

SIFD NEWS



October 2001

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

Internet website: www.sifd.org

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The typing is done by Lily Avery. The printing, packaging and posting
is done by Dalila Heath.

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This month's cover was produced by Simon Guest from a photograph
of Macedonian dancers taken by Tanya Allen at a festival in Bulgaria.

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

VERY IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Society will take place on Sunday, 2nd December, at 4.00 p.m. at Cecil Sharp House (venue to be confirmed).

For some years now, the announcement of the A.G.M. has been accompanied by an appeal for new members of the Committee. This year is no exception. We still need a Secretary, but if the idea of jumping straight into that role is too daunting we also need ordinary members of the Committee. The constitution allows for nine ordinary members but at present we have only three, so you can see we have our work cut out just to carry on the day to day business of the Society, let alone deal with any new initiatives.

I should also like to add an additional appeal this year. We need members to turn up at the A.G.M. We have only just managed to raise a quorum (which at an A.G.M. is 20 members) for the last few years. I don't know what would happen under the constitution if we failed to get a quorum and I don't want to have to find out. Attendance at the A.G.M. is not very onerous and it is followed by the usual Sunday Dance, so it is not all talk and no play.

The Society is still very active in organizing courses, summer schools, dances etc. and there is a healthy interest in our activities. It would be a great shame if we had to stop operating because we could not get enough people to help with the administration.

MIKE GILBERT (Chairman)



S.I.F.D. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS AND ASSOCIATION AND AFFILIATION
RENEWAL FOR 2001-2002

Annual subscriptions became due on 1st September 2001. Appreciation and many thanks are due to so many members and group officers who have renewed promptly. Members who have not sent their subscription 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 2001 of invitation to renew annual Association or Affiliation sent to group leaders. 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 Friday, 5th October 2001.

Annual subscriptions (unchanged since 1999) are:-

Town Member.. .. .	£17.00
Joint Town Members	£22.80
Country/Overseas Member	£13.50
Joint Country/Overseas Members	£17.00
Junior Member	£5.30
Affiliation Subscription	£29.30
	£24.00 for music groups

ALAN MORTON
Hon. Membership Secretary and
Groups Liaison Officer

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Lily,

I read the article of Mr. Towner in the August SIFD NEWS with great interest. I understand his questions about the East-European post-communist countries' high quality folkdance movement; "Was it an ideological construction?", which is the summary question of his article. I shall try to explain some circumstances in these countries. I can't say a yes or no, white or black. It is a complicated subject. Anyone who never lived at this time in these countries would find it difficult to understand this very complicated subject.

Naturally, I know the Hungarian circumstances well, but there was much similarity with the other East-European countries. In Hungary (and in the neighbouring countries) there was a living, flourishing folk-art, folk-music, folk-dance in the 19th and first half of the 20th century in the village life, peasant life. But the noblemen who lived in their country castles or mansions often took part in several peasant weddings or harvest and vintage feasts.

The 19th century's national romanticism encouraged the development of ethnographical researches. In the first half of the 20th century there was some national or folkdance teaching in some schools and scout teams. At this time the so-called "Pearl bouquet" movement was established. This meant that several villages, during national festivities, were brought to Budapest with their own dances in their original costumes. This movement surely had a nationalist tone; at first against the Austrian Habsburg oppression, later after the defeat of the First World War and the conclusion of peace in Trianon. Otherwise, there was a significant change in our music-life thanks to Bela Bartok's and Zoltan Kodaly's and their pupils' work, who researched the original old folk-tunes at the whole Carpathian basin. They not only collected but made a scientific analysis and systematised them. Their work drew the attention to the real folk-music.

After the 2nd World War, the Russian communist invasion brought a rule that these conquered little countries like Hungary should imitate everything from the "Great Brother", the Soviet Union. So that meant everything that was before should be negotiated and the cultural life should be based on the communist ideology, the "social-realist" and the socialist aesthetic. They mostly wanted to win the young people to their ideology. It became compulsory for every young worker to take part in some "social work". That meant that before and after work they had to take part at a folkdance group, choir or drama, or political seminar. So in the fifties every factory, workshop or office had their own cultural group. They were tiny and not very high level groups. Based on a Soviet pattern, a professional dance group of the Army (Honved Együttes) and the State Ensemble was founded. The Institute of Folk-arts ran courses in folk-arts.

The famous Russian dance groups, like the Alexandrov and the Mojsejev dance group, performed in Budapest and we gazed at their high level of dance technique and the artistic interpretation on stage. Igor Mojsejev encouraged the Hungarian State Ensemble to collect and interpret their own original Hungarian dances. As this aim wasn't without precedence there were talented young ethnographers who started the research of folk dances, the scientific analysis and the systematisation of the dances. Without tiredness they went to the far villages out of some good technical equipment and brought the pearls of our folkdance treasure. We choreographers and dance teachers realised how little our knowledge was of folk dance. We learned not to think in motives, but learnt the style, the construction, the spirit of the dances. We learned our very variable, colourful and rich folk dances directly from the researchers of the original dances.

After the events of 1956 there was a short standstill, then life started again. The little low-level cultural groups vanished. After a while, dance

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groups started functioning at the cultural houses or at trade unions or associations. These groups became big with 30-40 members and talented, qualified choreographers. Of course, there was an ideological direction, but with the experts there was not much to dispute. For school children we elaborated folk-games and folk-dance degrees founded upon the Kodaly system's music-teaching.

The dance researches extended to Transylvania and we learned the very virtuosic, archaic Hungarian and Romanian dances. We became acquainted with the full dance-set of Szek and the idea of the "dance house". After that the dancers in the best amateur dance groups realised it would be very good to arrange such "dance houses" where they could dance only for their own amusement. The folk dance became part of their life, not only performing on stage. In the dance houses flourished really the soul of the Hungarian folk dance, the free improvisation and the real partnership in the couple dances; all this had a good influence on the stage as well. The "officials" watched suspiciously but at last it wasn't forbidden. Of course, the movement gave the young people some national self-respect. The dance house movement is still living and many people take part in them who don't want to dance on stage.

A few words about the amateur dance groups at foreign festivals. Of course there was a demand for a high level for those who were allowed to go abroad and there was always a "delegation" who travelled with the group, partly to control the group, partly to have the possibility to travel to foreign countries. The latter encouraged the dancers as well because this was the only possibility to see something from the other side. Amateur dancers did not receive any payment for their performance, only accommodation in the given foreign country.

Luckily, the Hungarian folkdance movement flourishes also after the political changes. It is part of our cultural heritage.

I am sorry if this is a bit long. I feel I could tell much more about the subject but perhaps I have been able to give a rough sketch of the Hungarian folk-dance life in the last 50 years.

Yours sincerely,

MAGDA OSSKO Choreographer,
H-1124 Budapest, Kiss Janos altb.u.55



UPDATE ON MILTON KEYNES INTERNATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL

Five teams (not all Affiliated or Associated) have expressed an interest in taking part in the festival so far but there is still room for one or two more. This is a great opportunity to show off the dances we have been learning from all the expert teachers we have been bringing to this country over the years. It is also a chance to have a great weekend, meet old (and new) friends, and possibly share some repertoire and learn a few new dances. The provisional date is the weekend of 22nd and 23rd June 2002 but everything now depends on the ability of the organizers to raise the necessary money to make the event happen.

MIKE GILBERT (Chairman)

S.I.F.D. DAY COURSES

13th October - JAPANESE

These are the dances I shall be doing on the October Japanese Day Course:

Kototaki Ondo
Tajimi Ko Uta
Charachan Odori
Koshuu Bon Odori
Harukoma
Esashi Jinku
Yattusaka
and possibly Tanko Bushi

Two of the dances are with a flat Japanese fan, and for one the fan needs to have a round handle which can be rolled between the hands. I have some fans to lend.

MARINA WOLSTENHOLME

17th November - ROMANIAN

Our aim for the day is to travel through the regions of Romania meeting as many of the different types of dances as time allows, with some information on music and costume thrown in. Unlike our travels round Romania by hire car, we won't be leaving Cecil Sharp House for this event. We will try to use village dances instead of folkdance choreographies but this doesn't mean all the dances will be easy!

Some longer serving dancers probably have a good knowledge of the regional dances but hopefully it will be fun anyway!

NICK GREEN and LIZ MELLISH

Ed.Note: I haven't received any details re venue, times, cost etc. for these two courses. If you wish to check, please ring Helen Ezra, 020 8648 4118.

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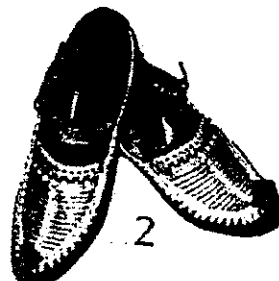
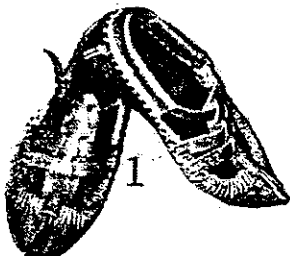
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BALKAN SHOES

Would anyone like to have my Balkan shoes, for the cost of postage?

One pair of Macedonian opanki, similar to photo No.1, and one pair of Serbian, similar to photo No.2 but with long leather straps to tie round the ankle instead of buckled straps. Approx. size 38.

LILY AVERY (address on p.2)



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- S.I. Nov.3rd FRITH FOLK are pleased to welcome Marina Wolstenholme as tutor for their Day Course, with dances from her recent visits to Romania, Bulgaria, with some from Israel and Russia. At Town End Methodist Church, Chapel en le Frith, near Buxton, from 10.30 a.m to 4.00 p.m., followed by afternoon tea (included). Cost about £6.00 depending on numbers. Further details from Pat Phillips, 01298 24450.
- Nov.3rd BLOWZABELLA DANCE at Bath Spa University College (Newton St.Loe). For details, ring Nicki Cawthorne on 01225 332025.
- Nov.3rd/4th YUGOSLAVIAN DANCE WEEKEND at Bognor Regis. Details given in June. Enquiries to Janet Douglas, 01243 265010.
- Nov.3rd/4th CRETAN WEEKEND WORKSHOP. See p.10.
- Nov.10th ARMENIAN DANCE COURSE organized by Nutbrook I.F.D.G. at Stevenson Junior School, Wadsworth Road, Stapleford, Notts. Tutor: Dalila Heath. 10.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. One session £3.50, all day £6.00. Bring your own lunch. Information from John & Gill Morral on 0115 917 1831.
- S.I. Nov.17th S.I.F.D. DAY COURSE - ROMANIAN with Nick Green & Liz Mellish. See p.6.
- Nov.24th BALKAN DANCE DAY with Paul Boizot, 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. at Sheffield. £6-£17. For details/bookings ring 0114 256 1708.
- S.I. Nov.25th ISRAELI DANCE PARTY with Anat, including revision of some of this year's workshop dances, at Stone Cross Memorial Hall, near Eastbourne. 10.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. £12.00 (concessions £7.50). Shared vegetarian lunch. For bookings/information/map ring Rowena Martin on 01323 503991.
- S.I. Nov.25th OXFÖRD BALKANSKO ORO presents Mira Lasarova (formerly with Rodopi Ensemble) teaching a variety of Bulgarian dances including Women's Rutschenitsa at St.Margaret's Hall, Polstead Road, Oxford, 2.00-5.00 p.m. £5 at the door.
- Nov.30th/Dec.1st ISRAELI DANCE COURSE with Fiona Howarth at Bourton-on-the-Water. Choice of General or Advanced course. Non-dancing friends and family welcome. Full board en-suite accommodation. £90.00. Course £14.00. Details from Cathy Meunier, 115 Chetwynd Rd., London NW5 1DA. (s.a.e. please).
- Dec.1st ZIVKO FIRFOV FOLKLORE GROUP PARTY at Moorfields Primary School, London E.C.1, 7.00-10.30 p.m. Nearest Underground Station: Old Street. Dances from Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia; also from Bulgaria, Greece and Romania. £6.00 including refreshments. ADMISSION BY TICKET ONLY from Irene Keywood, 133 Third Avenue, Dagenham, Essex RM10 9BD. Tel: 020 8592 4427. Cheques to be made out to Zivko Firfov Folklore Group (s.a.e. please).
- S.I. Dec.8th S.I.F.D. WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH CHRISTMAS PARTY, 7.30-10.30 p.m. at Weoley Village Hall, Weoley Hill, Selly Oak, Birmingham (off Bristol Road South). M.C.: Maggie Kaye. £2.00. Bring and share supper. For details of how to get there, ring Maggie on 0121 608 1437.
- S.I. Dec.14th/16th S.I.F.D. WEEKEND AT DUNFORD. Contact Jack Richardson, Dept. of Chemical Engineering, University, Swansea SA2 8PP. Tel: 01792 403153 (home), 01792 295194 (work).
- Dec.24th/Jan.2nd CHRISTMAS YUGOSLAVIAN FOLK FESTIVAL in Belgrade. For details contact (before 20th November) either OKUD Gradimir in Belgrade, Tel: +381/11/456-549 or Paja Milic in Holland, Tel: +31/229/234-609 or 229/249-109.
- S.I. Dec.31st S.I.F.D. WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY, from 8 p.m. to 2002. Downing Hall, Knowle. £2.00. M.C.: Grace Pittman. Bring and share supper.

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S.I. Jan.19th OXFORD NEW YEAR PARTY at St.Margaret's Hall, Polstead Road, Oxford.
7.00-11.00 p.m. (No price given).

S.I. Jan.27th ISRAELI DANCE WORKSHOP with Anat at Stone Cross Memorial Hall, near Eastbourne, 10.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. £12.00 (concessions £7.50). Shared vegetarian lunch. For bookings/information/map, ring Rowena Martin, 01323 503991.

Mar.22nd/24th A SPRING DANCE CELEBRATION of dances from the Balkans, Romania and Russia at Freshwater Bay, Isle of Wight. Tutor: Bob Neal. Contact: Pamela Le Goaziou, 55 Mitchell Road, Bedhampton, Hants. PO9 3QA. Tel: 023 9264 1028. Numbers limited.

Apr.19th/21st BULGARIAN DANCE COURSE with Eddy Tijssen at Derwent Bank, Lake District. Choice of General or Advanced course, or both courses. Non-dancing friends and family welcome. Full board en-suite accommodation £92.00. Each course £15.00. Details and booking form from Cathy Meunier, 115 Chetwynd Road, London NW5 1DA. (s.a.e. please).



EDDY TIJSSSEN AT BOGNOR REGIS, 16TH/17TH MARCH 2002

Eddy Tijssen will be giving a weekend workshop in Bognor Regis in March next year. He will teach dances that he feels will best suit the group as he finds them. However, I have asked him to teach at least two or three fairly simple ones.

The course consists of five hours teaching each day, with an optional evening meal on the Saturday. The course is £32.00; the Balkan meal is £10.00. For further details, write to me at Oak Cottage, 92 Rose Green Road, Bognor Regis PO21 3EQ, or ring 01243 265010.

JANET DOUGLAS



VISIT OF SILVIU CIUCIUMIS TO THE NORTH

On 16th and 17th March 2002, Silviu Ciuciumis will be coming to Manchester and Calver, Derbyshire, for two days of workshops. Again the course is being organized jointly by Barlow I.F.D.G. and Derbyshire Dancers. £12.00 for one day, £20.00 for the whole course, including a Dance on the Saturday night.

Silviu has been coming to England for many years now and is a leading exponent of Romanian folk dance as well as being an excellent teacher. We are extremely lucky to be able to book him for this course in the Spring.

For further details, please contact Helen Clancy on 0161 881 0442.

JULIE KORTH and
MARINA WOLSTENHOLME

SIDMOUTH FESTIVAL

When people speak about the leading annual festivals worth visiting in England to see displays of international folk dance they usually mention the three most important - Llangollen, Sidmouth and Billingham. After recent changes at Sidmouth, I would hesitate to include it with the other two.

One thing I like about Sidmouth is its readiness to change, to adapt, to introduce new ideas and to innovate. The festival is so huge it can incorporate and digest these changes, though some people may be displeased by what happens. I remember some years ago somebody grumbling to me that in the good old days it was all British but now he had been told the displays at the Arena at Sidmouth were nearly all by those wretched foreigners! Alas, changes in the last two years will not please S.I.F.D. members. I shall concentrate on discussion of displays at the Arena because it is where the audiences are biggest (up to about 8,000) and these displays are therefore the most important aspects of the festival.

For many years through the eighties and nineties the structure of the performances at the Arena had been well established. They were mainly dance displays dominated by the foreign teams of which there were half a dozen or more. They would give their first performance on the first Friday and the teams would appear quite frequently through the week and on the final night, the second Friday, all the teams would dance in the grand finale. One could follow one's favourite teams through the week, often showing different dances with different sets of costumes, and the final night was always a happy and glorious occasion.

Within this structure one noticed gradual changes through the years. In the early eighties there were frequent visits by Scandinavian teams and then they disappeared completely from the Sidmouth scene. One used to get homely folk teams peopled by ordinary folk of various ages and abilities, i.e. dance clubs one could imagine oneself belonging to, and then there was a tendency in the nineties to displace these with semi-professional groups with slickly rehearsed young dancers. Another tendency was to have fewer European teams (sad) but more from other continents (very welcome). There was one constant and that was the festival organisers' firm intention to have every year (with exceptions due to unfavourable circumstances) a team from the U.S.S.R. These teams all seemed to me to have the same choreography, to have male dancers recruited from Olympic gymnast teams, and to be infused with what one folkdance expert told me was "communist folk ideology". (There are signs, fortunately, that this is changing). This used to annoy S.I.F.D. members, who could think of other rarely seen countries who should have been invited instead for a change, and they would become even more irritated when the organisers made portentous announcements like, "There is a buzz to Sidmouth; it has come alive; the Russians have arrived". I think the organisers were right. The general public loved the athletic antics of the Russians. As for me, so long as they sang Kalinka, which they invariably did, I liked them too.

So what has changed? Far fewer of the programmes at the Arena are of dance as they are being replaced by concerts. Teams come for two or three days only for one or two appearances at the Arena. One feels if one blinks one will miss them. I blinked once or twice this year. There are fewer straightforward international folkdance teams with their good supporting bands. More of the international groups now invited emphasize other performance aspects besides dance, e.g. theatre, singing, acrobatics, and their music, especially percussion. There is an awful lot of drumming to be heard at the Arena and partly because the flavour of the month at Sidmouth (as in world music on Radio 3) is Africa. That splendid grand finale on the last Friday evening is there no longer because all the international folkdance teams have gone away by then. This year it was replaced by something called a Brazilian Carnival which, I was told, did not

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please audiences very much.

So the presence of international folkdance teams at the Arena has been drastically reduced and the S.I.F.D. people I spoke to were disappointed by this. If I were one of the organisers I would not be worried about that as very few S.I.F.D. members go, but I would be worried by the reaction of the general public who are the paying customers filling the Arena. From impressions I got they are somewhat bewildered and unhappy with the changes. They like to see a colourful and varied and exotic show, and a range of international folkdance teams provided that. Why have these drastic changes been made? I do not know. It may be a deliberate strategic move influenced by financial considerations.

So, one should not be bothered with Sidmouth? Not at all. We may not like the changes but the festival is enormous and if one is interested in and curious about the broad diversity of the folk arts, then there are lots of wonderful things to see and hear and do at Sidmouth.

HENRY LEE

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CRETAN WEEKEND AT WOOD GREEN

The Minotavri Cretan Dancers have organized a weekend workshop of Cretan dancing on 3rd and 4th November in Wood Green. Kostas and Mana Georgiladakis, of the Cretan Dance Group, "I Paradosi", will be giving an advanced course in the main Cretan dances. Cretan music will be performed by the "Ta Perivolia" group at the workshop party on the Saturday evening.

The cost will be £25.00 plus £5.00 for the party (musicians). Numbers will be strictly limited to 40.

The workshop is ideal for those who can dance basic Cretan and want to learn to dance solos.

All enquiries please to Vassiliki on 020 7226 4128 (weekends).

DIKI GLEESON

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EASTBOURNE FESTIVAL NEWS

Jan Mulreany has agreed to join the Eastbourne Committee. This is excellent news because this enables the Society to have a member attending the meetings and gives us a "voice". Thank you, Jan, for agreeing to be "our woman in Eastbourne".

JILL BRANSBY and JULIE KORTH