

*The monthly newsletter of the Society for International Folk Dancing*



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***SIFD NEWS***  
***September 2014***

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Packaging, posting and electronic distribution is done by Dalila Heath.

I must send my personal thanks to Cathy Meunier for organising 'Dance By The Sea' with Turgay and Mitko; I enjoyed it very much.



The cover picture is of Lynn Taylor from the Bognor group in a Turkish costume from Gaziantep. On the back page - a picture of Jacky & Judy Barkan; Jacky died suddenly on June 28th - see Fiona Howarth's tribute to him in last month's News.

**Ed.**



"Happy Birthday Iris ; **Iris Birch** celebrates her special birthday on September 28th and her friends would like to wish her a very Happy Birthday and a wonderful year ahead; many thanks go to Iris for her contributions to dancing over the years".



### **Monthly SIFD Dance at Cecil Sharp House**

The dance in September will be on Sunday 7th at 7pm and will be led by Dot Bradbury and Anne Maddocks. This will follow the AGM which starts at 6pm. There will be lots of well known dances and many that you can follow along even if they are unfamiliar.

The October dance is on Sunday 5th and will be led by the Woodvale group.

**Anne Maddocks**



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- S.I **Oct. 11 BALKANPLUS** - MC will be Meryl Abraham
- S.I **Oct. 18 WMIDS BRANCH ISRAELI DANCE WORKSHOP** with Adrian Pointon at Dorridge Village Hall, Grange Rd, Dorridge, Solihull B93 8QA (near M42 Jn 4 / M40 Jn 16 and Dorridge Station)  
Cost for the day (half-day): SIFD members £12 (£7) Non-members £15 (£9) More details from Maggie Kaye: 0797-464-9311 or margaretkaye@blueyonder.co.uk
- S.I **Oct. 25-26 DANCE AROUND THE WORLD** see page 5
- S.I **Nov. 7 RAINMAKERS ANNIVERSARY DANCE** 8 - 11pm at St.Michael's Parish Hall, Broadway, Letchworth, SG6 3PQ. £8.00 on the day. MC Jill Bransby with live music from Cloudburst. More info from Roger (01438 812766) or Mark (01462 454210).
- S.I **Nov.15-16 BALKANPLUS CAUCASIAN WORKSHOPS** with Tineke and Maurits van Geel at Cecil Sharp House. The weekend includes the Dunav 50th Anniversary Party. For full details visit [www.balkanplus.org.uk](http://www.balkanplus.org.uk) or phone Maureen on 01473 272256 or Brian on 01992 582717
- Nov.22-23 CAUCASIAN DANCE WORKSHOP:** Lambley Village Hall, Catfoot Lane, Nottinghamshire NG4 4QF. Tineke & Maurits van Geel £45 which includes 9 hours teaching, drinks and refreshments. To book, send a cheque payable to 'Kilikia Dances for Armenia' to Chrisandra, 16 Moore Road, Mapperley, Nottingham. NG3 6EF. Tel. 0115 9554962 or [chrisandra@tesco.net](mailto:chrisandra@tesco.net)
- S.I **Dec. 29 TWIXMAS DANCE PARTY** at Stone Cross Memorial Hall, nr Eastbourne BN24 5EH. 10.30-4.30. £8 (half day £5). Shared lunch, drinks provided. Bring own CDs. Rowena Martin 01323 503991 or [rowenahmartin@hotmail.com](mailto:rowenahmartin@hotmail.com).



*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 Around The World 2014**

Hard to believe, but DATW is 14 years old this year. Once again we're bringing you over fifty groups representing more countries than you could possibly have imagined. Whether you prefer to sit in Kennedy Hall and be entertained, or go to as many workshops as your legs will stand for, there's something for everyone. Two days to discover the variety of dance styles existing in London.

Both days start at 10.00am with 'Early Bird' dancing led by Fiona Howarth so it's well worth an early start. The list of performers for the weekend will include some long-standing friends of the SIFD but also some new faces (and feet!). We'll keep updating programme information on our website; [www.datw.org.uk](http://www.datw.org.uk)

If you've been to the event before you'll know to expect two days of non-stop performances and taster workshops and evening social dances. You can book your tickets through the site or, of course, just come along on the day. The festival grows every year. Get those dates in your diary now and come and help to make it the biggest yet!

See you there!

25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> October - Cecil Sharp House, Regents Park Road, London NW1 7AY.

**Anne Leach & Maggie O'Regan**



## **Playing Pontic Lyra for Dance –**

In July 2014 I visited Thessaloniki to learn as much as I could about playing Pontic Lyra for dance. The main source of my learning was Kyriakos' Pontos Project, a comprehensive seminar on Pontic Dance and Culture organised by Kyriakos Moisidis. I also had a series of lyra lessons with Giorgos Poulantzaklis, a highly accomplished and respected lyra player and teacher.

In the Pontos Project we had daily dance sessions introducing us to families of dances from several regions of Pontos. Most of the dance teaching was by Kyriakos Moisidis but we also had sessions with guest teachers Kostas Alexandridis, Giorgos Kasambalidis and Nikos Zurnatsidis. In the afternoons there were presentations on a wide range of cultural topics eg. Pontian Music, Costume, Wedding Customs etc. Every evening we visited local villages or towns either to attend special events organised by the local Pontic Associations or local festivals. The wide ranging and beautifully thought out programme allowed us to experience Pontic dance in many different contexts. Thanks to Kyriakos' excellent skills in interviewing and interpreting we were also able to hear the direct testimony of several elderly Pontians about the establishment of their communities in Greece following the exchange of populations with Turkey in 1923 and the ways in which their music and dance had changed over the years.

Happily for me there were skilled lyra players everywhere we went and we danced to live music every night. I was able to observe directly how the instrument is used today by many different players and I was also able to hear accounts of how the instrument was used in the past. Finally by taking lessons with Giorgos my learning was fleshed out by the additional insights of a master musician.

So, what did I learn? It's no surprise that one of the central requirements of Pontic dance music is rhythm. It's a pretty obvious thing to say but a really good way of learning the required rhythm is first to learn the dance. In my lessons with Giorgos we concentrated mainly on songs for Dipat but also Tik and Omal.

In our dance sessions variations from all of these dance families came up time and again, and all were danced at length at every festival or party we attended. The constant repetition of dances each day fed into my learning of different songs for them.

*Playing in Nea Trapezounda*



*Photo by Lenka Harmon*

Knowing the rhythms for the dances is a necessary first step but how does the lyra player get them across? The crucial factor here is bowing technique and in my case this meant unlearning some bad habits I'd got into by transferring violin bowing technique onto the lyra. On the violin (my main instrument) the instrument is maintained in a relatively stable plane and the bow moves from one string to another by moving the bowing arm from the right shoulder. My attempts to reproduce this on the lyra resulted in very uneven rhythm, particularly when it was necessary to cross strings. The design and playing position of the lyra are different and fast string changes are achieved by keeping the bow in a constant plane and turning the lyra just far enough by flexing or extending the left wrist.

Another important piece of lyra technique, especially if there is no drum, is foot percussion. Tapping out the beats with the feet is a familiar action of fiddle players the world over. In French-Canadian fiddle music complex rhythms are created from tapping patterns using both feet. In Swedish fiddle music it is usual to use foot percussion to tap on the beats which are important for the dance rhythm. Similarly in Pontic music foot percussion is used to reinforce the underlying rhythm of the dance. I was very honoured to be asked to play something at a festival in Nea Trapezounda (see photo ) and when I had finished the bespectacled man standing behind me advised me that for the sake of the dancers I must learn to tap my feet while playing.

The reinforcement of the dance rhythm by foot tapping is particularly important if the lyra player is the only musician. We experienced this in the session on dances from Matsouka taught by Giorgos Kasambalidis. Throughout this session the music was provided by Dimitis Triantafylidis, a young lyra player, and it was a magical experience to dance to the unamplified sound of just his lyra and voice. We had other similar experiences but it was much more usual for there to be both electronic amplification and daouli (drum).

The availability of electronic amplification has transformed the use of the lyra everywhere it is played. At a special celebration in the village of Pontoeraklia we followed a group of dancers and musicians as they processed from house to house receiving lavish hospitality along the way. The two instruments were lyra and drum and when we were behind the musicians only the drum was really audible. When the procession paused to dance outside someone's house the lyra player would turn round and become audible again although still unequally matched with the daouli. Later on in the village square when four different dance groups all came together the lyra was plugged into a sound system and became the dominant instrument.

A final, and perhaps also obvious, piece of learning is that there is no substitute for playing for dancers. Kyriakos kindly allowed me to play a couple of Dipat tunes in the final session of the seminar and despite my nervousness the dancers managed to find a rhythm to dance to.



My lyra studies will continue and I hope soon to collaborate with dancing friends to offer live lyra music at SIFD events.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Frank Flanagan Fund and the Lisa Ullman Travelling Scholarship Fund for their generous financial assistance. I would also like to thank Marina Wolstenholme and Laura Shannon for supporting my grant applications.



**Mike Machin**



## **Bristol International Folk Dance**

BIFD was founded by Hilda Sturge in October 1974 with much support and encouragement from other members of SIFD, notably George Sweetland and Frances Horrocks.

Hilda built up the group until it operated for a time as an evening class offering general international. Later we went independent. Hilda was joined in the teaching by Pat Skinner, Helen Watkins and, for a time, James Webb and Anne Marshall. Eventually the numbers in the weekly general class declined and it was decided to continue with only the small specialist Balkan group, led by Hilda and Pat.

Now, almost 40 years on, the time has come to lay down this small but committed group. We none of us are getting younger, health problems proliferate and a new regime at the school where we dance has made the decision inevitable.

To all those who have supported and taken part in the group over the years, our thanks and good wishes.

It has been fun!

**Hilda and Roger Sturge**

PS We'll be at Swansea next year -- in spite of aches and pains.

## Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod



**7-13 July 2014**

Llangollen this year got back some of the magic that we felt was missing last year. The sparkle came in the form of a newcomer, a school group from Belarus called Rovesnik (*pictured above*), with back up from two other children's groups. One of these Barvinochok, was from Kiev, Ukraine, the other an amazingly energetic party of diminutive Zimbabweans from Pathway school, Harare.

Rovesnik stole the show at the Carnival of Nations concert on the first evening, with a colourful performance of dance, instrumental music and singing, the highlight being a small girl, not more than about 10 or 11, who sang like Edith Piaf.

Next day they gave a similar performance, competing with adults in the Cultural Showcase competition and won with an astonishing but well-deserved 95.3 points. Loughgiel (N. Ireland) and Barvinochok trailed way behind.

On Thursday Rovesnik won again, in the Children's Folk Dance competition, this time with 92.3 points. The Zimbabweans were 2nd and Barvinochok, Ukraine, narrowly beat Loughgiel from Northern Ireland, back after a year's absence, for 3rd place. Two Indian entries failed to appear. Apparently they have had problems in getting, or perhaps affording, visas, an increasing problem for the Eisteddfod. Only a small representation of adults in the Heritage Folk Dancers were at Llangollen. Northern Lights from Liverpool represented England and a colourful group from Beijing brought elegance and interest. They had learned the lesson of last year when they lost marks for performing to canned music, and this time brought a lively group of instrumentalists, including two interesting pipes, one a low pitched flute, the other a reed pipe that looked like a snake charmer's pipe but had a soft almost recorder-like tone (*pictured below*), as well as the Chinese harp-like instrument and piano.



One of the Belarus girls won the individual folk dance, with two of the six Chinese entries 2nd and 3rd. The Belarus group is worth looking out for and I took the precaution of getting an address: [www.rovesnik.biz](http://www.rovesnik.biz).

In recent years there has been a tendency to reduction in the number of entries. Whether this is due to a policy change, a change in the cultural climate or a failure of programming or marketing is not clear. It lessens pressure on the programme which often in the past felt overloaded, but with the inevitable dropouts most of the dance competitions feel very thin. However, the four entries in the Choreographed/Stylised Folk Dance made up in quality for their small numbers. I particularly liked the balance of folk interest and intricate formations given by Orlyk, Ukrainians from Manchester, but the excellent adjudicators preferred Loughgiel (N Ireland) and Corryvreckan from Scotland who came 1st and 2nd respectively, with Orlyk a close 3rd. The thoughtfulness and warmth of the adjudications from Ed Austin, Ahmet Luleci, Jan Knoppers and, new this year, Evren Soytopcu Kiyak (Turkey), give great pleasure and confidence, even if sometimes we didn't agree with their order.

The Traditional Adult Folk Dance was also down to 4, with the two Indian groups having dropped out. It is now held on Saturday afternoon so the dance is spread out over four days. The time when dance all happened on Wednesday with a big one day attendance of SIFD members have long gone. This year we only saw Marina Wolstenholme and on Saturday, Julie Korth. Mary O'Mahony came one day but we missed her. Any other SIFD members were anonymous. But SIFD still sponsors the Adult Folk Dance prize money in memory of Lucile Armstrong with additional funding in memory of Jack and Joan Richardson donated by two SIFD members – one of whom was honoured to be asked to present the prizes this year. Loughgiel (N. Ireland) won, Stone Monkey Sword Dancers from Derby, a lively group of long sword and rapper dancers, came second and the London Kurdish Folk Dance Group third.

The winners of the two adult competitions competed on Saturday evening for the Dance Champions 2014. Three groups competed in both competitions the only difference being Orlyk (Ukrainian) in the choreographed and Stone Monkeys in the traditional. We now know what happens if one group wins the two competitions! Loughgiel had won both.

*Kurdish Dance Group, London*



So that they would have competition the highest scoring runner up from the two competitions, in this case Corryvreckan, got to dance again. They gave Loughgiel a good run in the evening, but not surprisingly, Loughgiel went away with 3 awards – and a useful £2,500 in prize money.

I don't think it's just that I'm getting old and nostalgic when I say that Llangollen no longer has the rich diet of dance cultures we were used to, but it still has its highlights and the friendly atmosphere of this very special event has not been diminished.

One innovation makes all this available to you.

<http://llangollen.tv/en/competitions/> has video recordings of all the competitions. What a feast!

**Roger Sturge**



*A dancer from "Ensemble Zagore" in gypsy costume (see July issue).*



## **SIFD Summer School**

8th - 15th August 2015 in Swansea

## **Dorset has Days of Dance too.**

Wimborne Minster Festival took place 12-15th June. More than 50 teams took part, mostly Morris, Rapper and Clog, from a 100 mile radius. International was represented by the Bournemouth and Christchurch U3A Folk Dancers and also Morena, who entertained a packed square with their lively Slovakian dances.



*The U3A team dancing Vespyolaya Kadril.*

Christchurch also had a Day of Dance on Saturday July 5th. Dances ranged from Appalachian to Zumba.

*Here we are dancing Taekemands Tretur.*



**Janet Mason**

## "Gastourikos"

While on holiday in Corfu this summer, I was interested to discover that there is a Corfiot village named Gastouri. This prompted me to investigate further. I have always been slightly curious about Gastourikos, partly because the music does not sound Greek, and also because at the back of my mind it has always reminded me of the music to a Polish dance called Sioltiska that Tony Latham taught at his 2001 Polish Day Course at Cecil Sharp House.

Imagine my interest therefore when on the internet I discovered the following. "Gastouriotikos" was composed by a Berliner, Franz Meissner, in 1892 and was called "Im Grünewald ist Holzauktion". Kaiser Wilhelm II (Kaiser Bill of WW1 fame) used to visit the Achillion Palace near Gastouri village in the summer, and as "Im Grünewald ist Holzauktion" was one of his favourite tunes, he brought the sheet music for it with him and persuaded the local band to play it. The rhythm fitted local dance steps, and from 1908 it became popular in Corfu and known as "Gastouriotikos Choros Tou Kaiser" (Gastouri dance of the Kaiser).

The website where I have found most of this information is [johncorfuworld.blogspot.co.uk](http://johncorfuworld.blogspot.co.uk). Here you can listen to the original German recording, and also hear the Greek one for comparison. I know one should always be wary of things read on the internet, but this does all seem to make sense. I have recently watched a video of Sioltiska, and it is indeed danced to a slow version of "Im Grünewald ist Holzauktion". I cannot find any reference to Sioltiska as a place name, and a Polish dictionary suggests that it might simply mean "a village dance". Possibly it is from a part of present day Poland that used to be Germany, or perhaps the tune simply travelled and became associated with a local dance as in Corfu.

I wonder how many other tunes have similarly travelled and become assimilated in other countries' cultures.

In Germany "Im Grünewald ist Holzauktion" was still very much alive and well in the 1950s and 60s, and may still be today. It was played at



festive occasions, and couples would polka round the room to it, or along the path in a village wedding procession.

The title translates as "In the Grünewald there is a Timber Auction". The timber auction refers to the selling of the wood from the trees felled from the Grünewald in Berlin to make way for villas and the Kurfürstendamm. The lyricist took the auction a stage further, with kisses also being auctioned in the wood. In fact my German friend remembers quite raunchy alternative lyrics being sung in her youth.

The correct name of the Greek dance is probably Gastouriotikos; the web yields many references to Gastouriotikos whereas a search for Gastourikos does not, and it sounds right to Greek ears as a dance name in a way that Gastourikos doesn't. The Achillion Palace near Gastouri was built in 1890 by Elisabeth (Sisi), Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary, following the suicide of her son Rudolph at Mayerling. After her assassination it was bought in 1907 by the German Kaiser Wilhelm II from the heirs to her estate.

**Linda Melville-Smith**



## **Balkanplus**

The September Balkanplus will be held on the 13th September at Cecil Sharp House, Camden NW1 7AY, starting at 7.00pm.

MCs will be the Zivko Firfov Group plus live music from Dunav. Admission £7.

**Maureen Felton**



## The Crested Hen or Cochin China

First learnt at Guides, later at P.E. college and much-loved by 11-13 year olds! We were told it was Danish.

A dance in trios - one boy (with red cap if possible), and a girl on each side. Hands joined at shoulder height, elbows bent, in circle shape (they are quite close together but not touching - only holding hands).

**Music A** (bars 1-8, 2x) RF lead -

All step-hop c-w 8 steps with a slight stamp on very last 1st beat. Reverse - c-c, stamp on the 1st step and with the last 2 step-hops, open out into a line - boy still in the centre.

**Music B** (bars 1-8, 2x) RF lead -

Boy and girl on his L, raise hands to form an arch, girl from his right step-hops under the arch and back into her place in the line.

Boy and girl on his R, raise hands to form an arch, 8 step-hops for this 2nd girl to circle under the arch and back into her place in the line.

**Start again.**

The 'fun' element is that one or other of the girls attempts to snatch his 'crest' (cap).

**Sybil Chapman**



Wilf's music for **The Crested Hen** was in last month's issue.

**Ed.**



Members might be interested in this American website for Stockton Folk Dance Camp, there's a lot of dance notes and some videos:

<http://www.folkdancecamp.org>

**Jeanette Hull**

Arcos Spain

Allegro

"Wilf Horrocks' Collection"



No feedback on **Arcos** I'm afraid - there doesn't seem to be much Spanish danced these days. **Ed.**



Wilf's music for **Yn Mheillea** - a dance, (probably from the Isle of Man as I recognise the word 'yn') will be in the October issue. On the manuscript is the following: "A circular harvest dance for as many couples as will. The Mheillea Queen sits in the centre cradling a babban (straw fashioned and wrapped as an infant) in her arms." **Ed.**





## WHAT'S ON IN SEPTEMBER

- S.I **Sunday 7th S.I.F.D. A.G.M.** 6pm. Kennedy Hall, Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London NW1 7AY
- S.I **Sunday 7th SIFD MONTHLY DANCE** - see page 3
- S.I **Saturday 13th BALKANPLUS** - see page 17
- S.I **Saturday 27th BALKAN DAY COURSE** Marion Nieuwenhuizen at Nutbrook IFDG. Greenwood Community Centre, Toton, Nottingham, NG9 6LN, (Note: new venue). 10.30 am - 4.00 pm; £8, half day £5. For further information: 0115 917 1831, [gill.morral@ntlworld.com](mailto:gill.morral@ntlworld.com)



*All material for the October issue of the SIFD NEWS must be received by the Editor in writing by 17th September.*