

Society for International Folk Dancing



December 2019

SIFD NEWS



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



It's that time of year again; thanks to Dalila for packing and posting the SIFD News every month and thanks to everyone who has contributed words and pictures this year.

Fiona Howarth sent in the collages of photos taken at dance Around The World together with her article (page 9).

The 'Final' picture of the Beskdy Dancers is on the back page and their article with more photos starts on page 6. All DATW photos of them are from Brian Evans.

Tinsel Time - Seasons Greetings to you all, Ed.



SIFD December Dance

This month, the last Sunday dance of 2019, will be led by Anne Leach, who still has energy after her hard work at another successful Dance Around the World weekend. Well done Anne!

The dance is on Sunday 1st December at Primrose Hill Community Centre, Hopkinson's Place, Fitzroy Road, London NW1 8TN.

The SIFD Band will be playing for us and we start prompt at 6.45pm finishing in time to clear hall by 9.30pm (hall available from 6.30pm). The next dance will be on Sunday 5th January 2020.

See you there,

Brenda Steventon



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- S.I **Jan. 5: SIFD DANCE** see page 3
- S.I **Jan. 11: BALKANPLUS** - MC will be Meryl Abraham, held in Trefusis, Cecil Sharp House, Camden NW1 7AY, starting at 7.00pm. Admission £6.
- S.I **Feb. 5–10: RIVIERADANCE 2020** Residential Balkan & beyond with Erik Bendix (dances from Macedonia, Bulgaria, Romania, Armenia) & Caspar Bik (dances from the Black Sea area – Bulgaria, Turkey, Georgia & part of Russia). 5 nights full board, Torquay. from £435 (dancers); £335 (non-dancers). *cathy_meunier@hotmail.com* website: *www.balkanfolkdance.org* or send s.a.e to Cathy Meunier 23, Church Street, Keswick Cumbria CA12 4DX
- S.I **Feb. 15: BALKANPLUS** - MC will be Meryl Abraham, held in Trefusis, Cecil Sharp House, Camden NW1 7AY, starting at 7.00pm. Admission £6. **NOTE:** This is the 3rd Saturday in February.
- Mar 20-23: 3 NIGHT INT. FOLK DANCING & WALKING** led by Phil & Brenda Steventon. Dancing morning & evening, 4-5 mile walks with HF leader at Newfield Hall, Malhamdale, North Yorkshire BD23 4AA tel: HF: 0345 470 8558 or Phil: 020 8397 9649
- S.I **Apr. 24-27 GREAT ALNE LONG WEEKEND** (Fri. afternoon - Mon. afternoon) (near Alcester, Warwickshire) International Folk Dancing with our special guest Karin Bellaart from the Netherlands. Other varied dancing, making music, handbell ringing, Maypole dancing, part singing, walking and cycling. Being the 37th year of the Long Weekend there is the opportunity to bag an 'Extra Early Bird' Season Ticket for £37.00 if booked by 31st December. For further information see website at *www.greatalnefolk.org.uk* or phone Paul Lindley on 0121 689 1802 or 07913 615002.



*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.*

Balkanplus

The December Balkanplus will be held on the 14th December in Trefusis, Cecil Sharp House, Camden NW1 7AY, starting at 7.00pm and finishing at 10.00pm. MCs will be the Zivko Firfov Group plus live music from Dunav. Admission £8.

Maureen Felton



To Simon (and Joan) and Lily and all my dancing friends, too numerous to mention. Here is my potted dance history.

When I was a tot I was always dancing,
Twirling, swirling, retreating, advancing.
Leap and hop, clap and shout,
Stamp and jump and turn all about.

So turn up the music, come fiddle and drum,
Bring on the accordeon, a guitar to strum.

In my wardrobe you will find
Not the clothes of the usual kind.
There's a beautiful costume that doesn't quite fit,
I just can't think what's happened to it.
No stilettos or platforms for me,
Just ballet, opanki, tap, cervuli.

We've danced on the green and in the town hall,
From near and far and even Bengal
But all I can say is the best of them all
Is that wonderful place the Royal Albert Hall.

Now my feet aren't so nimble, my knees seem to creak
But still I keep going, though not at my peak.
So when people ask me I say with a grin
I'm fine, just fine (for the state that I'm in)

Frances who dances
And old enough to know better.

The Beskydy Dancers: 1952 - 2019

1952. Elizabeth II ascended to the throne, Singin' in the Rain premiered...and the Beskydy Dancers folk dance group were formed. We spent the next 67 years sharing and preserving the folk dances of the Czech and Slovak Republics, often accompanied by musicians from the Beskydy band. Sadly, this year we decided to hang up our kroje (Czech/Slovak folk costumes) and dancing shoes for good, and our performance at Dance Around the World on 27th October was our last. We very much enjoyed the performance, and are pleased to have gone out on a high. It is unfortunate, but not unexpected as the group has been winding down for some time. There have been a number of contributors, to which I am sure many groups can relate: mainly funds, and a small core group of dancers.



It is difficult to do justice to the eventful history and legacy of the Beskydy Dancers in writing. In 1952, the group was formed by Czech actress and dancer, Hedda Klingerova Jolly, under the auspices of the British Czechoslovak Friendship League, which was established in London during WWII. Hedda had actually laid down the groundwork for the dance group in the late 40s, visiting Prague to learn and collect

dances from folklorist friends who choreographed for Czech and Slovak dance groups. The end result was a very authentic repertoire of dances, which changed very little over the years. The group toured Czechoslovakia in the late 60s and subsequently split, with Hedda's group continuing as the Kensington Slavonic Dancers.

In 1977, architect and dancer Hedy Fromings took over the group, renamed it the Beskydy Dancers, and spent the next four years consolidating the core dances and, introducing a repertoire of community dances. She nurtured close ties with folk groups in Czechoslovakia, and took the group on two field trips to folk festivals in the early 80s, to polish their dancing, and soak in the festival atmosphere. This led to reciprocal arrangements with Czech and Slovak dance groups, funded by the Co-Operative Society: a Europe-wide chain of businesses and services. We received a rapturous welcome during our dance tour of Slovakia in 1987, and twice at the Rožnov folk festival where we performed in the 90's. These were important highlights of our career, and the stories of our adventures on the minibus to Rožnov (nicknamed Bus-kedy) have become part of our own folklore! For the now mostly British dancers, it was a real adventure, offering a unique insight into Czech and Slovak life and culture. Of course, we also danced at UK events, including the Faversham Folk Festival in 2004 and 2015, the Liverpool International Garden Festival in 1984, and the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the end of WWII- held in Wingrave, close to where President Edvard Beneš and the Czechoslovak Government in Exile were based. We were also invited to perform at the Czech Embassy on their Liberation Day for several years, and have danced for a number of community groups.

Later, the group was taught by experienced dancer Pat Howard, who met her husband, Michael, in the group. Gill Blyth then led the Beskydy Dancers from 2007 to 2019. Our longest standing active dancers have been with the group for almost 50 years, which is an incredible achievement! One of the things that have made our performances so memorable is live music, and we owe a considerable debt to our long-standing accordionist Peter Murphy, who joined in 1984, with his keen understanding of Czech and Slovak music.

>> pto)



Troják at DATW 2010

The Beskydy Dancers has been a special part of our lives and an enduring influence for many of us, allowing us to explore and expand our love of Czech and Slovak folklor, culture, music and language. For those of us with Czech or Slovak heritage, the Beskydy Dancers was a vital connection to our roots. The final iteration of the group included dancers from a variety of backgrounds, some with previous dance experience, some without. Some of us had visited the Czech Republic or Slovakia and experienced the vibrant folk festival atmosphere, learned the language, or nurtured friendships and contacts. We all had one important thing in common: a dedication to understanding the character of the different regions, and crafting polished, engaging performances.

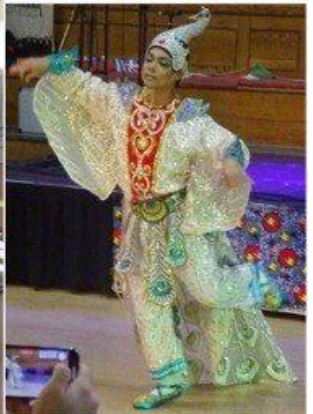
We would like to thank our performers past and present for their support, as well as our audiences clients, friends, family, and supporters. As one of our former dancers recently said, we were “more than just an evening class- we were the real thing”. Never a truer word spoken! Dekuji vám for the memories.

Asha Mangul, for Beskydy Dancers

With special thanks to Gill Blyth and Hedy Fromings



DATW
2019



Dance Around The World 2019

How do you do it Anne? Every year Anne and her team manage to produce a wonderful exciting and varied programme of dance to suit all tastes and this was well up to standard. I can only describe the few performances and workshops that I was able to attend, so please excuse any omissions.

Saturday



The warm-up was well attended and included Leana, Bojerka and the popular mixers Borrowdale Exchange and Three Meet Three [helicopters].



The Romanian group Tezaur, appearing for the first time, gave a lively performance of authentic dances among which I recognised Cuiliandra. They all came to the workshop and got everyone dancing.



Myanmar Community Dance Ensemble showed the very stylised traditional dance of the area. The picture shows a dramatic peacock dance



The Kurdish group Govend had a workshop in the marquee. It was a full house. The steps looked deceptively simple but were really tricky to follow. I loved the dance Bablekan with bounces and twists of the body. Maybe next year they will be offered a performance.



Anne led a mini dance-for-all in a gap between performances and a large section of the audience joined her in Dal Johanes Vals, Duke of Kent's Waltz and other favourites.



Tetry Polish Dance Group is a longstanding feature of DATW. They included several sprightly veterans and gave us two spots from different regions, Central and Southern Poland. The musicians played with lively spirit.



No Bulgarian performances this year, but Boyko gave a workshop. He taught with such dynamic energy and verve encouraging us through several dances without saying any words! I recognised Elena Mome.

The FavWell Appalachian dancers. [clog]
Dancers from three classes joined to give us a performance of this energetic dance style. The live music added to the excitement



The Maoris thrilled everyone with their amazing singing and those quivering hand movements. The girls showed us the poi dances and the Haka made a sensational finale.



The Bhavan Odissi Indian Dance Group brought some of the students from their Kensington classes. Before the performance the stories behind the dances, and the meaning of some of the movements were explained and made it more understandable for the audience.



The Estonian group included both adults and children. They danced in a relaxed and natural way to the haunting music. The programme included Oije ja Vasemba and Kalamies.



Januka is a group of Jamaican nurses in UK. They dance the Quadrilles that their ancestors saw the English doing, and adapted them to their very unique style. I love the way they open their arms and lean back before taking ballroom hold.



Sunday

In the warm-up we included Oj Svetjot Kalina and David Melech. Borrowdale Exchange was voted in for a repeat performance.



Dalila led an Israeli workshop, which was well attended. Here she is demonstrating Oneg Shabbat a stylised dance to welcome the Sabbath. Dalila specialises in Armenian dance, and gave us a performance and workshop that I was unable to attend.



A Caramina (means Whiteberry) Galician Dance Group performed their traditional regional dances to live music. They are a group of friends who meet informally.



The colourful dancers from China reflected a variety of cultural traditions in China. They included an intriguing “long sleeve dance”





Ursula led an International workshop for Friday Feet. It was well attended and those who came, stayed to the end. She taught confidently and with humour. I was happy to join in my current favourite – Steinhaugen Beinhaugen from Norway.



Members of the Japanese Traditional Dance School gave dances in the style of Nihon Buyo which originates from the Kabuki dance dramas. We were told the stories they were representing.



Mrs Bennet's Ballroom performed Quadrilles, figures from The Lancers and our favourite Duke of Kent's Waltz. Several quadrilles featured "one gentleman, two ladies" often seen in times of war when gentlemen were in short supply.



Saduto Lithuanian group had the youngest musician of the weekend. He kept perfect time with his drumming, and the whole band gave the dancers a lively accompaniment to their traditional dances.



London Dejo Latvian group performed modern and traditional dances. They included a dramatic story about modern soldiers and some dances for six people.



The Tibetan Group from London played traditional instruments and rounded off their performance with a dance during which the instrumentalists played, sang and danced all at the same time. In the workshop they taught us the dance leading us and playing and singing too! It was really difficult to emulate the steps but we all had a go. I even found myself joining in the singing without words of course.



The Philhelines Greek group performed dances from Cyprus, and showed us authentic dances with the minimum of choreography. In the workshop George and the group taught a range of dances which was pitched at the level of those attending. My friend was heard to say "now that's how to run a workshop" and I agree.



The local team, Camden Clog, performed in the East Lancashire style with solosang group arrangements. They were accompanied [led?] by a brilliant violinist – live music makes such a difference.

The climax to the weekend was the Anglo-International Barn Dance with Anne Leach and Dave Kerridge as MCs and music from the renowned band Cloudburst. People from the groups, day visitors and some of the DATW unsung helpers all gathered to follow the guidance of Anne and Dave. The programme included Boerenploff, Aunt Hetties White Horse, Nottingham Swing and Dal Johannes Waltz. A dance called Karla's waltz was to a wonderful tune called La Partida. The band played it superbly.

I finish with a view of Anne encouraging the dancers on to the floor. We owe her so many thanks for organising this special event which really promotes International folk dancing and supports the aims of the Society.



Fiona Howarth



Koprivshitsa Folklore Festival 6 – 10 August

Price: £1,050

In response to a request by some participants, we have agreed an extension after the Koprivshitsa Folklore Festival of 4 days from 10 to 14 August. A specialist mountain walking and natural history guide will lead you on excursions from your base in Koprivshitsa to some of the nearby beautiful mountain meadows, small streams, lovely mixed forests and high Stara Planina mountain ridges for some stunning views. We shall be looking for indigenous mountain flowers, wildlife, birds and those butterflies still on the wing. The extension will be on half board basis and we'll have a vehicle at our disposal. The price will be from £670 to £390 per person, depending on the number of participants, with £52 single room supplement. Further details available on request, do enquire.

Balkania Travel: T +44 (0)207 536 9400 E: annie.kay@btinternet.com
E: ognian@balkaniatravel.com

Annie Kay

Zu Lauterbach

Austria

8

15

21

"Wilf Horrocks' Collection"

The dance **Zu Lauterbach** has drawn a blank! It was the last one in the alphabetical list so next month we'll try the first - **A Chula** from Portugal. Ed.



WHAT'S ON IN DECEMBER

- S.I **Sunday 1st SIFD DANCE** see page 3
- S.I **Friday 13th BARNET CHRISTMAS PARTY** with Dunav. 8pm at Church House, 2 Wood Street, Barnet, Herts. EN5 4BW £6 Further info. Brian on 01992 582717 bvdowsett@aol.com
- S.I **Saturday 14th BALKANPLUS** see page 5
- S.I **Friday 20th RAINMAKERS CHRISTMAS PARTY**, 8pm-11pm at St Michael's Parish Hall, Broadway, Letchworth, Hertfordshire, SG6 3PQ. £3.00. MC Jill Bransby. Please bring food to share. More info from Roger (01438 812766) or Mark (01462 454210).
- Saturday 28th TWIXMAS DANCE CELEBRATION** at Stone Cross Memorial Hall, BN24 5EH. (Junctn B2104 / B2247.10.30 - 4.30pm. share dances & food, drinks provided. Cost £12 (half day £7). suekewley@outlook.com or ring 01903 744929.

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All material for the January issue of the SIFD NEWS must be received by the Editor in writing by 16th December.