




SIFD NEWS

MAY *1998*



SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

EDITOR: Lily Avery (Mrs.), 16 Willow Drive, Little Common, Bexhill-on-Sea,
E.Sussex TN39 4PX. Tel: 01424 845866.

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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 shows the design by Sister Anna Huston, which is used on the
new writing paper for sale in the "S.I.F.D. Shop". See p.8.

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Q Notes on a Special Meeting to Discuss the SIFD News *Q*

A special meeting was held last month to discuss all the suggestions made to change the SIFD News, or to
make it more cost effective.

All the points raised by members were considered, but were mostly put aside.

They were either going to make more work for those who already do so much (- to assemble and type it,
get it printed, label and post it) eg collate in batches for hand delivery at functions,
or were felt would harm the News too much for the relatively small saving that would be
involved eg produce it every *other* month.

So the only change you are likely to see is Lily trying to squeeze more into the eight pages!

At present the News is wonderfully reliable and regular - relying completely on a small team of dedicated
people, to whom we are very grateful.. The Society would be a poorer organisation without it.

(NB If you would like a complete copy of the notes from the meeting, please send an sae to

Alison Scrimshaw.)
22 Sherwood Park Road, Sutton
Surrey SM1 2SQ

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SIFD Tape Cassettes and Books

The following cassettes are available -



five different tapes featuring dances from varied countries
one tape specialising in Israeli dances
one tape devoted to French dances
one produced especially with schools in mind
one to commemorate "50 Dancing Years" of the SIFD

Books have been produced to accompany each tape; these books contain dance instructions and music.

Full details and order forms are available from Eleanor Gordon. *Discount available to members!*

Eleanor Gordon, 70 Chestnut Grove, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 3TS Tel: 0181 942 9834

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NATIONAL DANCE WEEK, 20TH-28TH JUNE 1998, organized by some enthusiasts to try
to encourage the world to dance. Publicity is offered by the organisers to any
dance event taking place during that week. If you are planning something then,
please let me know as soon as possible and I will send you some information and
pass your details on to the Dance Week office for inclusion in their list. THEY
WOULD LIKE THIS INFORMATION BY THE END OF MAY. ALISON SCRIMSHAW (address
above)

SUMMER SCHOOL - LATEST NEWS

The list of teachers published in March has changed. Two of the teachers have had to cancel, but a colleague of the original Hungarian teacher has offered to come. He is known to be equally capable. We are still searching for a good third teacher, if possible for Armenian, or a neighbouring country. The teachers we have are:-

RAMUTE GAUCAITE. She has studied Lithuanian folk dance at the Music Academy of Lithuania and has danced in both folk and historical dance groups. She now works at Siauliai University and at the Lithuanian Folk Culture Centre, teaching the origins of Lithuanian folk dance and methods of teaching. Until 1996 she was a dance leader of a group who performed at festivals around Europe. The dances she will present are folk dances that go back to the 19th century and are still danced at folkdance parties now. They include polkas, waltzes, quadrilles, games and dancing in circles.

ANDRAS GAAL has been recommended by Magda Ossko and by an S.I.F.D. member who has seen him teach.

I am confident that this Summer School will help us broaden the range of our repertoire and improve our skills at dances from less familiar countries, and as always it should be a good holiday with plenty of social time as well as serious dance classes. It would help us plan the course better if you book early so that we know our final budget, can plan groups and a timetable and can start twisting arms for M.C.s and teachers of extra optional classes. We hope to offer a music/singing class for each of the countries, if enough people are interested.

ANY BOOKINGS POST-MARKED 2ND MAY OR EARLIER WILL QUALIFY FOR THE EARLY BOOKING DISCOUNT. If you need another booking form, please contact Dawn Webster, Greenacres, Broadstreet Common, Nash, Newport NP6 2AZ. Tel: 01633 272662.

JEANETTE HULL

WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH JUBILEE

Over the weekend of 13th/15th March, the West Midlands Branch of S.I.F.D. held a Silver Jubilee Celebration to mark 25 years of dancing in the region, inspired by Sybil Chapman. So far, the Society has not publicly thanked Sybil for all she has done, so, as a Committee member, old friend and colleague, I have taken it upon myself to thank her for the fantastic contribution she has made to the work of the Society generally and to the West Midlands in particular.

As I looked through the beautiful photo albums recording all their performances and demonstrations and all their lovely costumes, I realised what a credit to the S.I.F.D. the West Midlands Branch is and what a high level they have reached. At the weekend, Sybil formally retired from active dance leadership and was presented with a crystal bowl as a retirement gift. All the ladies received a flower spray tied with silver ribbon and all the men a silver pen. Yvonne Hunt, who organised the weekend, made a beautiful birthday cake decorated with dancers in costume, and music.

Congratulations to you, Sybil, on your achievement, and thanks for your dedication to the Branch for 25 years and to the S.I.F.D. for (more than) 30 years. We wish you better health in the future and we wish the West Midlands Branch continued success.

MARINA WOLSTENHOLME

MUSIC Three more tunes from Wilf Horrocks on p.11. If you would like to have the music for a particular dance, please let Wilf know, on 0181 642 3629.

LETTERS

To all my friends at Selpar, Heart of England, Arden, and everywhere -

If, for once, I seemed to have little to say during our 25th anniversary celebrations it is because I was totally overwhelmed. The hours of thought and effort and skills put in by everyone are un-countable and are such a tremendous compensation for my having to step now, rather than dance, aside. Individuals are too numerous to name, but you all know who you are.

My gifts and memories are all around - 25 years of them - and the weekend was so very rich in warmth and friendship that it will be quite a while before I can "come down to earth".

I'll see you all soon - most of you - and those from more distant places I won't forget. Thank you, every one of you.

With love,

SYBIL CHAPMAN

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Dear Lily,

We had a wonderful weekend at Symonds Vat for the S.I.F.D. West Midlands Branch Silver Jubilee. The company, the setting and the weather were all perfect, and I can recommend the Paddocks Hotel for its amazing ballroom - the largest dance floor we've ever had on one of these occasions. I'd like to thank everyone who helped to make the weekend such a success; first and foremost Marina Wolstenholme for her lovely choice of dances and wonderful relaxed teaching. She has that knack of finding just the right phrase to make you remember the steps or the move (taking a sweater off will never be quite the same again!).

Thanks also to all those who helped with the planning and preparations, leading dances and walks, assembling flower sprays and presents, and all the other little jobs, which contributed to a really enjoyable weekend. Thanks to our friends who travelled quite a considerable distance to help us celebrate 25 years of dancing in the Midlands, and most important of all our thanks to Sybil Chapman for starting the ball rolling and giving so much time and energy to us and the Society as a whole. We hope she will enjoy her gifts and all her memories of these 25 years, and continue to share in our activities, even though she is now not able to dance much.

Finally, I should like to add a personal thank-you. On the Saturday evening, after the presentations to Sybil, she took me completely by surprise by giving me her original Selpar pendant, engraved with the Hungarian dancers who are our emblem, by way of an official badge of office as leader of the Selpar group. My thanks to Sybil for entrusting me with this responsibility. I can't promise to keep the group going for the next 25 years, but I'll do the best I can!

MAGGIE KAYE
402 Heath Road South,
Northfield, Birmingham B31 2BE

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NEW ADDRESS Rachel Novak has moved and now lives at 26 Kingsley Avenue, Bradford BD2 1DP. As a consequence, her group, Tokaji Hungarian Folkdance Group, has also moved and now meets at Hungarian Social Centre, 4 Walmer Villas, Bradford BD8 7ET.

Dear Lily,

GOPAK is surely the more usual transliteration. My earliest recollection of the name is certainly GOPAK, rather than HOPAK.

The American publication, "Dictionary of the Dance" by Raffe (1964) has no entry under HOPAK, but does include it as an alternative name under the entry GOPAK. The English publication, "The Oxford Companion to Music" by Scholes (1967) has an entry for HOPAK but refers the reader to GOPAK for details. The English translation of the Russian book (published in Moscow), "Dancing to Fame" by Chudnovsky (1959) gives GOPAK. Programmes that I have for performances of the Ukrainian Dance Company in London during the late 50s list GOPAK.

I would guess that the form HOPAK is more likely to have been introduced by an English speaker. The stem HOP suggests dance, and indeed was common in my younger days as a slang term for a dance. It is also vaguely onomatopoeic, and even has a slightly Russanglish ring about it.

Yours sincerely,

G.D.TOWNER
7 Woolven Close, Poole,
Dorset BH14 0QT

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Dear Lily,

I feel I must follow Roy Clarke's example (see last month's issue) and write a few lines in memory of Margery Latham on the 20th anniversary of her death. I am just one of many who owe her a great debt of gratitude for all the pleasure and knowledge she so freely gave.

I well remember the last few weeks of her life, when she was in hospital, and then the evening when the Wednesday class received the news that she had died. We lost a teacher who was so welcoming and friendly, always good humoured, and who had a great knack of tactfully dealing with "difficult" members of the class. Margery gave us a wonderful grounding in a variety of international folk dances, including many lovely Swedish dances. It was during one of her summer extension classes that, to my great joy, I finally mastered the Hambo!

Whenever any of "her" dances are done nowadays, my mind can still hear Margery's voice prompting with the instructions, and I still miss her.

Yours sincerely,

KAY KEDGE
9 Barnes Rise, Kings Langley
Herts. WD4 8AN

Although never a member of her class, I always felt that Margery represented the true spirit of the S.I.F.D. Although we have had many really talented teachers of "specialist" groups, Margery (along with Bert Price) was the "international" part of the Society and gave us the fun and excitement of dances from so many different countries. LILY AVERY

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

May 10th M.C.s: S.I.F.D. Band - in Trefusis

June 7th M.C.: George Sweetland - in Trefusis

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

"EUROPEAN FESTIVALS" (with CD) by JEAN GILBERT

This is the sister publication to "Festivals" which some of you may have already become familiar with. "European Festivals" is another excellent resource book, most attractively produced and on a strong spiral binding which makes for easy access. Contributions and "checking" have been done in each case (country) by an acknowledged authority, which in most cases is a knowledgeable national, e.g. most of the S.I.F.D. will know Maria Merodoulaki from her workshops, performances at Lykion Ton Hellinidon, and her reputation. Similarly with Hedy Fromings, leader of Beskydy Dancers. Again, Mercia MacDermott needs no introduction for the many people who will have read her excellent articles and books on various aspects of Bulgaria.

The countries included in this pot pourri of European traditions and cultures are Spain, Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Germany, France, Sweden and a section on May Day with the Helston Furry Dance, Padstow, Hal-an-Tow and a ribbon dance. Each section has a brief mention of a history outline, a clear map to orientate the country among its European neighbours, basic counting and greetings in the native language, songs and dances with the words and an English translation. In most cases more verses are given than the one sung on the CD. In addition, there are mentions of eminent nationals, traditional recipes, information on costume with a colourful central section of a costume from each country. The suggestions, examples, diagrams for craft and various activities linked specifically with the various customs and traditions will be greatly appreciated by Junior Schools in particular. Of real interest to children and parents at home as well as at school. It is all very accessible and appealing.

Inevitably there will be some who would have preferred a different choice of songs and/or dances, but with such a wealth to choose from and many different aspects influencing the choice, there is no question that with 55 tracks on the CD this package presents an excellent starting point (or continuation) for exciting studies in the traditions and customs of some of our European neighbours and would make it very easy for harrassed junior teachers to fulfil the National Curriculum requirements in relation to European studies.

The CD provides the live, accurate pronunciation of the numbers, greetings and words of all the songs included. The voices are clear and well accented and cannot fail to inspire hearers to try to imitate. There has been a real effort to ensure that the music presents a traditional sound and feel of each country. It was lovely to have the words for Rancuj and to hear again the Cobblers'-Blacksmiths' Dance which we had such fun with at Swansea a few years ago. The choice is lively and varied and will be appealing to all. No-one could fail to want to dance immediately on hearing "Lenim 'thi Mais"..... I could go on. Just one little niggle; personally I should have liked the name of the dance music to have been announced each time.

There are suggestions for further musical listening, books to read to extend the knowledge of each country, its history, traditions and so on, and useful addresses for each country. There is a clear mention of the S.I.F.D. and the regular workshops and residential courses it runs but a pity there is no contact address, although the S.I.F.D.'s "Dancing Into Europe" is mentioned in the book, so perhaps Eleanor Gordon, who handles the orders, would pass on any other enquiries.

Clearly this has been very well researched and stands testimony to a great deal of hard, concentrated and prolonged effort. I have no hesitation in recommending it as an excellent and very useful resource book and CD. I hope the teachers among us will be especially interested and bring it to the attention of their colleagues. Incidentally, Jean Gilbert herself is a member of the Society as well as being, in several areas, a wellknown dancer and teacher, and a Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music and member of the Incorporated Society of Musicians.

ISBN 0-19-321286-2. "European Festivals" with CD by Jean Gilbert. Obtainable from Oxford University Press, Saxon Way West, Corby, Northants NN18 9BR. £19.95

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You could mention the S.I.F.D. if you write. They need to be well aware of us!

("Festivals" resource book is No.3212854 for only £9.95 and that too is a very worthy addition to any school library or resource centre).

DIKI GLEESON

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ROMANIAN

"Purtata", a group of 35 Romanian folk singers, musicians and dancers from Medias in Transylvania, will be visiting Wales in May. Their itinerary includes:-

- 10th May Displays at Cardiff Castle Grounds at 11.00 a.m. and at St.Fagans Folk Museum, Cardiff, between 2.00 and 4.00 p.m.
- 13th May Dancing in the Square at Haverfordwest during the afternoon and a Concert at Queen's Hall, Narberth, 7.30 p.m. £5.00.
- 16th May At Builth Wells, procession of dancers through streets, followed by performances at Wyeside Arts Centre. Free. Guest appearance at International Ceilidh at Wyeside Arts Centre (evening). £5.50.
- 17th May Romanian workshop, 2.00-4.00 p.m. at Wyeside Arts Centre. £2.00. Guest appearance at Scottish Ceilidh, 7.30 p.m. £4.00.

The latter two items are part of the Builth Wells (mainly Scottish) Dance Festival, 15th to 17th May. For full information of the festival, contact Mrs. Vicky Sennett, Wyeburn House, Castle Street, Builth Wells, Powys LD2 3BN. Tel: 01982 552907.

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BALKANPLUS, 9th May 1998, at Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London N.W.1, 7.00-10.30 p.m. £3.00. M.C.: Roberto Haddon.

Roberto has already advised us that he will be "dishing up a delicatessen of dance delight" - a most pleasurable prospect indeed to celebrate a particular forthcoming birthday of his. Remember to wear your Balkanplus T-shirt and gain admittance at half-price. They will be on sale at the door, £6.50.

The next Balkanplus will be on 13th June. Make a note in your diary now for 11th July when we hope - yes, hope - to entertain the Macedonian team from Llangollen. Remember the Romanians from last year? What a fantastic evening that was, so keep the 11th free and watch out for further information.

FRANCES HORROCKS

Remember, remember the 5th of November - NOT! Try the 9th May instead, when Balkanplus will be in my capable(?) hands in anticipatory celebration of my two-score years at the beginning of June. A non-stop programme of dances from the Balkans and the Pluses including many of those that I myself have taught over the years. Come with good spirit and in party mood and help make this a special evening - and don't forget to wear your Balkan T-shirt (not available in lime green, burnt orange, baby blue, magnolia, khaki.....).

ROBERTO HADDON

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All material for the June issue of SIFD NEWS must reach the Editor IN WRITING by 17th May. Please write in BLOCK CAPITALS all names of people, places and dances, unless typewritten.

GUILDFORD, SATURDAY, 9TH MAY 1998

A Slovenian folkdance group from Ljubljana will be visiting this country on the weekend of 8th-10th May and will be giving a number of performances in Guildford on the Saturday. This event has been arranged by the Surrey Police who have been working with their counterparts in Slovenia to assist them in bringing a more accountable system to replace the older methods. To mark the success of the project, the Slovenian Police Ceremonial Orchestra and the folkdance group are making a fraternal visit to Surrey.

The folkdance group will be dancing in front of the old Guildhall (under the arch) in the High Street, with two fifteen-minute "spots" between 10.00 a.m. and noon but if wet they will be in the nearby Tugate covered area. Prior to the evening concert, the dancers will be performing again on the terrace outside the Civic Centre from 7.00 p.m. The dance group is under the direction of Mr. Zoran Trampus and I understand S.I.F.D. members would be welcome. The Orchestra will give a varied and popular programme in the Concert Hall finishing at about 10.00 p.m. Tickets will be around £8.00 and all proceeds will go to charity.

GEORGE SWEETLAND

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BACKGROUND TO SLOVENIA

The most Northerly of the old states of Yugoslavia, since the break-up independent Slovenia is now well on its way to recovering both its prosperity and its position as an international holiday resort. Although ethnically and linguistically its origins are Slavic, the culture has less in common with the Balkans than with that of their fellow Catholics in Italy and Austria, to the West and North, and there is also a strong link with Croatia to the South, which is also mainly Catholic. Slovenia is a marvellous walking country, and the well-marked paths in the areas around the lakes are most enjoyable for the less adventurous.

The predominant colours of the folk costumes are dark red and brown. The girls wear bodices, long striped skirts and pretty little white embroidered bonnets. The men have high, buttoned waistcoats, leather knee breeches and, most characteristically, thigh-length boots of soft leather. Both sexes wear patterned and fringed shawls across their shoulders, the men's underneath their waistcoats. The dances owe more to Western European traditions than to those of the South. Movements in typical dances, such as Kovtre Sivak and Zakle Sivak, performed in Spring festivals, use the "under and over" figure which features in many English dances, for example.

GEORGE SWEETLAND

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S.I.F.D. SHOP

Hate letter-writing? You need our new exclusive writing pack containing eight A4 coloured sheets and envelopes neatly packed in a plastic wallet. Each pack has two sheets of four colours edged with Sister Anna's new design of dancing people as shown on this month's cover of SIFD NEWS. Cost £1.50 plus 50p postage & packing. Obtainable from me at 34 Broadwater Avenue, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 3HF.

Thank you, Anna, for brightening our lives.

CLAIRE STEELEY

Re "BAONOPSTEKKER" (see p.12 of April issue of SIFD NEWS), Elsche Korf writes:-

The Baonopstekker is a traditional dance collected by Mrs. Anne Sanson-Catz on 25th August 1928 in Borculo, situated in the Eastern part of the Netherlands. It used to be a dance to start a ceilidh with. "Baon" is local dialect and means any amount of space suitable for a dance. "Opstekken" is a verb which means something like clearing the room of anything which, or anyone who, is obstructing the starting of the party. "Baonopstekker" means the dance which served that purpose. Those readers who know the dance will immediately understand what is meant by that.

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DANCING FOR TREES

On Sunday, 8th March, the Derbyshire Dancers held a workshop and raised £125.00 to plant trees in memory of our group member, Ann Hargreaves, who died tragically recently. Many thanks to Roberto Haddon for the lovely workshop, to all who came and to all those who sent donations. £25.00 is to go to the Woodland Trust and the rest to plant trees in Ann's home village of Eyam.

MARINA WOLSTENHOLME

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LLANGOLLEN INTERNATIONAL MUSICAL EISTEDDFOD, 7th-12th July 1998.

The opening concert this year, on Tuesday, 7th July, will be Nigel Kennedy playing with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

The Instrumental Folk Solo or Group competition will be on the Wednesday, followed by the Adult Folkdance Groups; Folk Song Groups on the Thursday; Children's Folkdance Groups on the Friday. The usual concerts including dancing in the evenings. No information, as yet, regarding dance workshops.

Groups listed so far:- Austria, Catalonia, France, Guatemala, Hawaii, India, Macedonia, Northern Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Rep. of Ireland, Romania, Russia, Sardinia, Sicily, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Turkey, U.S.A., Ukraine, Wales. Full programme available nearer the time. Enquiries to Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod, Eisteddfod Office, Llangollen, North Wales LL20 8NG.

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SIDMOUTH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF FOLK ARTS, 31st July to 7th August 1998.
Enquiries to the Festival Office, P.O.Box 296, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP19 3TL.

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GREEK DANCE SEMINAR at Sikirokastro, 21st-31st July 1998. Accommodation, dance instruction daily, lectures, visits, parties. For information contact Yvonne Hunt, 4837 38th Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98105 U.S.A. Tel/Fax: 1-206-523-2477.

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The ZAGREB "SMOTRA" INTERNATIONAL FOLKLORE FESTIVAL will take place in Zagreb, Croatia, from 23rd to 26th July 1998. For information, contact Zagreb Concert Management, Kneza Mislava 18, HR-10000 Zagreb, Croatia. Tel: 385-1-410128. Fax: 385-1-443022 n.

WHAT'S ON IN MAY

- May 1st to 4th S.I.F.D. DANCING/WALKING WEEKEND at Halsway Manor. Contact: Jack Richardson, 01792 295194.
- May 1st to 4th EASTBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FOLKDANCE FESTIVAL
- May 2nd to 3rd "DANCES OF SOUTHERN EGYPT" with Christine Hall at Pyke House, Battle (residential weekend). Includes Ghawazee (gypsy) and Tahteeb (stick fighting). £69.00 for accommodation, tuition, meals. Tel: 01424 772495.
- May 8th BULGARIAN WORKSHOP with Corry Verheijen, at Witnesham, near Ipswich. 7.30-10.30 p.m. £6.00. Contact Sally Fletcher, 01473 252824.
- May 9th BALKANPLUS. See p.7.
- May 9th EGYPTIAN DANCING & DRUMMING WORKSHOP with Christine Hall at St.Faith's Adult Education Centre, Maidstone, Kent. All levels. Approx. £15.00. Tel: 01622 752165.
- May 9th YASH BASH! At the British-Bulgarian Friendship Society's rooms at Finsbury Library (basement), 245 St.John Street, London E.C.1., 3.00 to 6.00 p.m., there will be a workshop for all those interested in learning to play BULGARIAN WEDDING BAND MUSIC. And from 7.00 to 10.00 "Yash Bash" will give a concert. Ring 0171 837 2304 for details.
- May 10th SUTTON DAY OF DANCE at Westcroft Leisure Centre, Carshalton, 10.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. £2.50 for whole day. Half-hour workshops throughout the day in dance forms - International, English, Scottish, Keep Fit, Tap, Latin American, Ballroom, Disco, Jazz, Ballet etc. Demonstrations during the breaks. Refreshments available. Further details from Westcroft Leisure Centre, 0181 770 4800/4819 or Frances Horrocks, 0181 642 3629.
- May 16th S.I.F.D. DAY COURSE in Trefusis, Cecil Sharp House. £6.00 members, £8.00 non-members. No details received.
- May 16th EGYPTIAN BALADI & DRUMMING WORKSHOP with Christine Hall at Priory Road Centre, HCAT Adult Education, Hastings. Approx. £15. Tel: 01424 435619.
- May 16th "BEYOND NINE FORESTS - TALES OF HIDDEN BULGARIA". Bulgarian stories, songs, dance, folk music. 8.00 p.m. at All Saints Church Arts Centre, 122 Oakleigh Road North, London N.20. Admission £6 (£5 advance). Preceded by BULGARIAN SINGING WORKSHOP, 2.00-4.00 p.m., led by Judy Greenwell. Advance booking essential. £6 (£3 youth). Combined workshop and performance £10 (£6 youth). Tel: 0181 445 8388.
- May 22nd FRANCES HORROCKS AT BARNET. Another opportunity to learn some of the dances Frances taught at the recent Balkanplus workshop of Eddy Tijssen's Bulgarian dance repertoire, including Gigenko Horo and Gajda. 8.00 p.m. at Church House, Wood Street, Barnet, Herts. £2.50. Further information from Brian Dowsett, 01992 582717.
- May 22nd to 25th INTERNATIONAL FOLKDANCE WEEKEND in North Devon, with Bert van-den-Meer. For information send s.a.e. to Mecki Trestroet, Manor Cottage, Burrington, Umberleigh, North Devon EX37 9LZ. Tel: 01769 560479.
- May 22nd to 26th KINNERSLEY SPRING FESTIVAL at Kinnersley Castle. Bals, sessions and dance workshops. Boleros, Bourrées, Polska, Breton, Israeli, Macedonian, Romanian, Greek, Basque. Music workshops. Accommodation. Details from John Leopold, 17 Longnor, Shropshire SY5 7PP. Tel: 01743 718145.

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- May 23rd ARMENIAN FOLKDANCE WORKSHOP with Marina Wolstenholme. 12.00-4.00 p.m. at Yorkshire Dance Centre, Leeds. £12.00 (£8.00 reduc.). Bookings to Box Office, 0113 243 8765.
- May 23rd MARTISORUL ROMANIAN GROUP at Victoria Embankment Gardens, London. 3.00 to 5.00 p.m.
- May 24th BALATON HUNGARIAN and PHILHELLENES GREEK groups at Victoria Embankment Gardens, London. 3.00 to 5.00 p.m.
- May 29th to 31st "FEST NOZ", a weekend of French and Celtic music and dancing at Thoresby Park, near Newark, Notts. Details from Marketing Officer, Nottinghamshire County Council (Arts), Trent Bridge House, Fox Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 6BJ. Tel: 0115 9774435.

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DAY COURSE IN GUJARATI FOLK DANCES, SATURDAY, 30TH MAY 1998

When people think of Indian dances, what often comes to mind is intricate classical dancing which takes years of special training to learn. We in the West don't always realise that India also has a rich and lively tradition of folk dancing, with dances that are simple enough for everyone to join in. Garba and Raas, the dances we shall be learning, come from the state of Gujarat, in the West of India, North of Bombay. There are many Gujaratis in England, and Harrow has a large and thriving Gujarati community, most of whom came from East Africa during the 1960s and 70s. The community has preserved a strong sense of its own culture, which is predominantly Hindu, and for special occasions people still wear traditional dress and dance their centuries-old dances. Gujarati clothes are colourful and are traditionally decorated with mirror-work and intricate embroidery.

Garba, originally a women's dance, is performed in a line without holding hands. There are several forms, with different steps, rhythms and patterns of clapping. Raas, a stick dance for men and women, is done in a circle, clicking the sticks of the people opposite. The movements of both dances are turning and flowing, and each dance continues for a long time - unlike the way we often do Balkan dances! - so that by the end you are taken into a hypnotic state where the dance is dancing you. Normally, both Raas and Garba are danced barefoot, but tender Western soles may need soft shoes.

The day course will be taught by Rohini Patel, an experienced dance teacher from the Gujarati community, and we hope to have another teacher assisting her so that complete beginners can learn at their own pace. At the party in the evening there will be live music (traditional-style if we can get it, otherwise modern), which always includes singing. There will also be a full Indian vegetarian meal, a raffle - and lots of dancing! Please wear Indian dress for the party if you can.

The day is being organized to raise money for "Mind in Harrow"'s befriending scheme. "Mind" is a charity which helps people who have experienced mental health problems to lead a full life in the community, and we hope very much that some of our scheme users and volunteers will take part in the event. We also hope that as many S.I.F.D. members as possible, and their friends, will come and join us for something that should be great fun and just that little bit different.

Day Course 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Beginners welcome. Party 6.00 to 10.00 p.m. At the Victoria Hall, Sheepcote Road, Harrow. Course £7.00, Party £6.00, Combined ticket £12.00. Concessions half price. Please book in advance from me on 0181 426 0909 (day), 0181 452 4174 (evening).

SUSAN JORDAN