

Society for International Folk Dancing

APRIL 2021



SIFD NEWS

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Dalila Heath.

Both front and back cover pictures were sent in by Penny Munden, she writes about them below.

Ed.



Front cover:

A greetings card from the Zagorisiotes Cultural Union showing Epirote dancers by the Kipi Bridge in the Zagoria region. I happened to be passing their centre when they had a dance class going on. I asked to take some photos and they invited me to dance with them. I had lived for four years in Ioannina and been part of the Kallarites dance group. Many people from rural parts of Epirus form their own cultural centres and there are lots of dance groups. They major on Epirote dances, but also dance other regional dances.

Back cover:

A photo of the Romanian folk dance group Doina Timisului from Timisoara. They were attending the Kallarites Festival in Ioannina in N.W. Greece in 1993.

Penny Munden



Remembering Graham Crowder

In the February SIFD News we mentioned that we were fundraising in memory of Graham Crowder.

We're very pleased to say that we almost doubled our target and raised a total of £1,930 for Pancreatic Cancer UK.

We wish to say a heartfelt thank you to all SIFD members who contributed and hope it won't be too long before we can all be dancing together again.

Roberto Haddon and Costas Lambropoulos

Dance Alphabet

Ahidous (Morocco)

A Berber dance of Central Morocco. Accompanied by the beat of tambours and clapping of hands, men and women alternate in a circle which closes and widens, as the dancers move in perfect co-ordination to a vigorous rhythm. Tempo gradually increases, rising to a climax, then slowly decreases to calmness again. It is danced out of doors. The men wear their native dress or woollen djellabah (hooded robes) and yellow slippers. The women (unveiled), in loose robes, are adorned with the many bracelets and gold and silver coin ornaments beloved by Berber women, their dusky skin patterned with blue tattooing, and often wearing ear-rings shaped like a tiny hand with a jewel in the centre - 'Fatima's Hand', a protection against the evil eye.

Ahouach (Morocco)

A 'shadow' dance of Shleuh Berbers of the Western Atlas, performed at night in a high-walled courtyard, by fire or torch-light, which throws huge shadows on the walls. It may be danced in a line by men only (in djellabah woollen robes), with young boys at one end; or in a circle of men and women. Unveiled, the women wear light tunics, scarves and jewelled ornaments. A single piece of material about ten yards long, the tunic or lizar is fastened above the breasts with silver brooches. The dancers do not circle the courtyard but remain in one place, dancing consisting of rhythmic movements of knees, arms and hands. Anyone breaking the rhythm by a false gesture is unceremoniously removed by the Master of Ceremonies. Accompanied by the dancers' high-pitched chanting and by the bendir (tambour) players, who sit on the ground in the centre of the courtyard, the rhythmic movements change with the music, being sometimes smooth and flowing, sometimes more jerky and violent. Based on a single phrase incessantly repeated, the chant has a theme usually of love or loyalty.

The Ahouach continues for several hours, perhaps all night, and in spite of its dignified quality is a joyous dance celebrating a good harvest or similar event.



These items from a 'Dictionary of the Dance' by **W.G. Raffe** were first published in the SIFD News in the 60s



Kathy Beech's article mentioning the Bethnal Green Festival brought back happy memories for me. I too loved that festival and always looked forward to it, as well as the other festivals which were Red Letter days in my calendar - Sidmouth, Billingham, Eastbourne, the Eisteddfod et al. The SIFD was always well represented at all those and they were the days when we gave demonstrations, performances, in small theatres, town halls and other locations, not forgetting the Royal Albert Hall.

We had many specialist groups, such as the Romanian, Bulgarian and Russian that Kathy mentions - French, Swedish, Spanish, Polish etc. We also enjoyed folkdance holidays abroad, weekends away, summer schools, day courses, teachers' courses, as well as the dance evenings at Cecil Sharp House. I don't know how I had time for anything other than folkdancing! My first stage appearance was at the Hackney Empire when I was eight years old (Ruffy Tufty, Picking Up Sticks, Gathering Peascods) and I was eighty when I finally gave up!

The SIFD has been so much part of my life and I do hope it survives the current crisis, and I thank Janet, Dalila and whoever else is involved in getting the SIFD NEWS to us, providing a link to hold us together until we can dance together again.

Lily Avery

Dear Janet,

I was so sorry to learn of Roy Clarke's death as I had enjoyed so many of his dancing/walking weekends and miss them so much. I had the pleasure of being invited to one of his Christmas parties at Charney Manor, which proved to be quite eventful. Mavis Lowe and I were billeted in the converted stables which were comfortable but rather cold, in fact on Christmas morning the 'inside' of the windows were frosted over, hastily dressing we hurried across to the house to discover it was no warmer there as the heating had gone wrong. An engineer did come out later that day and put things right, but in the mean time the people in the village rallied round and sorted various electric heaters and brought them up to the house, for which we were most grateful, truly Christmas spirit. Roy's lovely cooking and our dancing in the Solar made it a memorable Christmas.

Olwen Davies



a few words from Sybil Chapman..

I am so sad to read, today, the news about the death of Roy Clarke, who did so much for all of us. I still have, and use, the Hungarian equivalent to our "Mrs. Beeton's Cookery book" which many may remember their 'elders' relying on. My version, of George Lang's "The Cuisine of Hungary" has been well used and was a 'thank you' gift from Roy after taking a teaching - workshop weekend session for the S.I.F.D., organised by Roy, after one of my many visits to Hungary.

I was very touched a few months ago to see that I'm still an honorary member of the S.I.F.D. What memories I have! They are not only regarding the start of our West Midlands branch of the S.I.F.D., but of an almost double life spent between here and Hungary since then.

Two steel hips and one steel shoulder after years of 'impact' experiences like dance and skiing - and an accident on the stairs here, have meant a serious curtailment of my favourite activity - Dance, of course.

However, I could do with some help with regard to my 'collections'. It took three hours to sort through the first of many files of 'dance work' and also to consider all tapes, CDs, LPs, etc. etc, particularly as my mobility is 'somewhat restricted'.

Most of my costumes I passed on to Leslie Haddon for his group. He's followed - so well - Alan's footsteps - and mine in both researching for material and presenting it.

Many of my costumes were 'enjoyed' by girls in our School Dance Team and boys who made excellent demos of Verbunkos etc. (even in an Austrian bar on one enjoyable ski holiday!!) We danced in Day Centres for the elderly and Church Halls for charity and even in the lovely Synagogue Hall - where so much was recognised by our largely Central European guests.

Re: **Friss Magyar Csardás:**

(The music for Friss Magyar Csardás appeared in the July 2020 issue. Ed.)

Friss being "quick", or "fast", speaks for itself. The first dance I learnt, from Magda Ossko in 1967 at Swansea was...

Pést Megi-i-Lassu és friss Csardás = Slow and Quick Csardás from Country Pést! Magda later became my mentor and I became a close friend of her whole family. My mind whirls with memories of doors she opened for me!

I also have a collection of very good (v.expensive) books to 'cope with'. The book* is going forward, perhaps available in a few months.

Sybil Chapman

* Advance Notice: Sybil has written a book "My Kitchen Wall" in response to family and friends urging her "to write it down". **Ed.**

Sheffield Eurosession in Lockdown

This last year has been a crazy challenging year for many people. At Sheffield Eurosession after the initial shock and trying to work out what was possible to do, we are really proud to have developed a great on-line interactive programme of a monthly workshop, followed by a session.

We took the opportunity to spread our wings, and approached musicians and dancers from far and wide to teach workshops that we would not normally have had the opportunity to do, in terms of travel and costs etc. We thought about what was suited to learning on-line or as a solo dance, or musical style for different kinds of dances. From the solo Swedish Halling dance with Lucy Huzzard to dance music with balfolk duo Naragonia and 'Musicality in your Dance' workshop with Koen Dhondt of Belgium's Frisse Folk. We have also enjoyed a Danish music workshop with Mads Kjøller-Henningsen, and singing for dancing with Rowan Rheingans to name but a few.

We are so grateful for the support offered to us by SIFD which all helps towards us being able to offer properly paid work to the amazing professional folk musicians and dancers at this time. Eurosession also invested in a Zoom license early in lockdown and adopted PayPal as a means of online payment for donations from attendees. We allow people to choose to donate any amount depending on their means which ensures it is accessible to all, and actually people have been very generous. These are the mechanics by which you can sustainably run events online and keep paying your teachers a professional wage.

Since going on-line, we have been delighted to welcome participants from all round the world, including Canada, Belgium, Denmark, France as well as across the UK. As well as having the opportunity to learn new dances and new tunes, one of the most important aspects is the feeling of connection at

being able to learn and share these experiences together, from our own homes. It's not quite the same as being in the pub or a dance hall together, but it is a very good alternative and has offered us different opportunities that we would not ordinarily have had.

We are planning the on-line zoom programme for the next few months, so if anyone would like to join us in a workshop, drop into the session room, or pop into 'the bar' to say hello, please do so, we would love to see you. More details at www.eurosession.org.uk and on our facebook page.

'Sheffield Eurosession'.



Hi folks,

To accompany Jo's article, here are some links to photos of the teachers we've had during these online sessions:

Koen Dhondt - https://eurosession.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Schermafbeelding_screenshot_stage_muzikaliteit_musicalite_c_Ronald_Rietman_Julien_Wieser_2019_10_14_om_15_02_12-3-768x331.png

Benjamin Macke - <https://eurosession.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Macke2-768x570.png>

Jessica Abrahams - <https://eurosession.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Jess-photo-on-balcony-607x1024.jpg>

Lucy Huzzard - <https://eurosession.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Lucy-halling-x3-768x244.png>

Cheers,

Si
(Sheffield Eurosession)

see overleaf >



Remembering Rita Wood

It is with great sadness and a heavy heart that I have to share with you that our dear friend Rita Wood passed away on Thursday 11th February aged 90.



Rita was involved with Woodvale from the beginning and she was dancing with us right up to March 2020 when we had to close because of the lockdown.

She used to take part in our demos and latterly she said "Just put me down for non partner dances so if I have to drop out at the last minute it won't be a problem."

Towards the end of 2019 she decided that she would not do demos anymore, but she was still dancing every week. When she got to the stage where she could not turn quickly she wouldn't bother and would just say "I will just fake it!"

We believe she went on some of the SIFD dancing holidays and up until a few years ago she would come with us to the Sunday Cecil Sharp House dances - so many of you would have seen her.

She will be sorely missed.

David Mckie

Woodvale International Folk Dance Group



Below is my picture of a Finnish man - if you want a Finnish woman - to quote Laurence Sterne - "here's paper ready to your hand, - sit down, Sir, paint her to your own mind."



Finnish woman

(you're welcome to send in your picture to share with others. **Ed.**)

Kehruuvalssi

Finland

A

11 G Em D7 G Em

20 Am D G B7

37 Em A Am D7 G Am D7

40 G C Am G7

49 C Am Dm G C

D

58 E7 Am D Dm

G C Dm G7 C

"Wilf Horrocks' Collection"

There are videos on Youtube of **Kehruuvalssi** - it seems very simple, sometimes a mixer dance, and is rather like Laura from Poland.

(Finnish man on page 12).

The music for the Basque **Fandango** will be in the next issue. **Ed.**





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NO APRIL EVENTS



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

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.*

