



SIFD
NEWS

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SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

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The logo for Barnet International Folk Dance Club features along with Brian's article.

There are many tributes to Ken Ward (a former chairman of the Society) in this issue. The photo of Ken on the front cover was kindly sent in by Irene Keywood.



Due to the demands of family, dance groups and Roman wall painting I have had a very busy couple of months - with no end in sight. And, these things always combine all at the same time - the internet connection went down - the computer died - I had to trip off to the Post Office to pay to receive mail (SIFD mail!) that was too big for a 1st class stamp - the answer phone suffered chronic congestion - the printer messed itself - photocopying got lost - my car had a flat tyre - and so on.. But, I have prevailed.



Last month Mecki Testroet appealed for help with a picture that could be used in her quest to set up a new group in Bridport. If anyone has managed to create one perhaps you can share it with us and it can grace the front cover of the News. I am always pleased to receive pictures and/or designs for the cover, so please try and help.



I have just received 'Folk Dancer' the Ontario Folk Dance Association magazine. There seems to be plenty of folk dance activity in Canada; if any of you are going there - do ask me for further details.

Ed.



Day Course 19th November

We are sorry to announce that we have had to cancel the day course on South Sea Island dances scheduled for 19th November, please contact the secretary (mail@sifd.org) if you were planning to attend.



Balkanplus

The November Balkanplus will follow the Mitko Petrov workshop on the 19th November with MC Mad Chapman and John Riley with Mitko. There will also be live music with Bulgarian musician guests Galin and Nino (Note 3rd Saturday) at Cecil Sharp House, Camden NW1 7AY, starting at 7.00pm. Admission if you are coming to the Saturday evening party only is £10

It's not too late to buy your tickets for Mitko's London workshop; please see detailed information in the "Whats On" section of the News.

Maureen Felton



December Balkanplus

I have had my arm (ever so gently) twisted to MC December's Balkanplus, and as a lot of my repertoire is not well known to some of the regulars, I am going to take advantage of the free hour (from 6.p.m) to run through some of the dances that fall into the not-fantastically-difficult-but-just-a-little-bit-too-complex-to-call-on-the-day. I know that I don't really enjoy a dance if all my concentration is on just keeping up. There will be a couple of oldies-but-goodies and a couple of new dances from the recent Yves Moreau course at Malhamdale. As ever, I am open to any requests that people might have.

Maggie O'Regan maregdan@yahoo.co.uk 020 7609 7098

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- S.I **Dec. 4th SIFD SUNDAY DANCE/WORKSHOP** see page 15
- S.I **Dec. 9th BARNET CHRISTMAS PARTY** with music by Dunav at Church Hall, Wood Street, Barnet, Herts. EN5 4BW 8pm Contact Brian Dowsett 01992 582717
- S.I **Dec.10th BALKANPLUS** with MC Maggie O'Regan
- S.I **Dec.10th W MIDS BRANCH CHRISTMAS DANCE** 7.30 - 10.30 at Solihull Methodist Church Hall Blossomfield Rd, Solihull B91 1LG (B4102, by Solihull stations, near M42 Jn 5) MC Maggie K with the Heart of England Band. Bring-and-share supper. £5 on the door.
- S.I **Dec.29th WILLINGDON IFDG TWIXMAS DANCE PARTY** at Stone Cross Memorial Hall near Eastbourne (junction B2104 & B2247). 10.30-4.30 Shared lunch, drinks provided. Full day £7, half day £4. All welcome to bring and lead dances on tape or CD. Info: 01323 503991 or rowenahmartin@hotmail.com
- Feb.4th/5th INTENSIVE RUSSIAN DANCE WEEKEND WITH HENNIE KONINGS,** . ISTD studios, Old Street 10 - 5 Sat & 10 - 4 Sun. £90 for the weekend. Bookings & more info from Janet Wilks 02072299387 janet@janetwilks.co.uk

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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.



Dance With the World Leaflets

I'm pleased to report that our three SIFD leaflets are now updated and ready for distribution, in this year's fetching colours.

The two **Dance With the World** leaflets (one for London only, the other for the rest of the UK) list all the SIFD's associated and affiliated groups and classes, and are very useful for handing out at demonstrations and displays, to anyone interested in joining a group or class, or wanting more information about the Society.

The "**Join Us!**" leaflet encourages new membership. It outlines the benefits of joining the Society, both for an individual or an affiliated group. We need new members more than ever to keep the Society alive and healthy, so please consider distributing some of these, along with the colourful SIFD advertising card, issued earlier this year.

If you would like some leaflets and/or cards, please contact me or Jeanette Hull.

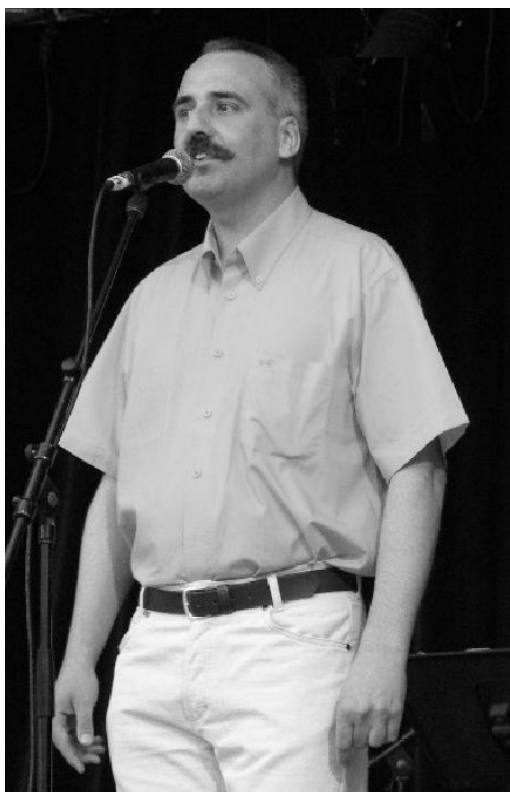
Alison Scrimshaw

5 South Rise, Carshalton, SM5 4PD 020 8395 1400 alison.scrimshaw@googlemail.net



SIFD Summer School, July 28 – August 4, 2012

Information about our third teacher, Philippe, and the dances that he will teach, is given below.



Philippe Marsac has taught the traditional dances of south-west France in workshops over the past 20 years. Since 2005, he has also led, with Pierre Corbefin, a class which combines dance and singing for Gascon dancing as used in “bals à la voix”.

Web The traditional dances of Gascony

In Gascony, the term *rondeaux* is used for dances related to the branles of the Renaissance.

In the Landes, often described as a country of the “rondeau en chaîne”, the dancers continue to dance in the original formations inherited from branles (between ten and twenty men and women, with joined hands, shoulder to shoulder). Elsewhere, and under the influence of more recent choreography, the chain has evolved towards a formation of individual mixed couples spaced in a procession following a circular arc.

site at <http://sites.google.com/site/duocorbefinmarsac/>

In Béarn (Pyrénées), the dances reveal quite strongly their origins in the old branles of the Renaissance. They have retained the name of *branle* and, since the beginning of the 20th century, have been danced in an open circle able to accommodate any number of dancers.

The area in which *congós* are danced corresponds, roughly, to that of the *rondeaux*, from which they borrow steps. Some *congós* do not use (or no longer use) the *rondeau* step and use instead a step similar to that of the polka. The *congós* are also characterised by figures whose choreographic elements (formation in squares, greeting, independent movement of the dancers, role of contrapartners) attest to their debt to the *contredanse*.

The couple dances (waltz, polka, scottish, mazurka ...) are found to some extent everywhere in Gascony, with local variations. Philippe, a dancer, singer and teacher, will be sharing his knowledge of these traditional dances of his region.

Jill Bransby (Publicity Officer for the Summer School).



Cantonigròs International Music Festival

19 - 22 July 2012 - in the city of Cantonigròs and Vic, in the county of Osona - Catalonia - Spain

The Festival is a competition and exhibition of mixed choral music, female voices, children's choir and folk dance. Each day has choral competitions and evening Concerts from Thursday 19, until Sunday 22 July. Groups from throughout the world that meet the required artistic standard and agree to identify themselves with the spirit of the festival may participate. The aim of the Festival is to achieve the strengthening of friendly links among all the countries of the world.

More information about the Festival and conditions for groups wishing to participate are available from the Secretary. c/València 435, 1r, 1a. 08013 Barcelona. Spain. or fimc@fimc.es

The Lyra Dancers and Kalamos

Heather Burgess discovered that an evening of Greek dance would form part of the Hailsham Festival in September. I went with her to the Pavilion for a wonderful performance by the Lyra Greek Dancers and musicians, Kalamos. The three musicians played a range of instruments, including a goatskin gajda - with a graphic description of how the goat became the instrument! They not only accompanied the dancers but between dances played and/or sang traditional Greek, Turkish and Arnnenian melodies.

The London based group of Greek and British dancers have researched old dances from Asia Minor (Anatolia) before the spread of the Ottoman Empire. The four girls in Cappadocian costumes with the lower half of their faces veiled performed ritual dances of the early Greek Christian community in that area, in one of which yellow scarves and spoons were used. Unveiled, they did dances from NE Thrace near the Bulgarian border, hence the arm swinging. More vigorous Pontic dances from the Black Sea area followed with the three men in black with elaborate black and yellow turbans.

The next change of costume saw the girls in Cypriot long coats covering white dresses and trousers, in which they did a candle dance from the area now known as Konya involving much turning, possibly predating the Whirling Dervish sect. The men in Island costume joined them for Island dances, Ikariotikos, Pentozali and a lively Hassapiko. Finally, the girls donned Sarakatsani costumes and the men wore the wellknown foustanelas and the pomporn slippers to perform some Greck mainland dances.

This was a delightful evening of authentic music and dance. The groups appear at various festivals and charity events, so if you see Lyra and Kalamos advertised locally, do not miss them!

Heather Edwards



Notes from the Committee Meeting on 2nd October

The main part of the October committee meeting was devoted to ideas collected at the AGM on how we can make the best use of the Frank Flanagan Fund. We agreed to the proposal to pay towards musicians at the Summer School, and have made plans to investigate how we could best provide support for more weekend courses, which will include a review of our Day Course programme.

The secretary has agreed to take on the work of keeping the diary section of the website up to date, to give Richard Scrimshaw more time for work on other aspects. Richard has set links up so that any change to the diary is automatically sent to Facebook and Twitter, so that anyone who is a friend of SIFD (facebook) or follows “folk dance” (twitter) will get news of our events. Information sent direct to Jeanette will usually appear on the website within 24 hours.

We were very pleased to note that that a higher proportion of members have renewed this year than at this time last year, and that most groups continue – with the number of new groups balancing the number that, very sadly, have closed.

Fundraising: now that interest rates are so low, we must rely more on membership fees and income from sales and Sunday dances for our running costs, so prompt renewal and assistance in producing items for sale are most welcome.

We are still working on finding a reliable means of meeting the UK Border Agency’s requirements for employing teachers from counties outside the EU. The consequences of breaking the immigration laws (and a weekend visit to do paid work is included in this law) are very serious.

The updated booklet with dance notes for “12 Circle dances” and “6 social dances” will be available very soon.

Anything you would like to contribute, offer or suggest for our next meeting should be sent to the secretary by mid-November.

A History of Barnet International Folk Dance Club

Barnet International Folk Dance Club (BIFDC) will celebrate its fiftieth birthday next year acknowledging as it does its birthplace in Hendon. The fact that other Balkan orientated groups are of a similar age suggests there was a big awakening of interest in Balkan dancing in the 1960s. The repertoire may have been relatively limited then but the individuals shaping the scene were larger than life. Philip Thornton had already started the Zivko Firfov group with Ken Ward, Danny Lumley was working with the recently acquired repertoire for the dance group of the Society for Friendship with Bulgaria, and Henry Morris – a chiropodist by profession but steeped in the British folk music revival and a Balkan music enthusiast – was ready to fulfil an ambition to start a club drawing mainly from Hendon Technical College students. These pioneering characters knew each other quite well but tended to follow their individual paths.

Some students may have had initial qualms about going to the Hendon Folk Club on hearing there would be a bit of dancing too, but Henry had mastered some Balkan and Israeli dances when playing in the basement of the Inns of Court Mission alongside Mourie Pfeffer and Ken Ward and these dances became the core repertoire of the club. There was a healthy internationalist spirit in those years which the club fully embraced. Students and au pair girls met to learn dances that probably felt more exotic than they do today and to sing from the club's amazingly diverse songbook. At the song interval and in the pub afterwards the multinational throng might belt out a traditional song from the Copper family of Rottingdean, a Danish folksong or perhaps Opsaj Diri from Yugoslavia. Henry instilled in club members an understanding of how music, song and dance can combine to greater effect than the sum of the parts. The joie de vivre and welcoming atmosphere was evident to any new visitor. An early highlight was the invitation to appear in a television play by Arnold Wesker in which the club members danced the Romanian dance Perinita. Henry's friend Cliff Beck recalled that Wesker insisted on accordion accompaniment when Henry only played violin and guitar at that time. Therefore, Cliff played for the dancing while Henry made a beeline for the nearest accordion shop.



Around 1964 Henry asked Cliff to alternate with him in leading the evenings because he wanted more time to see through his next project, the formation of a Balkan music group, arguably the first comprising non-Balkan musicians. Over the next years Hendon Folk Club would become a good source of musicians

for Dunav Balkan Group and the special relationship has continued up to the present day. The Bulgarian and Zivko Firfov groups also gained recruits from Hendon dancers aspiring to more advanced levels. The club could have folded after Henry Morris passed the baton when Dunav became his main preoccupation but it was robust enough to survive and was well placed in London to befriend several notable dance teachers including Narendra Kotiyan, Simon and Joan Guest, Ken Ward, Frances Horrocks and George Sweetland – key figures in the SIFD who helped to enrich the club's repertoire.



It was also that transitional time when the core members were past their college days and were settling into careers and relationships. Margaret Luck (nee Williamson) and Brian Dowsett both lived in Barnet at the end of the Sixties and, after a short period of meeting in each other's homes, found a new venue on Hadley Green in 1968 thanks largely to family influence at the local WI group. The re-named Barnet International Folk Dance Club must have seemed outlandish to the staid hall committee whose chairman, Kingsley Elliott, had retired from Asprey of Bond Street after a career in the police force ("Mounted, of course"). The club prospered as it became established in dancing circles and participated in local community arts activities. Regular visitors included Cliff and Anne Beck, Jack and Joan Richardson, Lucile Armstrong and many from beyond the North London area. Another regular member, Stan Lagden, brought his artistic skills into play to perfect the BIFDC logo. The club was proud to be offered the Associated Member status by the SIFD.

By the time the club moved to its present venue in Wood Street about twenty years later, the folk dance scene had significantly changed. An explosion of new dances introduced by teachers from or after visits to, principally, Holland and USA had changed things for ever. Bonds with like-minded dance groups, notably Oxford's Balkansko Oro, Hursley and Uri Gerson's High Wycombe group, grew stronger. The club had become the model for Balkanplus which came into being in 1986 and celebrated its twenty fifth birthday this year.

These days, BIFDC meets on the second and fourth Friday of the month, September to July from 8pm to 10.30pm at Church House, Wood Street, Barnet, EN5 4BW. Brian Dowsett still leads with the solid support of Margaret Luck and Irene Nichols who also teach Balkan dancing with missionary zeal at the local U3A organisation. The club is happy to count Henry's widow Jacqueline Morris among its regular members while continuing to extend a warm welcome to all.

Brian Dowsett

'Letter to Ken'

Dear Old Friend,

I've been thinking about the first time we met. It was a Sunday dance in the 'cellar' in Drury Lane in 1953. It was all so new and exciting with the music and movement and we were both absolutely hooked from the start.

After that we were two or three times a week at Carlyle School in Chelsea for SIFD classes where Margery Latham, and Bert Price and others taught us the then basic repertoire. Philip Thornton was perhaps the most charismatic of the teachers and you acquired your passion for Balkan dance and music from him. I'm sure you remember visiting his flat and the incident of the Swiss roll through the letter box! I tried to play Gankino on the tin whistle but you were always the more musically adept.

When I left College in 1954 we went Youth Hostelling in France and Spain. On the train from Hendaye to Biarritz we met a Basque dance troupe and their musician, playing the txistu in the corridor, took our breath away.

Margery was always on the look out for dancing talent and she soon had you in the demonstration team. We danced Swedish at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester, in many 'See How They Dance' shows in the Albert Hall and in an endless procession of summer fairs and fêtes. Also, of course, we danced with the prestigious French group, Les Escargots, which (controversially at that time) was by invitation only.

You were generous with your musical talent and in the days when music was hard to come by you won many Brownie points by recording dances for Joan's school concerts.

We didn't neglect the social side of SIFD life and there were many hostelling/dancing weekends and the Surrey Crest weekends with the traditional race to the Hare and Hounds before lunch on Sunday.

I was best man at your wedding as you were at mine and you followed me into the Chairman's role in 1962 when Tim was born.

Thinking back, we spent a lot of time together in France. Pierre Panis asked you to teach Balkan at one of the 'stage de danse' he ran for the French Ministry of Education and Culture at the Château de Boivre near Poitiers. Your 'Silent Kolo' created quite a sensation and the 'stagiaires' were delighted to learn it. On another of Pierre's courses (at Les Grandes Poteries) we had one of our most bizarre experiences when the four of us slept in an enormous dormitory in a boys' school in Sancerre (lovely town) - 60 empty beds and us! Afterwards the four of us went touring in my first real car. Then there was the time that Francis Feybli invited us to teach at one of his magical Christmas courses at Beckenried on Lake Lucerne. You taught Yugoslav and Joan and I did French and Basque. It was an unforgettable week.

Simon Guest

≈

Ken Ward

I was saddened recently to hear that Ken Ward had died, sometime in August, at his home in Spain. He was the very gifted leader of the Zivko Firfov, Yugoslav dance group based in London. He always ran his classes with humour and encouragement so that it was always a pleasure to attend. He had a good number of enthusiastic dancers and by working away at the accuracy of the dances managed to develop a high level of ability. Such was the quality of the group that it was frequently asked to give a performance, perhaps at a school or a museum and even by the Yugoslav Embassy. As well as the dances, Ken also encouraged members to learn and sing Yugoslav Folk Songs at meetings in his home.

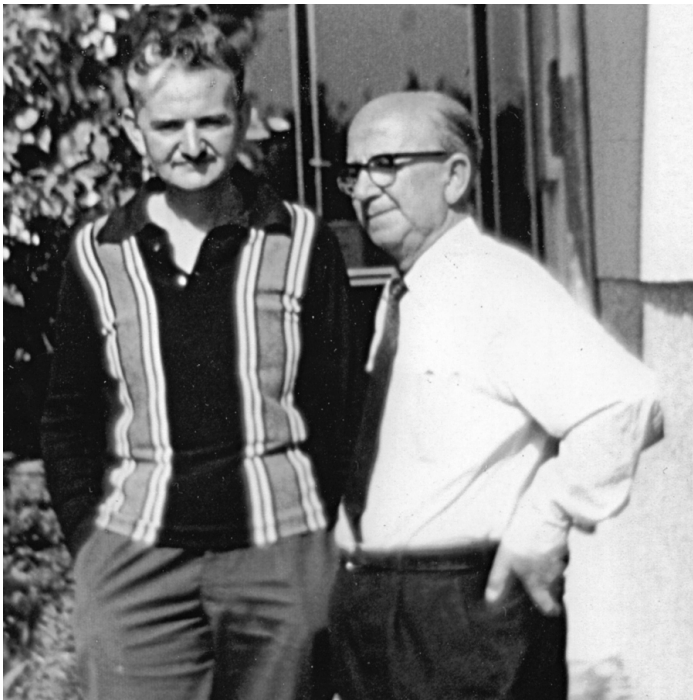
My wife, Pauline, and I joined the Group quite by chance in the early Seventies and were instantly welcomed by Ken and the other members. It took us a long time to get used to the strange music and dances but we persevered and the Group eventually became a major part of our lives.

Ken himself was a marvellous dancer and musician and had a vast knowledge of the music and dances of all the regions of Jugoslavia as well as the enormous variety of regional costumes.

When he retired to Spain he worked hard at his project to complete and publish a book of Yugoslav costumes. It was nearly ready when he died and it is hoped that it will eventually appear.

With many fond memories of Ken,

John Micklem



Ken ward (left) with Zivko Firfov

It was very sad indeed to hear the news that Ken had died.

Ken was in London earlier this year (April) and although he wasn't 100% fit, he was as always, very cheerful and upbeat. He was very near finishing his book on former Yugoslavia (Culture and Folklore). Also, there was a very important engagement - a visit to the British Museum (September) when a curator was to give a talk on one Ken's beautiful Macedonian costumes (one of many which he had donated to the Museum) which was on display in one of the Museum's Exhibitions, but sadly, it was not to be.

With the passing of Ken it is an end of an era.

Irene Keywood
Z.F. Social Secretary



Meeting Ken Ward for the first time in 1971, I had no idea he was an Englishman! The date was 29 November, and the occasion was the annual celebration of the National Day of Yugoslavia, organised by the British-Yugoslav Society. My memory of the actual event is a bit dim: it probably took place in the Caxton Hall, SW1; there would certainly have been some speeches and a decent helping of Yugoslav wine, but what I still recall vividly was the "entertainment". On came a brightly-attired folk group to give us a spirited rendering of what I learned later were dances from Macedonia, then one of the six constituent republics of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. My new wife Ružica (I had married a lady from Belgrade in September of that year) went up to the leader and asked him in Serbo-Croat "Where are you all from?" She was astonished to be answered in English and to be told that all these graceful dancers in their authentic costumes were all British and came from London and round about. Thus was born our close association with Ken and the Živko Firfov Group. It was to last 12 years, right up to 1983 when Ružica and I left London to settle for good in Belgrade.

Four decades later, still in Belgrade (and still married!), we can say for sure that the dozen years we spent in London as members of the ŽFG were among the happiest of our lives. For me, in particular, the experience was a very rich one. Before joining the Group, I had absolutely no knowledge of this aspect of Yugoslavia and its culture. The seriousness with which Ken and his friends had gone about collecting and learning the dances and music with prime emphasis on authenticity was extremely impressive. Far from having a deadening effect, this element allowed what I can only call the "soul" of the music and dance to express itself fully. The impact on me was huge. My own musical "bag" was Western classical: what I saw, heard and later performed with the ŽFG connected strongly with my classical experience, just because of that authenticity element.

It was all profoundly enriching - emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. And there's no doubt in my mind that the person mainly responsible was Ken. It was he who had travelled to the Balkans to mine its ethno-musical wealth and to bring it back to Britain. It was he who had set up the contacts in Skopje, Belgrade and Zagreb which ensured a continuity of friendship that would outlive Yugoslavia itself. It was he who gathered and inspired a group of like-minded enthusiasts, gathered a library of music and a fund of costumes, and organised and taught the classes. A special highlight was the Group's participation in the international folk dance festival in Bitola, Macedonia, in 1978.

To Ken - to his kindness, his friendship, his erudition - we therefore owe a debt of immense gratitude. And I'm sure I speak not just for Ružica and myself, but for all those who have benefited over the years from his teaching and his inspiration, and for all those who will go on doing so in the years to come through the medium of the Živko Firfov Group.

John White

Tribute to Ken Ward

To the best of my recollection, it was in 1983 that I first attended the Yugoslavian National Day Celebrations. I was delighted to see the Zivko Firfov performing under the leadership of Ken. I couldn't wait to join the Group, assuming of course that they would have me! Luckily, they welcomed me, and over the next few years I was able to learn many of the dances.

Ken was an inspiring teacher with an excellent knowledge of both the steps and the different styles of dance. His enthusiasm was boundless. He was a hard taskmaster, and I soon came to realise that a slight nod and a 'not bad' was praise indeed.

He was a stickler for authenticity, and went to enormous trouble to check even the smallest detail.

Fortunately for the Group, he left us copious notes on the dances and the wearing of the costumes.

His singing was a joy to hear, and we are lucky to have a few recordings of him. He also turned his hand to a variety of musical instruments, including accordion, tambura and gaida.

The Zivko Firfov will greatly miss his guiding hand, but hope very much that we can continue as a group in his memory.

Joan Sach



Firsts and Favourites

Philip E. Lloyd continues this series:

My first contact with international folk dancing was at a Scottish dance, where Col. Baldrey's class put on a demonstration. I would have liked to join the class but there were not enough days in the week to do everything. Shortly after that the class folded as Col. Baldrey had to give up leading. Then it was a year or two later that Alan Williams started an evening class which eventually became the Barlow Group, Manchester.



A friend of mine from church who had been a member of Col. Baldrey's class and now Alan's class pestered me to go, but I knew that if I did I would be hooked so I resisted until the last class of the first season. I went along and I remember that the first dance I did was **Ve David** and was intrigued by the going forward in twos then falling back to a single circle.

After that class I spent the Summer impatiently waiting for the Autumn term to begin!

In the August News, Kathleen Dickinson gives an admirably lucid description of Niguno Shel Yossi but I can not claim to have introduced it to the Group, after I took over the teaching. It comes early in my notes and must have been learned through Alan. We knew it for a while as the 'Israeli Mixer' before learning its true name, which means 'Joseph's Tune'.

left: Philip Lloyd, with sister, Breta Lloyd, both members of Barlow Group.

More contributions are needed if **Firsts and Favourites** is to continue next month. **Ed.**

Ken Ward -

a personal tribute by David Swanton

I knew Ken in the late sixties and seventies when the Yugoslav group grew very active. He was always a generous friend but we became a lot closer later when he made his home in Spain and corresponded regularly. We enjoyed a mutual interest in painting and the freedom that came with retirement. Ken originally had to give up a place at Art School and I believe regretted not receiving further formal education. His love of folk dance was part of a wider attraction to the arts, and his response to things remained natural and instinctive. Faced with serious illness he showed courage, humour and a lasting optimism. I shall miss him immensely.



Lewes Israeli Folk Dance Group

*Lewes Israeli
Folk Dance
Group*



The Group grew out of series of 38 Israeli Dance workshops taught by Anat (third from left in the photo) in the Eastbourne area between June 1990 and December 2003. As well as revising Anat's dances, the Group has benefited from input by Israeli Folk Dance aficionados both locally and from as far as London with sometimes as many as eight contributing dances.

We meet once a month (except August), usually on the 1st Sunday, between 6pm and 9pm at the St. Thomas a Becket church hall in Lewes, and attendees usually number between 12 and 20. Anyone is welcome to bring and share Israeli dances which tends to make for a relaxed atmosphere, although it has to be said that newcomers need to have some experience of this form of dance.

If anyone fancies joining us on a visiting or regular basis we shall be delighted to welcome them. Any queries can be addressed to Rowena Martin on 0 1323 503991 or rowenahmartin@hotmail.com

Rowena Martin

A comparison of English, Scottish and Manx Dancing

I list Manx dancing as one of my specialisms and Judith Payling has included me in the group asked to write something for the newsletter. Previous to doing international dancing I did Scottish (highland as well as country) and English dancing and had noted the many similarities and differences between them. Whereas the figures, eg figure of 8, reels of 3 and 4, down the middle and back, circles and stars were almost identical in both, the keen attention to the detail of footwork of Scottish dancing was virtually absent from English. When did this come about and how does Manx dancing fit in?

Between 1652 and 1728 John Playford *et al* published the 28 editions of “The Dancing Master”, describing over 1000 unique dances which were to dominate dancing in Britain, Europe and America until the end of the 18th century. So, during this time I imagine that dances danced in Scotland and England, including the Isle of Mann, were very similar to each other and showed no particular identifiable characteristics. Dances were performed with a walking step and no attention paid to the specifics of foot position. I believe, however, that the seeds of separation had already been sown by the French dance masters Lorin and Feuillet, during the late 17th and early 18th centuries, who both took a keen interest in English dancing. They devised detailed descriptions of foot positions incorporating many balletic elements, and these were introduced early in the 18th century. So, initially, I imagine that these developments influenced English (including Manx) as well as Scottish dancing.

Cutting a long story short, country dancing fell into decline in all three areas during the late 18th and 19th centuries, to be resurrected early in the 20th century: English due to Cecil Sharp, Scottish due to Jean Milligan and Ysobel Stewart and Manx through the work of Mona Douglas. How do steps and dance structures vary among these three groups today? In a nutshell, Scottish dancing has retained and extended its attention to detail, English reverted to simple forms and Manx holds the middle ground incorporating elements of both. A very popular English dance form is the duple minor: longways sets for as many as will, the long set consisting of groups of two couples where 1st couple progresses down and 2nd couple up. This formation still occurs in Manx but not Scottish. In Scottish, longways dances have been divided into 3 or 4 couple sets, (which also feature in English and Manx). All three have circle dances with dancers all in one circle and also in the English sicilian circle formation (couple facing couple in a big circle). All three have square dances but many Manx dances have a structure of a chorus with several figures, sometimes seen in English but not seen by me in Scottish. There is no equivalent to Highland dancing in English but Manx has retained many vestiges of this. Thus there are solo step dances, with and without swords, and many dances incorporate steps which are very similar to those in Highland, eg the Manx feather step (first step of highland fling) and the heel and toe step (another fling variation). In all these, however, the steps are done loosely; there is no apparent reference to ballet foot positions as in Scottish. In Manx dancing arms not involved in holding someone else are held out sideways. This is a strong characteristic and seems to have evolved solely in Manx.

In addition to the progressive three and four couple dances Manx also includes set dances for one, two and three couples, and several six hand reels for a man and two women, many including “highland” steps. These dances often consist of eight or nine different figures, each to 16 or 32 bars of music!

Post renaissance developments in the three groups are very similar to each other. Thus, they all started with someone collecting dances, progressed to newly composed dances to traditional tunes, and culminated in new dances to new music. Scottish and English dances must each now number in the thousands probably because they have spread around the world, but I doubt that there are more than 300 Manx dances. Manx dancing does not seem to be being propagated off the island. Further, I have not been able to find any CDs, just two tapes. This is a pity because the dances contain a very rich mixture of styles and structures with plenty of challenging forms that would be of interest to a wide clientele. I’ll finish with a description of the most recent one I have come across: Tree Cassyn Vannin, the Three Legs of Man. This three-couple dance with eight figures, begins in a shape resembling the logo of the island, moves into a circle, then longways, back into a circle and finally returns to the starting shape. A very interesting dance.

Geoff Weston

Dragaicuța

Moderato/ with an air of mystery Romania

Play 4 times
Bass emphasis first
and third beats of each bar

"Wilf Horrocks' Collection"

I would guess that the request on page 7 of the September news asking for info on Dracecuta is really just a mis-spelling for Dragaicuța. Google gives a YouTube video of the dance being done (perhaps not perfectly) as well as several others with dance notes. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BuDsw1P6n0c>.

Ron Wilks



For those of you not able to access the internet and see the video Ron mentions above here are the dance notes from the Evansville International Folk Dancers website:

Dragaicuța

Rhythm: 3/4 meter counted Q S 1 2 3, Presented by: Sunni Bloland

Formation: Single circle moving CCW. All face LOD, being R foot. No hands held.

Introduction 8 measures

Measures	Counts	Pattern
1	Q S	Hold on R Moving LOD, facing center, step L behind R
2	Q S	Step R, turning to face LOD Step L
3	Q S	Hop L Step R
4	S	Step L
5	Q S	Hop L Step R
6	S	Step L
7	S	Step R
8	Q S	Hop R Step L
9	S	Step R start to face center
10	S	Step L, slowly circling R Fwd
11	S	Hold on L, continue lift of R leg
12	S	Hold
13	S	Moving back facing center, step R
14	S	Step L
15	S	Step R
16	S	Step L
17	S	Step R
18	S	Step L, moving Fwd
19	S	Step R
20	S	Step L
21	S	Step R
22	S	Step L
23	S	Step R, bending Fwd, circle L leg Fwd
24	S	Hold on R, lift L slightly higher

REPEAT DANCE



NB Next month - **Fandango** - from the Basque country. (Fandangos from other countries to follow). **Ed.**

SIFD Sunday Dance/Workshops

at 7pm – 10pm at Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, NW1 7AY

£8 SIFD members £9 non-members £4 children 14-18 (under 14 free)

6th November MC: Helen Ezra.

This dance will include many dances especially for beginners to enjoy, but will also have many to please regular Sunday dancers. We need to encourage beginners in every way we can, so please support this evening, and bring beginners or those nervous of Sunday evenings with you!

4th December, Christmas Dance. MCs: Pam Radford and Maggie O'Regan.



WHAT'S ON IN NOVEMBER

- S.I **Thursday 10th** **OXFORD BALKANSKO ORO - MITKO PETROV**, evening event contact Sally Humphrey for details, sally.humphrey@onetel.net (tel 01865 873860)
- Friday 11th** **MITKO PETROV - DERBYSHIRE**, afternoon course 1- 4pm at Willersley Castle, Cromford, Derbyshire. Contact j.king194@btinternet.com or ring 01629 57065.
- S.I **Friday 11th / Sunday 13th** **SIFD WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH WEEKEND** with Marina Wolstenholme at Willersley Castle Hotel, Cromford, Nr. Matlock, Derbys. DE4 5JH (Fully Booked) Organiser: Maggie Kaye (07974649311)
- S.I **Saturday 12th** **MITKO PETROV** - Hempton Memorial Hall, near Fakenham, North Norfolk NR21 7LG. 11am - 4.30pm approx. £20 including refreshments, please bring food to share for lunch. For bookings and further information (including accommodation advice) contact Dawn 01328 856582. dawnwakefield@btinternet.com
- Tuesday 15th** **OXFORD BALKANSKO ORO - MITKO PETROV** advanced evening workshop
- Wednesday 16th** **METHODONSKO - MITKO PETROV** Chandlers Ford, 7.30 - 9.15pm, contact Mad Chapman, 02380 267616 or mad.john@dial.pipex.com
- Thursday 17th** **HURSLEY - MITKO PETROV**, Hursley International Folk Dancers 8-10pm
- S.I **Saturday 19th / Sunday 20th** **Nov.19th/20th MITKO PETROV - BULGARIAN** at Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, NW1 7AY. Workshops £25 per day. Party £10. Both Workshops + Party £50. Discount to Balkanplus season ticket holders. For tickets, please send sae to Maureen Felton, 28 Henslow Road, Ipswich IP4 5EG. Please make cheques payable to Balkanplus. For more details phone Brian 01992 582717 or Maureen 01473 272256 or visit our website www.balkanplus.org.uk
- Sunday Nov.27th** **AROUND THE WORLD IN A DAY** with Janet Douglas, 10.30am - 3.30pm at Pulborough Village Hall. RH20 2BT £6 Tel: Maureen Reed 01403 741431



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