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JANUARY

1998

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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This month's cover design was sent in by Simon Guest and is taken from a photo-  
graph he took of a young Bulgarian at the Koprivshtitsa Festival. The sleeves  
are red with white embroidery and the skirt and bodice (or is it a dress?) are  
navy blue with mainly red embroidery.

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PLEASE LET THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY KNOW IF YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS.

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S.I.F.D. books, cassettes etc. are obtainable from Mrs. Eleanor Gordon,  
70 Chestnut Grove, New Malden, Surrey KT3 3TS. Other S.I.F.D. goods are  
obtainable from Mrs. Claire Steeley, 34 Broadwater Avenue, Letchworth,  
Herts. SG6 3HF.

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All material for the February SIFD NEWS must be received by the Editor  
IN WRITING BY 17TH January. Please write in BLOCK CAPITALS all names  
of people, places and dances, unless typewritten.

## RESEARCHES IN MOROCCO

The Bizarre Camel (Toni and Gerald Page and Emerald Macmillan) have been researching more music and dance, this time in Morocco. We deliberately chose a non-tourist area to go to, in a Moroccan-style apartment. As a half-price offer and being self-catering, the total cost was very reasonable. However, the townspeople just got on with their lives; they all spoke Berber, Arabic or French (our French was pretty rusty), so our stay began with a feeling of isolation - "Where do we begin to break through?".

It did not take long to ask the right questions of the right people, however, and even though we had to resist advice on "tourist" dancing displays, nothing was too much for the Moroccans when they realized that we seriously wanted to know them as people, as a culture, and wanted to enjoy their own music and dance with them. Unfortunately, there is more difficulty, as in many countries, to find spontaneous folkdancing, as the major interest for young people particularly, is in making their own music, much of which is still based on traditional style and devotional songs (some of them also with a modern sound). The Moroccans are not Fundamentalist Moslems and are unlikely to become so as the Arab invasion across North Africa found a very strong and cultured Berber population here and, at the Westernmost point of their conquests, ran out of energy to subjugate the solid, religious background they encountered. Therefore, most of the dancing we came across was Berber dancing, and most Moroccans are proud of their Berber blood and heritage.

Once our contact with people began to open out we had constant adventures. The first one was an invitation to a local event which two young men had obviously arranged and then guided us to. This was at ten o'clock on one of our first evenings so it was a slightly nervous Bizarre Camel who followed these two strangers through the dark streets of a town we didn't know! We felt instinctively that to take our video and still cameras at this stage would have destroyed our credibility, but luckily we still have very vivid memories of that occasion. "Les Bêtes" (black ex-slaves similar to the Gnawas) were playing drums and claquettes and dancing as part of their exorcism ceremony. We were treated as special guests (the only Europeans there) and were each in turn asked to join them in their dancing. They seemed extremely pleased that we were unafraid enough to join in and I am sure we received a special blessing when the exorcisms began. We stayed to watch this and were soon laughing at the "Sacred Fool" even though we could not understand his language. Some of the exorcisms were very touching as the individuals concerned were obviously in deep suffering (to the Moroccans, although Moslem, djinn or genies and saints are very real and possession by a djinn is a terrible thing). The relief was obvious after the exorcism and blessing had been done.

When we felt it was time to go, our two Moroccans then took us to a wedding party where once again we were made very welcome (mint tea and sweet biscuits) as the only Europeans there. This was more of a modern "get-together" although we saw the bride and groom sat on their symbolic marriage bed before they left. At two o'clock that morning we fell into bed congratulating Emerald on having celebrated such an unusual start to her 30th birthday!

A couple of days later we were introduced to a representative of a local music association who met every Friday to sing and play inspirational poems and devotional songs. We were excited at being invited to their next meeting (our knowledge of Islam and ideas about Morocco and its culture were first tested in a very subtle interview!). However, being considered as "holy" musicians they had been asked to play at a local traditional wedding on that night and we were asked if we would accept an invitation to the wedding party. Of course we would!

We discovered when we arrived that it was the women's night (one of the three days of the traditional wedding) and normally the "Shikat" would be there - women singers and musicians - to keep the company all female. An exception was made on this occasion (the President of the music association owned the house and, after all, they were "holy" musicians).

Contd...

A beautiful sight met our eyes as we reached the roof terrace - a mass of gorgeously-robed women with peacock colours, bright kaftans, colourful head-scarves, and all were seated and draped on cushions like a Victorian picture of a harem! When they later began to dance to the drumming and singing of the group they were stunning, doing a mixture of belly-dance and Moroccan folk steps with tremendous grace and expertise. Before the party reached this point, the bride had to appear and she came upstairs in procession with the older women chanting and ululating. She looked beautiful, with big nervous eyes, and we all felt moved as she and her procession passed us, she to be seated on her symbolic, lone marriage bed. The henna ceremony began, lasting a long time, with extreme care taken with the patterns, and blessings being sung to signal the completion. Once again the only Europeans there, we expressed thanks and gratitude, with the Moroccans seeming extremely pleased that we were taking their culture to our hearts!

Our "death-defying" journey to, and adventures in, Marrakesh will be reported in a later SIFD NEWS.

The Bizarre Camel is organizing an informal holiday with workshops by native dancers in the same apartments - not half-price - next September. Please contact me if interested. We need deposits for February/March. We also are offering workshops in England on the Moroccan and Berber dance forms that we discovered on our trip.

TONI PAGE  
3 Bellhanger Court, Morford St.,  
Bath, N.Somerset, BA1 2RD

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#### LETTERS

Dear S.I.F.D. members,

I'd like to join the discussion about whether or not there should be a charge for publicity in the newsletter. I don't think there should be a charge for announcing events. It's in the interest of the members to learn about as many events, workshops, performances etc. as possible. Most organizers and teachers will not put this information in the newsletter any more if they have to pay for it. The newsletter would lose much of its value.

My main reason for paying the annual membership fee is to get the excellent newsletter with its wealth of information about events, and to be able to publicise my events. If the newsletter contains less information, and if I have to pay extra to get my events included, I don't see much point in continuing my membership.

I appreciate that other dancers have different reasons for membership, but for those of us who value the newsletter in its present format, the change to paid-for (and therefore drastically reduced) information would be a great disappointment.

CHRISTINE HALL  
Finchden, Sandhurst, Cranbrook  
Kent TN18 5JS.

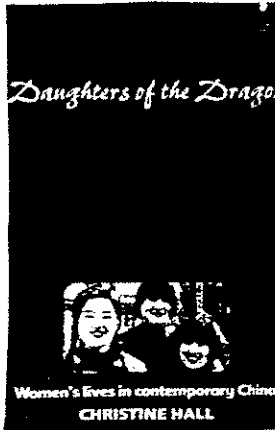
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Dear Lily,

What an interesting and enjoyable S.I.F.D. day course we had this month (November). I would like to thank all those who taught the dances and had prepared notes and tapes for us for all their hard work. It was good to come across El Candil again. Thanks to everyone.

MARGARET CULLEN  
3 Felden Drive, Felden,  
Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP3 0BD

# Travel writing competition



Daughters of the Dragon - Women's Lives in Contemporary China. Interviews with Chinese women about their lifestyle, education, work, sex and relationships. By Christine Hall. £10.99.



Scent of Saffron - Three Generations of an Iranian Family. Rouhi Shafii writes about the history of her country, her own life, and the fates of the women of her family in Persia. £10.99.

Could you write a travel article, suitable for publication in the SIFD newsletter? Perhaps you spent a holiday in Hungary, learning the local dances; maybe you came across an exciting folk festival by chance when travelling as a tourist in Morocco.

Even if you have never left England, you may like to write about a residential dance weekend you attended, how you visited the international folk costume department of a museum or what you saw at folk dance festival.

The article can be quite short and simple - nobody expects a literary or journalistic masterpiece. But it must have an 'international folk dance' interest.

The article must not be longer than 800 words, and must not be previously published. Please write clearly, or type on one side of white A4 paper. Staple your manuscript, and write your name and address on it. It must be received by 1 March 1998.

The judge is dancer/author/travel writer Christine Hall. The best entry will be considered for publication in a future issue of the newsletter. The winner receives a book on life in the Orient, donated by Scarlet Press.

Please state your choice of prize (*Scent of Saffron* or *Daughters of the Dragon*) - your choice will not influence the judge's decision. Send your entry to: Christine Hall (SIFD), Finchden, Sandhurst, Kent, TN18 5JS.

Please don't send your only original; keep a copy, since entries cannot be returned.

\* In fact, all entries will be considered for publication in the newsletter. Ed.

BALKAN FOLK SEMINAR, 1998

This year the seminar, which is held at Pamporovo in the Rhodopes, Bulgaria, will concentrate on dances from Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Armenia. Instrumental instruction is available for gaida, gadulka, tambura, kaval and tapan. Other instruction, in the Bulgarian language and Bulgarian folk singing, is optional.

Dates: 18th to 25th July 1998  
25th July to 1st August 1998  
18th July to 1st August 1998

Prices vary between \$290 for 7 days with no instruction to \$900 for 14 days and 6 courses per day. For full information, contact SC Zornitsa, 74 Opaltchenska Str, Sofia 1303, Bulgaria.

MARINA WOLSTENHOLME



THE DOINA FOUNDATION FOR ROMANIAN ETHNOGRAPHY & FOLKLORE are arranging the following in 1998:-

Folklore and Dance Tours to Romania

25th April to 2nd May Focşani, South Moldavia  
25th July to 8th August Piteşti, Muntenia

Balkan Festival

2nd to 5th July at Zetten, The Netherlands, with the following dance classes: Greek (Dick van der Zwan), Bulgarian (Jaap Leegwater), Turkish (Ersin Seyhan), Hungarian (Jenő Molnar), Macedonian (Martin Ihns), Yugoslav (Paja Milić), Romanian (Silviu Ciuciumiş). Singing: Nina Kavardjikova. Musical accompaniment: Orchestra Kaleb, Orchestra Trediki.

The Foundation also offers for sale, Romanian Folklore Costumes from all regions of Romania. Complete or partial outfits for men and women, including boots.

For information on all the above, contact Silviu Ciuciumiş, Aarhuispad 22, 3067 PR Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Tel: +31 10 421 86 22. Fax: +31 10 455 60 65.



THE CREATIVE DRAMA & MOVEMENT ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL is a worldwide Association which provides Teachers of Dance with training to enable them to add the teaching of drama in their schools. Although teachers of classical and stage dance make up the majority of their membership, they would like to encourage folkdance teachers as they see drama classes as complementary with every form of dance. They provide a learning package that includes a training video, music and three age levels of syllabus - Junior, Intermediate and Teen. If anyone is interested in finding out more about this Association, please write to Miss Susan Fisher, Head of Course Development, The Creative Drama & Movement Association International, The Old Police Station, 8 Priory Lane, Royston, Herts. SG8 7AJ.

"LARAJA" - A DELIGHTFUL DANCE FROM CADIZ, SPAIN

This dance, Laraja, was taught to us by the group from Cadiz during the dance course at the Billingham Festival this year. Marina Wolstenholme, Helen Ezra and I attended the session. It is a couple dance for men and women danced in a group for four, five or six couples. The basic steps are easy to learn and the dance follows simple patterns and pathways. The important thing is to perfect the carriage of the body, and coach the correct style for the arm and shoulder movements. The music is delightful, and towards the end of the dance, in the basket hold, the dancers sing.

The tutor of the dance group was excellent. She calmly built up and broke down the sequence and completed the dance with us in approximately two hours, knowing we were confident and would, we hope, perfect and use this gem of a dance eventually in our dance classes and, for some, in demonstrations. In fact, it would be a popular dance to include in the S.I.F.D. syllabus.

Marina and Helen, and I, have the technicians' video of this dance, Laraja, and the music on cassette as well as our own notes, but it was danced and taught at a previous Festival and therefore there are slight variations. My own group, "Kayroma", have danced Laraja for many years now and we have our own costumes from the Costa Del Sol region. We wear calf-length polka-dot skirts with black tops and suitable shawls. Owing to ill-health, my dancing days are almost over but for those interested I feel sure Marina and Helen would oblige, if approached, and teach Laraja at a day or weekend course. Maybe also our course director, Miss Deighton, would assist and perhaps myself, depending on my health.

In my opinion, Laraja is an enjoyable Andalusian regional dance without the strong Flamenco flavour. This is what makes it so appealing and it could be acceptable to most of our dancers in the future.

KAYE LEWIS POOLE  
Kayroma Folkdance Group

Ed.Note: Both Marina and Helen would need notice if they were asked to teach this dance as they are both involved in lots of dance activities and have not done this particular dance recently, and would need time to work on it to bring it up to teaching standard. Maybe other teachers have Laraja in their current repertoire?

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RE: KARSILAMA

I'd like to thank everyone who wrote or sent me notes regarding my Karsilama query. I'm overwhelmed by your generous response. I'm still studying all the notes, texts and book extracts which have opened out new perspectives. Actually, the information all seems to contradict each other, e.g. whether it was originally a group dance which developed into a solo, or a solo dance developed into a group dance, men's or a women's dance. A fascinating (if confusing) subject for research.

Thanks also for the notes about the Turkish/Persian rectangular wooden "clappers". One or two of you commented with interest on my remark that the pieces of wood were connected. Originally I thought the two wooden pieces were linked, but after reading your letters I've had a close look at the illustrations and I'm not sure if the two pieces are linked or just held that way. So I'm afraid I can't provide the "missing link" of cultural history between Persian loose pieces of wood and Spanish castanets.

CHRISTINE HALL

S.I.F.D. ARMENIAN DAY COURSE, SATURDAY, 17TH JANUARY 1998,  
IN TREFUSIS, CECIL SHARP HOUSE

Time: 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Price: £7 for S.I.F.D. members, £9 non-members

Tutor: Eddy Djololian

I met Eddy Djololian when I attended the Billingham dance course in August 1995. He was performing with the Armenian Folklore Ensemble "Navasart" from Paris. The group have also performed at the Sidmouth Folk Festival.

We all enjoyed the teaching session at Billingham, and I have persuaded Eddy to come over from Paris to teach us at the daycourse. He speaks excellent English and is a very clear teacher. Unfortunately, I have not been provided with details of the actual dances which he intends to teach yet, but I understand that one will be a "men's dance" and another will be a "ladies' Dance". We shall have to wait and see.

Eddy will be letting me have a master tape on the day, so I will take orders for copies and have them sent out afterwards. You will also be able to order a video tape of the dances taught.

I look forward to seeing you there.

HELEN EZRA



BELLY DANCING WITH CHRISTINE HALL

Weekly classes - Cost about £20-£40 per term. Open College accreditation possible.

Battle:

Monday, 7-9 p.m. Level 1 Beginners/improvers. Claverham Community College  
01424 775375.

Hastings/St.Leonards:

Tuesday, 9.30-11.30 a.m. Level 1 Beginners/improvers  
Tuesday, 7-9 p.m. Levels 2 & 3 Intermediate/Advanced  
Wednesday, 7-9 p.m. Level 1 Beginners/improvers  
HCAAT Adult Education, 01424 435619

Maidstone:

Friday, 7-9 p.m. Levels 1 & 2 Beginners/improvers. Adult Education,  
01622 752165



THE BINIOU

The biniou is a species of bagpipe, a primitive kind still in use in Brittany. It consists of a leather bag inflated by means of a "sutel", a short valved insufflation tube; a chaunter with conical bore with a double reed concealed within the stock having seven holes, the first being duplicated to accommodate left- and right-handed players. The biniou is the traditional and popular instrument of the Breton peasants and is seen at festivals, wedding feasts and threshing dances.

(Acknowledgement to "The Folk Dancer")



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

Jan.4th M.C.s: The S.I.F.D. Committee. Please wear costume if you have one.

Feb.1st M.C. to be announced.

7.00 to 10.00 p.m. Admission £4.00 for S.I.F.D. members, £5.00 for non-members.

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WHAT'S ON IN JANUARY

Jan.10th BALKANPLUS. See below.

Jan.17th S.I.F.D. ARMENIAN DAY COURSE. See p.10.

Jan.17th BARLOW I.F.D.G. NEW YEAR'S FAMILY EVENING DANCE, 7.15-10.15 p.m. at St.Ninian's U.R. Church Hall, corner of Wilbraham & Egerton Road South, Chorlton, Manchester. Adults £2.00, Children 50p. Visitors welcome. Please bring food for shared refreshment break. 'Phone 0161 881 1077 for further information.

Jan.24th CROXLEY GREEN INTERNATIONAL FOLKDANCERS' NEW YEAR'S PARTY, 7.30-10.45 p.m. at St.Oswald's Church Hall, Malvern Way, Croxley Green, near Watford, Herts. Come in costume if you can. £3.00 including refreshments, payable at the door. Enquiries to Joyce Sharp, 01923 228080.

Jan.24th WORKSHOP - BELLY DANCING, CHINESE FAN AND RIBBON DANCES. All levels. At Rye. 4-5 hours, cost approx. £13-£15. Teacher: Christine Hall. Adult Education, Tel: 01797 222318.

Jan.31st OXFORD BALKANSKO ORD NEW YEAR PARTY, 7.00-10.45 p.m. at St.Margaret's Parish Institute Hall. No price given.

Jan.31st WORKSHOP IN BELLY DANCING and possibly Veil, Sticks, Drums if requested. At Sevenoaks. 4-5 hours. Cost approx. £13-£15. All levels. Tutor: Christine Hall. Tel: 01732 451618.

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BALKANPLUS, 10th January 1998, at Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London N.W.1. 7.00-10.30 p.m. £3.00. M.C.: Brian Dowsett.

For once without his usual "backing group", Brian will be starting off the New Year's festivities with a varied programme for everyone. Make this the opportunity to dance off the seasonal fare and wish all your friends a terpsichorean 1998.

The next Balkanplus will be on 14th February, an auspicious date, so put it in your diary now and wait expectantly for further developments. M.C. to be confirmed.

FRANCES HORROCKS

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MUSIC Three more tunes from Wilf Horrocks on p.9. Please let Wilf know, on 0181 642 3629, if you would like the music for a particular dance.