

Society for International Folk Dancing



S.I.F.D. News



December 2024



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

The cover design shows 100year old bridal ensembles from Beit Lahm (Bethlehem), from the Palestinian Heritage foundation. The Beit Lahm Thobe, distinguished by the "Irdan" (long, winged sleeves) was made from hand-woven linen (exclusively for the purpose, in lengths of about 10 yards), with silver brocade, at one end, used for the lower back of the thobe, a tradition of at least a thousand years old. The thobe and head-dress embroidery is metallic and silk couching. The right thobe has a "Qabbeh" (chest panel), "Wuqa" headdress and scarf are silk-thread, cross-stitch-embroidered, with such designs as flowers, palm trunks, birds, and S-shaped "Alak" (leeches, used for medicinal purposes, representing health and longevity).

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As most of material for the News arrives via email, the traditional need to post early before Christmas no longer really applies; so any contributions for the January News will now be acceptable up to and including the 18th December.

There would not have been twelve issues of the SIFD News without your contributions and interesting letters, articles and pictures this year; thank you (keep it up). I would also like to thank Dalila for ensuring that everyone received the News throughout 2024.

Merry Christmas

Ed.



What a pleasure to see Belgian costumes in the newsletter! (*last month*)

In the late 60's, I used to dance with the University of Liege dance group, called Tchanches - no longer existing.

The symbolic figure of Tchanches is a kind, but a bit mischievous man. His wife is called Nanesse.

Thanks for the memories!

Dany Baker

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Jan. 5: NEW YEAR PARTY 11.00 to 16.30 in Calver Village Hall, Derbyshire S32 3XR. Bring & share lunch. Message Greg for more information on gregboyd99@aol.com

Jan. 18: STRICTLY BALKAN PARTY in The Cotswold Hall, Northleach, Gloucestershire GL54 3HG. 2.30-5.30pm. Please wear costumes if you wish. £3. (children free). Food & drink provided. Further details: Stephie Clark on 07765 352588

S.I **Feb. 23: SLIGHTLY FOREIGN DANCES FROM ABROAD** at Pulborough Village Hall, RH20 2BP. 10:30am - 3:30pm details: Janet Douglas 01243 265010. £10 Bring a picnic lunch, tea etc. included

Mar. 1: NUTBROOK DAYCOURSE see page 5

S.I **Mar.15: BALKANPLUS** in Trefusis, Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regents Park Road, Camden, NW1 7AY starting at 6.00pm - 9.00pm. Admission £10 (cash only please) An evening of dance with varied dance leaders. Any enquiries to maureen.felton@btinternet.com or our website www.balkanplus.org.uk

S.I **May 2-5: MAY HEYDAYS** at the De Montfort School, Four Pools Rd, Evesham, WR11 1DQ. Mitko will teach Bulgarian/Balkan, Scandi plus French/Breton workshops, 3 international/Balkan dances with live music, Argentine Tango and African music and dancing events, plus 2 Eurobals with bands. www.mayheydays.org.uk

S.I **July 25-28: SIFD HALSWAY MANOR WEEKEND**, dancing & walking, email: brenda.steventon@btinternet.com or 020-8397-9649



*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, May 2-5

We are pleased to announce that tickets for May Heydays, May 2nd to 5th 2025, are on sale, with ticket prices held the same as for 2023 and 2024. Note that our Early-Bird ticket (Nov 1st to Jan.31st) is £97 per person, and the price increases to £115 on Feb 1st.

Full details on our website: <https://mayheydays.org.uk/tickets.html>.

Those who would like to volunteer as stewards will find tickets available at half price — with some free options — on the Stewards page: <https://mayheydays.org.uk/stewards.html>.

Meanwhile, we trust all is well with you and yours, and send early best wishes for the year-end festive season.

Monty Crook and the May Heydays Team



News from Nutbrook I.F.D. G.

It was back to the good old days with a superb turn out for our day Course on 5th October led by Chrisandra Harris. A total of 44 people attended altogether. Chrisandra introduced us to some village dances from the Evros region Northern Greece, and also Georgia and Dagestan in Azerbaijan. She enhanced the day with stories and facts associated with the dances. We discovered a dance from Georgia which was all danced on the toes.

Our next day of dance will be held in Nottingham on March 1st 2025 led by Maggie Kaye. Come and celebrate St. David's day with us. And enjoy a mix of dances from many countries. Further details to follow in next SIFD News.

Gill Morral



Philip Steventon added this to the Sevillanas item (last month).

*

Mr. Sevillanas

Dad - Charles (Steve) Steventon - was of course, Mr Sevillanas!



I've attached some pictures from:

- 1955ish, when Dad was dancing Spanish three nights a week with Lucile Armstrong's group.
- 1969ish, with Mum.
- 1980, with the Merton Park Spanish Group for a demonstration at the Sunday night Cecil Sharp House SIFD Dance.



- 2001, at Dad's 80th Birthday party when a large group danced Sevillanas - after weeks of practising.

- 2003, when 82 year old Dad went to Granada in Spain for a Sevillanas course, what the young ladies all thought is anyone's guess!



- 2008, when 87 year old Dad led our group in the World Record Sevillanas dance in London's Regent Street - we had a lot of attention as we were the only group using castanets, so Dad got interviewed for Spanish TV.

Philip Steventon (Tolworth World of Dance)

Woodvale International Folk Dance Group

I was very sad to hear of the closing down of Woodvale I.F.D.G.

Wilf had a very long and happy association with this group. I have a certificate awarded to him for the many times he played for the group - "every spring and autumn dance over many years and many other times in between". I also have a beautifully framed award for Life Long Honorary Membership conferred on Wilf on their 20th anniversary in 1988 signed by Alan Cant as chairman at the time and one of their longstanding supporters.

Ian and Joan organised two very successful exchange visits to a French dance group in Chalons-sur-Marne, the heart of the Champagne district. On our first visit we visited one brewery and four Champagne Houses in five days. We were welcomed by the local mayor at a Civic reception and Ian thanked him - in excellent French - for the generous hospitality offered by the dance group families.

On our second visit we went to the large export houses and learnt about the various processes that the grapes go through. We also learnt that the bottom of the cork bears the name of the Champagne House which should match the label on the bottle. If it doesn't then the contents are not genuine.

Wilf played for the group at various demonstrations during the visit while the rest of the family just went along for the ride and a most enjoyable one it was.

So thank you Woodvale and the sadly missed Ian and Jean for all the happy memories over the years.

Frances Horrocks



Corry Verheijen 6.2.49 - 1.12.24



So many of you will be sad to hear of the loss of Corry who taught so many groups around the country. She was an excellent dancer and teacher and will be sadly missed by all.

She taught frequently at the Eastbourne Festival and had a wide repertoire of dances from many different countries.

She was also a personal friend and frequently stayed with us. On one occasion she brought her two sons for a non dancing camping holiday but unfortunately it rained so heavily the first day it was impossible to pitch their tent, so they came back and camped in our house instead. They then made day visits to various places including Windsor Castle, where her two sons were fascinated by the suits of armour and ancient weapons.

With five boys in the house it was full of fun and laughter which my sons still remember. Somewhere I have a photo of Bruce holding Arnaud upside down by his ankles in our dining room which became the boy's bedroom during their visit. I hope Arnaud and Taco remember the happy times too.

Farewell dear friend. You, your dances and lively personality will never be forgotten.

Frances Horrocks



John Boyd

It is sad to tell you that John Boyd passed away on Sat 26th October. Jane and I knew him in more recent times when together with his partner Margaret he came to our U3A weekly dances in Harrow and also to the monthly Cecil Sharp Sunday dance and to the annual weekend at Halsway Manor. Our thoughts are very much with Margaret.

Ian Green

Väva Vadmal

I learnt this dance from Dr. “Pug” Cyriax many years ago. She was awarded an honour by the Swedish government for her work in preserving folk dances, costumes and customs. She was very strict and insisted on precise details, such as the position of the hands throughout. The whole dance, apart from a few bars at the end, is a simple running step with three steps to each bar. Each figure generally takes up all the music so each new figure starts with Melody A. “Strip the Willow” takes up more than one repetition of all the music as the figure takes longer to complete. The article in the “News” is very good especially with all the photos of Rainmakers and their performance.

I taught this dance to 10 - 11 year olds at Wimbledon Chase Middle School as part of a Swedish Suite which they performed admirably as part of a Summer Fête in 1983. The complete set of costumes were borrowed from Joan Guest and the recorded music supplied by Simon.



above:

A photo of the performance of Väva Vadmal at the Summer Fête in 1983.

(another on the back page).

The figures of the dance represent the weaving of the cloth. I can't remember all of them but when the dancers form lines down the sides of the set they represent the selvages and must keep still and not spoil the straight edge of the fabric.

In the first figure when the top couple run down the middle and back again this represents the shuttle moving back and forth across the warp.

The pousette figure represents the heddle raising and lowering the treads of the warp thus allowing the shuttle to weave the fabric.

The arming at the end represents the tying of knots in the warp before the fabric is cut off the loom.

There is also a Hebridean Weaving Lilt with eight couples and fewer figures.

Frances Horrocks



Appenzell Costumes



Two girls **not** dancing Appenzeller Klatschwalzer.

Appenzeller Klatschwalzer

I am looking at a small piece of thin writing paper and time is telescoping in that strange way it does. The letter is a brief note confirming the commissioning of the fourth and fifth SIFD books of dance instructions (in the 1950s). On the back, in small, crowded handwriting, are the dance instructions for Appenzeller Klatschwalzer. The letter is not dated but this charming Swiss dance has been in the repertoire of the SIFD for as long as anyone can remember.

These notes were written by Margery Latham, evidently in haste and in the absence of any more suitable notepaper. We know that Margery and a friend (coincidentally, also called Marjorie) went to a course in Switzerland taught by Carl and Maria Klenk. This was well before the Klenks came to teach at the Swansea Summer School in the 1980s. Margery came home with a collection of Swiss dances that quickly became staples of the growing repertoire here. Appenzeller Klatschwalzer was one of them. It is a waltz dance for couples with three distinct figures. It is danced in a contained and precise style, very typical of the Alpine area; Appenzell is only ten miles or so from the Austrian border.

Margery's son, Tony Latham, reminisces to me about his mother teaching the dance. He also comments that Appenzell has the dubious distinction of being the last place in Europe to introduce full equality of suffrage. The canton of Appenzell Inner Rhodes allowed women to vote in regional polls for the first time in 1990!

In the early days of the SIFD, Western European couple dances were more prominent in the repertoire and Appenzeller Klatschwalzer was danced a good deal. It is no longer a fashionable favourite, but now, with Margery's dance notes in my hand, it feels like history.

Anne Leach



Appenzeler Klatschwalzer is in the SIFD book 'A Selection of European Dances', Volume 4. (page 28). Rainmakers still dance it sometimes.

Jill Bransby

The amalgamated notes from **John Pittman & Anne Leach**:

Appenzeler Klatschwalzer Switzerland

A couple dance. Couples in a circle facing l.o.d., holding inside hands, arms bent and hands just below shoulder level. The arms and hands remain in this position during the waltz balance movements, though there is a certain amount of movement forwards and backwards as partners turn away from and towards each other. Girl holds skirt. Man has his free hand behind his back with fist clenched.

Figure 1 Music A

Bars 1 - 3: Three walking steps forwards beginning with outside feet.

Bar 4: Turn towards partner and clap own hands twice.

Bars 5-8: Repeat Bars 1-4.

Figure 2 Music A

Bar 9: Partners holding inside hands, waltz away from each other.

Bar 10: Partners waltz towards each other ('Tyrolean Waltz').

Bars 11-16: Repeat Bars 9-10 a further three times.

Bars 17-19: Three walking steps forwards.

Bar 20: Turn towards partner and clap partner's hands twice.

Repeat figures 1 and 2.

Figure 3 Music B

Bars 1-2: Holding inside hands as before, two waltz balance steps forward in l.o.d. turning towards each other half turn at the end of Bar 2 to face against l.o.d. Partners take reversed inside hands (Man's L., Woman's R.)

Bars - 3-4: Two waltz balance steps moving backwards in l.o.d. turning away from and towards each other. At the end of Bar 4 turn inward to face forward to l.o.d., again rejoining inside hands.

Bars - 5-16: Repeat Bars 1-4 a further three times.

Figure 4 Music B

Bars 1-16: Ballroom hold. Waltz.

Repeat dance as often as desired.



Appenzeler Klatschwalzer

Intro: Last 4 bars A

Swiss

10
18
25
33

A
B

1. 2.

"Wilf Horrocks' Collection"



Now, I realise I have danced Appenzeler Klatschwalzer at various SIFD events without registering its name. Probably, the same lack of attention from me applies to **Bavno Oro** which will feature next month. Does anyone know of it?

Ed.



Barnet International Folk Dance Club

Christmas Party 2024: Friday 13th December 7pm-10pm

Church House, Wood Street, Barnet EN5 4BW

Balkan dances and refreshments

Live music from Kolotek Trio

All are welcome. £10

Meryl Abraham



SIFD Committee

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WHAT'S ON IN DECEMBER



- S.I Sunday 8th SIFD AFTERNOON DANCE** at Primrose Hill Comm. Centre, 29 Hopkinsons Place, London NW1 8TN. £10 (cash only) 4pm- -6:30pm (open:3:30pm) MC: Anne Leach, music: SIFD band.
- Friday 13th BARNET CHRISTMAS PARTY** see page 14
- S.I Saturday 14th BALKANPLUS** in Trefusis, Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regents Park Road, Camden, NW1 7AY. 6pm- 9pm. £10 (cash only) Varied dance leaders, includes live music with Kolotek Trio. enquiries to maureen.felton@btinternet.com or www.balkanplus.org.uk

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