

S.I.F.D. NEWS



LATVIA

SEPT 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 is by Caroline Thomas and shows a group wearing
Latvian costumes.

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

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SIFD/EFDSS INTERNATIONAL/ENGLISH BARN DANCE
SATURDAY, 19TH SEPTEMBER 1998

There will be a combined International and English Dance at Cecil Sharp House on
Saturday, 19th September, 8.00 to 11.00 p.m. in Kennedy Hall (upstairs). The
Dance is planned for beginners but with interest for more experienced dancers.
Phil Steventon will be the M.C. for the International dances and Brenda Godrich
for the English. The band will be "Jacob's Ladder" from Cambridge. While the
Dance is aimed at beginners, as always we need the support of more experienced
dancers. Fliers publicizing the Dance will be available at the Sunday Dance on
6th September. Please take a supply to distribute at the various classes, to
give to anyone who might be interested, or to post in local libraries or shops.
We need everyone's help to publicize Dances suitable for beginners.

Tickets £4.00 for SIFD/EFDSS members, £4.50 non-members. For more information,
call 0171 607 8975 or 0181 640 5267.

CASPAR CRONK

SUMMER SCHOOL 1998

Thank you to all the people who contributed to the success of this year's Summer School :-

the three main teachers who, between them, provided a range of dance styles and levels of difficulty,

Dawn and Paul Webster for their hard work behind the scenes,

the afternoon teachers, from Japan, Italy and Britain,

the evening M.C.s and Anne Leach, who persuaded them to "volunteer",

Betty and Vic for running the shop,

Fiona for her entertaining competitions,

Richard for keeping the sound system going,

all the people who offered and gave practical help; stapling dance notes, performing for the video, selling tapes, putting up notices,

all who contributed ideas, goods and money to the fund-raising effort, so the Summer School did not make a serious loss - especially Fiona and Roy,

Roger, for the group photo, and offering to help next time,

Hilda, Marina and Laura for their help in finding good teachers.

I had a very good time and came away with more than my money's worth of folk dance education, despite being totally exhausted and not getting to Sidmouth until Sunday tea-time. I hope the rest of you felt it was a worthwhile week too.

JEANETTE

p.s. If you want a tape and/or notes but did not buy at York, please contact me.

p.p.s. There may be a fault on side B of Hungarian Tape 1 (a few bars of introduction may be missing). If you would like to have it re-recorded, please send me your original tape.

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ED. NOTE: It is not my usual practice to omit surnames, but where I have done so in the above article Jeanette (Hull) has specifically requested me to do so.

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PROVISIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR A SUMMER SCHOOL IN THE YEAR 2000

Roger Sturge, Judy Penaluna and Anne Leach will form the core of a team who will plan and run the next Summer School. To make the event as successful as possible, early planning is vital. A provisional booking of York for 29th July to 5th August has been made, although alternatives will be investigated before the booking is confirmed. Anyone who can recommend a good alternative should contact Roger Sturge at 10 Carmarthen Road, Bristol BS9 4DU, Tel: 0117 962 1802, with as much information as possible about their recommendation. We are discovering that some places are already booked up for the summer of the Millennium year, so it may be even more difficult than usual to find a place better equipped and located, cheaper and more welcoming to us than York. Recommendations for teachers are also welcome.

JEANETTE HULL

S.I.F.D. DAY COURSE, SATURDAY, 12TH SEPTEMBER
10.30 a.m. TO 4.30 p.m. IN TREFUSIS, CECIL SHARP HOUSE

A change to my note last month. An opportunity has arisen for us to learn some authentic ALBANIAN FOLK DANCES. Come along and meet Tomorr Kokona. He is living and working in this country as a choreographer, but his love is "folk". He came along to our last Sunday Dance and would welcome the opportunity to pass on his knowledge of Albanian dances to the Society as he is aware that it would also help to preserve his culture. Price: £7.00 members, £9.00 non-members.

The next S.I.F.D. Day Course will be on Saturday, 31st October, and will be a revision of the dances taught at York Summer School. Come along and see what you have remembered or, if you did not get to York, this will be the time to learn some of the dances. Price: £6.00 members, £8.00 non-members.

See you there.

HELEN EZRA

VICTORIA EMBANKMENT GARDENS, LONDON

Our 1998 Summer Season closed with a performance by the Central London International Folkdance Group under the leadership of Janet Woolbar. They took the stage at 12.30 p.m. on a fine Sunday afternoon - 19th July. Usually this group has a number of male dancers but on this occasion only three were available. Very good use was made of these three and the programme included some threesomes and some pas de deux. An innovation was musical interludes, with folk music, including Irish, being played by Richard Mellish (concertina) and Caspar Cronk (musical saw). This was enthusiastically applauded by the audience. Many thanks to Central London Group for their contribution on this pretty open-air stage.

KAY KEDGE

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Lily,

One of the Compulsory Fun activities at York was this "Late Arrivals" quiz (based on the game in "I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue"). Below is a selection from the quiz, and subsequent additions, which members may like to try.

I really enjoyed York. There was such a relaxed atmosphere, no stress, good food (too good!), and the impromptu workshops and evening Dances gave an unexpected bonus of several attractive dances that can actually be taught in general classes.

FIONA HOWARTH

LATE ARRIVALS AT THE INTERNATIONAL BALL. NAME THE CHILD!

- 1) Mr. & Mrs. Kasteop and their twin daughters &
- 2) Mr. & Mrs. Brachot and their clerical son
- 3) Mr. & Mrs. N'tella and their daughter
- 4) Mr. & Mrs. Bad-Knee-That's-Why-I'm-Not-Dancing and their daughter
- 5) Mr. & Mrs. D'Bye-Side and their son
- 6) Mr. & Mrs. On-Shoulders-Lightly-Rest and their son
- 7) Mr. & Mrs. Unelul and their son
- 8) Mr. & Mrs. Pull-Leafrag and their daughter

Answers to these, plus more "late arrivals" next month.

LLANGOLLEN INTERNATIONAL MUSICAL EISTEDDFOD, 1998

The marking for the folk music and folk dance competitions are very complex and the parameters for judgment can be divided into three categories. First and foremost are the rules of the competition, and non-compliance with those can lead to disqualification, as happened to the Sardinians. They cover such things as the number of participants on the stage, their age, that two contrasting dances only can be presented (not suites). The time length of the item is important, but does it, for example cover the time off-stage when groups are changing costumes between dances? The second category of the technical dance ability of the groups is important but an agreement can usually be made. In contrast, the most difficult quality to define is whether the item is in acceptably traditional folk style or not. This is highly debatable, but obviously a working definition is necessary for the panel. They have to consider the dances themselves, the costumes, and the music in this light as well as the other parameters noted above and marks are allotted as they go - 20 for this, 15 for that and so on. Sometimes we disagree with the judgments, but considering all the pressures I think it is remarkable that they achieve such high standards in the short time allowed for judging.

The Eisteddfod in reality opens with the children's morning and afternoon matinees which are very popular with their young audiences, but the official opening is with the Tuesday evening concert. This year it was given by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Vernon Handley, playing the Academic Festival Overture and Elgar's Enigma Variations. After the interval, Nigel Kennedy, now known only as "Kennedy", was the soloist in Beethoven's Violin Concerto in D major. Kennedy is a very eccentric character but is nevertheless a wonderful musician. Altogether, a most enjoyable evening.

Folk Music Competition

As I have often said, I find the folk music preliminaries fascinating, and as so many S.I.F.D. members were present this year in the audience, I think they must agree with me.

The first soloist in the preliminaries was a young Welsh girl who gave an accomplished performance on the concert harp. She was followed by a member of the Sri Lankan group, a boy on the double-ended drum held horizontally, using his hands only. The third competitor was Wong Kong, a 14-year old girl from Hong Kong. The sheng is a traditional Chinese instrument some 5' by 1'6" with 24 strings and is played like a zither with ring plectrums on the right hand. She was a remarkable player on what must be a very difficult instrument.

The final soloist was the gajde player from the Bitola group. He seemed to me to be very competent but without that extra something that would make him outstanding.

The first group was the Catalonian sextet from Cassa de la Selva, with a sac de gemecs (bagpipe), a diatonic accordion, a tarota and tenoret (pipes), flabior, tabal and tambori (pipe & drums). This was an entertaining group as they had that individuality which is essential to folk music, but I have no doubt the judges were correct in not placing them in the finals.

The Irish band from Kerry, with their traditional instruments, created a jolly foot-tapping sound and they were followed by the first Slovakian group, who were from Kosice. Their cimbalon player was a tiny girl, dwarfed by the large young men on fiddles, cello and bass. To my mind, the two items had a sameness in their pace and mood. The second Slovakian sextet were the musicians from the Poprad group and the line-up was similar, except that the cello was replaced by a piano accordion. Again, a similarity of their pieces was noticed.

From Kandy in Sri Lanka six young men from the National Drum & Dance College, dressed in long white skirts, red cummerbunds, tailed turbans and red and gold

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collars, played four drums, two of the double-ended type, one large side drum, a pair of kettle drums, and a pipe and an instrument made from a shell (I think!). The percussive element predominated and the musicians were good, but as yet immature.

Lastly, we had two groups from the Ukraine, the first a trio of piano accordion, zither and fiddle. They have appeared before and I believe they are based in the U.K. They are very good but cannot compare with the better, larger ensembles. The second group, a sextet of fiddles, pipe, button accordion and cimbalon, were older and came from Ivano-Frankivsk. They played very well in the folk idiom and their two items were well contrasted.

The three selected to appear on the pavilion stage were the Sri Lankan group (90 marks), the Ukrainian sextet (92) and the Chinese soloist, Wong Kong, who won the competition with 95 marks.

After the folk music adjudication, the main competition of the day, Adult Folk Dance Groups, began. Nineteen groups appeared.

Loughgiel Folk Dancers, N.Ireland. This group gave their usual impeccable performance. The first item, The Battle of Aura, was a dance symbolic of the feud between the McDonalds and the McQuillans, and the second was the Bonfire Dance. They came third with 91 marks.

Lyngstad Leikarring, Norway. An older group, on their first visit to the Eisteddfod, gave two dances, the oddly-named Figaro, which is performed at the end of festivals, was first. It is progressive, the two centre couples moving down the set to finish as end couples. Gammel Reinlender followed and was almost identical to the version in the S.I.F.D. repertoire. The costumes were very good. (85 marks).

Mandriwka, Ukraine (Gloucester). Four couples and three musicians presented Hopak, a "must" for any Ukrainian programme, and Cappatske from the highlands, which was somewhat choreographed but the item was well danced and presented, probably worth more than the 79 marks they were awarded.

Vagonar, Poprad, Slovakia. These eight couples were young and very much in the tradition of the old East European show groups. Both dances, Zemplinsky Cardas and Zvecara, were highly choreographed and similar in pace and content. The very strident colours of the girls' costumes were certainly wrong but the short skirts are typical of some areas of Central Europe. The six musicians played in the Folk Music section. (80).

Cas Ilinden, Bitola, Macedonia. The eight girls, in their beautiful costumes danced first (I haven't the name of their dance as it was changed from that in the programme) but the dance was unfortunately marred by errors on the part of the gajde player. But Teskoto, by the men, was faultless. Accompanied by the zurla and tapan, it raised the hairs on the back of my neck. Second, 92 marks.

Rinneoiri Shliabh Luachra, Listowel, Rep. of Ireland. These are regular visitors to Llangollen and their programme was as last year (81).

Trinity College National Drum & Dance Troupe, Kandy, Sri Lanka. An all-male group, they presented a Harvest Dance and a Thanksgiving Dance. Eight men, dressed in similar style to the musicians described earlier, mimed the actions of gathering in the harvest, using sickles as props. I am not sure if the second set of dances, in white layered skirts, red and silver hats and silver chest ornaments, were meant to be shaman figures, but the second dance, with the first dancers using winnow trays, appeared to be celebratory. (82).

Harman Folklore Research Association, Istanbul, Turkey. In contrast, apart from the zurna and davul players, this was an all-female group. Their costumes

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were attractive, but uniform. Their first item, from the Gaziantap Region, was well danced but they were too young to give it real spirit. Their second item, announced as a dance, was in fact an enactment of the dressing of the bride before the wedding. (84).

The Great India Dancers, India (Southall). Their costumes are colourful and their presentation much improved, but how good they are within their tradition is hard to assess. Dancing to two drums and a singer, they performed Jhoomer and Bhangra, the latter involving the use of handkerchiefs, swords and sticks, as well as standing on each other's shoulders etc. It was a lively and happy item. (86).

Toc de Xarel-Lo, Cassa de la Selva, Catalonia (Spain). El Xirminimi was a pleasant, but not too demanding, dance with the typical Catalonian costume and using a simple running step. El Virolet, a men's stick dance, was more interesting but many of the "men" were girls, which is not acceptable to the panel. (86).

Dawnsyr Nantgarw, Pontypridd, Wales. A black-faced Welsh Morris side, complete with Squire, Betty and Hobby-horse, gave a really fine performance of Y Cadi Ha, followed by competitive clogging, stepping over brooms, sticks and clay pipes. They deserved their 89 marks.

Izvorasul, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The two dances from Transylvania, Dans din Fagaras and Joc de pe Valea Somesului, were technically good but seemed to be suites of dances. The costumes were attractive, but totally identical. (79).

Plaj, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine. An older group of ten men and women, in good costumes, gave us Lasso, an energetic dance for men, and Hutzul Woman, a couple dance. They were a charming group in the real folk tradition and should, I believe, have received higher marks. (85).

Heritage Dancers, Patiala (Punjab), India. With the men's dance, Bhangra, we have the same problem as was seen in the Southall dancers. Very well performed with great verve, but is it within the tradition? Jhoomar, a woman's dance, depicting a meeting at the well, provided a good contrast, the colourful dresses looking very pretty. (88).

Ffidle Ffadl, Llangefni, Wales. This second group from the host country danced first Mellionen, familiar to us in a slightly different version, and stepped in the Welsh style. It was followed by Yddafad Gornnog, a fun dance for five couples and an extra man. Well danced, well mimed, and with good costumes, they showed the quality of the revival of Welsh dance. (90).

NEFAP, Oporto, Portugal. This team was beautifully relaxed, with their movements totally co-ordinated and in exact time to the music. No two costumes were alike, which enhanced the authenticity of the dances. These were Vira de Cruz de Gondomar for four couples and Tirana de Gondomar for five. The music provided by guitar, accordion and drum was splendid and gave the item a real lift. First, 94.

Tatarata, Casteltermini, Sicily. Sixteen men, each with two swords, and dressed in white, performed two dances from a very old tradition, said to date from the Moorish raids, U Salutu a ure, and L'Assalto. Some of the men looked very large and fearsome and about to dismember their team-mates. Presumably it was less dangerous than it looked, otherwise a new team would be needed quite often. Unfortunately, both dances were very similar, and they were marked accordingly. (80).

Gruppo e Ballu Olianesu, Nuoro, Sardinia. Starting with a long song, accompanied by the unusual Sardinian mouth music which presaged all festivals, the group gave us Ballu Tundu and Su Durdurinu. The steps are not difficult, but the style is, and I have never seen anyone, apart from Sardinians, who get it right. I find the dances mesmerising and the women's costumes must be among the loveliest

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in Europe. It was tragic that with the song they over-ran their time and were disqualified.

Rinceoiri Chill Mhantain Eire, Bray, Rep. of Ireland. This group, dancing Lanagans Ball and The Wicklow Set, were older than most Irish groups and I preferred them to the more mechanically correct dance schools. (87).

Narendra Kotiyan gave the adjudication and in his speech again stressed the need to respect traditions and their relationships to the basic realities of life in agricultural communities (I paraphrase). He also noted the uniqueness of Llangollen and its adherence to those values and his debt to his predecessors, including his mentor, Lucile Armstrong. He then gave judgment on individual groups, but space forbids giving details beyond his thanking a number of groups who supplied notes on the background of the dances and costumes.

I attended the afternoon workshop, where the Norwegians and Macedonians taught, among other dances, Gammel Reinlender, Paiduska and Nevestinsko. The Turks also looked in, and finally the Heritage Indians arrived and for a while it was chaos, with several drums and oboes making a sound that could be heard in Chester. The Indians, followed by the Turks, Macedonians and S.I.F.D. people, leapt around in Bhangra. Great fun.

I could not find time to see the children's competition but I understand the standard was very high. The winners were Dawnswyr y Ferch o'r Sger, Pen-y-Bont ar Ogwr, Wales (92), Loughgiel Folk Dancers, N.Ireland (90) and Rinceoiri Chill Mhantain Eire, Bray, Rep. of Ireland (89).

Conclusions? Only that this is a wonderful event where you can see various styles danced as they should be. Also that the authorities should do more to ensure that groups are given the fullest information to guide them how to avoid such mistakes as the Sardinians made, perhaps by producing an informal leaflet which makes the points in everyday terms in several languages.

GEORGE SWEETLAND



CAN YOU FOSTER A SOUND TECHNICIAN?

The Sunday Dances at Cecil Sharp House need a new manager. I am retiring from the post at the end of the year. The team who support the running of the Dances every month are totally reliable, unfailingly charming and competent in every way. They will have to be sold if someone does not step into the breach.

If the Sunday Dances are to continue, the Committee needs somebody to arrange M.C.s and to co-ordinate the music, sound, fetching and carrying and so on. If you have been enjoying the Sunday Dances over the past year or longer, then you already know a lot of good M.C.s and you will have seen how smoothly the sound and music are run by the experts. If you think you might be able to help, please talk to me or to any other member of the Committee to find out more.

ANNE LEACH



MUSIC. Two more tunes from Wilf Horrocks on p.12. If you would like the music for a particular dance, please let Wilf know, on 0181 642 3629.

* RENEWAL OF S.I.F.D. MEMBERSHIP IS DUE ON 1ST SEPTEMBER.*

BALKANPLUS, 12th September, at Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London N.W.1. 7.00-10.30 p.m. £3.00. M.C.s: Malcolm and Barbara Shaffer with Dunav.

It's time to shake off the summer sloth and get those feet moving again, and this is the ideal opportunity to catch up with the holiday news and have a thoroughly enjoyable evening. You might even draw the lucky ticket and get in for free the following month, but don't forget that a season ticket at £25.00 is even better value. (An extra belt on the 12th might be useful).

The next Balkanplus will be on 10th October.

Advance Notice: The November Balkanplus will be on the 7th, a change of date as Cecil Sharp House is not available on our usual weekend. This will also be a special occasion as there will be a Bring & Buy Sale. Have you ever bought a cassette or record with a beautiful picture on the label only to discover you already have it when you get home? Or how about that lovely apron or blouse that never did match up with anything else? This is your chance to sell your duplicates and perhaps find an ideal present for your nearest and dearest. Start looking through the shelves now. Further details later.

FRANCES HORROCKS

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BALKANPLUS, 10TH OCTOBER 1998

I am following the recent trend and giving this Balkanplus a theme. As some of you may know, I have recently had operations for cataracts on both eyes. I want to celebrate the miraculous return of light and vision, after years which seemed like a journey down a dark miserable tunnel. If anyone can think of dances linked with light or vision, or even just rejoicing, do send me your suggestions. I shall be visiting Barnet on 25th September when I shall be previewing the Balkanplus programme. There will be a lot of user-friendly dances, and some "scribbled" reminders of steps, so I hope many people who don't usually attend will feel brave enough to come and share this happy occasion.

FIONA HOWARTH
17a Ravensbourne Road, Bromley
BR1 1HN

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DUNAV BALKAN GROUP now has a website which includes a musical extract. The address is: www.classical-artists.com/dunav-balkan We also have an e-mail address: dunav@classical-artists.com

In case anyone wonders whether the word "classical" implies that Dunav has branched out into Beethoven, the answer is that Classical Artists Worldwide is a company which designs websites and administers e-mail addresses for musical groups of all types, who do not have the facilities to do their own. If anyone is interested, I can put them in touch.

CAROLINE THOMAS
77 Forest Road, London E17 6HF

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Oct.3rd NAVASART ARMENIAN DANCE ENSEMBLE (Eddy Djolalian's group) will be giving an evening of traditional folkloric music and dance. 7.30 p.m. at Logan Hall, University of London, 20 Bedford Way, London W.C.1. Admission: £20, £15, £10. For advance booking, ring Mrs. Martikian, 0171 262 3540, or Mrs. Daghlian, 0181 789 9394, or Mrs. Heath, 01707 642774/665091 (fax).

Oct.4th DAY COURSE IN BULGARIAN FOLK DANCING with Delyan Demirev at St.Peter's Church Hall, Fairfield, Buxton. 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. £10.00. Contact Marina Wolstenholme, 01433 630183.

Oct.10th S.I.F.D. WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH AUTUMN DAY COURSE with Nick Green. 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. at Blakenhale Junior School, Homestead Road, Garretts Green, Birmingham. £6.00 non SIFD members, £5.00 members, all day; pro rata for half-day. Branch A.G.M. during lunch break. For details of how to get there, ring Malcolm Cox on 0121 783 8517.

Oct.10th/11th BULGARIAN DANCE COURSE with Delyan Demirev at Trefusis, Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London N.W.1. 11.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. £20 for both days. Booking essential. Contact Galina Turker for more information and booking form, on 0181 882 3328, or Roger Wicksteed on 01865 511898.

Oct.17th FRITH FOLK DAY COURSE. Tutor: Maggie O'Regan. Dances to include mainly Greek with some gems from Maggie's summer travels. 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. at The Methodist Church Hall, Chapel-en-le-Frith, near Buxton, Derbyshire. Not more than £6.00. Bring packed lunch (or pubs, cafes nearby). Tea provided at end of afternoon. Contact Pat Phillips on 01298 24450.

Oct.17th RAINMAKERS INTERNATIONAL FOLKDANCE GROUP ANNIVERSARY DANCE, 7.30 to 11.00 p.m. at Ickleford Village Hall, near Hitchin, Herts. Music by "Jacob's Ladder". Tickets £5.00 including refreshments. For further details, ring 01462 677916 or 01462 636038.

Oct.18th DAY COURSE IN BULGARIAN DANCING with Delyan Demirev at St.Ursula's School (Refectory), Brecon Road, Henleaze, Bristol. 11.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Party 6.00 to 9.30 p.m. £12.00 (concessions £8.00) party included. Accommodation available if needed. Tel: 01225 429134. More information from Galina Turker, 0181 882 3328.

Oct.24th ROMANIAN COURSE with Silviu Ciuciumis, 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. at Kingsway College, Grays Inn Centre, London W.C.1. £10.00. Tickets available from Martisorul Dance Group, c/o 10 Parkview House, Eastbury Road, Watford WD1 4PZ. Silviu will be teaching line and circle dances from his ever-popular repertoire. He has agreed to our making an official video during the day, which will be duplicated quickly after the course for those who order a copy, and Romanotation dance notes can be provided for those interested. Cheques payable to Martisorul Dance Group.

Oct.30th/Nov.1st WEEKEND RESIDENTIAL COURSE OF ARMENIAN DANCING with Tineke Van Geel at Dovedale, Peak district. Excellent location for walking/sightseeing for non-dancing friends. Comfortable single and twin-bedded rooms. Plentiful choice of food. Full board and accommodation £76.00, two half-days tuition £14.00, two full days £28.00. For details, send s.a.e. to Cathy Meunier, 115 Chetwynd Road, London NW5 1DA.

Nov.1st AN EVENING WITH TINEKE VAN GEEL, who will give a 2-hour workshop in Armenian folk dances at the Village Hall, Calver, Peak District. Soft shoes please. 7.30-9.30 p.m. Cost will depend on numbers, but under £5.00. Contact Marina Wolstenholme, 01433 630183.

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Nov.7th ROMANIAN DANCE COURSE, 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. Teacher: Celia Stone and JAPANESE DANCE COURSE, 1.30 to 4.00 p.m. Teacher: Marina Wolstenholme. Both at Stevenson Junior School, Wadsworth Road, Stapleford, Notts. Organized by Nutbrook I.F.D.G. £3.00 per session, £5.00 all day, concessions £2.00 and £4.00.

Nov.15th PONTIC WORKSHOP with Yiannis Kevredkidis and Matheos Tsahouridis at Hellenic Centre, London. 10.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. £10.00. Ring Mrs. Nitsa Charitou, 0181 991 1258 for details and bookings.

Nov.29th ISRAELI DANCE PARTY with Anat at Stone Cross Memorial Hall, near Eastbourne. 10.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Includes revision of this year's dances and requests. £12.00 (£7.50 concessions). Shared vegetarian lunch. For details/bookings/requests/map, contact Rowena Martin, 01323 503991.

Dec.5th ZIVKO FIRFOV GROUP'S CHRISTMAS PARTY.

Dec.23rd/Jan.3rd CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR with Martin Ihns in Macedonia. For details contact Dave Carter, 14 Highmead, Hockley, Essex SS5 4QG. Tel: 01702 202289.

Apr.16th/19th RESIDENTIAL COURSE OF ROMANIAN DANCING with Silviu Ciuciumis at Newfield Hall, Malhamdale. For details and booking form, send s.a.e. to Cathy Meunier, 115 Chetwynd Road, London NW5 1DA.

May 24th/31st ROMANIAN DANCE HOLIDAY with Silviu Ciuciumis at Tesna, nr.Suceava. For details send s.a.e. to Pamela Le Goaziou, 55 Mitchell Road, Bedhampton, Hants. PO9 3QA. Tel: 01705 641028.

May 28th/June 1st BALKANPLUS DANCE WEEKEND with Eddy Tijssen and Martin Ihns at Okehampton Youth Hostel, Devon. For details and booking form, contact Anne Marshall, 44 Church Road, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol BS9 3EQ. Tel: 0117 950 9889.

Thoughts on National Styles in Dance Music

Doudlebska polka is well known as a Czech dance. It is also well known as German dance and perhaps less well known as a Swiss dance and a Danish dance.

It was this varied background that inspired members of Jacob's Ladder to get together one Saturday in April, armed with CDs, cassettes and printed music to see if we could identify Czech, German and Swiss characteristics we could apply to this particular tune. The ideas we came up with in no way definitive, but might be of some interest within the SIFD.

Playing in thirds was common in all the music we considered. This can be above or below the tune (depending on the harmony) and works best with two identical instruments – and in this kind of music, with two clarinets or two trumpets. Unfortunately, in Jacob's Ladder, we have one clarinet and no trumpets. Using a flute to play a sixth above a clarinet gives a similar feel to having a second clarinet playing a third below. Two violins gives a quite different effect.

The German music made most use of trumpets (and least of violins). When not alternating with the clarinets in playing the tune itself, the trumpets are employed playing either fanfares or slow simple (almost corny) counter melodies. In the absence of a trumpet we substitute a clarinet plays the fanfares against flute and violins on the tune. Accompaniment is often also brass (trombone and tuba) and it may be this that leads to a crisp attack on the notes and a fairly plain and undecorated treatment of the tune.

The Czech recordings we heard also used clarinets in thirds (but not so much trumpet) possibly playing higher the Germans tended to do. A droning bag-pipe underneath gives a very un-German effect. The attack is far less crisp which makes the style more suited to violins and other 'lighter' instrument. Notes have more decorations and pairs of quavers are often replaced by a dotted quaver semi-quaver rhythm.

Most noticeable about the Swiss music we considered was a reluctance to play two identical quavers together. Four semi-quavers seem to be generally preferred. This may be in imitation of a zither, which was quite common on the recordings. The effect of this, when applied to doudlebska polka, seemed to dictate the shape of the whole tune. The 'Swiss' version we came up with (together with the 'Czech' and 'German' ones) is available from me. Anyone interested, please ring 01223 425648.