and half a yard wide. Choose a thin glossy material in a bright colour, preferably red or pink.

Manchurian dancing is performed gracefully with one or two large silk fans. Paper ones are no good for this as the paper is not strong enough. Christine will bring some for you to borrow OR BUY AT £6 EACH IF YOU PREFER (red, green and dark pink). Place an order now if you like!

DO COME ON SATURDAY 16th MARCH to Studio 10, The Place, Duke Street/Flaxman Road, 1.30-5.30pm. Fee: £6. Balkanplus is in the evening so it's worth a trip if you're miles from London.

Do let's take advantage of Christine's fieldwork in China - maybe start a trend? Please let me know your preferences, requests or queries if you intend coming. There will be a certain number of veils and ribbons to borrow. Notes and video available. DIKI GLEESON Tel: 0181 363 1506.

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'TASTE OF CHINA' DAY IN SHEFFIELD

Would the lady who 'phoned me regarding the 'Taste of China' day in Sheffield please ring again? I wiped your message from my answerphone by mistake before I had a chance to write down your name and number. I'm sorry your were disappointed that my workshops were cancelled. I was disappointed too - and angry.

I had a written agreement from the organisers. But a few days before the event I received a note saying that the programme had been reduced. No apology, no explanation, no compensation.

If you bought tickets at the full price and were offered a reduced programme, I believe you are right in asking the organisers for a refund.

CHRISTINE HALL

CECIL SHARP HOUSE SUNDAY DANCES 1996

The dates of the Sunday dances at Cecil Sharp House in 1996 are as follows:

| | | |
|--------------|----------|---------------|
| February 4th | May 12th | September 1st |
| March 3rd | June 2nd | November 3rd |
| April 14th | July 7th | December 1st |

The dances in April and May are on the second Sundays in those months and in October we shall be saving our energy and polishing our shoes in readiness for the anniversary celebration dance (see the News in due course).

My grateful thanks to all the M.Cs., musicians, technicians and unselfish volunteers who produced the Sunday dances in 1995.

See you all dancing.

ANNE LEACH

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DAY COURSE IN MACEDONIAN AND GREEK DANCE

Hope Valley College, Hope, Derbyshire. March 30th 1996. 10.00am,-5.00pm.
Cost in the region of £8-£10.
A.M, MACEDONIAN. Tutor: JANICE WRENCH
Please wear soft, flat-soled shoes through which you can "feel" the floor.
P.M. GREEK. Tutor: MAGGIE O'REGAN
A start will be made on the Badge dances, (see January SIFD News, p.4), on this day. Emphasis on STYLE.
Please book/enrol in advance as the course will only run if viable.
For booking and further details, ring Community Education Office 01433 620662.

MARINA WOLSTENHOLME

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BALKANPLUS WHITSUN DANCE WEEKEND - IRONBRIDGE GORGE YOUTH HOSTEL

There are a limited number of places still available on this course (Romanian and Macedonian). If you intend to go but still have not booked, please do so by February 29th at the latest. (Non-dancing partners and friends are also welcome). Final numbers will be sent to the hostel in early March. Full details were given in December's Newsletter, but if you want more information, ring me on 0117 950 9889. ANNE MARSHALL, 44 Church Road, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol BS9 3EQ.

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When sending in material for publication, please remember to write in BLOCK CAPITALS all names of people, places and dances, unless typed. Ed.

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VEIL

Dancing with veils is a tradition which dates back to at least 2000 years ago. Just think of Salome's famous performance! Today's dancers wonder how she managed to dance with seven veils; one in each hand, one in each foot, one in the mouth? More likely is that she wore free-swinging layers of transparent fabric attached to a hip belt and a band around her chest or neck.

Veils are used in folk and belly dances in many North African and Asian countries, from Algiers to Malaysia. Today's dances involve a single, large veil. For group dances, the veils are shorter than for solos. The minimum length is the distance between your hands when you stretch out your arms to both sides. For a really stunning effect, buy a length of at least 2.50 metres.

The ideal material is very light, thin, soft, and "flowing". A thin silk or chiffon would be fine. Transparent fabrics are very effective. You may want to embroider your veil with beads and sequins. Don't glue the decorations on; glue stiffens the fabric and prevents the harmonious flow.

Each veil has its own personality. You, the dancer, have to adapt to its characteristics. When performing a group routine, it's a good idea to choose the same fabric for all, and keep the veil to a length of about two metres.

Veil dances are usually performed to slow music, especially to the Egyptian taksim rhythms. However, there are lively fan dances as well, for example in Jordan and Lebanon. Veil movements can be dignified, mysterious, sensuous, or passionate. You can even use your veil to keep eager admirers at a distance!

The Americans like to claim that they invented the veil dance. This is nonsense, of course; there is enough historical evidence that Oriental women danced with the veil before the Americans discovered the art. However, it is true that the Americans did a lot to enrich the repertoire of veil movements. It is also true that European and American women are often better at dancing with the veil than their Arabic counterparts. The reason is probably psychological; for many Arabic women, the veil is a symbol of oppression and restriction. They like using it just for an effective entree to the stage, then discard it as quickly as possible. Western women are not inhibited by such associations; they can enjoy using the veil to dress up and play.

Veils are essentially a female requisite of dancing. It is rare to see men use one in folk dances. However, some men, especially from Iran, are highly skilled at using the veil in innovative ways. Watch them if you ever get a chance.

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SYBIL CHAPMAN

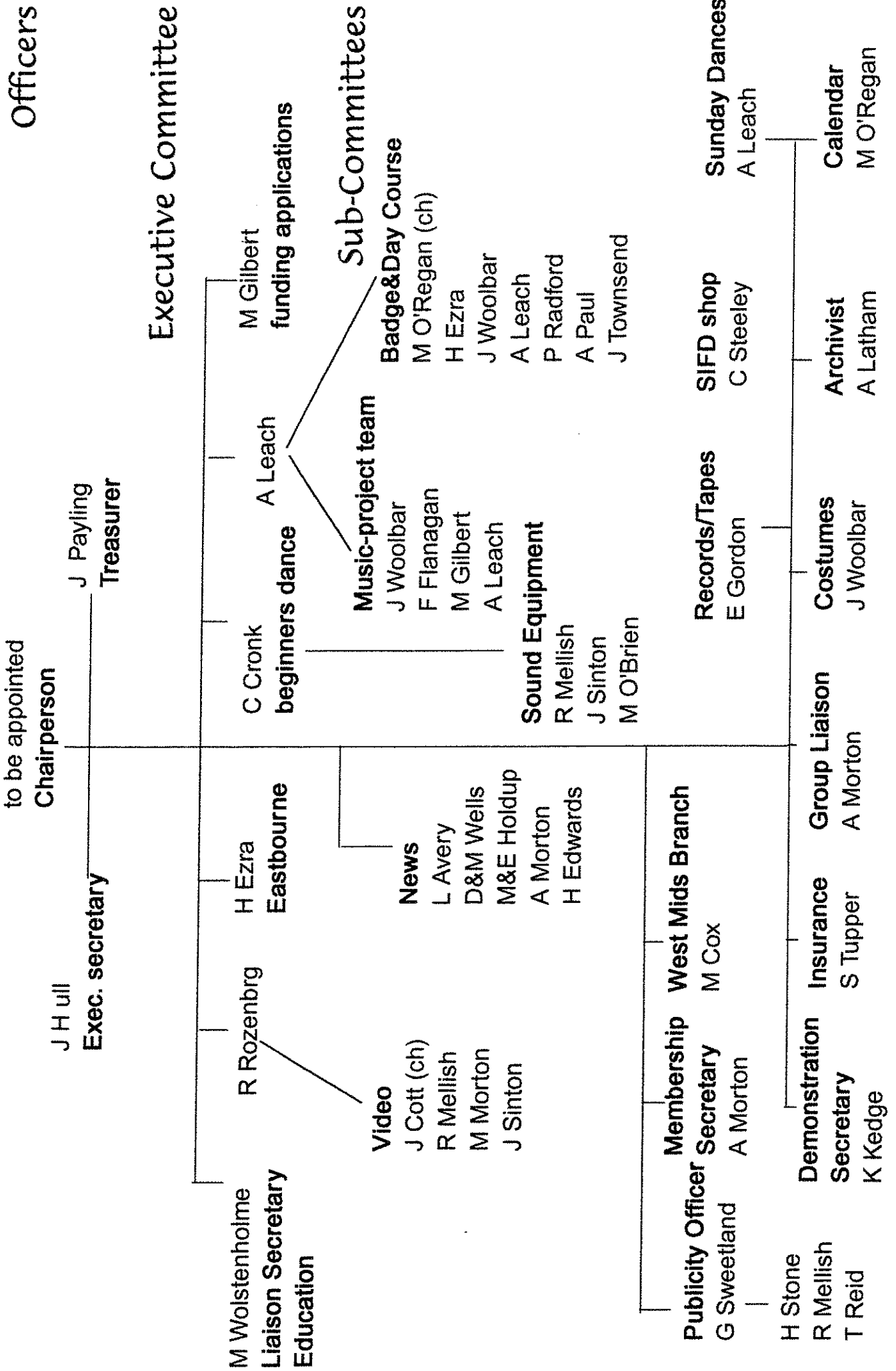
Dancing friends and colleagues will be sorry to hear that, after a successful hip replacement operation, Sybil then suffered a thrombosis, and later, disc damage. She has been in and out of hospital and nursing home since October 26th. She wishes to apologise to people who have been "missed out" lately, especially over Christmas.

Sybil, we wish you a speedy recovery and quick return to full dancing form!

MARINA WOLSTENHOLME

Note: if I've made a mistake, tell me so I can correct it

SIFD ORGANISATION January 1996



S.I.F.D. SUNDAY DANCES at Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London NW1.

Feb.4th Woodvale I.F.D.G.
Mar.3rd Fiona Howarth

7.00 to 10.00p.m. Admission £3 for S.I.F.D. members, £4 for non-members.

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WHAT'S ON IN FEBRUARY

- Feb.10th S.I.F.D. DAY COURSE - CHINESE. See p.2.
- Feb.10th BALKANPLUS. N.C.: Frances Horrocks. Trefusis, Cecil Sharp House.
7.00-10.30pm. £3. See p.5.
- Feb.11th BALKAN(ISH) WORKSHOP with Val Lenny and Maggie O'Regan at The Place,
Studio 9, 2.00-4.00pm. £2.50. Information from Val 01634 685 0130
or Maggie 0171 609 7098.
- Feb.17th MIDDLE EASTERN AND BELLY DANCING WORKSHOP with Christine Hall.
Tunbridge Wells Adult Education Centre. Tel: 01892 527317.
- Feb.18th CONCERT OF CHINESE OPERA AND FOLK SONGS, including the Lion Dance.
Ashcroft Theatre, Croydon. Matinee 2.00pm. £8.00; Evening 7.30pm.
£12.00. Box Office 0181 688 9291.
- Feb.24th BEGINNERS-PLUS DANCE, 7.30-10.30pm. at the Working Men's College,
44 Crowndale Road, Camden, NW1, two blocks east from Camden High
Street, near Mornington Crescent (Station closed). Note the change
in venue and half hour earlier time. The N.Cs. will be Jill Bransby
and Jeanette Hull and the band will be Jacobs Ladder. Admission £4,
£3 for SIFD members. The evening is aimed at newcomers but with
interest for more experienced dancers. See p.6

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TRADITIONAL INDIAN TEXTILE TECHNIQUES

Hand painting on silk, Tie dye, Batik, Block printing - at the Horniman
Museum, London Road, Forest Hill, London SE23.
Thursdays, 6.30-8.30pm. commencing 29th February, 1996 for 4 weeks.
Phone Carolyn Roberts, 0181 699 1872 to book as places are limited. Fee £20.

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ALL MATERIAL FOR THE MARCH ISSUE OF THE SIFD NEWS MUST REACH HEATHER EDWARDS,
47 SUTHERLAND AVENUE, BEXHILL-ON-SEA, EAST SUSSEX, TN39 3QL, IN WRITING, BY
FEBRUARY 17th 1996.
