

S I F D

OCTOBER



1998

NEWS

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.

This month's cover shows children from the local group at the Confolens Folkdance
Festival in France and is from a photograph taken by Simon Guest.

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

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Topics from the September Committee Meeting

- ❖ The **Treasurer's report** showed a better financial position than had been anticipated, partly due to a generous legacy, and partly because no money has been spent yet on the next dance tape and video, new introductory leaflet or new amplifier.
- ❖ The suggestions for a **replacement amplifier**, as the current one is getting old and temperamental, were looked at by the committee, but the final choice will be left to the experts, who are going to liaise and decide.
- ❖ The committee heard that the new SIFD organisers for the **Eastbourne** festival have already made great progress.
- ❖ The people who had been to the **York Summer School** said how much they had enjoyed it, and were really pleased by the enthusiasm shown to prepare for the next one in 2000. All sorts of difficulties had been encountered while organising this year's, which will now, hopefully, be avoided by a very early start, and the work shared between many people.
- ❖ Nothing more yet about the proposed increase in **Cecil Sharp House hall booking fees**.

Alison Scrimshaw

S.I.F.D. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS AND ASSOCIATION AND AFFILIATION
RENEWAL FOR 1998-99.

Annual subscriptions became due on 1st September 1998. Appreciation and many thanks are due to so many members and group officers who have renewed promptly. Prompt renewal reduces the administration work considerably and this applies to well over half the membership this year. Members and group officers who have sent in their subscription need not read any further!

Members who have not sent their subscriptions are reminded that membership lapses with this issue of the SIFD NEWS and that this is the last copy that will be dispatched to you.

With regard to Association or Affiliation renewal, I refer to my letter of 1st May 1998 of invitation to renew annual Association or Affiliation sent to group leaders and officers. I should like to remind group officers that for inclusion in the next issue of the S.I.F.D. Brochure it is essential that a return is sent some days before our printer's final deadline of 5th October 1998.

Annual subscriptions for 1998-99 are: Town Member £17, Joint Town Members £22.80, Country/Overseas Member: £13.50, Joint Country/Overseas Members £17, Junior Member £5.30, Affiliation subscription £29.30 and £24 for Music groups. (Town Member means an address within 30 miles of Central London or Birmingham, i.e. generally nearer to folk dancing events).

ALAN MORTON
Honorary Membership Secretary
and Groups Liaison Officer

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SIFD Annual General Meeting

The AGM will take place on 6th December 1998 at Cecil Sharp House.
Any motions that have been received before 30th September 1998 will appear on the agenda as usual.
Any motions received after that date will be accepted at the discretion of the Chairperson, and she would be grateful for prior notice of topics that anyone is planning to raise at the meeting.

We would also like to hear from anyone who is interested in joining the Committee.

Alison Scrimshaw

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S.I.F.D. DAY COURSE, SATURDAY, 31ST OCTOBER 1998

As mentioned in last month's issue, this Day Course will be a revision of the dances taught at York. In this instance it will be LITHUANIAN, and Janet Woolbar has kindly agreed to teach the dances. Please come along and try them; they are all good dances for a social evening. £6.00 for members, £8.00 for non-members. (Ed.Note: No venue or times given).

The next date for an S.I.F.D. Day Course is 16th January 1999.

HELEN EZRA

HOW TO GET FREE PUBLICITY FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR EVENTS (Part 1)
WRITING PRESS RELEASES

Almost everything you or your group does can make an article. Perhaps your group won a prize at a local dance competition, or are preparing for your very first television appearance? Think in terms of "news", and write about events BEFORE they happen. An announcement of a folk dance show for charity is more interesting than a review of what happened.

Remember that most magazines and newspapers are produced several days, weeks and even months in advance. For example, if your local newspaper is published on Fridays, the copy deadline is usually on Tuesday or Wednesday, and some pages are put together earlier than that. Try to submit your copy before Monday to increase the chances of getting it published. If you don't send an article, but just the information, you have to be even faster, to give the journalist time to interview you, do the research and write up the piece.

Unlike a school essay, which leads the reader to the conclusion slowly and gently, a good press release presents the reader with the essential facts (what happens/happened where, when, why, with whom and how?) in the first two paragraphs. The following paragraphs contain interesting background information. Sub-editors, when they have to shorten an article to fit into an existing space on the page-layout, are always in a hurry. It is journalistic practice to chop off the last paragraph if there isn't enough space.

Type your press release on one side of white A-4 paper, with margins on both sides and with double-spacing between the lines to give the sub-editor room for corrections. Keep your sentences short and succinct, in plain English, and prefer the active form to the passive. For example, "The Oakhill Balkan Dancers will perform Greek dances at next year's village fete" reads better than "Greek dances will be performed by the Oakhill Balkan Dancers". Use plenty of quotations; for example "I'm so excited", admits 24-year-old Susan Smith. "This is going to be my first ever public performance". Simply interview members of your group, or the organizers, or yourself to get good quotations. They make the piece interesting, readable, personal and lively.

Always give a contact name and telephone number in every press release. Sometimes it is sheer luck if a piece is published or not. During some days, the editorial desks are covered in press releases, and even well-written pieces about interesting events end in the bin. On other days, the sub-editor may be so desperate for a short article to fill a gap that he/she will joyfully put in a whole article about Susan Smith, dressed in Bulgarian costume, winning the third prize in the local fancy dress show.

Photos increase your chances of acceptance by 500%. More about that in the next part of the series.

CHRISTINE HALL

(Christine is an experienced newspaper and magazine editor - as well as a belly dancer).

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A WEEKEND AT STAFFORD HOUSE

The August Bank Holiday weekend saw local dancers of all sorts meeting at Stafford House, Hassocks, in East Sussex, to share our dancing enthusiasm(s) with each other. We were made very welcome by Barbara Lees, the Manager, and were lucky to have good weather for our walk over the Downs, visiting the Jill windmill en route. There was a special treat on Saturday evening when the "Labyrinth Band" played for us. In between, we had sessions of English, Israeli, Circle, Romanian and Bulgarian dancing. We are full of enthusiasm for a repeat next August - all we need is a bigger dance floor!

ROWENA MARTIN

YOU'VE BEEN FRAMED!

At a recent day course (not S.I.F.D.) for which I had paid to go along and learn dances, I found that, whether I liked it or not, I had been "video'd" during the morning session and it was the intention to continue for the afternoon as well. Where this video was to be shown and for whose entertainment/amusement/education, I have no idea and I found it impolite, to say the least, for someone to take a video of people without announcing that this is taking place and without asking the people concerned whether they mind.

If members of the class do object, then I think the video of the dances should be taken at the end of the day's course for those who wish to take part. Asking people to leave the floor during the workshop if they object (as has been suggested in the past) is not acceptable as those people have paid for a day's course of instruction, not to have to sit out for part of the time.

May I ask video makers to take note and have the courtesy to announce their intention beforehand, and to comply with the wishes of the people on the course. We don't all wish to be in the frame!

In every other respect this day course was very enjoyable, with excellent teaching and a good choice of dances.

LILY AVERY

LATE ARRIVALS AT THE INTERNATIONAL BALL. NAME THAT CHILD!

Answers to last month's clues:

- 1) Pol & Deb
- 2) Rev
- 3) Tara
- 4) Ava
- 5) Cy
- 6) Hans
- 7) Al
- 8) May

plus some more -

- 9) Mr. & Mrs. Sing-the-Presence and their daughter
- 10) Mr. & Mrs. Into-a-Circle-Please and their daughter
- 11) Mr. & Mrs. D'Mills and their daughter
- 12) Mr. & Mrs. Janet-can't-do-this-Dance and their Welsh son
- 13) Mr. & Mrs. Edonsko and their son
- 14) Mr. & Mrs. Ian Lyrical and their son
- 15) Mr. & Mrs. T'Lines and their son
- 16) Mr. & Mrs. Instructions-Once-More-Please and their daughter
(two first names)

Answers next month.

FIONA HOWARTH

S.I.F.D. books and cassettes are available from Eleanor Gordon, 70 Chestnut Grove, New Malden, Surrey KT13 3TS, Tel: 0181 942 9834. Other S.I.F.D. goods are available from Claire Steeley, 34 Broadwater Avenue, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 3HF. Tel: 01462 686419. For details, please contact Eleanor and Claire respectively.

MUSIC Two more tunes from Wilf Horrocks on p.10. If you would like the music for a particular dance, please let Wilf know, on 0181 642 3629.

Articulation in Folk Dance Music

One of my main concerns in playing International music is getting the sound right. Even if we knew exactly what notes, harmonies and rhythms to play, a band from one tradition would still not sound like a band from another. A major reason for this is, I think, articulation – the way the notes are started, continued and ended.

Everyone is acquainted with the difference between staccato and legato, but listening closely to various recordings and live musicians one soon realises that there can be far more to it than that. Of course, it can be very difficult to distinguish between styles of articulation of individual musicians and differences (if any) between traditions, and all I will do here is list various different ways a note can be played and leave it to others to work out when each approach is appropriate.

Playing Russian music (Troika or Kohanoshka for example) it can be very effective to hit virtually every note very hard and then fade quite dramatically. This is not quite the same as staccato, where the notes are hit very firmly, kept at a constant volume and then cut short. Swedish music by contrast seems to hit each note hard, keep a constant volume and the stop abruptly having given the note its full length. When attacking the note one can also consider whether to start with a small explosion of sound (trumpets, and hence German music do this quite naturally) or to come in as uneventfully as possible and keep the sound even throughout the duration of the note.

If starting firmly is not right for the dance, starting softly and getting louder is often worth trying. This can give a gentler effect (suitable for the more lyrical Israeli dances) without making the overall effect subdued or drab. If applied very strongly to longer notes in a tune it can keep the impetus going where it might otherwise flag.

Having started the note and then played the middle bit, the final thing to consider is the end. One can come off crisply (on a clarinet you stop the reed with your tongue which can give a small explosion of sound) or just stop, or fade, or get a bit louder. Different instruments will each have their own ways of doing this.

All this may seem rather over subtle, and pretentious. It is, after all, 'only folk dance music', but one of the joys of folk music is that it gives a freedom to try different things, and International Folk gives us the opportunity to be exposed to ideas and ways of playing we may not otherwise encounter. I am frequently surprised by how much difference to a tune a very small change in articulation can make.

Mike Gilbert

P.S. There were a number of typing errors in last month's article, which Lily spotted, but owing to the vagaries of the post office it was too late to do anything about them. I hope the article still made sense.

P.P.S. These articles are my personal opinions. Does anyone violently disagree? Or agree? Or is there any aspect of dance music that people would like to read about? Please let me know.

SCANDIA OPEN DAY

Saturday 21st November 1998 in the Storrow Room at Cecil Sharp House
10.30am to 5.00pm

Scandia meets twice a month in London to practise Scandinavian dances. Please come along to our open day to try them for yourself.

Janet Woolbar and Richard Mellish will be teaching some of the repertoire which includes amongst other dances Långdans, Schottis, Slångpolska, Polskas (various), Sönderhoning and, of course, Hambo which will be a main feature. Many of these dances involve turning so non-stick soles are recommended.

We hope to have some live music on the day. There will be a small charge to help with expenses. More details next month.

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

Oct.4th M.C.s: Audrey Whiteley and Mona Graham. Interval dances
by Fiona Howarth

Nov.1st M.C.s: Merton Park I.F.D.G.

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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FOLKDANCE INSTRUCTIONS AND MUSIC

Would anyone like to have any of the following items for the cost of p. & p. only?

"A Selection of European Folk Dances" Vols. 1-4 (S.I.F.D.)

S.I.F.D. EP records 1-6, 8, 9 and "Twelve Circle Dances", all with
instructions and sheet music.

"Greek Folk Dances" (instructions & melodies) by Rickey Holden and Mary
Vouras (Folkraft Press, Newark NJ 1965)

Instructions (no music) for dances from Lithuania, Hungary, Ireland,
Yugoslavia (Northwest Folkdancers Summer Camp 1964)

Also sundry cassettes from Swansea summer schools.

Contact John Rigby, Flat 5, Cathedral Court, Cathedral Green, Llandaff, Cardiff
CF5 2EB. Tel: 01222 569904.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Lily,

The sad news of John Hughes' passing has reached us here in the colonies.
We were over in London in the middle of June and I spoke to him then. I knew
he was unwell as he had written to tell us about his illness after we met at
the time of the S.I.F.D. reunion. In fact, he was not at the Dance but joined
us the following day for a brunch we had with Simon, Mary and Joan, the Staines
and Florence Brien. He had put on a lot of weight and I would not have known
him on the street.

He was a member of Margery Latham's demo team and a very apt dancer. He
had a wicked sense of humour and he tried to irritate Margery by fooling around.
He could dance half a beat behind everyone else but always end in the right place
at the right time. I particularly remember when we were invited with Dr.Cyriax's
group to join a visiting Swedish group as guests of the E.F.D.S.S. at Cecil Sharp
House. John spoke Swedish all evening, when in fact if you listened closely you
realised that he was just reciting the names off the costume boxes. The E.F.D.S.S.
folk, assuming as they did that we were all Swedish, complimented him as he
"struggled" with Morpeth Rant, which he probably danced better than many of them.

Best wishes to all.

DOROTHY SLOAN
10 Campbell Crescent,
Toronto M2P 1P2

A NEW EXPERIENCE

Having danced and studied International Folk Dancing since my late teens, I was tempted to go to Pyke House in Battle, East Sussex, in August, to Christine Hall's summer school, to try Belly Dancing. I didn't know anyone else who was going but decided to give it a try. We were blessed with beautiful weather and we were able to dance in the lovely garden on the lawn, part of which was under the trees in the shade. We were told that this was where the Battle of Hastings was fought.

On the first morning when we arrived, we were greeted by a T.V. crew who filmed us for the local news programme that evening. I hoped that I wouldn't be seen as I'd never done Belly Dancing before - everyone else had. Christine gave us some tuition beforehand. I needn't have worried, as the crew were more interested in the women (of all shapes and sizes) wearing scanty Turkish belly dancing costumes. We were also recorded for a local radio programme the next day.

A boat was chartered for the Tuesday morning, and we took a trip on the River Rother. Many, in costume, danced and we played hand drums, having had a lesson the previous afternoon on Arabic rhythms. We had a picnic and a look at Bodiam Castle, and then danced and played our way back on the boat. The next morning, we took off to Camber Sands, where we were photographed in costume in the dunes with veils blowing in the wind, hoping it looked like the desert.

Christine gave us excellent tuition in a variety of dances, including a Tunisian scarf dance, a Persian veil dance, and a Moroccan tray dance, which wasn't so easy when trying to shimmer on our knees with a tray on our heads. We also danced the "zaar" dance designed to drive evil spirits away.

The evenings were varied. A "souk" was organized to trade goods etc. and we had a group of visiting dancers to perform for us. On the final evening, we had a Haflah (party) and an Arabic banquet (including sheep's eyes!) ending with traditional mint tea. The meal was excellent, and so was the food that we were given all the week. It was good that we were doing plenty of exercise. The course was good fun, and I really enjoyed it. It was a change from what I had done before. Although the younger members of my family teased me, I would certainly do it again sometime.

GRACE PITTMAN

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BALKANPLUS, 10th October 1998, at Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London N.W.1, 7.00 to 10.30 p.m., £3.00. M.C.: Fiona Howarth. Fiona's programme is specifically designed to be user-friendly, with reminders of steps. Please come along in bright colours and a cheerful frame of mind to help Fiona celebrate her successful eye operations.

The next Balkanplus will be on 7th November. Please remember the change of date. We shall be holding a Bring and Buy Sale of books, records, cassettes, C.D.s etc. and any items of interest to folk dancers. Please bring along any items you have for sale, clearly marked with your name and the price, 10% of which will go to Balkanplus. Prices should be given in multiples of 50p, to make finances quick and easy. If you have several items, please give a list, with prices, to any Committee member. Items can be brought at 6.00 p.m. The Sale will start at 6.30 p.m. The Dance will start, as usual, at 7.00 p.m.

There will be reductions for Balkanplus season ticket holders at the Bulgarian Dance Course with Delyan Demirev on 10th/11th October (see "What's On in October"). Please book in advance. Other courses with Delyan are also listed in "What's On".

FRANCES HORROCKS

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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.

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 Kevrekidis 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.21st BULGARIAN VILLAGE (mainly Pirin) DANCE COURSE, 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. at St.Ninian's U.R. Church Hall, corner of Wilbraham & Egerton Road South, Chorlton, Manchester, organized by Barlow I.F.D.G. Tutor: James Webb. £4.00 all day, £2.50 one session. Bring packed lunch. Further information from Joan Wood, 0161 881 1077.

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 FOLKLORE GROUP PARTY at Moorfields Primary School, London E.C.1 (nearest Underground Station, Old Street). 7.00 to 10.30 p.m. Dances from Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia; also from Bulgaria, Greece, Romania. £6.00, including refreshments. ADMISSION BY TICKET ONLY, from Irene Keywood, 133 Third Avenue, Dagenham, Essex RM10 9BD (s.a.e. please). Tel: 0181 592 4427. Cheques payable to Zivko Firfov Folklore Group.

S.I. Dec.12th S.I.F.D. WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH CHRISTMAS PARTY, 7.30 to 10.30 p.m. at Bentley Heath Primary School, Widney Close, Bentley Heath (near Dorridge). Bring and share supper. Admission £1.50.

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.

Mar.13th ISRAELI DANCE COURSE. Return visit of Roberto Haddon by popular request. 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. at St.Ninian's U.R. Church Hall, corner of Wilbraham and Egerton Road South, Chorlton, Manchester. Organized by Barlow I.F.D.G. £4.00 all day, £2.50 one session. Bring packed lunch. Details from Joan Wood, 0161 881 1077.

Mar.20th HISTORICAL EUROPEAN DANCE COURSE, organized by Nutbrook I.F.D.G., 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. at Stevenson Junior School, Stapleford, Notts. Dances of late 16th/early 17th centuries (English, French and Italian sources). Tutors: Ann and Paul Kent. No price given.

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 BLAKANPLUS 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.

Contd...

- Oct.23rd DELYAN'S LAST HORD IN BARNET. Forget Tangos in Paris. In the final workshop of his current British tour, Delyan Demirev will teach a selection of popular social dances from Bulgaria. 8.00 p.m. at Church House, Wood Street, Barnet, Herts. £4.00. Leather belts may be required. Further details from Brian Dowsett, 01992 582717.
- Oct.24th ROMANIAN DANCE 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 from Martisorul Dance Group, c/o 10 Parkview House, Eastbury Road, Watford WD1 4PZ. An official video will be made during the day, copies available after the course. Romanotation dance notes can be provided. Cheques payable to Martisorul Dance Group.
- Oct.28th PERFORMANCE OF TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY MIDDLE EASTERN SOLO DANCE, choreographed by Miraj (from Pennsylvania, U.S.A.) and Almeh Amira (a.k.a. Christine Hall). Approx. £6.00. For details, ring 01580 850687. The venue is in Hastings, with beautiful setting.
- Oct.30th BELLY DANCE WORKSHOP with Christine Hall at Urchfont Manor College, Urchfont, Wiltshire. All levels including introduction to some Middle Eastern dance props such as veils. £23.00. Tel: 01380 840495.
- Oct.30th WEEKEND RESIDENTIAL COURSE OF ARMENIAN DANCING with Tineke Van Geel to Nov.1st 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.
- Oct.31st S.I.F.D. DAY COURSE. See P.3.



BALKANPLUS EASTER DANCE WEEKEND 1999, FRIDAY, 2ND, TO MONDAY, 5TH APRIL
AT BEAFORD ARTS CENTRE (NEAR GREAT TORRINGTON, DEVON).

There will be another opportunity to enjoy a weekend in Beaford to dance and relax in the beautiful rural setting of the North Devon countryside. The ever-popular Bert van der Meer will teach a programme of international dances in the mornings, Balkan with the odd Dutch or Israeli dance thrown in. There will be international workshops for beginners in the afternoon and some English folk dancing for those who have any energy left. The evening dances will be mainly international. The Beaford Arts Centre has provided good accommodation and food and a pleasant atmosphere in the past. For further details and booking form, please send s.a.e. to me at Manor Cottage, Burrington, Umberleigh, North Devon EX37 9LZ. Tel: 01769 560479.

MECKI TESTROET



Events which are advertised in SIFD NEWS and which are covered by S.I.F.D. insurance are marked with "S.I." in the margin. All other events are included for information, and any enquiries should be directed to the organiser.

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
held at Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London
at 4.00pm on Sunday 7th December 1997

Present : Jeanette Hull Chairperson
 Alison Scrimshaw Secretary
 Judith Payling Treasurer
 Helen Ezra Committee Member
 Michael Gilbert Committee Member
 Anne Leach Committee Member
 Alan Morton Membership Secretary
 George Sweetland Publicity Officer
 and 26 other members

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from

Lily Avery	Jill & Peter Bransby	Sue Clark
Caspar Cronk	Drusilla Duffill	Diki & Sula Gleeson
Mona Graham	Joan Guest	Arlene Hansell
Roy & Peggy Haycock	Joan & Harry Matthews	Alison Paul
Christine Peths	S. Rees	Brenda & Philip Steventon
Hilda & Roger Sturge	Mecki Testroet	

2 Minutes of the Previous Annual General Meeting (1.12.1996)

The minutes of the AGM held on 1st December 1996 had been previously circulated to members.

2.1 Corrections

No corrections were reported.

2.2 Approval

The meeting unanimously agreed to accept the minutes as a true record of the proceedings at the 1996 AGM.

3 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4 Committee's Report

This report had previously been circulated to members.

The chairperson took the opportunity to correct an error which had occurred in the printed report. Edna Foster should have been thanked for assistance given to the Membership Secretary not as part of the News team.

In amplification of the report Jeanette said that most of the executive committee had full time jobs and conducted the Society's business in their spare time. There is a dire need for more members to volunteer to serve on the executive committee and especially on the subcommittees. There is a real danger of having to cut back on our activities unless more volunteers are found.

Our proposed new cassette/book/video project is now under way but our application for funds from the National Lottery has failed.

In answer to a request for more information on the National Lottery question Michael Gilbert explained that a great deal of effort had gone into our application, providing background information about the SIFD and setting out exactly how we could use a grant to further our aims. The reasons given for refusing the grant were confused and illogical. As an example of illogicality Michael said that our request for help with promoting traditional folk material was criticised for lack of *original* artistic content. It would seem that traditional arts do not qualify for assistance. The English Folk Dance and Song Society, it appears, have only received one grant out of many applications. All in all the reasons given for failure seem very poor and there does not appear to be any appeal mechanism.

Jeanette explained that the initials VAN appearing in her report stand for Voluntary Aid Network. It was also pointed out that 'Lucile Armstrong' is spelt thus and not 'Lucille'.

That the meeting should accept the committee's report was proposed by Charles Steventon, seconded by Frank Flanagan and agreed (with one abstention) by all the members present.

5 Treasurer's Report

This report had previously been circulated to members.

The Treasurer commended the report to the meeting and stressed that the Society had enjoyed a financially good year.

In answer to a question Judith explained the change from 'Auditor' to 'Independent Examiner'. It is now a requirement that auditors must be registered and since the Charity Commissioners allow that the accounts of small charities can be examined by a competent, independent person who is not necessarily a registered auditor we are altering the wording to take advantage of this.

That the meeting accept the Treasurer's Report was proposed by John Walford and seconded by Alan Morton and agreed unanimously.

6 Independent Examiner's Report and Consideration of Accounts

In answer to questions from the floor the Treasurer gave the following explanations.

- Record sales were high this year because a new cassette (the 50th anniversary tape) went on sale.

- The increased cost of producing the SIFD News was attributable to an unavoidable change of printer.

- The item 'Surplus on revaluation of investment' in the balance sheet under 'Lucile Armstrong Memorial Fund' represented free shares given away by Abbey National to investors.

- The Lucile Armstrong Prize awarded at Llangollen is funded by the interest on the above fund and is considered very good publicity for the Society.

- The item 'Debtors' in the balance sheet was accounted for by as yet unpaid-for cassette sales and reclaimed tax not, as yet, received from the Inland Revenue.

A motion that the meeting accept the accounts and Independent Examiner's report was proposed by Audrey Whiteley and seconded by Kevin Brown and was carried unanimously.

7 Appointment of Independent Examiner

Having previously explained (see Minute 5) that 'auditor' was now 'independent examiner' Judith said that Denis McCarthy was willing to continue to act for the Society in this capacity and proposed that he be appointed for a further year. Joan Richardson seconded the motion which was passed unanimously.

8 Motions

8.1 Motion 1

The following motion was proposed by Judith Payling and seconded by Alison Scrimshaw.

That clause 37 of the constitution be amended to read :-

"An independent examiner shall be appointed and his duties regulated by the Committee. The Independent Examiner appointed must be approved by a vote at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society, or the Independent Examiner be appointed by an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting."

The reasoning behind this motion had already been explained by Judith (see Minute 5). The motion was carried by a unanimous vote with one abstention.

8.2 Motion 2

The following motion was proposed by Judith Payling and seconded by Jeanette Hull.

That with effect from 1st September 1998 the subscription rates be increased as follows:-

Town Member	£17.00	(at present £14.00)
Joint Town Members	£22.80	(at present £19.80)
Country Member	£13.50	(at present £10.50)
Joint Country Members	£17.00	(at present £14.00)
Junior Member	£5.30	(at present £2.30)
Affiliation	£29.30	(at present £23.30)
Music Group	£24.00	(at present £18.00)

and that no life members are accepted between this date and the 31st August 1998 except at the new rate of £200.

The Treasurer explained that the proposed increases were required purely to cover our expected commitments in producing the SIFD News. It does not seem sensible to use our reserve funds for regular expenses. It was pointed out that a £3 across-the-board increase seemed unfair to Junior Members, more than doubling their rate, but though unfortunate this appeared inevitable bearing in mind the purpose of the increase. The Membership Secretary reported that there are only 5 or 6 Junior Members. Doubt was expressed as to whether Junior Members read the SIFD News anyway. It was suggested that a Family Membership category could be established in the future.

The motion was carried with none against but three abstentions.

8.3 Motion 3

The following motion was proposed by Simon Guest and seconded by Janet Woolbar.

That Judith Payling be elected an Honorary Life Member of the SIFD in recognition of 18 years of service as Honorary Treasurer of the Society.

Judith was asked to leave the meeting while this motion was debated.

The proposer delivered a brief encomium about Judith stressing her excellent work in connection with the new Charities legislation. Janet recounted, from her own experience, how comforting it was as chairperson of the Society to have such a competent and reliable treasurer as Judith.

The motion was carried unanimously.

9 Announcement of the New Committee

Jeanette reported that since there were fewer nominations than vacancies no elections had been necessary.

The new committee is

	Chairperson	Jeanette Hull	
	Secretary	Alison Scrimshaw	
	Treasurer	Judith Payling	
Committee Members	Caspar Cronk	Helen Ezra	Michael Gilbert
	Anne Leach	Marina Wolstenholme	

10 Any Other Business and Discussion

10.1 Proficiency Badges

The following points/comments were made from the floor :

- Members of the Merton Groups are, in general, keen that the badge tests should continue.
- Members of the Barlow Group do not, in general, want to work towards badges although specific courses might create interest.
- Organising badge tests (and courses) involves a lot of work on the part of the Badge & Day Course Subcommittee and can be quite stressful. Lack of time has caused problems in the past.
- Many members already have badges but newcomers should be given the opportunity of taking tests if they so wish. Perhaps a smaller scale operation than in the past is viable.
- On one occasion a Group fielded 17 candidates but now only a few new people would be interested.
- Badges are not incontrovertibly effective in raising the standard of dancing.
- Working for badges helps dancers think about finer points and can give an incentive to work.
- The syllabus for each country is normally reviewed before each test and the aim has always been for a broad spread of material.
- Graded passes would have the advantage (?) that nobody actually fails.
- Grading could work for difficult dances.
- New dancers could be encouraged by a general badge.
- Account should be taken when setting syllabuses of the skewed gender distribution found in many groups (e.g.. 26 ladies to 2 men !).
- Should the necessity of holding badges be removed from the Teaching Certificate requirements?
- Some consistency with past practice must be maintained if changes are to be made to the system.
- Could/should the holding of badges be considered as a necessary condition for dancers to be included in demonstration teams.

10.2 SIFD News

The following points were made :

- Reports on the production of the SIFD News were prepared by working parties in 1985 and 1991.
- The Editor requested that any suggestions for changes should be in the form of factual reports and fully thought-through and documented schemes not just vague ideas.
- Since $\frac{2}{3}$ of the subscriptions paid by members go to News production costs, any practical methods of reducing these costs without reducing quality must be of interest.
- Although some members would prefer dance instructions to be included instead of written music others like having the tunes printed.

10.3 Summer School 1998

A lively discussion took place on the problems of allocating students to classes at the Summer School :

- If classes are at different levels who should decide who goes where and on what basis is the decision made. Does self-grading work ?
- Should/can provision be made for students who wish to attend all the classes given by a particular teacher.
- More flexibility in class attendance might attract more people to the School.
- Teachers who can offer music sessions in addition to dance should be asked to do so.
- Keeping the cost down seems to be very important in keeping the numbers up.

10.4 Day Courses

The attendance at Day Courses is somewhat erratic and the Badge and Day Courses Subcommittee would like to know what members want in this area. Points made in the discussion were :

- More foreign national teachers could attract people to attend.
- Courses do not always have to present new material. Revision and recapitulation have their place.
- 'Repertoire' days could attract newer members.
- Publishing the programme well ahead would help group leaders to plan and perhaps persuade potential attendees.
- Saturdays seem best for travelling and using the same Saturdays as Balkan Plus has an attraction for some members.
- Only a small proportion of our members live close to London although non-members do often attend courses.

10.5 Eastbourne Festival 1998

Helen Ezra asked for volunteers to help during the festival.

10.6 Sunday Dance Organisation

A volunteer is sought to take over from Anne Leach who has been doing this job so well for so long.

10.7 Teacher Training

The Society now has fewer teachers than two years ago and the topic of teacher training and Teaching Certificates is seen to be of primary importance and is being addressed by the Committee. Some notes and memoranda on possible strategies and structures have been produced and consideration given to the setting up of a 'teachers group'. It may be possible to hold a Teaching Certificate examination in 1999. Meanwhile the existing Teaching Certificate Syllabus and accompanying notes are available to interested members.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.05pm