

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING



October 2014
SIFD News

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Nearly Christmas!

With that in mind may I ask you to look out any pictures (in colour) with a festive theme - maybe people wearing tinsel (not just tinsel!); perhaps next to a seasonal tree or decorations, carrying candles etc. - you know the sort of thing. You can send them electronically (jpg. preferred) or post them to me - I scan them in, which does no harm, and subsequently return them. As I need time to work on them I would much appreciate receiving them soon.

The cover picture (by Caroline Thomas - way back when) keeps us in tune with current social media ie. 'the ice-bucket challenge'; on page 8 a very old postcard from former Czechoslovakia.

Ed.



SIFD Monthly Dance at Cecil Sharp House

Sunday 5th October at 7pm

It was lovely to see so many people at the dance in September so please come again on 5th October when the Woodvale group will be selecting and leading the dances.

The November dance is on Sunday 9th November when Philip and Brenda Steventon will be the MCs.

Anne Maddocks



Balkanplus

The October Balkanplus will be held on the 11th October at Cecil Sharp House, Camden NW1 7AY, starting at 7.00pm.

MC will be Meryl Abraham. Admission £5.

Maureen Felton

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 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. 9 SIFD DANCE** see page 3
- 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 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
- S.I **Dec. 7 MAGGIE O'REGAN IN BOGNOR REGIS:** a day of dance including Dashme e Rexhës 10.30 - 4.30 at Barnham Village Hall, nr. Bognor Regis PO22 0AX cost: £14 (£12 SIFD members) tea, coffee etc. included. info: Janet 01243 265010 or www.interfolk.co.uk
- S.I **Dec. 13 BALKANPLUS** - the MC will be Maggie O'Regan
- 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.
- S.I **Mar. 7-8 ERIK BENDIX** teaches Balkan Folk dances in Sheffield. More details to follow.



*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.*

Russian Course with Hennie Konings - 18/19 October

As many of Hennie's fans know, he now suffers from a very severe form of arthritis in his feet, so it's possible that this could be the last time he would be teaching here. The group numbers are small, and the teaching very detailed, so especially suited to teachers, or anyone who wants to improve their Russian style and knowledge. Although some of the group have been coming to these workshops for years, this is a very friendly group and newcomers are made very welcome.

See "What's On in October" for details.

Maggie O'Regan



Balkan Instrumental Music Workshop with Maya Buckley

Livermead House Hotel Torquay

Saturday 7th February 2015 10am - 5pm & 8:30pm – 10:30pm

This non-residential day course is for instrumentalists who would like to discover more about the wonderful melodies and exciting rhythms of Balkan folk dance music. Maya will help you to prepare a selection of tunes to popular Balkan dances. Resources for the course will be provided in advance of the workshop so that you can familiarise yourself with the music beforehand. All instruments are welcome. The main workshop is from 10am to 5pm. You are also invited and encouraged to stay for the evening social dance and play for some of the dances if you wish.

Cost: £30

This event is part of the Rivieradance! 2015 Folk Dance Holiday with world-renowned teachers Yves Moreau, Cristian Florescu, Sonia Dion and France Bourque-Moreau (Wed. 4th – Mon. 9th February)

For full details and a booking form please contact Cathy Meunier email cathy_meunier@hotmail.com website: www.balkanfolkdance.org or send s.a.e to 23, Church Street, Keswick Cumbria CA12 4DX

Cathy Meunier

Rivieradance! 2015

Wednesday 4th – Monday 9th February in Torquay

Our first RIVIERADANCE! holiday was pioneered by world renowned and much loved folk dance teachers **Yves Moreau, France Borque-Moreau, Cristian Florescu** and **Sonia Dion** in 2013. We enjoyed it so much that we decided to repeat it in 2015. So don't miss this opportunity to dance with these inspiring teachers! The main course is split between Yves teaching Bulgarian and Balkan, and Cristian and Sonia teaching Romanian. But there will also be opportunities to learn a few International dances with France. You can choose either full days or half days of dance tuition. There will also be opportunities for singing, informal music-making, walking, and sight-seeing. The accommodation is a lovely family-owned hotel overlooking the sea on the south-west Devon coast. We look forward to meeting old friends and making new ones, together with plenty of music, dancing, and delicious food.



Yves Moreau World-renowned specialist and teacher of Bulgarian and Balkan folk dance, already well known and loved in the UK. His teaching is inspirational and he brings many gems of information and stories that he has gathered from his time spent researching folklore in Bulgaria and elsewhere in the Balkans.

Cristian Florescu and **Sonia Dion** Romanian folk-dance specialists demonstrating both men and women's styles. Their wonderful enthusiasm is infectious and they have delighted folk dancers all over the world with their wealth of knowledge and skill in teaching Romanian folk dance.

France Bourque-Moreau Internationally recognised and much loved teacher of folk dances from all over the world.

If you have danced with these teachers before, you will know what a treat we are in for! They delight in sharing their love of folk dance with us.

The holiday is 5 night's full board in comfortable en-suite accommodation, arriving on Wednesday and leaving on Monday after breakfast. The cost is given below

Residential dance course (half / full day course) £395 / £465

Residential only £305. Single room supplement (5-nights) £50

For full details and a booking form contact Cathy Meunier email cathy_meunier@hotmail.com tel 017687 73117 website:

www.balkanfolkdance.org or send s.a.e to 23, Church Street, Keswick Cumbria CA12 4DX.

Cathy Meunier



Dance Around The World 25/26 October

Get your dancing shoes polished, and start revving up for the annual dancefest that is DATW. As usual, there will be loads of groups, with all sorts of workshops and demonstrations to enjoy. Keep your eyes on the www.datw.org.uk website to see what's on offer, because, also as usual, we never know exactly what's going to happen until the last minute, which makes it even more exciting. As well as some of our usual stalwarts like Tanec and Akhtamar, I have it on good authority that the Maori group, who were such a hit last year, will be back. We look forward to seeing even more of you at Cecil Sharp House this year. See "What's On in October" for full details.

Maggie O'Regan

Jacky & Judy Barkan

Thank you Fiona, for your lovely tribute in August's Newsletter. If Judy receives a copy of it and also of this, I think she will be pleased that their work goes on and has even returned, in small measure, to their 'homeland'.

When teaching at Yardley Grammar School, I was lucky enough to work with a group of pre-University pupils in my Senior Dance Group. An invitation was received from Solihull Council and the Jewish community for a student to spend 3 months in Israel to follow their own interests. Joy Irechuku said she'd love to apply for the bursary. To cut a long story short, after many sessions with the Council, Joy was chosen so she could follow her interest in seeing what medical facilities there were available - both in city hospitals and in the smaller towns.

At the final selection meeting, she had to inform the Council that, unbeknown to her, her family had arranged her first ever visit to Nigeria to see family not previously met. The Chief Rabbi was at that meeting and told the Council they could delay her visit until the following year.

All these interviews took some time, but the Committee agreed - she and a boy from another school were the winners. The price to pay?? A full accounting of her activities on her return and to be a speaker at our next Speech day.

Imagine their surprise when they discovered that in any free time she had she was teaching - in whichever Kibbutz she was lodged - Yes! Israeli dancing! So it certainly shows how her interests and dance skills were put to good use.

At the post-Israeli visit to the Council she, accompanied by her parents - and wearing full Nigerian dress - long cream gown with purple flowers on the cloth, and the matching headscarf tied in the traditional way with the knotted ends standing up like 'rabbit's ears', held the floor for a long time! Elegant, dignified and happy! I don't know who was proudest - her parents, the Council, or her school! So you see - yet another generation following on the work of Jacky and Judy.

Sybil Chapman

A New Dance Movement in Hungary?

While checking out of a hotel in Hungary recently, my eye was caught by a feature on the television at the end of the bar, in which young women and men, replete in Hungarian costume, were dancing traditional dance steps to very modern-sounding live music. What was striking about the dancing, which was sometimes in a circle and sometimes couple dances, was that it was done as line dancing is, with each step "walked" rather than danced, and the rhythm a very even, brisk walking tempo. The orchestra may have been playing jazzed up Hungarian folk music. The ambient noise level was such that I couldn't tell for sure, but what I did hear sounded as though it certainly had its origins in traditional music. A huge and very enthusiastic crowd was cheering on the dancers, and a young lady who seemed to be the performance leader was interviewed speaking very passionately about what they were doing. It may be relevant that the day of the TV broadcast was 20th August, St Stephen's Day (Hungary's most important national holiday, which celebrates the foundation of the Hungarian state.)

Is this a new variant of Hungarian dancing for the 21st century? It certainly seemed to be very popular with young people. Does anyone know any more about it?

Linda Melville-Smith



Some Ritual Dances of Mann

The following article by Mona Douglas on Manx dance was written in 1957, appeared in the SIFD News in 1979, and again this month to complement Yn Mheillea. (acknowledgements to The Folklorist). Ed.

Only one of our Manx ritual dances is known outside the island: the Dirk Dance, Reeaghyn dy Vannin, traditionally performed at one time by the young Kings of Mann on their taking of arms, and later by a specially trained dancer before the King, the honour of being King's Dancers being hereditary in one particular family, from a descendant of which I noted it; and as this dance has been described in a former article, I shall pass over it with this brief mention and write of some lesser-known dances of a ritual nature of which the tradition still remains reasonably vivid. In most of these the information available has been sufficient to make a workable reconstruction possible.

In folklore, the term 'ritual' has a wide connotation, ranging from a definite religious observance to a tenuous and often jocular folk-memory of some ancient rite or belief presented in a children's game. Here in Mann, apart from the Dirk Dance, which always seems to have been regarded with a certain reverence, I have not found complete and faithful observances, but only fragments of old beliefs, told half-seriously; and in one case a definite fear of ritual dancers, but with no actual reason given for being scared of them. In other cases, I have had clear descriptions from several unrelated sources of a whole dance and ritual, with demonstrations of steps and movements, given without any understanding that these had any special significance.

The one set of dancers who seem to have inspired fear in their beholders in all parts of the island, even well within living memory, is the Mollag Band. There seems to have been one of these Bands in each of the towns, and in some country districts also. They were men (number uncertain, but eight or ten seems to be the general opinion) dressed in rough white suits, sometimes with open sleeveless coats having one or two short shoulder-capes, worn over them, and tall-crowned blue or black felt hats, once made in the village of Ballasalla; with brightly-coloured ribbon cross-gartering over their trousers, and long trails of ivy and other greenery decorating the whole costume. They carried long staves of about six feet, also decorated with ivy

twined around them, and mollags (the inflated skins used to float fishing-nets) dangling from ropes, which they swung about them, giving blows with them on house-doors, and sometimes hitting anyone who got in their way, as they danced through the street of Ramsey or Castletown, shouting and leaping high in the air and flourishing their staves.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to get a demonstration of this dance, or even a workable description of the step used, though I am fairly certain that the High Reel Step would come into it. But I have seen one of the old Mollag Band costumes, and heard many general descriptions, all of them emphasising the fear motive. In fact, more than one informant has said, “You’ll not get any person to show you that dance, at all, for the only ones that can remember it were just little ones when they saw it, and would be far too scared to take notice of the steps and the like”.

Probably the same thing would have happened to another of our ritual dances, known as ‘Mylecharane’s March’, but for the fortunate chance that my own great-grandfather Phillip Quayle of Glentrammon, actually danced in a set which performed about 1870. He left notes of this dance, as of many others (it was these notes, incidentally, which became my first basis of collecting Manx dances); and his daughter, my grandmother, having seen it danced every year round the Christmas and New Year season in her girlhood, was able to give me a detailed description, show me the steps used and the stick movements, and sing the tune - which turned out to be the one recorded by the late W.H.Gill and printed in an arrangement for piano in his Manx National Music under the caption ‘Mylecharane, Modern Version’. Why ‘modern’ I don’t quite know, unless because it is a major variant, not the minor one usually sung traditionally. This, however, is essentially a fiddle tune, with very strong rhythmic stresses - fine for dancing to but not very easy to sing to the words of the Mylecharane folksong. As a matter of fact, my grandmother could not remember ever hearing it sung, but only played by the itinerant fiddler who used to accompany the dance team on their rounds.

Whatever musicians may think of the tune, however, I feel that the

continued overleaf >

dance itself is very old; it strongly suggests to me an ancient war-dance, for some of the figures, and the names given to them, seem to mimic fighting and the testing of weapons. As folk-ritual, it is associated with the New Year and with prophecy. At the New Year's Eve gatherings, a terrifying object would fling open the house-door and dash in - a whiteclad figure maybe seven feet high, topped by a wooden, white-painted horse's head with red jaws opening and closing as they tried to snap at anyone within reach - especially the prettiest girls. After a good deal of this quite literal horse-play, the figure would gradually herd the Fiddler and maybe a couple of girls out through the open door into the night. There would be screams, groans and laughter from outside, and then the Fiddler would march back playing the Mylecharane tune and followed by the dancers swinging and clashing their sticks, with the tall white figure gambolling clumsily around them. Then the dance was performed, the Fiddler actually taking part in one figure and at the end being ritually 'killed', while the dancers gave a wild yell. Next, the whiteclad figure, called the Laare Vane, or White Mare, seated itself a little apart, and the leader of the dance raised the Fiddler, blindfolded him, and led him to the Laare Vane, where he had to kneel down with his head in its lap and answer questions as to happenings to be expected during the coming year. These answers were regarded as oracular, and I think every informant of mine who remembered the dance and ceremony at all has assured me solemnly that the Fiddler was seldom wrong on these occasions.

The Laare Vane links up in folklore with the Welsh Mairi Llwyd and the well known Hobby-horse, and I think possibly also with the various Waterhorse traditions found in all Celtic countries. The only Celtic dance I have heard of, however, which seems to have some affinity with Mylecharane's March is a fighting dance called 'Brian Boru' which I once saw mentioned in an article on Irish dances, but no detailed description was given of this, only a statement that "The dancers fought each other with clubs, often causing broken heads, and the steps were very difficult". I may say that broken heads have on occasion occurred in 'Mylecharane' teams, not to speak of bruised and broken fingers, while all those who have tried it say that the 'sand step' occurring in this dance is far the most difficult of any Manx steps.

To be continued next month.



Dear Janet,

Re Linda Melville-Smith's article regarding the tune for **Gastourikos** being originally from Germany and also being used for the Polish dance Sioltiska, just to muddy the waters further I would point out that it is also used (slightly altered) for the Polish dance Olender.



Re the Manx dance "**Yn Mheillea**", this was taught by the Woodfidley Dance Group at a Manx workshop at Eastbourne in 1995.

Lily Avery



The Crested Hen or Cochin China:

There were a couple of mistakes in last month's notes:

In Music A it should read: with a slight stamp on very 1st beat.
(not last)

In Music B it should read: 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 place reforming the circle. (not back into line)

Sybil Chapman



☀ The next dance to work on is **Lirppu Larppu** from Finland for the November issue. Do you know the dance?

Is there a Finnish Dance Specialist in the Society?

Ed.

Yn Mheillea

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.

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 6/8. It consists of three staves. The first staff is the melody, starting with a treble clef and a 6/8 time signature. The second staff is the guitar accompaniment, with a treble clef and a 6/8 time signature, and includes chord diagrams for G, C, D, and A. The third staff is the bass line, with a bass clef and a 6/8 time signature, and includes chord diagrams for G, C, D, and G. The score is divided into two systems. The first system is labeled 'A' and 'B'. The second system is labeled 'After 4th time' and '1.' and '2.'. The lyrics are written below the bass line: 'Yn Mheil - lea, y Mheil-lea, A-reesht, A-reesht, A-reesht'.

Yn Mheil - lea, y Mheil-lea, A-reesht, A-reesht, A-reesht

"Wilf Horrocks' Collection"



*Manx Folk Dance Society dancing Yn Mheillea.
(picture taken from their website. Ed.)*



Eastbourne International Folk Festival 1-4 May 2015

We will have special events throughout the weekend to celebrate 40 years of the festival at Eastbourne. The new International dance organisers, Ron and Jean Wilks, have already invited Jan Knoppers & Richard van der Kooij to teach their usual eclectic mix of dances, along with band Maggie's Mix who made their début at EIFF in 2013. There will also be workshops on Russian and Greek dance and beginners' workshops for those new to International Dancing.

The programme will, as usual, also include a full range of English and American folk dance options such as free waltz and Historical dance and a new addition to our repertoire, informal stepping from Southern England. In addition, there will be workshops on Dancing with Disabilities and "How to Hold a microphone!"

Don't wait until you arrive at the festival to find out what is on the programme as the website will be frequently updated.

A full weekend ticket costs £95, with Early bird price of £80 from 1.October-10.January (same as 2014). You can reserve tickets on-line at www.eiff.org.uk, or download and post the form, or ring the friendly box office on 01823 401271. Payments by cheque or BACS.

The festival cannot function without our steward team and we have room for more volunteers. We would be glad to hear from you if you are able to exchange work for a ticket. Our arrangements are flexible to maximise dancing preferences. Please contact Maureen on 01823 401271.

EIFF 2014 is now on Facebook and YouTube so if you look you will be able to spot dancers you know!

Maureen, Jean and Ron





WHAT'S ON IN OCTOBER

- S.I **Sunday 5th SIFD MONTHLY DANCE** see page 3
- S.I **Saturday 11th BALKANPLUS** - see page 3
- S.I **Saturday 18th W. MIDS BRANCH ISRAELI DANCE W/SHOP**
with Adrian Pointon at Dorridge Village Hall, Grange Rd, Dorridge,
Solihull B93 8QA (near M42 Jn 4 / M40 Jn 16 and Dorridge Station)
half-day: SIFD members £12 (£7) Non-members £15 (£9) Maggie
Kaye: 0797-464-9311 or margaretkaye@blueyonder.co.uk
- S.I **Friday 17th AN EVENING WITH MAGGIE O'REGAN** hosted by
Rainmakers International Folk Dance Group. Balkan and Eastern
European dances; 8-10.30pm at St Michael's Parish Hall, Broadway,
Letchworth, SG6 3PQ. £5. More details from Mark (01462 454210).
- Sat. 18th - Sun. 19th RUSSIAN COURSE - HENNIE KONINGS.**
10.30 - 5.00. Cost £110 ISTD Studios, 346 Old Street, London EC1V
9NQ (nearest tube stations Old Street and Liverpool St)
Further information: raymond@daymer.freeuk.com
- S.I **Sat. 25th - Sun. 26th "DANCE AROUND THE WORLD"** at Cecil
Sharp House, 2 Regents Park Road, London NW1 7AY. 10.00 am to
11.00 p.m. workshops and performances. Latin American Evening
25th. Social dances both evenings. £14 whole day, £9 evening only,
£22 weekend ticket, £2 reduction for concessions, children free.
Information at www.datw.org.uk or 07749 007 040 or 07738 293 157



*All material for the November issue of the SIFD NEWS must be received by
the Editor IN WRITING by 17th October.*