

SIFD NEWS



JULY 2009

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

registered charity number 284509

www.sifd.org

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One of the girls from the Bognor Regis International Dance Ensemble is pictured on this month's cover. She is in the English costume that she will wear at the Llangollen International Eisteddfod this month.

Sybil Chapman has pointed out that Magda's surname was been spelt incorrectly in earlier issues; it is **Osskó** (pronounced Oshko).

Also there were typos in the article '**Hungarian Evening for the Institute of Conductive Education**' by Sybil last month, they are:

para 3 "I was involved, years ago, in the initial "steps" the Institute took"

para 4 "His group gave dances from four different regions with great expertise and conviction and was very well costumed (now their's) in action"

para 6 "managed to find"

mea culpa .. Ed.



Change of Membership Secretary

You will notice when you get your renewal forms next month that instead of returning them to Epping they go to Brookmans Park.

Dalila Heath who, as you know, has been responsible for the News distribution for many years past has agreed to take on the Membership Secretary job as well.

I have enjoyed my five-year stint and I feel very lucky to be able to hand over to such an efficient and well-organised person. I am sure that you will give her the same consideration and support that I have received.

Simon Guest, ex Membership Secretary



Thank you to Michael and Edwina

Every month, for more years than anyone can remember, Michael and Edwina Holdup have stuck over 400 address labels onto envelopes ready for the News distribution; and they have made sure that the envelopes are ready in the right place at the right time.

Thank you Michael and Edwina

Simon Guest



July Balkanplus

The July Balkanplus will be held on the 11th July at Cecil Sharp House, Camden NW1, starting at 7.00pm. Come and enjoy an evening dancing with Frances Horrocks. Admission £5

Maureen Felton

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According to journalists and politicians the summer break is often referred to as the "silly season" and that is exactly the trend that Balkanplus will follow this month. Dances will be light, easy to follow (mostly) with some fun music thrown in for good measure. This is the last dance before the summer hols, so do make the most of it. Now, I wonder where I left my sun hat and my hula hula skirt?

Frances

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Aug.1st/8th ALNWICK FESTIVAL tel: 01665 511333

Aug.1st/8th BILLINGHAM FESTIVAL Performances and Courses. www.billinghamfestival.co.uk
tel: 01642 553220

Aug. 22nd/29th 7 NIGHT INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE COURSE led by Phil & Brenda Steventon at HF Holidays, Selworthy, Exmoor, Somerset. For details ring HF on 0845 470 7557 or Phil & Brenda on 020 8397 9649

- S.I. **Aug.28th/31st WILLINGDON IFDG MINI FESTIVAL** at Plumpton College near Lewes, East Sussex. Shared leading of International Folk Dance and Circle Dance, also English Folk Dance, Line Dance, and singing. Free afternoon to explore the lovely South Downs or Sussex villages. Full board £160 (no supplement for single rooms). Booking form from Rowena Martin, 60 Anderida Road, Eastbourne BN22 0PZ.
- S.I. **Sep.12th SIFD DAY COURSE** will be Israeli with Fiona Howarth.
- S.I. **Sep. 19th/20th BALKANPLUS BULGARIAN WORKSHOPS WITH ILIANA BOZHANOVA** 10.30am to 4.30pm at North Bridge House School, Camden (Sat) and Cecil Sharp House (Sun). Saturday evening dance party with special guests at Cecil Sharp House. Prices: 1 workshop £20, 2 workshops £30. party £10, Weekend deal £35. Reductions for Balkanplus season ticket holders. Workshops by ticket only. Tickets are available from Maureen Felton, 28 Henslow Road, Ipswich IP4 5EG. Send SAE and cheque payable to Balkanplus. More information on www.balkanplus.org.uk or contact Maureen on 01473 272256 or Brian Dowsett on 01992 582717
- S.I. **Sep.26th NUTBROOK INTERNATIONAL F. D. G. 30TH ANNIVERSARY** Grangewood Methodist Church Hall, Wollaton, Notts NG 8 2SJ 12.30-9.45pm.details: G. Morral 116 Nottingham Road, Stapleford, Notts NG9 8AR or www.nutbrookfolkdance.co.uk
- S.I. **Sept.26th BULGARIAN DANCE WORKSHOP WITH ILIANA BOZHANOVA** and accordionist Todor Yankov at Hempton Memorial Hall, near Fakenham, North Norfolk NR21 7LG. 11am - 4.30pm approx. £10 pre-booked, £12 on the day if available. Refreshments included, please bring food to share for lunch. For bookings and further information (including accommodation advice) contact Dawn 01328 856582. dawnwakefield@btinternet.com
- Oct.18th ROYAL ALBERT HALL 'ON SHOW' REHEARSAL** 1.00 - 5.00 pm. Elmdon Heath Community Centre, Cornyx Lane, Solihull. B91 2SF. (near Junction 5 on the M42). details from Janet Douglas 01243 265010
- S.I. **Oct.30th/Nov.2nd RESIDENTIAL COURSE OF GREEK FOLK DANCE** with Angie Saravelaki at Malhamdale, Yorkshire Dales. Comfortable ensuite accommodation, full-board, indoor swimming pool. Choice of General or Intermediate course, or both courses. Excellent area for walking or sightseeing. Non-dancing friends and family welcome. Full board accommodation (3 nights) £195. Single course £28, both courses £50. For details and a booking form please send s.a.e. to Cathy Meunier, 23, Church Street, Keswick, Cumbria CA12 4DX or email your request to cathy_meunier@hotmail.com
- S.I. **Nov.21st CROATIAN DANCES** including Ličko Kolo (the silent dance), with Joan Sach. 10.30am - 5pm. at Barnham Village Hall, nr. Bognor Regis, West Sussex. £10 (SIFD members), further details from Janet Douglas 01243 265010
- S.I. **Dec.5th ZIVKO FIRFOV BALKAN PARTY** 7.00 - 10.30pm. St. Alban's Centre, Baldwins Gardens. EC19 7AB further information to follow. Irene Keywood 0208 592 4427

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Events covered by SIFD insurance are marked S.I. 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.

Llangollen Eisteddfod

After our performance last year at the Embankment Gardens Theatre, George Sweetland suggested that the girls in BRIDE would benefit from a visit to the Eisteddfod, to see at first hand how children from other countries dance. I toyed with the idea and then decided that if we were going to go we may as well try and participate.

First hurdle would be getting accepted; I downloaded all the information, got the parents on board, and prepared to make a video for the audition. The rules immediately disqualified my best dancer as she would be sixteen by the time of the Eisteddfod; but things still seemed possible (she could be a flag bearer) so we made the video and sent it off.

Then, they moved the goalposts! We then learned that those children aged *fifteen* and over on the day of the competition would now also be ineligible as they had lowered the age limit for 2009 by a year. As a result I lost two more good dancers, but as by then we had been accepted we decided to go ahead anyway; favourite dances for eight were ruled out and dances for six introduced (we are only a small group). Of course, as they are English children living in Sussex they have to perform English dances. We chose Sussex Cottage and The Hop Pickers Feast from our region and also Jenny Pluck Pears.

Musicians were our next problem, or rather the lack of them; we had only one, our percussionist, James. One of the older girls (disqualified by old age from dancing) volunteered to play the melodica, but was soon overcome by the scale of the task and withdrew from the lists. As I poured out my tale of woe to one of the mothers - she unexpectedly announced that she too could play the melodica, and the piano, and the saxophone, and the clarinet and also the recorder (I tried not to overwhelm her with my enthusiasm) - we opted for the recorder as it is definitely a traditional instrument. In an attempt to support our duo, I taught myself to play a couple of easy bits on the melodica. Although my efforts were not wholeheartedly received by the girls at first; they enjoyed giving advice on how to improve, and also suggested that I cue them in to new figures by 'playing' tambourine.

Costumes became the next job needing to be tackled. We already had replica 19th Century pinafores, which were worn over mid length skirts, but they weren't really right for this job. So, after careful research the girls ended up with what I hope passes as late 17th or early 18th Century costumes as worn by the middling classes. This includes a mob-cap - taken into instant aversion by the girls (so please if you meet them on any occasion be sure to tell them how cute they look in their mob-caps!).

This photo call was like herding cats - but hopefully all wrinkles will be ironed out by July 9th.



Money was another problem; as usual some families were more able than others to bear the additional cost of travel and accommodation. We applied to the SIFD committee for help, and have a grant to offset the cost, for which we are most grateful.

Goodness knows how we will fare - but judges and scores are secondary in this adventure. We just aim to enjoy being there and hope to make new friends and watch the entrants from other countries. No doubt George Sweetland will give you his insight into our performance as part of his usual annual review of the Llangollen Eisteddfod.

Janet Douglas

A Taste of Spain

A festival called "A Taste of Spain" was held in Regent Street, London on Sunday, 31st of May 2009. Regent Street was, except for a small section, blocked to traffic from Oxford Circus to Piccadilly. Along its length a series of marquees were set up which were occupied by different regions of Spain. The festival was open from about noon till 8p.m, and attracted large crowds. It was first held in 2008 in torrential rain and this year in lovely sunshine.

The main duty of the staff in the marquees seemed to be to issue promotional tourist literature. I liked one marquee where people in fine folk costumes were shown engaged in various craft jobs.

The title would indicate this festival was to be about Spanish food but in Regent Street this was not the case, only a few small stalls sold food products. The emphasis on food was going to be at Borough market on the following Tuesday and Wednesday and there would be some folk dancing there). However a gigantic paella was cooked and masses of people queued for a long time for a small portion.

What attracted me to the festival was the news that there was going to be some Spanish folk dancing. When one got there it was difficult to know at what time or at what spot displays would occur, one felt one needed luck to witness any dance and also luck to be reasonably well positioned to get a good view.

The Andalucian marquee had a small stage on which there was a very good performance of flamenco. There was a flamenco workshop, the only workshop, but I did not see that. Further up the street I saw a very large band of men and women from Galicia playing drums and bagpipes. The Galicians also had dancers, two couples supported by a small band, who showed simple couple social dances. The Basques were there with a band that included a bagpiper, they showed some couple social dances which were interesting. Also two young Basque men did a dance which had some brilliant dancing with much leaping, it could only be done by very young and able dancers who, I suspect, had had ballet training. Spectacular stuff.

Further up the street I came to the Aragon marquee. They had two bands, one with a bagpiper, for listening to and another band for the dancers with a guitarist and two men on mandolins. Two young couples did three jotas with intervals between each to give them a necessary rest. Singers performed during these intervals, the dancing was full of athletic and joyful energy. Dazzling and wonderful to observe but I was sadly personally aware that these lovely dances, which I would have loved to be taught, were way beyond my capabilities past or present.

I had an unusual folk experience. I saw a folk fashion show. In Andalusia the ladies wear at fiestas those very bright colourful costumes that hug the body down to the thighs and spread out to the hem with lots of flounces. I have read that current fashion designers have entered this world and they will take the basic form of the costume, put their own individual mark on it, show them at annual cat walk shows and sell them for large sums of money (over £1,000). It was these fashion costumes we were seeing in the marquee they had an extension to the stage for the cat walk. Five Spanish models, tall and slim, modelled twelve different dresses. Each of the girls had black hair combed back and tied in a bun, with a large artificial flower at the front and a comb at the back. They had large plastic earrings, perfect teeth and bright red lipstick. They looked alike to me. The clothes were beautifully tailored and seemed to be of high quality and naturally they were very colourful with all the colours of the rainbow.

The dancers and some members of their bands wore their splendid regional folk costumes. It was a delight to hear the Spanish folk music and I was pleased there was no amplification except for the flamenco.

The organisation of this year's festival was quite different to that of last year when there was a lot of emphasis on mass dancing of Sevillanas. So this festival may be quite different next year. So I was lucky, with the help of a lot of patience, to see a variety of fascinating Spanish folk dance and I am glad I went. I was surprised not to see in the crowd another SIFD member's face I would have recognised. Oh, by the way, attendance at the festival was free which is a bonus in these terrible financial times we have been told we are suffering from.

Henry Lee

A Wonderful Treat For Bromley



We so rarely see good authentic international groups here now, so it was a red letter day for Bromley when the MacLennan Scottish Group brought two outstanding teams from overseas to their festival. The first group was from Zagreb, “Sevetska Sela”. They perform dances from all over Croatia, including also Hungary and Western Herzegovina. All their dances were accompanied by a lovely ensemble on traditional instruments, and the dancers sang before and during their dances. The costumes were authentic, down to the footwear for each region. The girls told me that some of their shoes were very uncomfortable. The whole presentation was superb, spine-tingling, brilliant! The group “Trachtenverein” was from Waldburg. Complete with lederhosen and dirndels and, most surprisingly whips they danced Schuhplatter and couple dances. The men performed in a circle cracking long whips deafeningly in time with the music. This group too brought their own musicians. All of them obviously enjoyed dancing and playing for us and conveyed a very happy atmosphere. I saw some SIFD faces in the audience but what a shame that more of us didn’t seize this opportunity.



Either of these groups would be ideal for Swansea teaching, and I would thoroughly recommend them. Thank you MacLennans for bringing them over.

Fiona Howarth

Devoiko Mari Hubava

Rowena Martin has been asked for the English translation of the beautiful Bulgarian song “Devoiko Mari Hubava”. Can anyone help?



SIFD Day Course

Date: July 11th 2009

Place: Cecil Sharp House

Time: 10.30 am -- 4.30 pm

Cost: £8 for SIFD members, £10 for non-members

Tutor: **Shivanti Lowton**

Subject: South Asian Dance

Shivanti is a teacher at the RAD and is very enthusiastic about sharing (perhaps introducing) South Asian dance. She will include dances from different regions and various styles. There will be some stick dances, some Bhangra, the Punjabi folk dance, and perhaps a taste of classical hand movements and stamping patterns.

A marvellous chance for us to widen our dance experience and knowledge.

Pam Radford

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A piece of History

At Swansea Summer School in 1971 Judy and Jacky Barkan exploded on to the SIFD world with an astounding collection of Israeli dances.

[Hitherto we had been doing the likes of Palestinian Hora and many different versions of Kuma Echa.] The dances were lively, lyrical and dynamic. The words “Yemenite step”, “debka”, “Moshiko” were all new to us. After that Jacky and Judy were studying in London and taught an evening class for the Society, which I attended.

In 1973 they were invited back to Swansea, also to Lady Mabel College where new dances were added to our repertoire.

When they had returned to Israel it was decided to bring out a record to mark their input. They compiled notes for 12 dances, and Jacky arranged to record the music in Israel and sent over a cassette. We reduced the number of dances to ten.

A Day Course to teach these dances was arranged and I was asked to teach it. We had a large attendance, which filled one of the famous halls at the Oval Henry Fawcett School. The record was made and sold quite well.

Unfortunately I found that the recordings were too fast to do the dances properly, but as we used cassettes later, these could be slowed down. I recently played the record and I think it may have been speeded up in order to fit all ten on to the EP size.

The question of whether these dances were worthy of preserving in CD form, as many of the SIFD earlier ones have been, was raised in the magazine. The point was made that no one was buying it so it was not worth keeping; I suggest that no one was buying it for two reasons – there has been no day course or revision of these dances since 1973, and the music is too fast.

Frank Dowling, who was at that first Swansea and Lady Mabel, and I have spent many hours listening to a cd of my record, and Frank has juggled with the speed then played it down the phone until he has reached a speed we agree is acceptable. I have offered to do a repeat of the Day Course using a slowed version of the music so that people can decide if they like the dances and want the music. The day Course committee has arranged for this to be on September 12th. The dances are –

Hora Nirkoda, Hora Neurim, Haroa Hatkana, Debka Halel, Hen Yerunan, Ahavat Hadassa, Debka Dayagim, Vayiven Uziah, Erev Ba, Debka Uriah.

Please send feedback to the magazine if you are interested, and may attend the day course. And oblige,

Fiona Howarth

Letters to the Editor:

Dear Janet

Re: Raksi Jaak

It is nice to know that the debate on Raksi Jaak is still alive and kicking. We have enjoyed reading the various letters in the newsletter over the past couple of months. It seems that he is as popular as ever. He must have been a sailor in his younger days sailing between Tyneside and Estonia (with pit props).

There have been various versions of the dance over the years - along with various instructions. It would appear that one word has been left out of the instructions - "*repeat*". This would account for the missing bars that Frances was referring to in her letter. Hence the discrepancy.

The blue book referred to is the bible of Estonian Folk Dancing it was not written until 1953 but Aili left Estonia in 1945. This is due to the fact that Estonia was about to be reoccupied by Soviet forces. The book was written by the gentleman who taught her. He was and still is the most respected teacher of Folk Dancing in Estonia.

If there has been any confusion in teaching the dance we humbly apologise and here's to happy dancing.

Thanks to Sue Clark for her simplified instructions, this is how it was done before the Blue Book was written.

Once again thank you for the interesting reading over the past couple of months.

Aili and Karin Eistrat



I was very interested in the front cover of June issue and enclose some observations.

The costumes shown on the front cover of the June edition are most probably Albanian, or of Albanian origin. They are worn by people belonging to one of the two main tribal groups, the Ghegas. The jackets are very old probably early 20th century and are very fine specimens. The fragment of the long sleeveless coat (bottom right hand corner) is also old and of Turkish origin, and was worn over a wide area of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans. The men's trousers and women's aprons are modern.

Although Albania was a politically close country, Folk groups were given visas to cross into what was then Yugoslavia. In the 1960s I saw Albanian groups dancing at the Ohrid International Folk Festival at which Zivko Firfov was an adjudicator. Ohrid is a very beautiful old town further along Lake Ohrid which forms the frontier between Albania and Macedonia. The Ghegas are widely spread in large numbers in Macedonia where they are known as "Shiptars", and in the large mountain village of Galicnik the costumes are quite similar, the men's trousers being of white felted cloth with seams covered with broad bands of black braid. (Much more elaborately decorated at the top on Albania proper). Some pictures of a Galicnik woman's bridal costume formerly in my collection, appeared in the News several months back. In the mountain village of Smilevo in south west Macedonia, the women's costume is similar but with less gilt and silver decoration.

In the other main tribe, the Tosks, the men wear fully pleated white kilts which use to be knee length. The Tosk men acted as mercenary soldiers and fought with the Turks among others. I have a book published in 1906 which has a photograph of Albanian soldiers in long knee length white kilts taken in Sutari, in Greece. Did they influence the guards' uniforms that are a tourist attraction outside the former royal palace in Athens? Over pleats can be found in south east Macedonia, in the region of Mariovo the tie on kilt has 22 pleats.

I should be glad to have any observations.

Ken Ward.

GASTOURIKOS.

(Isle of Corfu)

Handwritten musical score for "Gastourikos" in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of five staves of music with various chords and section markers. Section A is marked with a box 'A' and includes chords G, D, and G. Section B is marked with a box 'B' and includes chords D7 and G. Section C is marked with a box 'C' and includes chords G, C, F, C, G, and C. The final staff includes a handwritten note: "We try to finish on 'A' music but this is not essential" and "plan ABCA".

Wilf Horrocks

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Gastourikos

I discovered Gastourikos thirty years ago when Les and I were on holiday in Corfu (Kerkyra). We were walking round the island and found ourselves in Gastouri, a village on the Eastern coast. It was early evening and as we were walking in the hills we could hear folk music being played on stringed instruments and as we got nearer we could hear the sound of festivities and smell the delicious aroma of lambs being roasted on spits. We entered a clearing where a group of local people were gathered for some sort of celebration.

We were hesitant about joining them, as we were the only "tourists" there and we did not want to invade a private party. However, we were warmly welcomed and given glasses of retsina and ouzo and invited to join the feast. The dance they were doing was Gastourikos (obviously from Gastouri) and it was very much a social dance - everyone joining in, old and young, chatting to each other while dancing, some dropping out of line for a drink and others joining in when they felt like it. The dance and music just went on and on.

The evening darkened and lamps and candles were lit and still the dancing went on. Les and I eventually left, quite late, and couldn't resist continuing to dance along the way down the hill.

The next morning, quite by chance, I recognised one of the musicians in the streets of Gastouri. I asked him where I could get the music for Gastourikos. He said he didn't know but kindly wrote the notes by hand on a scrap of paper. I gave these to Wilf (Horrocks) on my return from holiday and so Gastourikos entered the SIFD repertoire.

(As a footnote I can't resist a little name-dropping; quite late in the evening, at the party, we noticed a small group of people arrive who were obviously not locals. They joined us and to our amazement Les and I found we were rubbing shoulders and sharing drinks with the actress Vivien Leigh and the actor Robert Morley! We never found out how and why they were there).

Lily Avery

SIFD Sunday Dance/Workshops

at 7pm – 10pm at Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, N.W.1

Cost £6 members £7 non-members

July 5th - MCs: Woodvale International Folk Dance Group

No Dance in August



WHAT'S ON IN JULY

- Friday July 3rd** **BALKAN NIGHT** at Boncath Village Hall, Pembrokeshire, from 7.30pm - 9.30pm. Circle and open line dances - no partner needed. £2 or £3. Mara Freeman and David Watkins at 01239 858 830 or email: dance@chalicecentre.net
- Tuesday 7th - Saturday 11th** **LLANGOLLEN INTERNATIONAL MUSICAL EISTEDDFOD** 01978 862 001 or www.international-eisteddfod.co.uk
- Friday 10th** **BARNET SUMMER PARTY.** The best of Balkan with music by Dunav. 8pm at Church House, Wood Street, Barnet, Herts. £5. Further information from Brian Dowsett on 01992 582717
- S.I **Saturday 11th** **SIFD DAY COURSE** see page 8
- S.I **Saturday 11th** **BALKANPLUS** see page 3
- Saturday 18th** **NORWEGIAN FOLK DANCING** by the Sanderingen Folk Dance Group in Chichester city centre, also local Morris sides. 11am - 1pm and 2pm - 4pm
- Sunday 26th** **GYPSIES EAST OPEN WEEKEND** on The Terrace at South Hill Park, Bracknell (free) at 4pm: showcasing the culture of Romania through a group of musicians all newly arrived in this country. Expect musical fireworks and fun with the authentic gypsy sound of the region. Organiser: 01344 416260 Centre: 01344 484858 www.southhillpark.org.uk (easily reached from both the M4 and the M3).



All material for the August issue of SIFD NEWS must be received by the Editor
IN WRITING by 17th July, emails by 16th July.



The music next month will be for **Kaczok**, which is Polish.
Please send in any information or memories which can shine a light on it. Ed.