

*Society for International Folk Dancing*



*February 2020*  
***SIFD NEWS***

registered charity number 284509

[www.sifd.org](http://www.sifd.org)

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The packaging and posting is done by Dalila Heath.



The News always needs articles and contributions from **you**. Reports and photos of your groups and dancing activities are welcome.

Leszek Bojanowski has pointed out that the photograph on page 7 of the January News is of two of the Tatry Polish Dance Group (circa 1990's) dancing Fafur - part of their Kurpie suite (NE Poland).

Another of Brian Evans' photos of the Beskydy Dancers graces the cover; they were dancing the Doudlebská Polka which is featured this month (page 7).

**Ed.**



### **SIFD February Dance**

Phil and I will be MCs on 2nd February at the SIFD dance held at Primrose Hill Community Centre, Hopkinson's Place, Fitzroy Road, London NW1 8TN. The SIFD Band will be playing for us as usual and we start prompt at 6.45pm, finishing in time to clear the hall by 9.30pm (hall available from 6.30pm).

The next dance will be on Sunday 1st March 2020.

See you there,

**Brenda Steventon**



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- S.I **Mar. 1 SIFD DANCE** see page 3
- S.I **Mar. 6: GENERAL EVENING COURSE** with Meryl Abraham hosted by Rainmakers IFDG, 8-10.30pm at St Michael's Parish Hall, Broadway, Letchworth, SG6 3PQ. £5.00 for the evening. More info from Mark (01462 454210)
- S.I **Mar. 8: DAY OF DANCE WITH CATHY MEUNIER** at Witnesham Village Hall, Church Lane, Witnesham, IP6 9JD near Ipswich. 11-5. Cost £12. Contact Sally Fletcher to book on 01473 252824 or *email fletcherism@aol.com*
- S.I **Mar. 14: BALKANPLUS** MCs will be Jill Bransby and Rainmakers, held in Trefusis, Cecil Sharp House, Camden NW1 7AY, starting at 7.00pm. Admission £6
- 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
- Mar. 28: ISRAELI DANCES WITH DALILA HEATH** 2 -5.30pm Doors open from 1.45 – 6.00pm. £7.00. New Stapleford Community Hall, Washington Drive, Nottingham, NG9 8PY. For further details please contact – *gill.morral@ntlworld.com* or 0115 9171831.
- S.I **Apr. 5: GREEK DANCES FROM PONTOS** taught by Dimitris Triandafyllidis 10:30am-4:30pm at West Wickham Methodist Church Hall, Hawes Lane, West Wickham, Kent, BR4 9AA. On-street parking. £30 to include refreshments. Cheques payable to 'Helios' and sent to Sue King, 83 Upland Road, Sutton, Surrey, SM2 5JA.
- S.I **Apr. 18: BALKANPLUS** MCs will be Greg Boyd and Hora Sheffield. Admission £6. **Note:** This is the third Saturday in April.
- S.I **Apr. 24-27 GREAT ALNE LONG WEEKEND** (Fri.pm- Mon. pm) (near Alcester, Warwickshire) Int. Folk Dancing with Karin Bellaart Varied dancing, making music, handbells ringing, Maypole, singing, etc. bag an 'Extra Early Bird' Season Ticket for £37.00 has been further extended to 14th February. Further information see: *www.greatalnefolk.org.uk* or phone Paul Lindley on 0121 689 1802 or 07913 615002

S.I **May 1-4: SIFD HALSWAY MAY WEEKEND** (option to stay until a.m. 5th May) Int. Folk Dances led by Janet Woolbar each evening, a mix of band and recorded music. Guided walks Sat. Sun. Mon. Time to visit the local area. We only have non en-suite rooms available. More info: Robin Morris 01564773482 or [robinnimbo@aol.com](mailto:robinnimbo@aol.com)

S.I **May 29: FRENCH EVENING**, hosted by **RAINMAKERS IFDG**, live music from Danse Herts musicians, 8-10.45pm at St Michael's Parish Hall, Broadway, Letchworth, SG6 3PQ. £5.00 for the evening. More info from Mark (01462 454210).



*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 Events in 2020**

First, a reminder that the next dance is on 15th February - the third Saturday in the month. It will be a special occasion in that the Balkan Ceilidh band Ygra will make a cameo appearance. We hope it will be the first of many joint ventures with Ygra. The MC is Meryl Abraham. The date avoids a clash with Torquay this month but with Cecil Sharp House being more restrictive on smaller scale bookings of late, please note that Balkanplus has had to move to the third Saturday in April and October, too.

We try to organise at least one dance workshop a year with a guest teacher. I am delighted to say that Iliana Božanova and Todor Yankov (accordion) have accepted our invitation to come in September. Full details will be published next month. I expect news of a fourth Bulgarian folklore tour in 2021 led by Iliana will be announced during her UK visit. This will be a topic of conversation when I meet Iliana in Koprivshtitsa in August. Germans and Americans – not to speak of British friends – will be keen to discover what is in store for them in what will probably be my last tour in the role of coordinator.

**Brian Dowsett**

## Betty Lee (3.6.1933 - 13.12.2019)

Betty and Henry joined the Rainmakers International Folk Dancing Group when it was founded in September 1976. They both became loyal and enthusiastic members, even paying their subs when they couldn't attend a meeting. When we had jumble sales to raise money, we always sorted the jumble out at their house. Betty kept our scrapbooks from 1976 - 2013, meticulously describing all our many activities, such as demonstrations, festivals, picnics, parties and workshops.



The 'Early Days' scrapbook showed Betty dancing Mayim, Mayim, Nigoono Shel Yoshi (*left*) and Kreuz Koenig. She took part in displays locally, including the annual Hitchin Gatherings (see photo below which shows Betty dancing the Ijs Wals in 1988 in a Vollandam costume.)

Betty and Henry brought hats, clogs, braid and skirt materials from Holland which we made into our costumes for our 1988 performance and on numerous future occasions. Further afield, Betty danced at the Sidmouth Festival, Covent Garden (the market not the Opera House!) and at the Royal Albert Hall with the SIFD.



We were delighted that Betty (and Henry) managed to come to Rainmakers 40th Anniversary dance in 2016. (See page 9 photo which shows Betty and Henry watching the Maori Stick dance. Guess who made the paper sticks? Betty and Henry of course.)

In recent years, when Betty was housebound, she always wanted to know who was still dancing with Rainmakers and how they were. She was still interested in the wider world and remained cheerful despite her restricted circumstances. She will be sadly missed but remembered with affection.

**Jill Bransby**

# (Doudlebska) Linečká Polka

Czech

Pro: Leenetsker

The image shows a musical score for the piece "(Doudlebska) Linečká Polka". It is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff starts at measure 10 and includes a first ending (1.) and a second ending (2.). The second staff starts at measure 19 and includes a first ending (1.). The third staff starts at measure 27 and includes a first ending (1.) and a second ending (2.). The fourth staff continues the first ending (1.) and second ending (2.). Chord symbols D, A7, and B are placed below the notes. The instruction "Play Ad Lib but finish on A" is written at the end of the score.

Doudlebská is the Czech name. Within the 20th century, probably during one of the world wars, the dance was taken by migrating workers to the town of Lienz in Austria, when it was “taken home” again it was known as “The Polka from Lienz” or Linečká Polka.

“Wilf Horrocks’ Collection”



**Doudlebska Polka** brings back old memories for Jean and me; we first came across it when we both lived in Cricklewood between 1963 and 1967. We attended a Balkan dance evening in Barnet with Henry Morris, Brian Dowsett and other stalwarts of their day, when, during the interval, everyone danced Doudlebska Polka, a great mixer party dance which immediately appealed to me!

We took it to Woodvale when we moved to Kent, and it has been done at many a dance party to this day, though sadly, so many groups no longer have the numbers necessary to do it properly.

Incidentally, it was during our time at Cricklewood that I introduced a work colleague, Joe Cott, to Harrow Green dance group, where he met and married Sheila. Happy memories!

**Ian and Jean Willson**

## A Chula and Doudlebskà Polka

The Rainmakers last danced 'A Chula' (Portuguese dance featured last month) at the final Hitchin Gathering in 1998. (The Gatherings had been organised for 40 years by The Staplers English Dance Club, of which I am a member.) At this final event Rainmakers performed a suite of dances called 'Portuguese Sunshine' and the music was played by Cloudburst, led by Martin Butler.

We started with 'Bate, Bate Ó Silva Verde', a circular dance for couples which comes from the Algarve. I learnt it from the winning Algarvean team at an Eisteddfod the previous year. We made a new set of costumes for the event (*see photo on back page.*) The second dance performed was 'Fadinho A Três Tempos'. This is the three speeds dance which comes from the Ribatejo area. Janet Woolbar taught us this couple dance which is still in our repertoire. The third dance was 'Á Chula' from Northern Portugal. I think we danced it as the instructions provided last month by Heather Edwards. We had lines of 2 couples which filled the dancing space nicely and showed the patterns of the dance well. The Bob step went forward and back (*see photo below of rehearsal*). The 'swish' step was hard work with a lot of turning – pivoting. The clap step a welcome relief from this and the 'Horns of the Bull' figure must have looked good from the balcony and we faced this 'presence' on each diagonal.





I can tell you all this because Rainmakers have scrapbooks (predating Facebook!) detailing every event that they have undertaken from 1976 up until the present day. Betty Lee meticulously kept them from 1976 until 2013. We also have DVDs (updated from videos) of displays including the one described above.

Our group is much smaller and just a bit (!) older now but we sometimes still dance **Doudlebskà Polka** (to be featured this month) and all of our men can still reach the floor on the 3rd part ('hands, hands, side, side, hands, hands, knees, knees, hands, hands, **floor, floor**, hands, hands...'. It's a good party dance and even suitable for barn dances (with Cloudburst), although 'normal' non dancing folks struggle with the first polka figure – sometimes they walk about or gallop round the room before the promenade figure.

Thank you for reminding us of these dances and happy days dancing them.

**Jill Bransby**



## Doudlebská (or Linecká) Polka

This polka originates from southern Bohemia and is named after a village of Doudleby, about 6 miles south of České Budejovice (Budweis in German). It is sometimes called Linecká polka after the city of Linz (in Czech: Linec), the capital of Upper Austria, further south. While Bohemia was for 300 years (until 1918) a part of Austrian Empire, there was always a lively cultural interplay in the area. According to one story, a band of musicians from Linz was once on the way to an engagement in České Budejovice with a new version of the Linzer Polka. On the way they stopped at Doudleby for a hearty meal and good Czech beer and were so satisfied with the sustenance that they decided to name their version of the polka after the place.

Doudlebská polka is a mixer couple dance, similarly like the other variations of Linzer Polka. It is danced usually on a big circle in ballroom (anticlockwise) direction. It has three parts: polka – promenade – clapping (men) and walking on (ladies). While the ladies leave their partners and continue walking on the outside, the men turn to centre of the circle and perform a sequence of clapping (usually: own thighs, own hands, neighbour's hands twice, but other variations are also frequent). At the end of this sequence the men turn outward to face a new partner to polka with.

I have danced several variations of this dance in the past. At a Viennese ball it was introduced as a Sternpolka (Star Polka) and was danced in small circles of (if I remember correctly) six couples and during the promenade part the men stretched their left hand to form a star, with right hand round the lady's waist. In Bohemia, the musicians often, after couple of polkas, change into the  $\frac{3}{4}$  waltz time, to make the dancers more alert, and next time switch back to polka.

Doudleby is a very old village, probably founded in the 6th century by one of the Slavic tribes that at that time occupied the territory. In the early Middle Ages Doudleby became an important settlement. Later on, the Czech kings selected the nearby České Budejovice as their administrative centre of south Bohemia and the importance of Doudleby was vastly diminished. Today only a few hundred inhabitants live in the village. I only hope that its idyllic location is not spoiled by the projected motorway that is planned to connect southern Bohemia with Upper Austria.

(And, incidentally, České Budejovice is the Czech second most important brewery town, after Pilsen. It's the cradle of the Budweiser beer that one of the maltsters, who emigrated to America in the 19th century, tried to replicate in his new homeland, with – to my mind – dire result. But the original Budvar Budweiser is blissful!)

**Dal Sudwell**



We have certainly had plenty of information this month about the **Doudlebská Polka** and also **Á Chula** from last month.

Next month **Dans sa Cabane** (French, Chaalonnaise) - it does state in the notes: “men inspect petticoats of partners” ?! Who knows something?

**Ed.**



## **SIFD Committee**

- Acting Chairman:** Richard Mellish 15 Lancaster Road, Harrow, HA2 7NN  
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## WHAT'S ON IN FEBRUARY

S.I **Sunday 2nd SIFD DANCE** see page 3

S.I **Wed. 5<sup>th</sup> - Mon.10<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:cathy_meunier@hotmail.com) website: [www.balkanfolkdance.org](http://www.balkanfolkdance.org) or send s.a.e to Cathy Meunier 23, Church Street, Keswick Cumbria CA12 4DX

S.I **Saturday 15th BALKANPLUS** - see page 5

**Saturday 29th CHARITY DANCE AFTERNOON** in Ditchingham Village Hall near Bungay NR35 2QN. 2 - 5.30pm £10. Balkan & circle dances led by dance teachers from across Norfolk and Suffolk. No teaching. All proceeds to a charity (as yet to be decided). All welcome. Contact Birgitta on [birgittae@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:birgittae@hotmail.co.uk) for further info.

*All material for the March issue of the SIFD NEWS must be received by the Editor in writing by the 18th February*