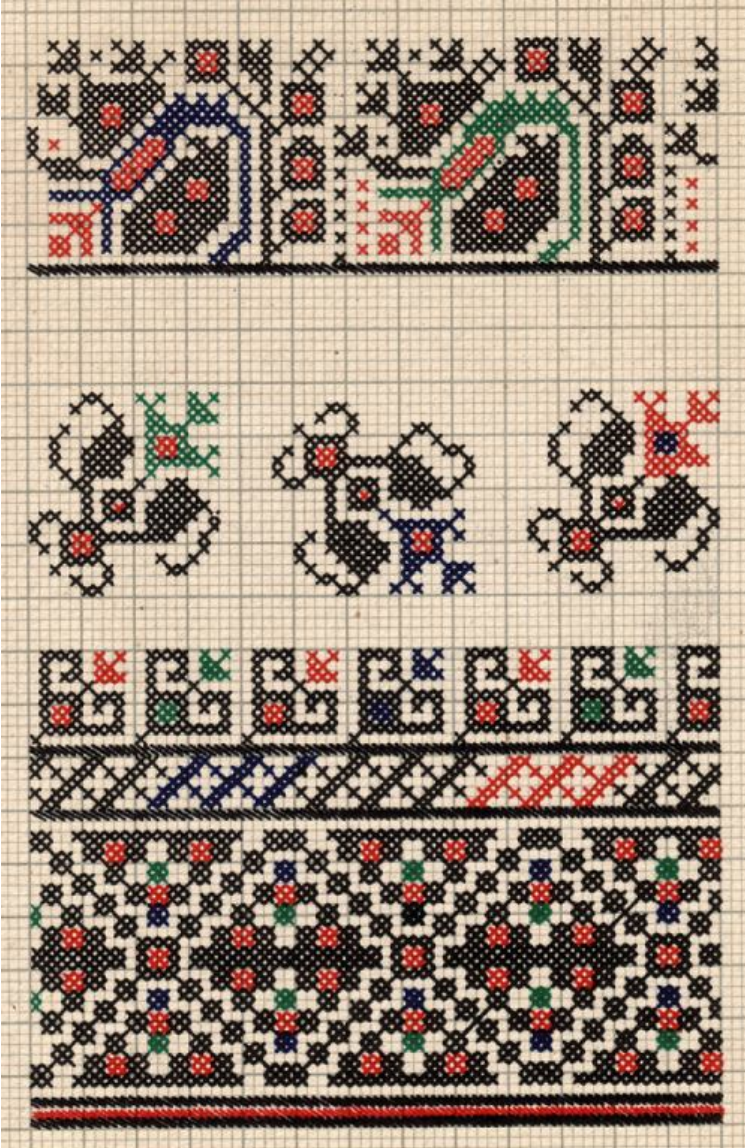


Society for International Folk Dancing

SIFD NEWS



JUNE 2020

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

The use of video conferencing software 'Zoom' is increasing as a dance tool, last month with Horo Sheffield and Rainmakers, and this month with the Oxford International Folk Dance Group (page 8).



The Gosport Interfolk Group are encouraged to keep in touch with their regular dances by David Atkins; he sends out the music and notes for one dance each week so that they can dance it at home.



Fiona Howarth has apologised for one missing vowel being incorrect last month:

12. CM BRLN DSQRG HT



The cover picture is an embroidery pattern from former Yugoslavia (courtesy of Lily Avery) for you to adorn the bottom of a white shift (should only take a couple of months!).

I have played around with Lesley Boorer's doll to colour-in (page 8 & 9); to give you something else to do whilst in lock-down.

And I just had to share the joy of dogpole on the back page.

Ed.



Folk Dance Videos

Dear Janet

To make constructive use of our time while being tied to the home Sue and I have spent a week making folk dance videos from eastern Europe.

They can be found at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/doinaeasterneuropeanfolkdance/home/leslie-and-sue-folk-dances>

We plan to add another batch - in fact, we have already made one but I haven't posted it yet. The last group we made very quickly, 7 videos in 7 evenings, but we will spend more time doing the next ones since we have to practise more.

Leslie Haddon



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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,
Elsworthy Road, London NW3 3DS** Trefusis, Cecil Sharp House, 2
Regent's Park Road, London NW1 7AY www.balkanplus.org.uk
SUBJECT TO CORONAVIRUS RESTRICTIONS BEING LIFTED

Oct. 3: WORLD DANCES WITH ANNE LEACH + some by Gill
Morrall. 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 Morrall – gill.morrall@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.*



Hi Janet,

My lame attempts for
the caption
competition.



1. Turning your back on people does not constitute social distancing.
2. That is not what I meant when I said "Go back into a circle!!!"
3. Life was a lot simpler when we could dance.
4. "Turn out to face the audience" "What audience?"

Thank you

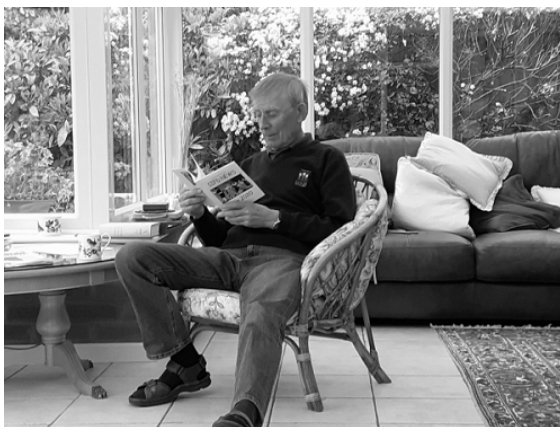
David Mckie



Dear Janet,

Thank you very much
for the uplifting May
SIFD News.

I have been taking
photos of each
lockdown day and on
April 28th, when I
received our News, I
took this picture.



Fiona asked for other groups' disaster stories. I can remember quite a few, some with similar scenarios to Fiona's! Thanks to all the contributors for their cheerful items.

Jill Bransby



Dear Janet,

While sorting through some papers, I came across this article by Ken Poyton which outlines the origin of the Croxley Green dance group which was originally run by Joyce Sharp and which I took over several years ago.

I thought it might be of interest as it also mentions events from the history of the society.

Best wishes to you and everyone at this strange time.

Meryl Abraham

Croxley Green International Song & Dance Group

In about 1951 Miss Kathleen Monroe-James, a teacher at Malvern Way Infants school, Croxley Green near Watford, started an international folk singing and dancing group for children at the school. Music was provided by the head-mistress, Miss Hemmens, on the piano. Within a short time the group was flourishing and meeting after school twice a week as well as Saturday afternoons. Kathleen then began organising one week dancing courses for her children at different venues during the summer holidays. Places visited included Waterford, Seaford, Rhyl and Shanklin. In 1962 they stayed at the Youth Hostel at Duntisbourne Abbots in the Cotswolds; this activity holiday was advertised in a comic and was open to anyone interested.

Our daughter Alison Whiska (nee Poyton) went on that holiday and so began the family's involvement in international folk dancing. At that time we lived at Stanmore and as Croxley Green was not far, Alison, who is still dancing today with the Wycombe group, was able to join Kathleen's Saturday classes. In September 1962, Kathleen started an adult's group at Malvern Way school and my wife and I decided to join. Both the juniors class and the adults group continued to meet until, sadly, Kathleen died in 1971.

Kathleen made an important contribution to S.I.F.D. affairs including being the Society Secretary for a short period as well as helping at some of the Swansea summer courses. In particular she played a major role in the 'See How They Dance' festivals at the Royal Albert Hall. In the March 1963 festival her children performed three Lithuanian dances. In the March 1964 festival Kathleen was one of the four producers; her adults group danced a very lively tarantella while the children gave a

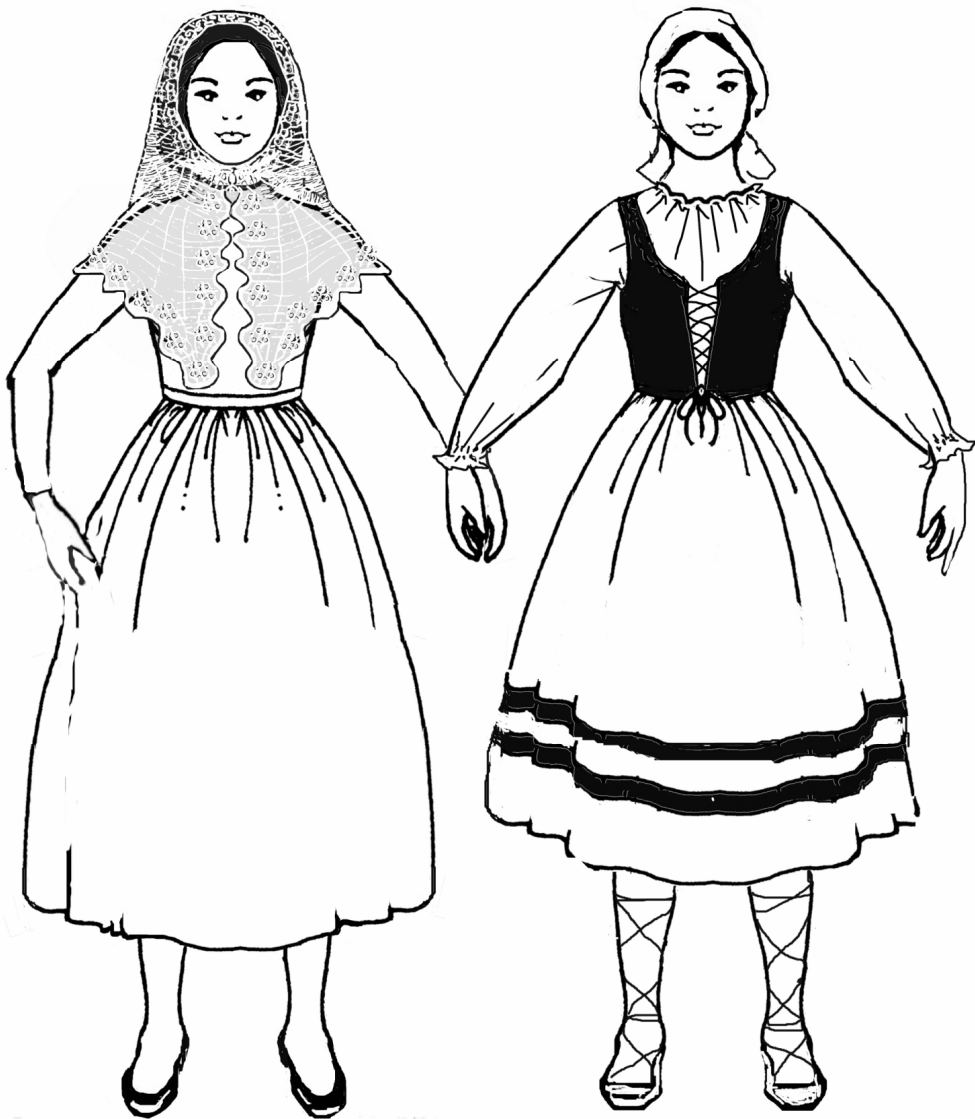
most authentic performance of Los Viejotos from Mexico. In this dance the children are dressed and move to imitate old men. For the last Albert Hall festival in November 1966, Kathleen was co-producer with Ken Ward. Her young class did two dances from Lithuania whilst the adults performed three dances from Mexico including the slow graceful women's dance La Sandunga, which became a firm favourite in the group's demonstration repertoire. The music for the items was provided by a band from Rickmansworth Grammar School under the direction of their music teacher David Peacock. Through Kathleen's initiative and persuasion this band, under the name of Croxley Green Folk Dance Band, went on to record several of the society's records.

At the 1966 festival, Kathleen herself danced with the Polish group, of which she was a member. As a consequence of the numerous demonstrations and performances given over the years, Kathleen built up an extensive wardrobe of national costumes from many countries. They were made under Kathleen's direction mainly by needlewomen amongst parents and members of the adult class. As well as costumes there were accessories such as 16 colourful gourds [made from papier mache] containing flowers carried on the head by the dancers in La Sandunga. The interest which Kathleen promoted in international folk dancing was far reaching and still survives. Several of today's dancers and workers for the cause came either directly or indirectly from Kathleen's group. Judith Payling [nee Holloway], Joyce Sharp, Kay Kedge, Mona Graham, Alison Whiska and Jennifer Cant {nee Mead} all took their first steps at Croxley Green.

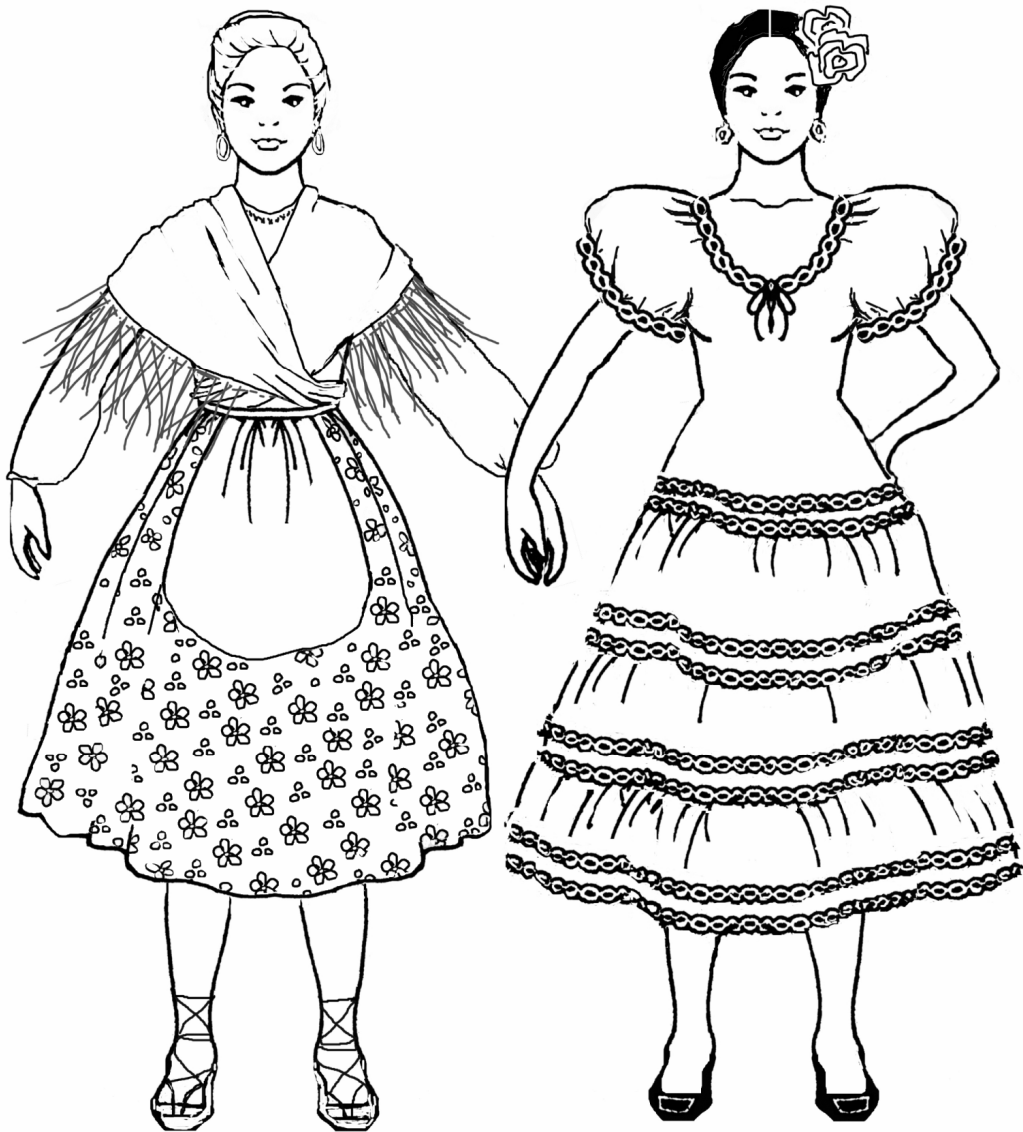
Shortly after Kathleen died, I formed a group at Stanmore where Alan and Margaret Morton started dancing. Another group that is a direct descendant of the original Croxley Green group is, of course, Joyce Sharp's group. Thus, with only a short break after Kathleen's death, Croxley Green has been a centre for international folk dancing for about 45 years.

Ken Poyton [written about 1997]





Spanish dancers from Majorca (left) and the Basque country (right).



Spanish dancers from Asturias (left) and Andalusia (right).

More Disasters!

I can relate very closely to some of Fiona's disaster stories and she even included a Reel to Reel tape recorder one. In April 1976 I was dancing in a dance competition in Cambridge with a student called Nick Hunn. Kathy Tribe had entered us in it. We were using a Reel to Reel Tape recorder. We turned it on and danced onto the stage making our grand entry. Unfortunately the tape got caught up in the machine but we continued dancing Čšardaš Myjava. The judges told us to stop and we could start again. We dashed off stage, found a nail file in my handbag and proceeded to undo the machine and untwist the tape and rewind it to start again. We danced again in fear and trepidation that the same thing would happen but it didn't and we managed to dance without further mishap. No, we didn't win the competition. Some music equipment mishaps are easier to rectify, such as when the Rainmakers danced at Ramsey Abbey Festival in 1984. We were dancing outside of a building with our Tape recorder plugged in through a window. We were in mid dance performing 'A Gota' when the sound abruptly stopped. We continued to sing the tune and finish the dance which produced much applause from the audience. I managed to get back in the building and discovered that someone had unplugged our tape recorder to put the kettle on!

A costuming disaster happened to me at the 1981 Hitchin Gathering. The sequence consisted of Italian dances when Henry Lee and I were partners for the second dance La Danza. At the end of the dance there was a lift and, as I bent my knees in preparation to jump up/be lifted in the air, Henry trod on the bottom of my long Sicilian skirt. As I rose in the air I heard a sickening ripping sound which was the gathers of the skirt ripping out of the waist band. I gathered up the yards of skirting material, thrust it down the front of my waist band as I ran into position for the next dance which was Tarantella Montevirgene. Holding hands in the circle of four was an act of faith because I couldn't hold the material. Somehow I got through the dance and most of the audience were unaware of the traumas going on except for some of Isobel Lamont's Scottish dance friends who saw the expression on my face when the skirt ripped.

Fiona also mentioned getting caught up in a net, so here's a miniature net story. In 1990 Rainmakers were performing a sequence of four dances at

the annual Hitchin Gathering. Our 6 minute sequence for that occasion was called ‘Walking in Europe’ and we had borrowed some costumes from the SIFD for the Swiss dance ‘En Allant aux Chataignes’. Betty’s words in our Rainmakers’ scrapbook take up the story. ‘This is a bright lively dance involving a lot of turning. When Peter (Bransby) was turning Maria (Kerr) his finger became caught in her net glove. As she turned the cotton wound tighter and tighter round his finger until it was losing its circulation! She frantically tried to pull off the glove but had to tear it to release him!’ This was just in time for them to get into a new formation to perform the final dance of the sequence and save Peter’s finger!

Peter reminds me of more dramatic disasters - that we danced through a riot in Hemel Hempstead and we ended up on the cutting room floor when danced with Barrymore but that’s enough of my disaster stories for the June News. I’m sure other groups have plenty of their own! Now we only have to worry about whether our Zoom meeting will stop in mid dance when we meet online. How sad is that?

Jill Bransby



More Random Thoughts from Home

The following rhyme came to mind from an old film “A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court”. This is the first verse which seems rather appropriate just now.

We’re busy doing nothing
Workin’ the whole day through
Trying to find lots of things not to do
We’re busy goin’ nowhere
Isn’t it just a crime
We’d like to be unhappy, but
We never do have the time.

Frances Horrocks



Dancing in Isolation

In the current situation, with no physical meetings allowed, all normal dance activities have ceased. With the average age of most groups as it is, it is unlikely that we will see an early return to "normality". Therefore, there seems to be a pressing need to maintain some interest in dancing together during this time, as well as keeping in touch with the rest of the group, many of whom are friends, not just acquaintances. International dance (at least the more Balkan type) has a great advantage over many other forms of dance in that a lot of dances can be done on your own and in a very small space - no partner required!

So we instigated a "COoperative VIRTUAL Dancing (CoViD) strategy". This takes the form of a Zoom meeting once a week where everyone can join in the dances in their own rooms at (approximately) the same time as everyone else. We also try to find decent videos on the web of the dances that we do which everyone can study at their leisure - we publicise one of these each week.

The group would normally have different teachers each week, but as we have the largest space we have to lead all the dances at present. We try to pick dances that take up very little space - preferably ones that are more-or-less on the spot - since some people have very a small space to dance in. Expansive movements or fast circles are out of the question, but there are plenty of dances that move very little. Dances like Romanian Horas, which usually have an in-and-out section, can be adapted so that the dancer returns to the original position instead of moving on.

This is nowhere near as sociable as a real meeting, but is better than nothing. For some it is the highlight of their week, which says we are achieving something. With any luck, when we can start meeting again there will be more than a mere memory of the dances we used to do. It is surprising how much one can forget even after a short summer break, let alone after four or six months of social isolation.

Colin & Sally Hersom

Oxford International Folk Dance Group





another caption?

I thought perhaps this photo of two of the Bognor Regis girls (2013) could trigger ideas for another caption.

Ed.

Enbenposlka

To expand on Dal Sudwell's note in the May News about the enbenposlka; as with most polskor the couple turn all the way round in one bar, three beats. In this case the man turns once round on one foot and then on the other foot during the next bar.

The one-leg variant is typically done (if at all) in conjunction with the other two variants from Bingsjö the basic one and the springpolska ("running" polska, though it's more like a walking step).

I do occasionally risk enbenposlka myself. On a good day and with a good partner (you know who you are) I can manage two or three turns before I lose my balance too far.

As with many other dances, the best dancers make it look easy. I have found some videos on the Web but they are of poor technical quality, so with the teachers' permission I am making one of my own available at mellish.uk/Videos/PfB.mp4

This is from the 2019 Norrlandia dance camp in Hälsingland. The teachers are Tommy and Ewa Englund, whom some SIFD members will remember teaching at York in 1992 and at a day course in London in 2014.

I can't promise how long my video will remain available, as I may want the space for something else sooner or later.

Richard Mellish

Klepany

A Slowly

Silesia

B Quicker

"Wilf Horrocks' Collection"



Klepany from Silesia (where is Silesia?)

Silesia is a historical country in Central Europe. Nowadays the largest part lies in south-western Poland, with small areas in eastern Germany and the north-east Czech Republic. In the late Middle Ages it was part of the Bohemian (Czech) Crown within the Holy Roman Empire. In 1526 it was passed with that Crown to the Austrian Hapsburg Monarchy. Two centuries later (in 1742) most of Silesia was seized by the Prussian king Frederick the Great in the war between Austria and Prussia. It stayed under German rule until the end of the Great War in 1918.

I believe **Klepany** (clapping) dance is an easy Polish dance for children from the Silesian region, not unlike a similar children dance from the Czech part of Silesia. In this dance, dancers in couples face one another, usually on a big circle. They clap each other's hands (right to right, left to left, both hands), then slap their own thighs, though there are variations to this order. Then they push-pull along the direction of the dance, and reverse. If I remember correctly (and it is now more than 60 years since I tried to introduce a group of "young pioneers" in my old country to some easy folk dancing), the older children added some polka turns after each sequence. But the "Polish" Silesian **Klepany** may be completely different.

Dal Sudwell



Friss Magyar Csárdás (Hungarian) will be featured next month. **Ed.**





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WHAT'S ON IN JUNE

- S.I **Sunday 14th DOINA EASTERN EUROPEAN** perform at the Victoria Embankment Gardens, London. 3-5pm.
- S.I **Sunday 21st BALATON HUNGARIAN GROUP** perform at the Victoria Embankment Gardens, London. 3-5pm.



All material for the July issue of the SIFD NEWS must be received by the Editor in writing by 17th June.