

Society for International Folk Dancing

# SIFD NEWS



# May 2020

Editor: Janet Douglas, Oak Cottage, 92 Rose Green Road, Bognor  
Regis, West Sussex PO21 3EQ. Tel: 01243 265010  
*sifdnews@hotmail.co.uk*

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

There will probably be no dance events this month - but if organisers have not notified me to the contrary all 'dates' are still displayed - so **check first**.

The front cover picture from Fiona Howarth accompanies her article on page 6; for back page see Caroline's note below.

The lockdown has inspired a few to write in - Ian Willson has sent a copy of the Loidis antidote to Coronavirus (centre pages).

**Ed.**



The colour picture is Dunav's violinist Dominic Coltman, during a visit to Glastonbury (NOT the Festival!) to play for a Balkan dance party there. While I was visiting the City of London Police Museum I saw the other illustration in a display and took a photo of it. I think the little girls on the right in each picture must be related to each other!

Best wishes, keep well and safe,

**Caroline Thomas**  
Leader, Dunav Balkan Group [www.dunav.org.uk](http://www.dunav.org.uk)



### **Balkanplus**

In light of the continuing Coronavirus situation Balkanplus are cancelling the May, June and July monthly dances, we hope to start again in September, or when indicated by the government that it is safe to resume if after that date. Any enquiries or updates can be found via: Website [www.balkanplus.org.uk](http://www.balkanplus.org.uk), email [Balkanplus@aol.com](mailto:Balkanplus@aol.com), or phone Brian Dowsett on 01992 582717

**Maureen Felton**

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- S.I **Jun. 14: DOINA EASTERN EUROPEAN** perform at the Victoria Embankment Gardens, London. 3-5pm.
- S.I **Jun. 21: BALATON HUNGARIAN GROUP** perform at the Victoria Embankment Gardens, London. 3-5pm.
- S.I **Sept. 12-13: BULGARIAN DANCE - ILIANA BOŽANOVA**  
Sat: Workshop 10.30am - 4.30pm at St. Paul's CE Primary School  
\* Balkanplus Party 7pm -10.30pm at Cecil Sharp House \*\* Sun:  
Workshop 10.30am - 4.30pm at Cecil Sharp House \*\* Workshops:  
Sat. £40 Sun. £25 Party £10 Weekend package £55  
Discounts for Balkanplus season ticket holders. \* St. Paul's CE Primary School, Elsworth Road, London NW3 3DS\*\* Trefusis, Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London NW1 7AY  
[www.balkanplus.org.uk](http://www.balkanplus.org.uk) SUBJECT TO CORONAVIRUS RESTRICTIONS BEING LIFTED
- Oct. 3: WORLD DANCES WITH ANNE LEACH** + some by Gill Morral. A mix of partner and non-partner dances.10.30am -4.30pm with a lunch break 1-2pm. Day course £10.00, ½ day £7.00. Bramcote Memorial Hall, Church Street, Nottingham, NG9 3HD. For further details please contact Gill Morral - [gill.morral@ntlworld.com](mailto:gill.morral@ntlworld.com) or 0115 9171831.
- Nov. 6-9: THREE NIGHT INT. FOLK DANCING** with walking led by Phil & Brenda Steventon. Dancing morning & evening, 4-5 mile afternoon walks led by an HF walking leader. at Harrington House, Bourton on the Water, Gloucestershire GL54 2BY



*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.*

## May Heydays

Sorry not to have thought about this before, but May Heydays has been postponed to 2021. All the people on our mailing lists have been informed, and we haven't had any more bookings come in, so I expect by now 99% of people who may have been interested will know.

Next year's dates will be 30 April to 3 May - if the virus is under control by then.

**Mecki Testroet**



## Children Dancing

Although she would not dream of saying so herself, Joan has staged some great shows and performances over the years as a teacher and as the leader of the Syrenka Polish Dance group. I recently found an example of one of her school concerts on a VHS tape which although somewhat less than 100% technically has quite inspiring content. The label on the tape says "7th Year Folk Concert 1982". Joan says that having folk dancing on the curriculum, as it then was, greatly helped. It is wonderful to see these young people dancing with such enthusiasm and enjoyment. There is a stunning Vava Vadmal, a rumbustious Dorset four, Greek, Hungarian, Basque, Catalan, Israeli and so on. It brought back some of the old magic for me. It's rather extraordinary to think that the girls in this video will now be nearly 50! All the dancers are in appropriate costumes - a minor miracle in itself considering the numbers involved. Joan and I would like to share this with anyone interested. I have produced an mp4 file of just the dancing items. (Thanks to Ron Wilks for moral and technical support). The file is about 1.2 GB and plays for about an hour. I know that such big files can be sent by email in gmail. I'm not sure whether a non-gmail address can receive them. If you are interested let me know at [sguest1929@gmail.com](mailto:sguest1929@gmail.com) and I will try emailing it. As an alternative I can post a DVD copy.

**Simon Guest**

## News of Past Disasters

Over the years my classes have weathered various tricky situations, usually when doing performances.

My Israeli Group, Hama'agal had a Chassidic programme which included the dance Sher. This included the leader going through the last 2 people's joined hands, then next, finishing like the old "Good Ship sailed on the AllyAlly O". We were performing in a synagogue room



where they were not really interested in us, and were busy noshing and chatting. I forced my way in and we duly performed, but when it came to Sher

I inadvertently went through the same arch twice making a very uncomfortable line (*cover pic*). We exited to minimal applause and I don't think anyone had noticed the mistake.

Another time we were at a school fete and in those days music was on reel-to-reel tape. We began by leaping on to Rav Brachot [many greetings] I pressed the button for the music but nothing came out. After a short pause I realised I had pressed "record" not "play" and had erased the start of the programme. We had to let it play from where it stopped and pickup from there.

My Bromley class, Bromley International, was to perform in a day of displays by the Active classes in the Adult Ed. Department. We decided to dance in Israeli costume and chose Debka Dayagim, Fishermen's Debka. To add colour we decided to use a long net to resemble the ones pushed out into the lake, and begged an old badminton net to which we sewed little plastic fish. I arranged the dance with a subtle moment when we swung the net high above our heads and neatly turned round to face the other way and bring the

net down on our other side. We practiced hard in our bare feet, which was de rigueur for Israeli in those days. At the performance I suddenly became aware that my big toe had got entangled in the bottom of the net. My frantic brain raced ahead to the moment when we would lift the net above our heads! With difficulty I just managed to work free before the lifting moment, and, again, I don't think the audience was aware of the problem.

Several years later I was MC at a SIFD Sunday dance and there were often demonstrations by the MC's group. We had been working on a choreography of the Bulgarian dance Daichovo. It involves two lines, supposedly men and women, who interact and finally interlink.



The hold throughout is belt hold. At the end the men's line comes up behind the girls and the line is alternately men /women. All this is done whilst continuing the dance steps.

Unfortunately a less experienced member of the team got confused and grabbed the next-but-one belt, thus excluding Rita from the line-up and leaving her flailing around on the outside. Rita is third from the right. In this format we joined in a circle and whizzed round for a rousing finale. I don't know how Rita managed to cope but we finished to a loud round of applause.



I am still searching in my attic for the old photos of the Debka Dayagim and school fete incidents. If they emerge I shall add them. I'm sure all groups have similar stories and look forward to hearing about them.

**Fiona Howarth**

## An Ederlezi Whirlpool

Late one Sunday evening, the phone rang. It was Ben. "Janna! I need your help! The band need someone to lead Romani dancing tomorrow morning at a Secondary school in Hertfordshire. I'll pick you up at 6.30a.m.!!" He rang off, leaving me intrigued and confused. What tunes were the band going to play? How many students would there be? What age group? How much space would there be?

On the way to the school the following morning, Ben explained the deal. At the beginning of June, he'd begun working with a band on an educational project for Roma Gypsy Traveller month. This project, focussing on Romani history and culture, had been well received in schools. Teachers had one criticism, however. They wondered why the project didn't include any Gypsy dances. So Ben thought of me. We played together in the London Gypsy Orchestra, and he knew I often taught Gypsy dances to London schoolchildren. "It'll be easy!" he said, swerving to avoid a lorry. "You know all the tunes we play, and there'll be plenty of time to discuss arrangements before the morning session starts." Unconvinced, I stared out of the window at the rush hour traffic. In the school car park, Gundula and Martin were unloading their instruments. We all went into the huge school hall where the musicians set up their mics on the very high stage.

I changed into my long skirt with a feeling of dread and excitement. I couldn't imagine what the next hour would be like. Gundula tuned her violin, Ben played a few notes on his guitar and Martin adjusted his accordion straps. I did a few dance steps to test the state of the floor. We were now ready to discuss music and dances. But before we could do so, the door of the hall crashed open, and hundreds of enormous teenagers piled into the hall, laughing, shouting, doing silly walks, accompanied by teachers attempting to quieten them down.

Picture the scene. The three musicians are on stage. I'm marooned in the body of the hall, encircled by massive youngsters. The headmistress appears on stage and calls for calm.



"We're very lucky to have Ben and his group here today to teach us about Gypsy culture." Turning to Ben, she adds, "So over to you. Play us a dance tune and we'll all join in!" As soon as the headmistress stops talking, the students start chattering loudly. Gundula is looking around nervously for me. I'm hidden from her view, surrounded by pupils taller than me. Gundula shrugs and mutters something and the band begin playing the opening bars of Ederlezi.

Ederlezi, with its complicated, syncopated footwork! The band can't see me. Most of the students can't see me. I can't show the steps AS NO ONE CAN SEE ME. Panic! I can't remember the steps! And in the packed hall, there's absolutely no space in which to dance. I froze. I stood. I shuddered. Then, soothed by the beautiful tune I'd learned from my grandmother, my panic abated. My feet began to move. I elbowed my way through the crush of smirking pupils, and reached for the hand of the girl next to me. In a trance, I trudged onwards, clearing a path before me. When I looked back, I saw a miraculous sight. The entire group of huge, unruly adolescents were holding hands with each other, snaking in a long long line behind me. The headmistress, still on stage, apparently thought this was wonderful, and started to clap in time. Emboldened, the musicians played louder and louder, faster and faster, and the walkers walked more and more energetically, until we were striding round the hall in a mad, joyous and totally incorrect dance. After what seemed like hours, the musicians finally ended the tune, the students dispersed to their classes, and we were taken to the staff room for a well earned cup of tea. I worked with Ben every June for a few years after this incident, making sure we discussed the music and rehearsed the dances beforehand. But I still sometimes have nightmares about being swallowed up in an Ederlezi whirlpool, desperately leading a mass of excitable, giggling adolescents.

**Janna, Barnet SIFD**

# THE LOIDIS FORUM

Issue No.3, 9 April 2020



Having to stay in? Needing some exercise? Here's one you can do in bed. Ready? Here goes.....

RAISE, LOWER. RAISE, LOWER. RAISE, LOWER. RAISE, LOWER.

Now let's try it with the other eyelid....

I read in the paper the other day that frogs have been seen wearing open-toad sandals....mind you, it was the April 1st edition!

I had to go to the doctor's last week with a spot of trouble, and this is what he told me!

We've had greetings from Ruth in Edinburgh, who some of us know from Cathy's dance courses; she came across this:-

Our 5-year old seems to have deemed himself the local virus warden.

Over the fence to our neighbour:

"JEAN YOU NEED TO GO INSIDE" "Okay I will in a minute" "YOU'RE OLD AND THERE'S A VIRUS" "I'm not that old thank you" "HOW OLD ARE YOU JEAN" "I'm 68" "THAT IS NEARLY 70 JEAN."

Ruth comments "I can just imagine an earnest wee boy having a conversation like that.!



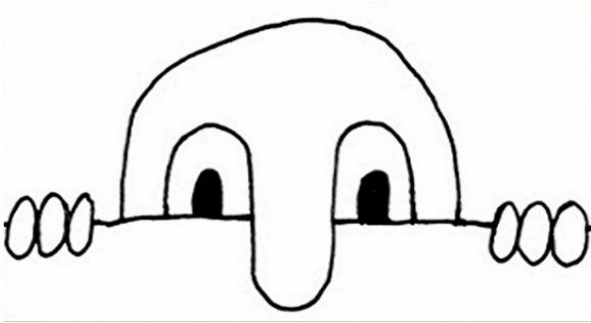
Here's a blast from the past, this is Loidis doing a demo in Knaresborough in July 1988



And we haven't changed a bit! (well, some of us might have!)

Rita has become a great-great aunt

Midst all the problems affecting all of us, it was nice to have some good news. My great niece gave birth last week to identical twin boys, Charlie and Oliver, each weighing 6 lbs plus - wow!- so I am a great great auntie to them and their big sister aged 14 months  
Rita



Mr CHAD SAYS  
WOT! NO DANCING?

Finally, Lorna invites you to set a caption for this photo taken, I think, at Nutbrook



Thanks to all of this week's contributors, and for those that haven't got in touch yet, we hope that you're keeping the virus at bay, and thinking of some interesting titbit to send us!

Keep well and keep smiling!

Jean and Ian

## **Rainmakers 2020 - What we were doing**

We started a Farewell to Europe in January at each meeting by doing a dance from a European country that we would be leaving. We managed 6 countries so I think that's another 21 to go. This is apolitical but seemed a good opportunity to remind ourselves of dances we used to do and perhaps research dances to expand our knowledge.

Meryl Abraham visited the Rainmakers on March 6th to teach us: Xanime (Kurdish), Dodi Li (Israel), Tea Pickers' Dance (Taiwan), Hora Pe Sase (Romania), W Moin Ogródecku (Poland), Zenska Albanska Igra (Albania). We enjoyed these and vowed to dance them soon to get them into our repertoire. Thank you Meryl (and David) for an interesting and varied evening, and thank you to the SIFD for your support of such events. I think it's a brilliant way of sharing repertoires and connecting with other groups.

The following Friday 13th we managed to do the first 2 dances but the rest of the evening was spent preparing and reminding ourselves of dances that were to be on The Balkan Plus programme that we were leading in London the next day. Peter and I also had a young Japanese relative Mizuki Iwasaki staying with us, who showed us some very energetic Japanese dancing that evening. Mizuki also performs in a traditional Folk Dance troupe that performs Bon Odori. She repeated the energetic dancing at B+ and managed to dance most of our Balkan programme including Charachan Odori!

### **What we are not doing now or are trying to do Since Lockdown**

we have tried to do a dance at 8 pm on Friday night in our own houses. Music and instructions have been sent out in advance. So far we have tried Ma Na'Vu (because it's easy), Hora Hadera (because it's fun), Syen Tu (because there was a Supermoon that week) and Changerai-tu? (because it was requested, but also because the words of the song reinforce ideas of social isolation, Madeleine doesn't join the man and his sheep at his home!).

We are going to try to get together on the web tonight, 17th April – fingers crossed! Our French Dance evening with the Danse Herts band, which was scheduled on May 29, will have to be postponed - I have no idea when it will be rescheduled. I suggest that you look on our website for this and any future events that may have to be cancelled.

**What we hope to do** - Our 44th Anniversary Dance is scheduled for 16th October, with Cloudburst playing. We have another SIFD guest teacher, Ursula Brown, coming to Rainmakers in November.

I do hope you are all keeping safe, sane and well and 'hope we meet again some sunny day! Keep dancing (even if only virtually).

**Jill Bransby**



## **SIFD Sunday Dances at Primrose Hill Community Centre**

CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Due to Coronavirus Primrose Hill Community Centre is closed, therefore our SIFD Sunday Dances are closed until further notice.

We will of course let you know when the situation changes.

Keep well,

**Brenda Steventon**



## **Horo Sheffield**

Dancing continues online via zoom on Thursday evenings. As well as the regular group we have a few friends joining us from up and down the country and even friends from Germany and France. We are dancing some of our simpler dances as it is challenging enough anyway. If anyone is interested in joining then drop an email to [gregboyd99@aol.com](mailto:gregboyd99@aol.com) for the link.

**Greg Boyd**



## **Dunford - the end of an era for our Society**

During the 1960s while on the telephone looking for a residential venue for a weekend conference I came across Dunford House the home of Richard Cobden, then under the auspices of the YMCA. At the end of the conversation for some reason I asked if they could accommodate a weekend of folkdancing, yes was the answer. But when we arrived we were shown a building with a concrete floor which they thought would be suitable for dancing! We immediately booked the village hall for the Friday dance. On Saturday night music was organised through a window into the garden and we danced on the grass. On many week-ends after that we used the Library dancing on carpet until they built a hut in the grounds with a suitable floor which suited us very well.

For the next more than 30 years we enjoyed Dunford weekends organised among others by Jack Richardson, Dot Bradbury and Irene Keyword.

I last heard news of Dunford on the BBC 4 Radio programme "The Untold" on February 20 that the YMCA could not continue paying large maintenance bills and losing money on Dunford to the detriment of their own charities for young people. They decided to sell the house much to the consternation of Cobden's great, great, great grandson Nick Cobden Wright who together with friends tried to raise money to buy Dunford and turn it and the area around into a Cobden National Heritage site but they failed and the YMCA sold Dunford to a hotel company. So I was in at the beginning and heard the end of an era for Dunford for the Society which has been full of memories for Joe and me.

**Sheila Cott**



## Random Thoughts from Home

Self - isolation? Easy, there's nowhere to go. As the library is closed I have looked along my own shelves and come up with this little gem. Many of you will know the dance Obrenova Kolo, but did you know there was a king of Serbia, Alexander Obrenovitch, who was assassinated in 1903 together with his wife? What a wonderful piece of pure trivia!

Heartiest congratulations to Simon on his Advice to the Young Dancer with a nod to Dylan Thomas whose grandson I used to take swimming many years ago.

It's always interesting to hear news from overseas members who still keep in touch. Klompen is such a wonderfully onomatopoeic word. I once saw a young dance student wearing a Volendam costume with the apron upside down. Unfortunately I was unable to find her later to point it out. So thank you Dorothy (remember Malta?) and keep on being picky.

So who's bored? Not me. I haven't got time.

**Frances Horrocks**



### Missing Vowels - Dances

- |              |                    |
|--------------|--------------------|
| 1 L NLL      | 11 DLH VTD         |
| 2 JDJ N      | 12 CM BRLN DSQR HT |
| 3 DV LSDR M  | 13 JSV TJTK LN     |
| 4 RKJ        | 14 M KDNS K        |
| 5 LP SH      | 15 BRRP ST RLL     |
| 6 RM NNT RN  | 16 TT              |
| 7 VR PCT     | 17 LLM RCNPR MND   |
| 8 R VB       | 18 JCR MN          |
| 9 GJVS MB    | 19 WN TTBN RY      |
| 10 LB STRN G | 20 RJNT            |

**Fiona Howarth**

## **In answer to Dorothy Sloan's Letter in the April News.**

The Volendam costumes that the Rainmakers made in 1982/3, from the materials that Betty and Henry Lee brought back from Holland, were based on those we saw at the Sidmouth Folk Festival in 1981 when the Dansgroep Paloina, from Amsterdam, were performing. I have three photos that Henry took of the group showing how they made an entrance in clogs but then danced in their shoes. This is what we also did when we first performed a Dutch Suite at the Hitchin Gathering in 1983, and at various other events, including a Dutch wedding, and at a Dutch plant Nursery. We did our best to capture the dance style and sequences from watching various Dutch teams over the years.

Our other reference point for the costumes was the very useful and delightful book *Folk Costumes of the World* written by Robert Harrold, a fellow of the Imperial Society for Teacher of Dancing. Plate 7, which is copyright so not included here, shows a couple in the same Volendam costume. I expect quite a few SIFD members have this book on their shelves anyway.

I am sorry that Dorothy disapproved of our costumes but thought I'd explain that we researched them from what we thought were two reliable sources and that we, and we hope, our audiences enjoyed our displays.

**Jill Bransby**



*Dansgroep Paloina entering in clogs at the Sidmouth Festival 1981*





*Mid display – note discarded clogs at front*

*At the Arena after a performance.*



### **Enben Polska**

Just a short postscript to the last month's Danish Enbenet Reel. Before I got too old and decrepit, and regularly danced with the Scandia group, we used to practise mainly the various Swedish **polskor**. If I remember correctly, on one occasion a visiting Swedish teacher demonstrated to us the **Enben Polska**, which was a variation of the **Bingsjö polska**, I think. I recollect that you had to make more or less a full turn of 360 degrees on one (right) foot, on a single beat, (without toppling over). How the lady in the man's arms managed to get round him, I have now not a slightest idea. I have a vague memory of attempting the enben turn a few times afterwards, without any visible success, before accepting defeat. One-legged dances seem to be a Scandinavian speciality.

**Dal Sudwell**

# Vivat Szocz

Poland

Taniec Wielko Polski

*Lightly - not too fast*

Intro

7

A7 D A7 D

B

13

D A7 D

20

A7 D A D A D A

E

29

D A E7 A A E7 A E7 A

A E7 A E7 A (A7)

Repeat all once then first 24 bars for exit

## "Wilf Horrocks' Collection"

Dear Janet,

With reference to your mention of "Vivat Szocz" for inclusion in May's edition of the News, this must be **Wiwat Szocz** from the Wielkopolska region of Poland.

Jacy Tacy danced a choreographed version of this which Betty Harvey got from the Cepelia group on one of her visits to Poland. Wilf would have got the music from Betty for playing with Jacy Tacy, but I doubt it was ever danced generally.

With best wishes,

**Tony Latham**



Next month the music for **Klepany** from Silesia (where's Silesia?). **Ed.**



## SIFD Committee

- Acting Chairman:** Richard Mellish 15 Lancaster Road, Harrow, HA2 7NN  
*Richard@Mellish.uk* 0208 863 7807
- Treasurer:** Judith Payling Rosebank, 56 Quickley Lane, Chorleywood,  
Rickmansworth, Herts. WD3 5AF.  
*judithcpayling@yahoo.co.uk*
- Secretary:** Dalila Heath 18 Calder Avenue, Brookmans Park, Hatfield.  
AL9 7AQ tel: 01707 642774  
*dalila.heath1@btopenworld.com*

### Other Committee Members:

- Caspar Cronk 8 Langbourne Avenue, London, N6 6AL 0208 340  
4683 *caspar.cronk@blueyonder.co.uk*
- Holly Payling 07784 117599 *hollycp@hotmail.co.uk*
- Brenda Steventon 92 Hamilton Avenue, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 7PT  
020 8397 9649 *brenda.steventon@btinternet.com*
- John Stewart 129 Glebe Road, Thringstone Coalville, Leics. LE67  
8NU *j2ohn@yahoo.com*





## WHAT'S ON IN MAY

Check with organisers before attending any event.

- 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)



*All material for the June issue of the SIFD NEWS must be received by the Editor in writing by 18th May.*

