



# SIFD News



# December 2023

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Packaging, posting and electronic distribution by Dalila Heath.

I attended the AGM in November and it gives me great pleasure to report that **Joan Guest, Frances Horrocks** and **Fiona Howarth** are now Honorary members of the Society.

Anne Leach led an enjoyable workshop. She taught Jamaja Labajalg (Estonia), Taekkemands Tretur (Denmark), Tervelska Råka, Verceraj Sino (Bulgaria), Malisorka (Macedonia), and The Thief (Canada).

Also two Israeli dances, Yehalelucha and Sachaki, which for some reason brought to mind this old cartoon from the 60s!



The front cover is comprised of all the 2023 covers, the back page photo from Penny Munden who writes:

“The Richmond Fair pictures are of the Zivko Firfov dance in May 1989. We were dancing Macedonian dances. The group photo shows Janice Wrench, myself, Linda Swanton and Diki Gleeson in Mariovo costumes with others behind in Skopje and Bitola costumes.”

Didi Crooke has given us another poem (page 6); I have to tell you how moved I was by the last one, a wonderful poem. So as I had an empty page to fill I have reprinted it.

Thanks to all who have contributed to the SIFD News of 2023 - and especial thanks to Dalila for distributing it. **Ed.**

## ***Merry Christmas***

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Jan.14: NEW YEAR PARTY** at Calver Village Hall 11.00 to 16.00.  
Dancing to our favourite tunes! Bring & Share lunch. Refreshments provided. Further information from Greg on [gregboyd99@aol.com](mailto:gregboyd99@aol.com) or Gill on [seller123@btinternet.com](mailto:seller123@btinternet.com)

**Feb.1-6: RIVIERADANCE** [www.balkanfolkdance.org](http://www.balkanfolkdance.org)

**Mar.2-3: NUTBROOK DANCE WEEKEND** with Mariette Van Gelder see page 6

**Apr. 27-28: DANCE WORKSHOP WITH DANIEL SANDU**, internationally-known dancer, teacher, & performer of Gypsy, Romanian & ethnic fusion dances, at Calver Village Hall in Hope Valley, Derbyshire. To reserve a place or for details from Greg: [gregboyd99@aol.com](mailto:gregboyd99@aol.com)

S.I **May 3-6 (7) HALSWAY MANOR SIFD WEEKEND**  
International Dance and walking weekend in Somerset, contact Ian Green: [icgreen@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:icgreen@tiscali.co.uk) or phone 07934 909968

**May 3-6 MAY HEYDAYS** [www.mayheydays.org.uk](http://www.mayheydays.org.uk)

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*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**.*



## **Aulona Interfolk Festival, Vlora, Albania**

I am planning to take a group to this festival in 2024 in the coastal town of Vlora in southern Albania. The stay in Vlora would be for five nights from 23rd May and leaving on 28th May. The tour would start from Corfu and take a ferry across to Saranda and then involve a drive along the spectacular coast road to Vlora or alternatively arrival could be by plane to the Albanian capital Tirana with a transfer from there. During the festival there will be some Albanian dance lessons in the mornings, but also some outings with the folk dance groups performing in the festival, such as to the beach along the coast and a visit to the Zverec monastery in the lagoon of Narta, a haven for many birds. On the last night of the festival our group can perform an Albanian dance on stage in Albanian costumes. On the return journey to Saranda we can travel by the inland route via the UNESCO World Heritage city of Gjirokaster, the best preserved Ottoman town in the Balkans.

The festival organiser has offered to arrange transport to and from Saranda or Tirana, excursions in Vlora area, 4 star hotel accommodation and meals for 650 Euros. The ferry/flying dolphin crossing between Corfu and Saranda would cost about 40 Euros.

The link below shows a video of the 2023 festival :-

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qw2j\\_o\\_\\_6I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qw2j_o__6I)

Please let me know if you are interested in joining the trip and would like an application form and more information. Please contact me at [penny.munden50@gmail.com](mailto:penny.munden50@gmail.com) .

**Penny Munden**



Dear Janet,

Sometime back, I sent you a poem which you did publish in the SIFD magazine! You said you might like some others if appropriate. I did have one - but it was about Jazz/Jive really, so I felt it was probably not right for you.

However, the November SIFD magazine with all those costume pictures sent in from Marina Wolstenholme, had such a memory trip for me - that it produced a poem!! So, as it is very appropriate for SIFD, I decided I will send it to you in case it is of any interest! It does show what can go on in the minds/hearts of people attending dance groups! However, in spite of frustrations I was very happy and loved being part of all those SIFD or similar groups. It was a very important part of my life for many years, ending mainly in the Balalaika Dance group, now sadly gone.

So now, aged 90!, I am unlikely to dance those wonderful Czech, Eastern European and "Russian" dances any more. But, I still feel them within.

★ ★

You asked for a favourite dance in last magazine. I've actually forgotten the names of some of my favourites - but one I never failed to love was - **Hopak** - Ukrainian.

Very Sincerely,

**Didi E.M.Crooke**

PS I was still jiving - fast jive 1940-50s style until my 80s -  
87 years in fact!!



## On receiving my Dance magazine

Looking at the pictures,  
a deep emotion from the past  
moved my heart -  
indeed, within my soul.

The costumes, deeply embroidered  
brought back memories  
and sounds of music -  
accordion and violin,  
but also a sense of frustration.

Long ago,  
I moved  
to those wonderful sounds  
within women-shared and  
slower partner dances,

But, more adept than I,  
others would dance  
to those favourite fast tunes  
full of excitement -  
allocated skilled partners  
for a future performance.

So, I  
as a lone person -  
longing to share  
that full flight of movement and joy,  
could only dance in deep secrecy  
within my room  
or in dreams.

**Didi E.M.Crooke**

11. November 2023

## Moon Over Vyhodna

One moment - inward, isolated, tired  
half-alert to living -  
following others,  
uncertain,  
lost in my own half-awake world.

Then - a shout,  
like a light being switched on,  
then arms loosely encircling me  
but impelling me to move, to swirl, to hear  
the compelling music.

Energy charged from a vibrant  
dancing body,  
Energy charged from a vibrant  
dancing soul,  
flowed  
straight  
into my sluggish spirit,  
causing some inner response  
akin to the rising sap of a tree in springtime -  
which, once flowing, refused to be dammed back  
by past inhibitions.

My Soul experienced the release of a prisoner,  
and the encircling arms were life  
reaching out for me, my-self -  
calling me to come back to Life  
again  
and again.

That was no ordinary dance,  
no common energy felt on a happy evening.  
Others may mock about the wine,  
the silly jokes,  
the rough hillside grass,  
but only I know that  
in the dark, under the moon  
Life itself had danced the Czardas with me  
and found me good.



## **Richard Thom**

We are sad to report the death of Richard Thom, who will have been known to many folk dancers for many years as the broker for the SIFD group insurance scheme. He was on a bird-watching holiday in Australia when he had an accident and went to hospital for a back injury, while he was there it was discovered he was already suffering from a kind of cancer. He was treated for that and flew home but on the flight his health became worse and he died on 16th October, from multiple causes.

He did English and International folk dance. At the Rainmakers international folk dance group in Letchworth, he enjoyed the Israeli circle dances but his preference was the couple dances, in particular Renningen, which as many readers of SIFD news will know is a Swedish weaving dance with a string of figures ending with a kind of procession. It calls for exactly 16 people, some of whom have specific roles in some of the figures, but Rainmakers was a big group in the 1980s and 90s and we danced it quite a lot.

If anybody wants to make a donation in his memory, his niece's suggestion is to the RSPB. The funeral directors are Austins Funeral Directors Stevenage; the funeral was on 28th November.

**Alan Trangmar**

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It was with great sadness that we heard that Richard had died at the relatively young age of 70.

Richard had been an enthusiastic member of Rainmakers for many years, and Treasurer, again for many years. He was a committed and loyal member, who wanted to be in the middle of things. Although he sometimes seemed like a big kid, underneath, he always wanted to help, he was very loyal, and he had a soft heart.

More recently, Richard only did English country dancing, mainly with the Roundabouts Dance Club at Stevenage, of which he was Treasurer. The last time we were on a dance floor with him was at their 50th Anniversary celebration, a happy occasion.

We think he added a great deal of liveliness and fun to Rainmakers, and viewed him with affection. We shall miss him.

**Jill and Peter Bransby**

## Marcie Van Cleave dance in Norfolk

Jelenka Balkan Dance group in North Norfolk were very pleased to welcome Marcie Van Cleave from Boston, USA as our first guest teacher since Covid. I and several others who were present are regular participants in her Sunday evening Zoom dance sessions presented from her home, sharing dances with enthusiasts from the USA, Canada, the Netherlands and the UK.

On Saturday 21st October we had a lovely gathering of dancers from our North Norfolk group as well as dancers from groups in Ipswich and Norwich. We were treated to an exhilarating and varied selection of dances, with plenty of fizz and zing! Each dance was clearly explained, yet the overall impression was a whirlwind of different styles and nationalities of dance, all infused with her amazing effervescent energy and great sense of humour.

My personal favourite was Starodavny – a Czech/Bohemian dance with particularly beautiful music. Dances from this region are Marcie's speciality and she regularly visits Prague and the surrounding area to learn more.

A brilliant afternoon – it was both wonderful and weird to finally be dancing next to someone we had only met on a Zoom screen before. We really hope she considers a return visit.

**Dawn Wakefield**



## International Dance Weekend

2 and 3 March 2024 – Nutbrook Dance Group is hosting a weekend of international dance led by the wonderful Mariette Van Gelder on both days. There will be an evening dance party on Saturday, 2 March so come and dance old favourites with us to the lively music of Belzebug. This event will be held at Bramcote Memorial Hall, NG9 3HD, starting at 11.00am and finishing at 8.30pm on 2 March with a Bring and Share supper at 5.00pm before the evening dance at 6.30pm. Sunday will start at 11.00am and finish at 3.00pm.

A weekend ticket costs £40.00, Saturday whole day/evening costs £30.00, ½ day Saturday costs £12.00, Sunday is £15.00. Booking helpful but not essential, no partners needed. For further information about the day please see [www.nutbrookfolkdance.co.uk](http://www.nutbrookfolkdance.co.uk) or contact Gill Morral on [Gill.morral@ntlworld.com](mailto:Gill.morral@ntlworld.com) or 0115 9171831

**Trish Griffiths**

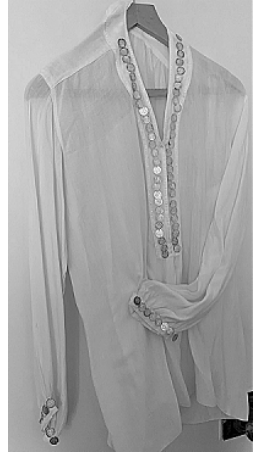


To all SIFD members with all good wishes for Christmas and the New Year, Happy Dancing”.

Love from **Susan Chetwynd**



## Dunav blouses



Caroline Thomas is offering three of her Dunav blouses to SIFD members for the cost of the postage only.

They are all white, left to right: Bulgarian (with a red trim), Romanian (white embroidery), and Serbian (mixed gold, silver and copper coins/buttons).

Enquiries to Caroline on this email address.

*carolinejthomas@yahoo.co.uk*





This charming drawing of ladies of the Arctic Circle in their costumes was by Leslie Boorer for a December issue many years ago.

(my starter for the motifs) **Ed.**

# Carré de Peerdesprong

Holland

C Major

6

11

"Wilf Horrocks' Collection"

Next month: **Jamaja Labajalg**, (the Nutbrook Group are in a position to contribute a few words about this dance!) **Ed**.



By the way I discovered a **Rozsa Waltz** (*last issue*) in one of my dance files. Apparently this is sometimes described as the Rosa Waltz but it is not Austrian and was composed by Gordon Potts in the early 1990's as an English dance. Peter and I danced this dance during lockdown on Zoom as part of an online Barn Dance Event that happened every month with different dances as a focus.

If anyone wants to know about it I can explain further how we participated and choreographed extra sequences, for example using figures from The Mexican Waltz and dancing in costume!

**Jill and Peter Bransby**

## SIFD Committee

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C.I.O. number **1189141** *www.sifd.org*



## WHAT'S ON IN DECEMBER

- S.I **Friday 8th BARNET CHRISTMAS PARTY** with music by DUNAV. 8pm at Church House, 2 Wood Street, Barnet EN5 4BW. £10 incl. food and wine. For more details contact Brian on 01992 582717 or email [bvdowsett@aol.com](mailto:bvdowsett@aol.com)
- S.I **Saturday 9th BALKANPLUS** -Trefusis, Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regents Park Road, Camden, NW1 7AY starting at 6.pm - 9.pm. Admission £10 (cash only please). An evening of dance with varied dance leaders. Any enquiries to [maureen.felton@btinternet.com](mailto:maureen.felton@btinternet.com) or our website [www.balkanplus.org.uk](http://www.balkanplus.org.uk)

