



SIFD

NEWS

JAN
1997

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

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SUMMARY OF S.I.F.D. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (Minutes to follow later in 1997)

All three motions were adopted, so:

- 1) The officially accepted version of the Constitution is that dated 5.4.96.
- 2) Clause 3d of that Constitution was amended to improve the grammar. Naren Kotiyan, who proposed the addition of a clause to include music in the Constitution, gave a reminder of the spirit in which the clause was intended, i.e. to encourage the playing of music for our dancing.
- 3) Charles Steventon is now an Honorary member of the S.I.F.D.
- 4) Jeanette Hull is now Chairperson, and Alison Scrimshaw has joined the Committee as Secretary. The rest of the Committee are as last year: Judith Payling (Treasurer), Caspar Cronk, Helen Ezra, Michael Gilbert, Anne Leach, Rosette Rozenberg, Marina Wolstenholme. Ex-officio: Lily Avery (SIFD NEWS), Alan Morton (Membership), George Sweetland (Publicity).
A chart showing who is responsible for what on the Committee, sub-Committees, and all the other work for the Society will be published soon.

Within "Any Other Business", discussions covered intentions to invest in the improvement of the quality of new S.I.F.D. cassettes, plans for 1998 Summer School, the 1997 Eastbourne Festival, and an invitation from the Committee to the whole membership to give us ideas for new projects, events, publicity, recruitment of new members, to prevent too much of an anti-climax after the very busy and successful Golden Jubilee Year.

JEANETTE HULL

A NOTE OF THANKS

As always, the task of thanking all those people who have supported the Sunday Dances throughout the year is almost overwhelming. To all the M.C.s, the musicians, the technicians and the unfailingly cheerful volunteers, my heartfelt thanks. Thank you also to all dancers who have attended during the year for your energy and enthusiasm and a warm invitation to you all to the Dances in 1997.

ANNE LEACH

S.I.F.D. DAY COURSES

As announced last month, the Course in January is a Breton Weekend. The next Day Course, on 8th February, will be Romanian with guest teacher, Emil Urcan At Cecil Sharp House, 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., £6 for members, £7 non-members.

Many of us have met Emil on trips to Transylvania with Silviu Ciuciumis. He is a young dancer originally from a small village along the Mures river in Southern Transylvania who has danced in groups from Bucaresti and Bistrita (Transylvania). He has now qualified as a choreographer and is passionate about Romanian dance and music. He will be teaching dances from the different regions of Transylvania plus some from Banat, Moldavia and Muntenia. He speaks good English. The programme will include couple dances and circle dances covering the diversity of Romanian dance. He has already prepared tapes and videos plus CDs etc. for his teaching sessions. While in England we hope to arrange visits to Bristol Balkan Dance Group and to Heart of England Group in Birmingham.

Please check with either Anne Leach (0181 462 7959) or myself (01923 249704) beforehand as the visit is still to be confirmed, but we hope to be able to confirm the situation in the February SIFD NEWS.

NICK GREEN

S.I.F.D. SHOP

New Year - New Stock - New Design. In response to your requests, we now have coloured T-shirts, 100% cotton, printed with Sister Anna's design "Lots of Dancers" in Black on Red/Light-Blue/Jade/Raspberry, sizes Medium/Large/Extra Large. Cost: £9.00 plus £1.00 postage & packing. Obtainable from me at 34 Broadwater Avenue, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 3HF.

Thank you, Anna, for another stunning design.

CLAIRE STEELEY

A SOURCE OF FOLK AND WORLD MUSIC

I have received a catalogue from a music company, ARC Music Distribution Ltd. More than 70 pages listing a wide variety of world and folk music CDs, with information about each one. They also produce a set of CDs with samples from most of their range. I have enjoyed listening to all seven in the set. The CD catalogue costs £10, but I would be happy to lend the one sent to me. For further information, contact ARC Music Distribution Limited, P.O.Box 111, East Grinstead, W.Sussex RH19 4FZ. Tel: 01342 312 161, Fax 01342 325209.

JEANETTE HULL

Folkdance or fakedance?

Dr. Towner asks the question 'What is a real folk dance?' (May and June SIFD News). There are two aspects to this question: firstly, was there ever anything which could justifiably be called a 'folk dance'; and, secondly, what is it that we - as 'international folk dancers' - do?

If aspects of folk culture are to be defined by the 3 Grimm postulates (or should that be 'the 3 grim postulates'?) - namely, the existence of a homogeneous folk population, the immutable transmission of ideas and practices over many centuries, and communal creation - then I agree with Dr. Towner that we are unlikely to find anything that can unequivocally be called a 'folk dance'. However, I believe that most international folk dancers would regard folk dances as part of the culture of peasants in a basically rural context. However, it is a long way away from asserting that there is, or was, a homogeneous folk population. Rather, I believe that one of the defining conditions of folk culture is variety: what is done in one village or region is different from that which is done in the neighbouring areas. Folk dances are far from being 'national dances' let alone universal.

The context for folk dance was a traditional culture, in the sense that ideas and practices were passed from one generation to the next either orally or, in the case of dance, by demonstration. Of course, this sort of transmission does not rule out the possibility of change, and to me the word 'tradition' implies continuity rather than stasis. No culture is entirely isolated from external influences which have an effect on the people, whether they actively embrace or reject any particular change or whether it just slips unnoticed into their lives. (This includes Stalinist attempts to fashion a heritage which can be used to define 'the Nation'. I make no comment about whether this is a good or bad thing. I merely note its existence.)

On the third point of 'communal creation', I find it hard to envisage what might be meant by this phrase. Every dance was probably created by a single person or, at most, a small group of people. However, dances do not exist continuously from the moment of creation. They are re-created each time some-one dances. Although there *is* a model which everyone follows, this is not *rigidly* prescribed. Every dancer has their own way of dancing which is affected by their age, sex, economic status, together with the nature of the dance event (whether it is a wedding or a funeral, for example), their state of mind at the time (whether they are happy, sad or drunk) and their reaction to the way the musicians are playing at a particular moment. Since everyone is doing this, the creation may be said to be communal, especially since there are broad (cultural, as well as musical) limits to what may be done. However, no two dancers are exactly alike, so the re-creation is also individualistic.

Assuming that there are no longer any peasants (at least in Europe), then folkdance in the form described above is, indeed, a historical dance form. This brings us to the question of whether there can be modern folkdance. One answer might be that a dance is a folk dance if one can demonstrate continuity between the dance today and a dance done by peasants at some particular time. This, of course, begs the questions of how you pick the 'particular time' and what exactly constitutes

'continuity'. However you decide to answer those two questions, the status of a particular dance as a folk dance inevitably becomes more questionable as the years advance, unless dances which have once been identified as folk dances are then maintained in a prescribed form. This goes against the responsiveness to historical context and the individual re-creation which I have identified as two of the major features of folkdance; the dances become the equivalent of the stuffed or pickled specimens to be found in a natural history museum.

In summary I believe that folk dances are part of a geographically heterogeneous culture which is responsive to its historical situation. These dances can be regarded as being both individualistic *and* communal. I realise that this definition is rather broad and imprecise. However, I think that it is unwise to be dogmatic about cultural phenomena which do not (and cannot) have well defined boundaries in space or time.

The second question has a straight-forward answer: whatever it is that international folk dancers do, it isn't 'real folkdance' because it lacks the cultural context. At best, it may be an authentic representation of a folk dance, though even this is somewhat contentious and depends on your definition of 'authentic'. The question is: whose style do I copy? Even if I manage to produce an exact facsimile of some peasant's dance style, I have only copied the way he was dancing at a particular moment. (I use the male pronoun because *I* am male and I assume that I would *really* have trouble trying to dance exactly like a woman - although it is interesting to try now and again.) It is more likely - and probably inevitable - that my style of dancing will still be affected by the way I learned to walk, stand and sit having been brought up in England.

Since I have decided that I will never dance in an authentic manner, you may feel inclined to ask me why I don't give up. The answer is "because it's fun trying". However, just saying "folk dancing = steps + style" misses the point about dancing. Dancing should be fun. If it isn't, why bother? And, after all, that is (part of) why the 'folk' did it in the first place. Dancing is also an avenue for self-expression or self-awareness - which is perhaps why Circle Dancing, with its emphasis on this, is rather more popular than so-called folk dancing.

Should we worry about dancing modern choreographies to recorded music? Some people may dance just for fun or for the exercise and are not particularly concerned with historical accuracy. I think people should be aware that what they are doing is *fakelore* rather than *folklore*, but there is no need to lie awake at night agonising over it. However, some people are also interested in the historical aspects of folk dancing and gain both enjoyment and an increased self-awareness from trying to imitate the movements of someone raised in a different cultural environment. As someone who *is* interested in folklore, I think that the SIFD ought to be able to promote the recreational aspects of folkdance (as well as the 'authentic') without having to change its name to the 'Society for International Fake Dancing'.

JAMES WEBB

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WANTED. Please, does anyone have any Balkan dance shoes? All sizes required, children to adult, or does anyone know where we can purchase new shoes (Nevofoon/Holland no longer supply). Can anyone help Drusilla Duffill, at Drusilla Duffill Theatre School, Grove Lodge, Oakwood Road, Burgess Hill, W.Sussex RH15.0HZ.

GREEK DANCE WORKSHOP - SUNDAY, 9TH MARCH 1997

AT THE PLACE, STUDIO 10, 1.30 TO 5.30 P.M. £6.00

I do hope you will all make a note of the Greek Dance Workshop I am organizing for Sunday, 9th March 1997. This time Natassa Lemos cannot manage to take it herself, but she has highly recommended a charming young dancer, recently come to London - Vassiliki Barradaki. She is a talented, experienced performer and enthusiastic teacher, so I am sure the varied programme will be of interest to experienced dancers and to those beginning to discover the enjoyment and delight of Greek dancing. PLEASE MAKE A NOTE NOW so as not to miss this excellent opportunity. REQUESTS WILL BE CONSIDERED and if possible incorporated into the programme, or at least walked through in the mid-session break, when I plan to have a sort of revision/dance just for enjoyment, to rest the weary/thirsty and to satisfy the indefatigable. Let's give Vassiliki a great welcome! Requests and queries to me at Oak Lodge, Theobalds Park Road, Enfield, Middx. EN2 9BN. Tel: 0181 363 1506.

DIKI GLEESON

TOURS TO BULGARIA 1997

Readers may be interested in the tour to the Rhodope and Pirin mountains to take place in August 1997 (provisional dates 20th-29th August or 20th August to 3rd September) which we hope will include one of the Folk Festivals in the mountains.

The B.B.F.S. tours are now organized in association with Balkania Travel by Dr. Annie Kay, following the retirement of Mrs. I. Purton. For further details please contact The British Bulgarian Friendship Society, c/o Finsbury Library Basement, 245 St. John Street, London EC1V 4NB. Tel: 0171 837 2304.

SYBIL NEWTON

WANTED URGENTLY!

A vacancy has occurred for a teacher of Greek folk dance for a friendly, well-established adult group based in Surbiton. We meet every Monday from 8 to 10 p.m. and are seeking a teacher who can help us extend our repertoire of 80+ dances from all over Greece, and remind us of those which we do not dance so often. We are quite well known locally for dancing at charitable events and for providing entertainment for the elderly etc.

The teacher would, hopefully, start in the New Year at a salary to be negotiated. We would consider attendance weekly, fortnightly or even monthly. If interested, please contact me at 3 Hartford Road, West Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT19 9JD. Tel: 0181 397 0008 (Answerphone always connected).

RITA WILD
Secretary, Hellenic Folkdance
Group

MUSIC. Three more tunes from Wilf Horrocks this month on p.12. If you would like the music for any particular dance, please contact Wilf on 0181 642 3629.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR...

Dear Lily,

Marie Claire Viala, who taught dances from Gascony at the 1996 York Summer School, has sent to Janice Gilliam, as promised, the written music of the dances taught. Janice has kindly sent me copies of the music and Marie Claire's explanatory postcard. Marie Claire has moved house (her new address is 41 rue Luchet, 31200 Toulouse) and in the process has mislaid some of the addresses she was given in York. I understand that Wilf Horrocks also has copies of the music so that he may be in a position to publish the dances in SIFD NEWS if they are requested. Meanwhile, if anyone is desperate, I could supply copies.

Marie Claire finished her card with an offer to provide anyone who was at York with any further information on request, and gives her telephone number as 05.61.48.89.67. This is the new style of number now in use in France and the leading zero is omitted when calling from abroad.

SIMON GUEST
49 Station Road, Epping, Essex
CM16 4HJ

THE MANCHESTER GALOP - WHY "MANCHESTER"?

Some three decades ago I was asked by Shirley Andrews, then an editor of 'Australian Tradition' magazine, whether I knew anything about MANCHESTER GALOP, a dance surviving in Nariel, Victoria, Australia. Thinking it was an old English dance, a search was made in folk, ballroom and pre-20th century sources without success. Subsequently I spotted a dance called simply MANCHESTER in a book of Swiss dances, which proved to be no other than the familiar "Lott Is Dead"! Subsequent correspondence confirmed that the choreography matched that of MANCHESTER GALOP. But why MANCHESTER? None of the texts of the accompanying songs then available to me referred to Manchester. However, more recently, I learnt of such a version, viz. "samt, samt, samt, samt, samt MANCHESTER hosen sind die besten weit und breit - i.e. velvet, velvet, velvet, velvet, velvet corduroy trousers are the best far and wide". Of course, this does not explain why a dance song should extol the virtues of velvet corduroy trousers, but it does weaken the story that the dance had an English origin, if not eliminate it.

But how did it end up in Australia, given that it was collected from a natural community environment and not from a folkdance enthusiasts' club? The answer must lie with immigrants from Continental Europe. Indeed, one such family was prominent in the area organizing and playing for social dancing. It is perhaps not often realised in the U.K. that there are established German and Italian communities in Australia that date from before World War II.

G.D.TOWNER

FRENCH DANCING - Regular events.

Mostly French sessions - First Monday of month, The George, Borough High St., Southwark.

Totally French sessions - Second Monday of month, Jerry's Bar, Cecil Sharp House.

Weekly dance workshop - Ring Jessica Abrahams, 0181 838 1996(h), 0171 573 5342(w)

Brighton Bouge - Contact Jan Mulreany, 01273 501304.

Le Beatroot - French/Breton Dance Club at Windows Arts Centre, Bath. Contact Carmelite Rifle, 01225 338269.

On Bouge - French Dance & Music Club, 3rd Monday of month at London Welsh Centre, 157 Grays Inn Road, London W.C.1, 8-11 p.m.

THE DOMNA SAMIOU CONCERT AT THE HELLENIC CENTRE

I just must say what a wonderful concert it was on Saturday, 30th November, given by Domna Samiou and her exceptionally talented musicians. Her vocal range, soul-stirring sincerity and passion, springing from her very being, was awe-inspiring. No less gifted and special were her musicians. The solo gaida player won everyone's hearts with his ingenuous, boyish, huge delight in the audience's appreciation of his undoubted talents. Ross Daly's accompanist, the highly gifted (and handsome) lyra and lavda player - Sokratis Sinopoulos by name - was bewitching (as all those lucky people attending that very special evening given by Ross Daly at the Queen Elizabeth Hall would expect). Georgos Yevgelis was a real wizard on all the percussion and the daouli solo was incredible. BUT the one who stole my heart was Nikos Philippides. He hardly seemed to breathe for a start and was completely relaxed and gorgeous. The amazing variety of sound, so effortlessly produced on the clarinet he had made himself was breathtakingly beautiful. Sheer magic! I was completely transported with the two Macedonian "numbers". One in particular almost reinvented the clarinet as a refined gaida. Each of the seven superbly talented musicians was a wizard in his own right, and I wholeheartedly recommend you make sure to catch the programme of their music to be made from the B.B.C. recording of the concert, which Natassa Lemos will be introducing, on Radio 3. As Natassa is doing the arranging in January, I don't suppose the actual broadcast will be till the beginning of April.

I was so carried away with the music, I almost forgot to mention the brief performance of the Lykion Dancers, which was very good and a lovely added bonus to the evening. They were beautifully colourful in the Liti and Trikeri costumes. The men looked particularly fine and versatile, dancing with vigour and panache. The performance could hardly fail to "take off" with the fine live accompaniment.

It truly was a memorable evening in the magnificent grand hall of the Hellenic Centre, which looked so festive and autumnal, decorated tastefully and elegantly with a harvest home theme - hessian, straw, fruits, rope, dried flowers and grasses displayed with variety and advantage on various panniers, drums and containers with flair and imagination. I was indeed profoundly grateful to have been able to enjoy it all - hobbling on pinned, stitched toe notwithstanding!

DIKI GLEESON

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MILTON KEYNES INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL 1997

Plans are progressing well for next year's Milton Keynes International Festival of Folk Art which takes place from Friday, 4th, to Sunday, 6th July. So far, we have booked three groups from abroad: "Clog America" (the International Festival Ensemble from Salt Lake City) who perform traditional precision, freestyle and hoedown dances of the Appalachian Mountain Region, wearing "claquettes" on their shoes; "Janavik" from the Darpana Academy of Performing Arts in Ahmedabad, India, who have researched and present folk dances from many parts of India (they performed at Billingham some years ago); and an Albanian dance group from the Artistic School in Tirana. No name has been given yet and we have few details about the group apart from a video and personal recommendations, but we are confident that the style and variety of their dances will have strong appeal, particularly to S.I.F.D. members. There will be some extra events in our programme for 1997 and a slight change in format, but there are no firm details yet. Watch this space!

To answer a query from last year re the length of the Festival: although the groups will still be in Milton Keynes on the Monday, their programme for that day comprises visits to schools, a formal reception and a farewell barbecue, so for the general public we treat the Sunday evening concert as the last event of the Festival.

DON ALLISON and JILL GOURLAY

IS BELLY DANCING A FOLK DANCE?

Yes it is, and no, it isn't. Belly dancing is probably the world's oldest dance form, so old that nobody can say where it comes from. Scholars argue whether it is 300, 900, 2,000, 4,000 or 20,000 years old, and there have been many heated debates and even doctoral theses about the subject. The discussions are even more passionate about where it originated. The Egyptians insist that belly dance started in Egypt, whereas the Turks claim it was invented in Turkey. I have also been told that belly dancing started in Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Cyprus, Persia, Iraq, India, and China (by Moroccan, Tunisian, Algerian, Cypriot, Iranian, Indian Iraqi, Indian and Chinese nationals respectively) and none would even consider another view.

The difficulty is, of course, that once your research takes you that far into history, you won't find original documentation, film recordings, music tapes, instruction books or newspaper articles about it. Those murals in ancient Egypt, those Indian stone figures, certainly look as if they were depicting belly dancers in action, but it's impossible to be sure that what they are performing is really belly dance.

To make matters more complicated, belly dancing (like many other traditional folk dances) spread from one region to another, crossed borders into other countries and even other continents, carried by invading nations and by gypsy tribes. In each new country it touched, it assimilated local folk dance forms and these were blended with the original dance. For example, flamenco is derived from belly dance (which was brought to Spain by the Saracens who occupied that country) plus local folk dances. In return, the Saracens picked up some of the Spanish dance elements and introduced them to their own native shores.

There are many different types of belly dance. Discounting what is sometimes performed in seedy nightclubs under the name "belly dance" (but certainly does not deserve the name), there are still a hundred or so belly dance forms left, most of them regional dances which qualify as "folk dance". Looking at Egypt alone (which is regarded as the centre of belly dance), there are the following major forms, each of which has its own sub-groups.

Saïdi. This is a relaxed, earthy dance of Upper Egypt with strong forward-back and up-down hip movements, often performed with a small stick or camel cane, frequently as a group dance, by men as well as by women, using a special saïdi rhythm.

Tahteeb. This is another stick dance, popular in upper Egypt, but performed almost exclusively by men. It is derived from martial arts practice. The dance is fierce and aggressive, and the sticks are thick and heavy.

Baladi. This is the traditional women's solo dance. It is an improvised, deeply emotional dance. The dancer draws upon her wide repertoire of traditional dance movements to express feelings. Homesickness, longing for the past, or a townswoman's dream of the countryside, are frequent themes of a Baladi dance. A Baladi dance lasts between seven and twenty minutes, during which the musicians change rhythms, tempo, instruments and mood several times. A good Baladi dancer dances almost on the spot; her movements are "internal", for example hip shimmies.

Raks Sharqi. This term is interpreted in many ways. The translation is simply "dance of the East", and people in the Middle East use it for Egyptian-style belly dancing generally. In the U.K. the term is used for a very traditional style of Egyptian belly dancing, which is related to the Baladi but more formalised, often choreographed, sometimes performed in groups, with no emotional expression, very precise hip movements and few other movements.

Zaar. This is a trance dance, in which several women participate, usually led by a wise woman, to exorcise evil spirits from a woman. The ceremony is per-

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formed at the possessed woman's request. The ceremony can last for several days, during which the possessed woman is treated as a V.I.P., dressed in her finest clothes, spoilt with delicious food and often presents (which are officially bribes for the evil spirit). Much of the Zaar dance is performed kneeling, and there is a lot of head tossing. The rhythm of the Zaar is quite spooky. Zaar rituals are outlawed in Egypt but are still performed in some North African countries, and some American and European dancers keep the Egyptian tradition alive.

In other countries, there are many more forms of dance, such as Haddawi, Nayli, Dabke, Berber, Khaleegy, which are loosely gathered together under the belly dance (although they don't necessarily involve "belly" movements). All of these qualify for the term "folk dance".

On the other hand, there is the so-called cabaret style. This can be performed as a solo or group dance, with complex choreographies, often including gimmicks (fire-eating, live snakes), elements from other forms of dance (ballet, jazz) and effects which are derived from Western cliché images of the East, including the "ruby in the navel" and costumes invented in Hollywood. The cabaret belly dances, although just as beautiful and respectable as the folk belly dances, are fairly recent. They evolved during a constant exchange between East and West at the end of the 19th century, and experienced their greatest time in the 1940s. I would not call them folk dance.

But who knows? The cabaret style has been around for a century now. Assimilating foreign dance elements is in itself an old tradition. One day the cabaret style may be regarded as "traditional folk".

CHRISTINE HALL

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ISRAELI DAY COURSE, NOVEMBER 1996

What a lovely way to end the 1996 season of Day Courses with the inimitable Fiona Howarth (that is how she is billed in SIFD NEWS). It was a wonderful day with a selection of dances to suit everyone. Fiona was indefatigable as always and so clear in teaching and generous in her information, plus her wit and sense of humour (but you need to be on her wave length!). If you have never worked on a course with Fiona then you have missed "The Howarth Experience"! She is always full of wise words, "It is much better to learn one dance thoroughly than go away with too many incorrect". We all perhaps try to cram too much in.

Very many thanks on behalf of all the members for the year's interesting and varied courses. Maggie O'Regan does a wonderful job. Where else are so many courses on offer, with notes, cassettes all available at such reasonable prices? All this and a Jubilee too. Some year.

ROBERT HARROLD

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ROMANIAN FOLKDANCE WEEKEND WITH SILVIU CIUCIUMIS, 7TH-9TH NOVEMBER 1997

Details will shortly be available for a weekend at Dovedale in the Peak District with the Romanian teacher, Silviu Ciuciumis. Silviu has visited England several times, and many of his dances have remained in our repertoire. Dancers will be able to choose from full or half-day tuition. The house is an excellent location from which to explore the Derbyshire Dales, providing opportunities for half or full-day walks, or sightseeing. Accommodation is in comfortable single and twin-bedded rooms with full board and plenty of good food. Full board £70, plus £24 for two full days dance course or £12 for two half-days. For details, send s.a.e. to me at 115 Chetwynd Road, London NW5 1DA.

CATHY MEUNIER

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Feb.1st CELEBRATING CHINESE NEW YEAR (as on 25th January) at Sevenoaks Adult Education Centre. Enquiries: 01732 451618. No price given.

Feb.8th EGYPTIAN BELLY DANCING workshop with Christine Hall, women only. Isle of Sheppey Adult Education Centre. Enquiries: 01795 875059. No price given.

Feb.9th INTENSIVE WORKSHOP IN EGYPTIAN RAKS SHARQI, veil dance, dancing with finger cymbals, in Lewes. Christine Hall plus special guest tutor. Enquiries: 01580 850687. No price given.

Feb.15th CELEBRATING CHINESE NEW YEAR (as on 25th January) at Rye Adult Education Centre. Enquiries: 01797 222318. No price given.

Mar.1st WORKSHOP IN EGYPTIAN AND IRANIAN VEIL DANCE TECHNIQUES with Christine Hall (veils can be borrowed) at Hastings Adult Education Centre. Enquiries: 01424 435619. No price given.

Mar.9th LAURA SHANNON'S WORKSHOP of mostly Armenian dances, with some Gypsy and Greek. 10.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. at Stone Cross Memorial Hall, near Eastbourne. No price given. Booking form and map from Rowena Martin, 01323 503991.

Mar.15th RUSSIAN DAY COURSE, 10.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. at Stevenson Junior School, Wandsworth Road, Stapleford, Notts. £5.00. Tutor: Marina Wolstenholme. Organized by Nutbrook I.F.D.G. Contact: Gill Morral, 0115 9393204.

Mar.15th INTRODUCTION TO EGYPTIAN DANCING, with Christine Hall. Includes belly dancing, baladi, raks shaqi, veil and stick dance, plus rhythms. At Eastbourne College. Enquiries: 01323 644711. No price given.

Mar.22nd MIDDLE EASTERN DANCING (BELLY DANCING) with Christine Hall. At Sevenoaks Adult Education Centre. Enquiries: 01732 451618. No price given.

Mar.28th EGYPTIAN AND IRANIAN VEIL DANCE TECHNIQUES (veils can be borrowed) with Christine Hall at Sittingbourne Adult Education Centre. Enquiries: 01795 424124. No price given.

Mar.29th/31st "EASTERN PROMISE", Asian weekend course with Jan Knoppers at Doncaster College Conference Centre, High Melton. Please send s.a.e. for further information and booking form, to Marina Wolstenholme, Robin Cottage, 4 Commercial Road, Grindleford, Sheffield S30 1HA.

Apr.5th/6th EGYPTIAN DANCING, focus on Baladi, with Maggie Caffrey, introduced by Christine Hall, at Rodmell School of Dance. Contact Maggie on 01280 817212. No price given.

May 23rd/26th BALKANPLUS WHITSUN WEEKEND OF BULGARIAN DANCING with Eddy Tijssen at Cheddar Youth Hostel, Somerset. Contact Anne Marshall, 44 Church Road, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol BS9 3EQ. Tel: 0117 950 9889. No price given.

June 8th ISRAELI DANCE WORKSHOP with Anat at Stone Cross Memorial Hall, near Eastbourne. £12.00 (concessions £7.50). Contact Rowena Martin, 01323 503991.

Aug.22nd/25th BALKAN FLAVOUR WEEKEND (Bank Holiday weekend) at Dunford House, Midhurst, West Sussex. If you are interested, please contact Irene Keywood on 0181 592 4427.

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When sending in details of events, please give price, if possible. Ed.