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Merry Christmas

First, thanks to Dalila for distributing the SIFD News throughout 2020, and everyone who has contributed letters, articles and pictures during this very difficult year. It has been heartening to pass on your messages of support for the dancing community whilst we have been imprisoned, forbidden to dance, sing or meet friends. Instead of losing the joy in our lives your contributions have brought hope and humour to combat it. The front cover is a Christmas collage of all the 2020 SIFD News covers.

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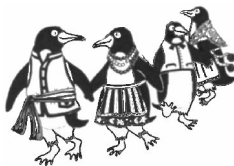
All the many people who knew Simon Guest will be saddened to hear that he passed away on November 10th. He was an active prominent member from the early days of the Society, and Chairman more than once. He made countless contributions to the Society and also to the News, especially this year; his last offering was a poem ‘That’s Life’ (October issue). Joan sends her heartfelt thanks for all the wonderful messages she has received and the wonderful memories you have shared with her. My condolences to Joan and a picture of them both in happier times on the back cover. To fill these pages I am repeating several of Simon’s articles, including his letter to Ken Ward which tells so much of Simon’s dance story.

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Although there were only three other contributions to this issue, one is for Dates for your Diary, so there’s hope that the tide has turned. At the time of writing the latest lockdown will be over in time for the proposed dance in Pulborough to go ahead on Sunday December 6th. Time to kick off those shackles and meet and dance again; if in doubt ring me - 01243 265010.

Ed.





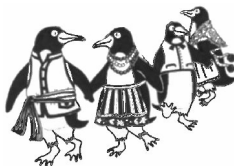
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

S.I Apr.30-May 3: SIFD HALSWAY MANOR WEEKEND see below

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.*

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



Update on Plans for SIFD Halsway Weekend 2021

May Bank Holiday usually sees a weekend of dancing, walking, sight-seeing and much more at Halsway Manor, Crowcombe in Somerset. Obviously this year's event had to be cancelled.

While the situation for 2021 remains very uncertain, plans are nevertheless being made to hold the event if at all possible. The dates, Friday April 30th to Monday May 3rd have been booked with the option to stay an extra night until May 4th thereby avoiding travelling on Bank Holiday Monday.

The weekend is a flexible mixture of International Dance, with Janet Woolbar, largely to a live band and there is walking and much more. Social dancing in the evenings. There are many local places of interest to visit. Non-dancing partners are very welcome.

Fingers Crossed.

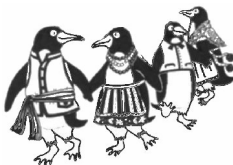
Contact details for further information:

Ian Green - icgreen@tiscali.co.uk
Robin Morris - robinnimbo@aol.com

Wishing a Happy Christmas and New Year 2021 to all SIFD members,
Heart of England International Folk Dance Group and Selpar from

Susan Chetwynd

Hoping we are all back Dancing together in the Spring.



Swansea Summer School October 2010

We hadn't planned on going to Swansea this year but we were persuaded to go by good friends and we are so very glad that we did. Many people commented that this was the best Summer School yet - actually many of those we have attended have been "the best yet" but this one certainly was exceptionally good.

It is not always easy for us to take a back seat because we have been to all the Summer Schools that the Society has run - the first was in 1961 - and we are always thinking of how it used to be. Things have to change, of course, and the good management of these changes is the key to success. This year the organisation of the course seemed to be very good indeed and we congratulate the organising team and all its helpers. The new arrangements for the evening meal were certainly an improvement on previous years.

Teachers - what can one say - an absolutely wonderful team with lovely dances and lovely personalities. The extra courses held in the afternoons seemed particularly interesting this year too. The evening dances - what a joy to have live music and with MCs, all so different, and with such extensive repertoires.

Our resolve not to name individual names falters a bit now when we think of the 'Compulsory Fun'. Thank you Fiona for adding that extra something.

Ninety seven people enrolled this year and by the end of the week we had 97 new friends (well not quite because we knew a lot of them already but you see what I mean). What a wonderful crowd it was.

Many thanks to everybody who was there.
anniversary somehow. Any ideas?

Joan & Simon Guest

Bourrées et Autres Choses

March 2006

French dancing has become quite popular in recent years. There are groups, clubs and classes in several places around the country as well as 'On Bouge' in London and 'Le Breizho', the Breton group. The dances learnt when these groups meet (with the exception of Le Breizho) seem to be gathered from many regions within France, but the style of performance is usually, and not unnaturally, what one might call 'French generic'.

Areas of France which were once remote from each other are now, with modern communications, next door and in consequence some subtleties of regional style have tended to disappear.

What do you dance at a French evening? Typically there will be couple dances (Mazurkas, Schottisches and Waltzes) and there may be Breton non-partner dances (An Dro, Hanter Dro, Gavottes etc.) but a large part of the evening will undoubtedly be devoted to Bourrées. Bourrées come only, as far as we can tell, from the central regions of France - Auvergne, Bourbonnais, Nivernais, Limousin, Berry - but there is a wonderful diversity of form and style to be found under this one name.

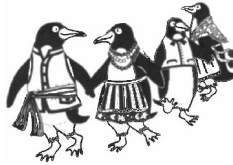
The berrichonne bourrées in the SIFD repertoire were taught to us by Pierre Panis (1911-1993) who collected dances from old people in his native countryside during the early part of his career and who was meticulous in passing on the berrichon style to his students. Berry was one of the ancient provinces of France and the name is not to be found on modern maps. In 1790 the Assemblée Constituante, trying to suppress provincial identity and spirit, divided France into departments and Berry is now, approximately, Cher (Haut Berry) and Indre (Bas Berry). George Sand, famous among other things for her depiction of peasant life in Berry in the early 19th century wrote "Aucun peuple ne danse avec tant de passion et de gravité en même temps que les Berrichons" (No people dance with so much passion and, at the same time, so much seriousness as the Berrichons). We will be doing our best at the Day Course to see what she meant.

Joan and Simon Guest

Thoughts at 90

Bourrée, Waltz, Poitou Quadrille,
In my mind I dance them still,
But to venture on the floor,
That, alas, I can no more.
Pravo, Hambo, Sherelee,
Are all there in memory,
But by far the best of joys,
Men and women, girls and boys,
All my partners, such good friends,
Remembered 'til the dancing ends.

Simon G
October 2019

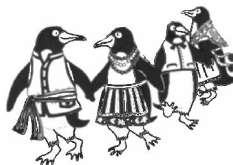


Advice to the Young Dancer

(with a nod to Dylan Thomas)

Do not go gentle into middle age,
Fight, fight against the turning of that page,
Take a stand and shake your fist
At your contemporary's bucket list.
Do not slow down but rather, faster go
And if wild oats remain, then sow!
Yes, it's a parting of the ways
But choose the Polka not the Polonaise.
Forsake the wings and take the centre stage.
Do not go gentle into middle age.

Simon Guest
April 2020



‘Letter to Ken’

November 2011

Dear Old Friend,

I’ve been thinking about the first time we met. It was a Sunday dance in the ‘cellar’ in Drury Lane in 1953. It was all so new and exciting with the music and movement and we were both absolutely hooked from the start.

After that we were two or three times a week at Carlyle School in Chelsea for SIFD classes where Margery Latham, and Bert Price and others taught us the then basic repertoire. Philip Thornton was perhaps the most charismatic of the teachers and you acquired your passion for Balkan dance and music from him. I’m sure you remember visiting his flat and the incident of the Swiss roll through the letter box! I tried to play Gankino on the tin whistle but you were always the more musically adept.

When I left College in 1954 we went Youth Hostelling in France and Spain. On the train from Hendaye to Biarritz we met a Basque dance troupe and their musician, playing the txistu in the corridor, took our breath away.

Margery was always on the look out for dancing talent and she soon had you in the demonstration team. We danced Swedish at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester, in many ‘See How They Dance’ shows in the Albert Hall and in an endless procession of summer fairs and fêtes. Also, of course, we danced with the prestigious French group, Les Escargots, which (controversially at that time) was by invitation only.

You were generous with your musical talent and in the days when music was hard to come by you won many brownie points by recording dances for Joan’s school concerts.

We didn’t neglect the social side of SIFD life and there were many hostelling/dancing weekends and the Surrey Crest weekends with the traditional race to the Hare and Hounds before lunch on Sunday.

I was best man at your wedding as you were at mine and you followed me into the Chairman’s role in 1962 when Tim was born.

Thinking back, we spent a lot of time together in France. Pierre Panis asked you to teach Balkan at one of the ‘stage de danse’ he ran for the

French Ministry of Education and Culture at the Château de Boivre near Poitiers. Your 'Silent Kolo' created quite a sensation and the 'stagiaires' were delighted to learn it. On another of Pierre's courses (at Les Grandes Poteries) we had one of our most bizarre experiences when the four of us slept in an enormous dormitory in a boys' school in Sancerre (lovely town) - 60 empty beds and us! Afterwards the four of us went touring in my first real car.

Then there was the time that Francis Feybli invited us to teach at one of his magical Christmas courses at Beckenried on Lake Lucerne. You taught Jugoslav and Joan and I did French and Basque. It was an unforgettable week.

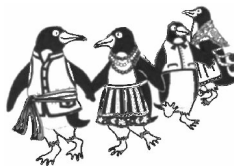
You soon started visiting Yugoslavia regularly and I still have all the postcards you sent from there. I remember how concerned we were for your safety when Skopje suffered a terrible earthquake in 1963.

After the years passed by we were very happy for you when you retired and eventually went to live in Spain. I hope someone will be finishing your book on costume which I know was a project close to your heart.

Ken, you were such a good friend, talented in so many ways and we had wonderful times together. We'll miss you but we treasure such good memories.

Joan sends her love as do I.

Simon



Out of Lockdown

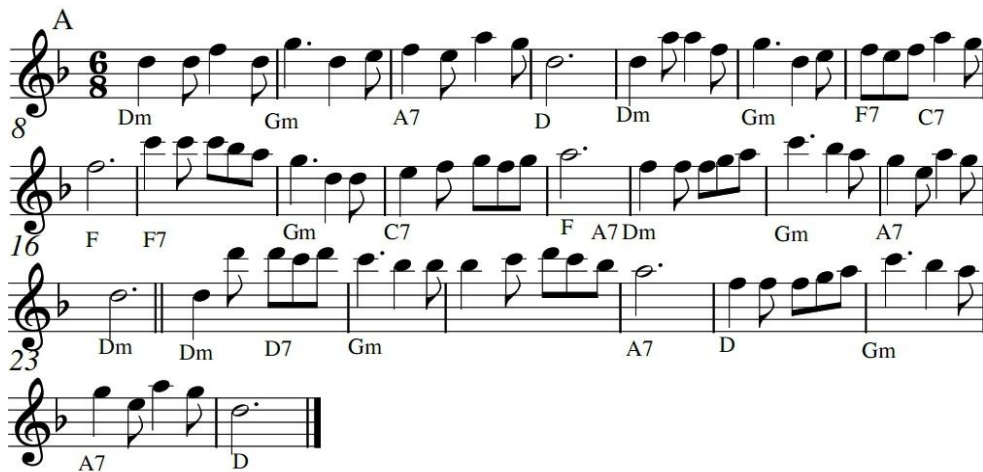
Soon I'll find delight
In flowering dawn. Sunlight'll
Fracture doubts so ill-gotten.
Despair, sempiternalis forgotten.

Can you spot the gimmick behind this verse?
Answer on page 11

Simon Guest
July 2020

Riabinuska

A



8 Dm Gm A7 D Dm Gm F7 C7

16 F F7 Gm C7 F A7 Dm Gm A7

23 Dm Dm D7 Gm A7 D Gm

A7 D

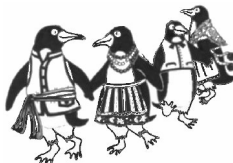
Balalaika Russian group

Riabinushka

I enjoyed several years as musician and choir-coach for the wonderful Balalaika Dance Group, performing in prestige venues like Sadlers Wells Theatre and Queen Elizabeth Hall. There was a concert tour in Cornwall the week after SIFD Summer School in Swansea, and I went direct by ferry from the Mumbles to Ilfracombe, then bus and train, dragging the accordion behind me.

As for Riabinushka, I remember Jenia Graman getting very cross if anyone put the emphasis on the wrong syllable - it's so easy to do with Russian names. She would say "You wouldn't call the Queen Eli-Zahbeth, would you? or her sister Ma-Gahret? So please don't say Riabin-Ushka. It's Ria-Binushka."

Caroline Thomas
Dunav Balkan Group

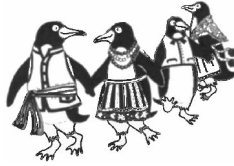


Next month from the Wilf Horrocks' Collection **Hora Mințita**, Romania

Ed.

Answer to ‘Out of Lockdown’.

All the words start with S,F,I or D and within each line the initial letters are in order. **S.G.**



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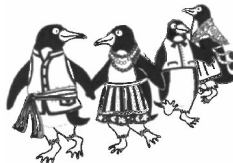
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C.I.O. number **1189141**



WHATS ON IN DECEMBER

S.I **Sunday 6th. DECEMBER 'DISTANCED' DANCE** at Pulborough Social Centre, Swan View, Lower Street, Pulborough, West Sussex, RH20 2BF. 1pm - 4pm. Cost £5. shared non-contact international folk dances 01243 265010 or sifdnews@hotmail.co.uk

