

SIED News



August 1999

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 1998-99

The final membership figures for the year from the 1 September 1998 to the 31 August 1999 from ledger records are:

	1998-99	1997-98
National members	529	552
Overseas members	<u>43</u>	<u>43</u>
Total membership	<u>572</u>	<u>595</u>
Associated Classes	20	20
Affiliated Groups	44	43

The SIFD NEWS production and distribution Team, (Lily Avery, Editor, Michael and Edwina Holdup, envelope preparation and Doug and Maureen Wells, photo-copying and dispatch) currently handle 587 copies of the SIFD NEWS per month, including two copies to each affiliated group (as required by the Constitution).

Annual subscriptions remain unchanged from the previous membership year and are due on 1 September 1999 and they are:

	£
Town Member *	17.00
Joint Town Members	22.80
Country Member	13.50
Joint Country Members +	17.00
Junior Member	5.30
Life Member ++	200.00
Group Affiliation	29.30
Music Group	24.00

* Address within a radius of 30 miles from Central London or Central Birmingham.

- Any two members living at the same address.

++ Subject to two years continuous membership and Committee approval.

If you would like a receipt please enclose a stamped addressed envelope otherwise I shall assume that one is not required.

Many thanks to many members and group officers for prompt renewal of subscriptions.

Thanks are due to the many members who have in the past made donations and also thanks in advance are due to other members for helping in this way.

New changes are a new Data Protection Act (1998) that will replace the Act of 1984. I do not foresee any need for change to our existing procedures. New BT telephone code changes will run in tandem with the present ones until next year.

Best wishes for Happy Dancing for the next membership year of 1999-2000.



Alan Morton
Honorary Membership Secretary
& Groups Liaison Officer

KAY LILLEY (née Modi) - SAD LOSS OF A VERY DEAR FRIEND

We have known Kay and Peter Lilley since the early '60s and have been great friends ever since. They have supported all the major S.I.F.D. events over the years and also attended many of the Dances that Woodvale group held. It is with great regret that we report the passing of Kay on 5th July. She will be sadly missed. We are sure that their many friends in the S.I.F.D. would wish to extend their deepest sympathy and condolences to Peter, Jonathan and Andrea at this sad time.

JEAN & IAN WILLSON

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FRED WOOD

The Zivko Firfov Dance Group is sad to report the death last month of our Chairman, Fred Wood. Fred had been an active member of the group for many years and took part in most of the performances that we have given. His dancing expertise and imposing tall figure will be sadly missed. He had been Chairman for the last few years, a job which he carried out with his usual dedication to duty, and I hope, as the new Chairwoman, to be able to maintain his high standard.

JOAN SACH, Zivko Firfov Dance Group

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A Millennium Idea

At our last committee meeting we came up with an *idea* on how the SIFD could mark the Millennium!

How do you like the idea of every SIFD group, both affiliated and associated, and every individual who isn't a member of an SIFD group, submitting a photo for inclusion in a grand Millennium Album?

Our aim would be to have a photo of every member belonging to the SIFD in the year 2000.

The photos wouldn't need to be formal, and as (most) cameras will be Year 2000 compliant, we will accept no Millennium bug excuses. They should be accompanied by a legend to link names to faces, and, if possible, a couple of lines about the group or individual.

So – do you like this idea? Would you be willing to enter your photo?

The plan does seem to have the virtue of requiring little organisational effort, but achieving great results.

Please let know me what you think!

Alison Scrimshaw

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Are you going to Philadelphia?

I've had a letter from Cyril Fleisher of the International Folk Music Centre in the USA, who used to dance in England, and had hoped to visit the Cecil Sharp House dance at the beginning of May. He says "If any British folkdancers visit Philadelphia have them contact me, and I can get them slotted into the groups there."

So if any of you are lucky enough to be able to take him up on his offer, his address is –
803 E 24th St, Chester, PA 19013-5227.

Alison Scrimshaw

For most of the time the weather was idyllic - hot and dry, with a light breeze, and for this much thanks. The opening concert went off without a hitch, but there were organizational hiccups in the competitions and workshops. The Youth Choirs Competition preceding the Folkdance Groups over-ran by something like 90 minutes which made the adjudicators' task very difficult and deprived both the audience and competitors of a detailed summing-up. I heard rumours last year that the new Director would be a woman, and this proved to be correct. Also, there will be a number of changes in the competitions next year, which in my experience will lead to some problems. However, it is my purpose to give a quick sketch of the folk events this year, so here goes.

I said previously that the opening concert was to be a Slovak company but I now believe this to be wrong. Although the programme does not specify that they come from the Czech Republic, it does say they are Moravian; based in Brno, both of which are in the Czech region. On the other hand, the group is named after Ordras, a Slovak folk hero and rebel. Perhaps they are a Slovak minority group living outside Slovakia? Whatever else, they were professional in the best sense of the word. Every fast, energetic item was contrasted with one graceful and lyrical. Their singing too was delightful, and the musicians gave the show a lift which only good folk players can. Costumes were inclined to be uniform, but some items used a mixture of types, which gave a more authentic feeling. "Lifts", which occurred in most dances, were neatly done and looked effortless.

The first dance was for the girls only. Initially they were bare-footed but later put on clogs and demonstrated some wonderful footwork, not a tradition one sees much in Central Europe. Then a sword dance for the men, with an obvious relationship to those of England. Eight men in two opposing sets of four, a captain and a "bear" and his drunken keeper in place of the hobby horse. Next, a wedding dance from the Moravian/Slovak border, showing several folkloric rituals.

After the interval came a slow, gentle dance for couples, joined together only by holding the ends of a shawl. The next dance also started slowly but evolved into a fast and energetic Verbunk (recruiting dance) and then to a yearning couple dance. The girls' costumes were beautiful - dark red and black, the skirts turned back to show the colourful lining. Then a mountain dance from the Slovak/Polish range. Three men (wolves) met a fourth (lamb), toyed with him as a cat with a mouse, trapped and then killed him and danced round in triumph. This was particularly well done and had a real air of menace. Finally, a happy dance in attractive costumes for the entire company, closing what was the most enjoyable opening concert for many years.

Folk Music Competition

Next morning, bright and early (for me!), to the Town Hall for the Music preliminaries, where the first contestants were a duo from the Breton group. The bagpipe (biniau) and pipe (bombarde) produced lively, foot-tapping rhythms. From Provence, six musicians each playing a long drum (tambourin) and pipe (galoubet) gave us a march and a farandole. I liked them, but there was a monotony to the sound. The Lithuanian group, made up of two zithers (krankles), three pipes and a vertical xylophone with wooden blocks (scrabalai), were excellent musicians and played two contrasting and tuneful melodies.

The four Slovakian musicians were really good value for money. The combination of fine playing on the two violins, button accordion and bass, interspersed with extrovert singing, was most impressive. An older group of five Ukrainians, two violins, button accordion, pipe and drum, have appeared before but I think this year they were less together, musically.

A quartet from Korea were the last group and were purely percussive - a large gong in a wooden frame, two drums, one waisted, and a small hand gong. As can

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be imagined, they were difficult to make a judgment on. How do you tell if it was folk music? But they were masters of their instruments. Rising to a crescendo, dying away and rising again, the complicated rhythms were mind-blowingly loud. There was some controversy, I understand, as to whether they were professional or amateur, but as they were placed second I assume this was settled amicably. To close the competition there were two soloists; one, a stringed instrument player from Hong Kong. The instrument itself was a work of art but I felt the player showed some hesitation in the playing. The final entrant was a Norwegian, on flute, jaw's harp and mountain horn.

Three groups were invited to the finals in the Pavilion, and the marks awarded by the adjudicators were Slovaks 94, Koreans 92 and the Brittany duo 89.

Adult Folkdance Competition

At 3.00 p.m. approximately, we came to the Wednesday afternoon competition. It was as well, timewise, that four groups withdrew, although it would have been interesting to have seen the Albanians. There was also a record number of entries this year, so I am re-introducing my previous practice of omitting full details of the groups from the British Isles.

Turkey. The Harman Group opened the competition with Kiriklareli-Karsilama and Kabadayi. Accompanied by zurna and duval, the first was a men's dance, starting with a solo and the other men joining in later. Slowly turning, with outstretched arms and holding handkerchiefs, they attempted to pick up with their teeth what I suppose was a "lamb". It was presumably symbolic of something or other, but I am not sure I want to know what it was. The second was a harvest dance; first the men, then the women performing separate tasks. Finally they all joined in a celebratory dance. (80 marks).

France. From Provence, an older group, Li Dansaire Dou Grand Cavaou, performed Les Epées, a dance for four couples, with the men fighting with their rapiers and alternating with the women dancing Farandole steps. Then La Moisson, a mimed harvest dance using all the tools of the countryside. The music was provided by the five drums and pipes aforementioned. (82 marks).

England Shuttlers' Clog danced Brunswick Mill Jig and Lancashire Waltz. Good clogging, with a real folk feel. (84 marks).

Spain. The team from the Basque country, Baztango Dantzariak, gave a ritual dance, Musiko, celebrating the apple harvest. Four men, dressed in white, with tall, conical, multicoloured hats hung with ribbons, presented a simple but effective dance which concluded with them throwing "apples" (actually light balls) to the audience. Changing into black berets, and sashes, they joined the rest of the group for a fast fandango for six couples, Baztango Soka Dantza. The musicians were a small ensemble of pipe, drum and accordion. (90 marks - Third).

Slovenia. The pretty little town of Bled is the home of Folklorna Skupina Ribno and their regional costumes in dark reds and browns are very attractive. The group of nine couples presented first Starjrisi, which was, I think, a number of dances put together to represent a wedding party; a Landler-type dance, similar to that from Karinthia, with lots of arm movements. This was followed by a hat game in which the men stand in a circle, lift their hats and pass them on, with varying speed and direction, until a hat is dropped and the culprit eliminated. So it goes, until there is only one left. The second item was Ples Z Metlo, announced as a broom dance, a sort of Ninepins, where the odd man out has to dance with a broom. Well danced and presented better than the marks awarded. (86 marks).

N.Ireland. Loughgiel Folkdance Group danced Battle of Aura and Middletown Jig. Superb dancers but no individuality at all. (93 marks. Second).

Germany. The Sorbian Youth Ensemble Bautzen performed Hency Netk Zahrajce and

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Anka. Although the dancers did their best, the music was truly awful. The large band totally froze, leaving a solitary fiddler to scrape her way through. (79).

Lithuania. Seltinis was a large group of eight couples, and their first dance Kulimo Sokis, a fast dance in lines and circles, was followed by Kauskutis, an interesting clog dance for the men, stamping across the music, and then the girls, and eventually the men carrying their partners off the stage. Very well danced, but perhaps choreographed. (85 marks).

Hawai'i. This women's Youth Opera Chorus sang Iesu Ka Ho'ola and Nani Na Pua Ko'olau. Although they used arm movements, they cannot be called dances. Nevertheless, they were awarded 85 marks.

Wales. Dawnswyr Mon danced Abergenny and Dawns y Blodau Nantgarw, a dance for the gentry and a wellknown Welsh folk dance. (85 marks).

Poland. Ziemi Cieszynskiej presented Owieziok and Zajaczek Zabiok, both dances from the mountain area of Southern Poland. The first was a short couple dance and the second with separate parts for men and women. The music was provided by three violins, a bagpipe, trumpet and accordion. (84 marks).

Lithuania. The second group from this country was Dainava, with Dahlia Waltz and Polka. Comparatively simple but well presented, it was difficult to separate the two dances. To three pipes and an accordion, they told a story of the girls dancing with the boys, then refusing to, the boys partnering the older women and the girls getting jealous and, of course, one of the older men could not get a partner at all. In the evening concert this was expanded so that when he did dance he was out of time and always going in the wrong direction, to the despair of his partner. Familiar, perhaps? (85 marks).

Ukraine (Bradford). Krylati danced Vesnyanka, a compilation arrangement, and Hopak. They were competently performed by six men and six girls. With a small choice of dancers, they keep up a very high standard. (84 marks).

Brittany. This group of six couples, Measerien an Menez, based in Paris, gave us a foursome, Kas Abarh, a slow and grave dance, then a circle dance in couples with the man leading his partner across and into the circle and back. They adopted the costumes of a central district of Brittany. The figures and footwork of their items were quite simple but the style was impeccable. Music by biniou and bombarde. (95 marks. First).

Romania The music for the Izvorasul group was played on trumpet, clarinet, violin, bass and accordion. Fecioresc in Ponturi, a wedding dance, was for men only, with lots of clapping and boot slapping. Joc Din Mihai De Campie was a couple dance but again was dominated by the men. (86 marks).

Scotland (Bath) Corryvreckan danced Rioghal Leanabh, a formal Highland dance, and Moulin Dhu, a more folk-style dance in knee breeches for the men and country dress for the girls. (86 marks).

Korea. Jung Je Man Dance Company. The music for this group was largely percussion, and no information was given for the dances. One can say little about the company except that there were lots of pretty girls in raspberry coloured costumes making complicated patterns using fans and then drums and gongs. I am irresistably reminded of Busby Berkeley's arrangements for Hollywood musicals. (86)

Estonia. Tartu Teacher Training College. This attractive group of eight couples danced Kolme Kandi Lood, a finger dance in Schottische rhythm, and Sormolugu Ja Reilender, a comic flirting dance starting with one couple following the rest and ending with the last man carrying his partner. This was a good performance and, apart from the choreography, I saw no reason for the low mark. (81).

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England. Castiard danced Picking Up Stitches(not sticks!) for two sets of four, and Winter's Dream, a stick dance for six men to pipe and drum and with a hobby horse, or, rather, stag. English folk dance at its best. (86 marks).

Rep. of Ireland. Rinceoiri Chill Mhantain danced a Trip To The Cottage and The Emerald Isle. Absolutely precise footwork and movement but uptight, with little folk feeling. (88 marks).

Slovakia. Polienko. Their first item, Taku Mi Zahrajtel, had eight men in white and red mountain costumes and their partners in blue and red. Highly choreographed they still danced mainly in separate groups, but whether the addition of a man "Betsey" is traditional I do not know. Then a change of costume which was quite odd. Wide calf-length trows with a low waist and with a wide leather belt, a small waistcoat and a small shirt only covering the chest, leaving the rest of their body bare. All this topped by a little round hat. The style of the dance is odd, much gesturing as usual but in a laid-back way. Otherwise, the format for Ktori Chcete Podte So Minou Tancovat was as before, men's solos follow a few turns with partners. (86 marks).

North Harrow Friends Group (Indian). The two dances, Garbo and Raandal No Ghodo, appeared to be in praise of the goddess figures placed in a small shrine on the stage. In the first, they carried cooking pots, and for the second they were in two facing lines and a girl from each met and danced together. Their saris were wonderful, and the items were well done, but again judgment is difficult. (84).

Ukraine. A small group of four couples, Plaj, were very clearly amateurs and gave, I thought, a very successful performance of their two dances, Prykarpatian Dribon'ky and Love-Making, with a slight change of costume. Both were couple dances and included "show-off" figures for both sexes. The love-making would have been deemed a little genteel for Channel 5. (82 marks).

Tuekry. Finally, from Istanbul, Turku Folklor R A, a group of young people. Performing Gaziantep and Agri, in contrasting costumes, they were well rehearsed and the dances not over-choreographed but perhaps because of their youth they were not positive enough. For the audience, the duval player was a show on his own. (89 marks).

As noted above, the adjudication was very short and much information was not given, but Narendra Kotiyan again stressed the aim of the Eisteddfod was to promote friendship among peoples through dance and song. He also complimented many of their groups on their research into the background of their chosen items.

GEORGE SWEETLAND

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martin_ihns@oxford.dances.ok

To celebrate the fifth weekend of October this year, the ever-popular Martin Ihns makes a brief visit to Oxford on the 30th-31st October to introduce his new programme of dances from Macedonia. An evening Dance will give us a chance to remember some of his earlier dances. There may be a short dance session on the Sunday. Arrangements are yet to be finalised. More details will follow in the September SIFD NEWS.

Numbers are limited, so if you are interested please contact me on 01702 202289 or Roger Wicksteed on 01865 451890.

DAVE CARTER

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

S.I. Sept.11th S.I.F.D. DAY COURSE. No details.

Sept.11th BALKANPLUS

S.I. Sept.12th DAY OF BALKAN DANCES with Frances Horrocks, 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. at Stone Cross Memorial Hall, near Eastbourne (at junction of B2104 and B2247, map on request). £6.00. Drinks provided; please bring packed lunch. Ring Rowena Martin on 01323 503991 to reserve your place.

S.I. Sept.25th ANNIVERSARY DANCE organized by RAINMAKERS International Folkdance Group at Ickleford Village Hall, near Hitchin, Herts. 7.30-11.00 p.m. Music from "Cloudburst". M.C. Jill Bransby. Tickets £6.00 including refreshments. Details from 01462 636038.

Oct.2nd S.I.F.D. WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH ISRAELI DANCE WORKSHOP with Roberto Haddon. 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. at Blakenhale Junior School, Homestead Road, Garretts Green, Birmingham. £7.00 S.I.F.D. members (£8.00 non-members) all day; £4.00 members, £4.50 non-members half day. Branch A.G.M. during lunch break. For details of how to get there, 'phone Maggie Kaye on 0121 608 1437.

S.I. Oct.9th S.I.F.D. DAY COURSE. No details.

Oct.15th/17th S.I.F.D. DANCING/WALKING WEEKEND at Glenfall House, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. For information, contact Roy Clarke, 33 Cedar Park Road, Enfield Middx. EN2 0HE. Tel: 0181 367 2649.

Oct.16th WOODVALE INTERNATIONAL FOLKDANCE GROUP AUTUMN DANCE, 7.30-11.00 p.m. at Borough Green Village Hall. Tickets £5.00 including excellent buffet; please bring your own drinks. Further information from Alan Cant, 01732 883405. Please let us know if you are coming; we love to see all our friends, old and new.

S.I. Oct.16th FRITH FOLK are organizing a day when Frances Horrocks will teach a variety of dances from EASTERN EUROPE. 10.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m., followed by a full tea (included). Town End Methodist Church, Chapel en le Frith, near Buxton, Derbyshire. Drinks provided; bring packed lunch or explore pubs, coffee shops etc. in Chapel. Not more than £6.00, possibly less depending on numbers. Details from Pat Phillips, 01298 24450.

Oct.22nd BRISTOL I.F.D. 25TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY.

Oct.23rd READING TRADITIONAL & STEP DANCE GROUP ANNUAL CLOG & STEP DANCE FESTIVAL in Maidenhead, Berks. The 12 workshops include Pierre Chartrand from Canada on French Canadian step dancing, and Nigel Close & Woodfidley taking solo to 4-couple Manx dances. Information from Michele Vale, 0118 987 3901, or Anne Garrison, 0118 947 4244. Programme of events with application form from Lesley Gowers, 94 Hartsbourne Road, Earley, Reading, Berks. RG6 5SJ. Tel: 0118 987 4510.

Nov.12th/14th RESIDENTIAL WEEKEND COURSE OF ISRAELI DANCING with Fiona Howarth at Bourton-on-the-Water, Cotswolds. Non-dancing friends and family welcome. En-suite accommodation, plentiful choice of food. Full board and accommodation £82.00, weekend course £14.00. For details send s.a.e. to Cathy Meunier, 115 Chetwynd Road, London NW5 1DA.

Nov.27th ZIVKO FIRFOV BALKAN PARTY at Moorfields School, London E.C.1.
(N.B. The party will be a week earlier than in previous years).

Events covered by S.I.F.D. insurance are marked "S.I." in the margin. Please remember that the onus is on you to mark each event when sending in the notice if your event is covered by our insurance.

DANCING IN GUERNSEY

While on holiday recently in Guernsey - top speed limit 35 m.p.h., petrol 29.9p per litre - Wilf and I managed to make contact with a group of Guernsey Folk Dancers. Despite the fact that they were rehearsing for a demonstration, they invited us along for the evening, where we received the most wonderful welcome. Everyone was so friendly and hospitable; we didn't feel we were intruding one bit.

The group were rehearsing for an annual event organized by the National Trust of Guernsey, called "Le Viaer Marchi", with displays of goods and artefacts by local craftspeople. They were presenting not just dances but some monologues in the old Guernsey patois, or ancient French, which is spoken by very few nowadays. In both spoken and written, only a few words are close enough to modern French to be understood. One of the monologues, beautifully delivered by "Hazel" with accompanying actions, described a rooster with a rich red coxcomb and gleaming plumage, much loved by day but at dawn, with its raucous crowing, its doting owner could quite cheerfully have strangled it. The monologue was directed at Wilf, who was the one who got "strangled". Hazel is a very lively, agile lady in her eighties, though I wasn't supposed to know that.

As in many countries, some of the original dances have been lost, and memories are being jogged and research undertaken. Unfortunately, a lot of the music has also gone and we heard melodies like "Little Brown Jug" and "Two Lovely Black Eyes" played by a lovely accordionist, though there was also a rumbustuous polka to an old tune which had much more of a French flavour. Although close to the Brittany coast, the dances have more in common with the Normandy tradition (old William has much to answer for!), with couple dances in various formations, polkas, waltzes and some individualistic steps. While we were there the group was working on a dance in a longways set, alternate couples improper, with the first couple in the centre and gradually working outwards until the whole set was involved.

For demonstrations, the group wear costumes taken from the turn of the century, the men in top hat and tails with white trousers, and the ladies in long silk and brocade dresses of various colours, with elaborate hats and fringed silk shawls, all looking extremely elegant. During their demonstrations, the audience is also invited to join in certain dances and I was delighted to be the participating audience during the evening, being partnered by several charming gentlemen, in fact nearly all of them, in a progressive dance where the ladies stayed in place and the men had to get from the top to the bottom of the longways set of indefinable length with no extra time in which to do it - quite a scramble but great fun.

We thoroughly enjoyed our evening with them, and recommend anyone going to Guernsey to seek them out.

FRANCES HORROCKS

P.S. At Llangollen, during the interval of the opening concert, I got talking to a gentleman sitting behind me. He came from Guernsey, speaks the patois, and knows "Hazel". I believe the tent holds 4,500!

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The Taras Cossacks

I've seen a fabulous dance show, called The Taras Cossacks, in Bexhill. I'm no expert on Russian dancing and thus can't talk about the authenticity, but I enjoyed every minute. The dance acts short, varied and interspersed within instrumental melodies by three musicians. There was a good sprinkling of humour. Everything was fast-paced, with slick presentation and colourful costumes, and the performers seemed to be enjoying themselves tremendously.

So many dance shows are disappointing because the performers present themselves as 'artists' and forget to entertain the audience. Taras Cossacks were refreshingly different. A friend told me that the troupe have been touring for several years. If they come to your area, go and see them.

And if you see a really good dance show somewhere, please tell me about it, so that I can go to it.

Christine Hall Tel. 01580 850687.

VICTORIA EMBANKMENT GARDENS, LONDON

On Saturday, 19th June, the Martisorul Romanian Folkdance Group gave a performance at midday and were blessed with fine, warm weather. The actual teacher is Mihai but this year he decided to leave the arrangement of the programme to anyone who wanted to do it. The arranger this year decided not to have continuous dancing but to have a definite interval while the group changed costumes. To the dancers' surprise, the usual drifting audience remained seated and were still there for the second half. Thank you to all members of Martisorul who turned up.

On Sunday, 27th June, Central London International Folkdance Group joined with dancers from Croxley Green (Herts.). Central London started the programme in Basque (French) costumes, followed by white Latvian for a team of girls, and then Polish costumes for a set of East European dances. The Croxley Green dancers had a variety of beautiful and colourful dresses which they wore for a selection of dances. Both groups joined together for a Russian dance to end the varied programme.

Those members of the audience who were familiar with the dance personnel were extremely sorry to hear that Tony Latham was unable to dance on this occasion because of a back injury, and we hope that by now he will have recovered. However, Tony was able to operate the sound, while our usual disembodied voice - Richard Mellish - stepped on stage to do some dances in Tony's place. Let us hope that we see more of Richard in this way! Meantime, thank you to all Croxley Green and Central London dancers who put on an interesting and varied programme.

Thank you also to members of Balaton (Hungarian) and Philhellenes (Greek) who danced on Sunday, 11th July. There had been quite a lot of trouble with the Gardens staff about the timing, and eventually it took place at 11.30 a.m. instead of at 3.00 p.m. as advertised in SIFD NEWS. We tried to let as many people know as possible and hope no-one in the Society missed out. In the event, there was a larger audience than usual, with many tourists staying to watch. A delightful innovation was a group of children brought by the Greek Philhellenes.

KAY KEDGE

NOT A LOT OF PEOPLE KNOW THAT the Willingdon I.F.D.G. runs Israeli folkdance evenings at the St.Thomas a Becket Hall in Lewes, East Sussex, mostly on Sundays (irregular dates). For details, and a list of dates, telephone Rowena Martin on 01323 503991.

ROWENA MARTIN

KARL KLENK, one of our Swiss members, kindly sent me some helpful comments on the music published last month, which I have passed on to our musicians, and Karl also asked for his best wishes and greetings to be passed on to all his English friends. Ed.

FOR THOSE WITH ACCESS TO THE INTERNET:

The surfers in the S.I.F.D. might like to direct their browsers to the new Martisorul web site at <http://members.aol.com/eliznik/marts.htm>

LIZ MELLISH

SALTY DOG RAG

Have you ever wondered about the precise origins of a dance? I sometimes do and never ask because I assume, rightly or wrongly, that the origins of most dances are so obscure that it is pointless enquiring. I do like it when English country dance callers say something like, "The dance we are now going to do was first published in the Playford 1651 edition", or "This dance called "Lost and Never Found" was choreographed by me last year when I tried for the first time to find my way around Stevenage". I then have a firm reference point in my mind and it helps me to understand the dance a little better. I remember being astonished when Elsche Korf, when teaching the Dutch dance "Ys Wals", gave the year of composition, the name of the choreographer, and the origins of the tune. I was surprised because it is very rare to be given this information in international folk dance.

One dance I have puzzled about is "Salty Dog Rag", which is often danced in the S.I.F.D. Ragtime music started becoming popular before 1900 and the great ragtime dance era is considered to have been between about 1900 and 1920, so I guessed that because there is the term "rag" in the title the tune and dance originated in America in the early years of this century. That was quite wrong and was a warning that simplistic thinking in the folk world does not necessarily give the right answers. I was lucky enough to talk to Richard Powers and he put me right. He is a professor of dance history at the University of Stanford, California, who specialises in nineteenth and twentieth century dance. Unfortunately, the conversation was brief and so I did not get all the detail I would have liked but here is what he had to say.

In the nineteenth century a very popular dance in ballrooms, along with the waltz, polka and mazurka, was the schottische. In 1905 in America, a set dance using the schottische was composed, called the "Ostend". In America before the first World War there was a dancing couple, Vernon and Irene Castle, who were enormously successful stage performers and who were much admired by Fred and Adele Astaire. They choreographed dances that became popular in ballrooms and one of these was the "Castle Schottische" which was written about 1913 and which was really an adaptation of the "Ostend".

Ragtime music was so popular that hundreds and hundreds of tunes were composed and many of these long after the ragtime era. In 1950, the "Salty Dog Rag" song was written. Somebody wanted to dance to it and instead of turning to one of the new dance forms that had appeared in the last thirty years they reverted back to the "Castle Schottische". They took it, simplified it, and fitted it to the new music and called the result the "Salty Dog Rag". In the mid-sixties a heel and toe variation was introduced but that was not part of the original "Salty Dog Rag" dance.

Two comments. When we dance "Salty Dog Rag" we tend to invest it with a lot of wild, jazzy movements because we think that is how Americans dance. I was not able to ask whether that is correct or not, but no way would one have danced the "Castle Schottische" like that in the elegant society ballrooms of 1913. The other thing is that it was obviously clear to me that Richard Powers (a University academic) had put "Salty Dog Rag" into the category of American folk dance, though I do not know on what basis he would have made this classification.

On the same occasion, he gave a short lecture to the assembled group on aspects of the origins of the Tango. It was fascinating, but that is another story.

HENRY LEE

GREEK FOLKDANCE COURSES. The residential courses in Greek folk dance mentioned last month on p.10 will be taking place on 3rd-10th August and 18th-25th September.

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

No Sunday Dance in August.

S.I. Sept.5th M.C. Jeanette Hull

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

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WHAT'S ON IN AUGUST

Aug.12th "KROKE", Klezmer Music from Poland, at Hazelwood House, Loddiswell, Nr.Kingsbridge, South Devon, 8.00 p.m. Concert £9.50 (£7 concessions), Buffet supper £12.00. Tel: 01548 821232.

Aug.14th BILLINGHAM INTERNATIONAL FOLKLORE FESTIVAL.
to 21st

Aug.14th HF HOLIDAYS RESIDENTIAL WEEK in St.Ives, with Phil and Brenda Steventon.
to 21st A course aimed at Beginner/Intermediate dancers; all dances will be walked through. To book, ring 0181 905 9558, or for further details contact Phil or Brenda on 0181 397 9649.

Aug.21st "ZIGAZAG", a Cajun Creole Dance Band will be giving a Concert at The Pit, Itchel Lane, Crondall, Nr.Farnham, Surrey. Tel: 01252 850789. Buffet 6 p.m., Dance Workshop 7.15 p.m., Concert 8 p.m. £12.00 for Concert, £25.00 Buffet & Concert.

S.I. Aug.27th MINI-FESTIVAL at Roedean School, Brighton. Programme includes Macedonian, Greek, Romanian, Israeli, English, Circle, Russian, Armenian, Playford and Breton. "Labyrinth" Band on Saturday evening and a country walk on Sunday. Full board, single rooms, swimming pool. £110 (deposit £20). S.a.e. to Rowena Martin, Willingdon I.F.D.G., 60 Anderida Road, Eastbourne BN22 0PZ. for details.

Aug.31st "KROKE", Klezmer Music from Poland. 7.30 p.m. at The Pit, Itchel Lane, Crondall, nr.Farnham, Surrey. £12 concert only; £25 concert and dinner afterwards. Tel: 01252 850789.

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BALKANPLUS. There is no Dance in August. The next Dance will be on Saturday, 11th September. M.C.s: Madeleine Chapman and John Riley, with "Dunav". All season ticket holders are invited to attend a meeting at 6.30 p.m. prior to the Dance. This is important, and the Committee hope that all concerned will make every effort to attend.

FRANCES HORROCKS

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Christine Hall has published a list giving details of the many dance courses, workshops and summer and autumn schools she will be running from this month onwards. For details, please contact Christine at Finchden, Sandhurst, Cranbrook, Kent TN18 5JS. Tel: 01580 850687.

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N.B. Please read the notice on p.2 regarding the September issue.