

Folk Dancer

The Magazine of World Dance and Culture



Welsh dancers on a British “First Day Cover” for stamp-collectors, issued in 1999. See page 8.

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Have Sholehorn, Will Edit

By Karen Bennett

As your guest editor for this issue (and the next), I'm delighted to present a magazine jam-packed with *other people's* contributions.

First up we have a trip down memory lane: Ruth Ostrower reminiscing on her involvement of over 20 years with this very publication. Ruth was asked to write her reminiscences by Stefania Miller, whose third article in her *Folk Dancer* series, concerning the years 1984-91, graces these pages too, but so stuffed is the issue that we have room only for half of Stefania's tale.

In a situation unusual for us, we've had two articles in inventory we couldn't run till now because of lack of space, and Ruth Ostrower's was one of them. The other was a travel piece by Murray "Indiana" Forbes, who, with his wife Lavinia, drove from Spain to Croatia last year to attend a dance workshop and, as we have come to expect, had many adventures along the way. (Murray has been contributing wry travel articles since at least 2003.) However, in a continuation of my evil plan to frustrate readers until the June issue, I've divided Murray's article in two as well. The next installment about our intrepid travellers/possible fugitives from Italian justice (it's a complicated tale involving road tolls)

will include, among its delights, hurricanes, four-eyed fish, and banana suckers as the story moves from the Old World to the New and back again.

Also in this issue is a review of the Hungarian Csango Café in February by Patricia Stenton, who, with her husband Conrad, drove down from Midland (north of Toronto) to attend. I went to high school in Midland; Conrad and Patricia have been friends of the family for more than 40 years. If it weren't for Conrad sending me a flyer for the University Settlement Open House when I moved to Toronto, I'd never have discovered folk dance. He is one of numerous international folk dancers who've performed with Hungarian ensembles over the years; others include David Green, Michael Wagner, Victor Shoup and Diana Rush Verseghe. Patricia and Conrad lodged with me after the Hungarian café, and I (over)heard interesting observations that prompted me to beg for a review (such as, they first met during a week-long seminar in Hungary run by Csaba Palfi). It was clear to me that Hungarian dance and music, and the OFDA café in particular, held a special meaning for both the Stentons.

Hungarian folklore is special for others as well; witness an e-mail from Nancy Nies which she

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The OFDA has established an e-mail list in order to communicate timely information of interest to folk dancers. If you would like to add your name to the list, send an e-mail request to: ontariofolkdancers@gmail.com



Please do let us know about special events!

has kindly given us permission to reproduce. Nancy and her husband Paul, both OFDA members, live in California, where Paul has a consulting business, and the two of them visit Toronto at least once a year for a few weeks, and folk dance (at IFDC) when they do. On January 26, Nancy wrote: "Paul says to tell you that he's tempted to fly to Toronto just to go to the Hungarian Dance Café! In the late 80s he attended a number of Hungarian dance workshops, and I also went to a couple. In 1987 we accompanied the Dunaj dance ensemble from L.A. on a tour to Hungary and what was then Yugoslavia – they had extra room on their tour bus – and we got to attend folk dance festivals with them in both countries. We love Hungarian music, and will be thinking of you the night of Feb. 4, when we'll be in San Diego with Toronto friends!"

In advance of Ontario Folk Dance Camp in May, where Dale Hyde will be teaching Welsh dances (as well as Radboud Koop presenting Russian ones), we bring you an article by Dale on the subject. We believe that Dale has much more to say, as Welsh dance is a specialty of his; we must think what gentle persuasion will induce him to share details of his long-time interest.

We must apologize for some minor glitches in the February issue. The same photo of teacher

Stephania Woloshyn appeared twice in the Ukrainian Dance Café article on p. 23 (but it's a very *nice* photo). And, as amends for the opposite kind of "oops" (something being left out *entirely*), Dorothy Archer, the guest editor, submitted an e-mail dated February 19 which we present in its own kind of gift box.

Letter to the Editor

In my editorial in the February issue of *Folk Dancer* I neglected to mention Riki Adivi, one of the younger teachers. Riki leads a group in Richmond Hill which includes some younger-than-the-average dancers.
– Dorothy Archer

*Riki Adivi ▶
dancing at the
OFDA
Portuguese Café,
December 2, 2010*



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Behind the Scenes – Secrets of Our Success

By Ruth Ostrower

When Stefania Miller asked me for some thoughts on my tenure with the *Ontario FolkDancer* it initiated a bit of a walk down memory lane. It's hard to believe that offering to help with the syllabus at Ontario Folk Dance Camp in 1973 would lead to an over-20-year association with the OFDA publication. I decided that since I had helped with the camp paper, a logical progression was to work on the newsletter, especially since Heidi Fiebig was the editor in charge of both publications at that time.

It would be November 1973 when I got my first "credit" for production, along with Sally Sturgeon. Heidi, as noted above, was the Newsletter Editor, Dorothy Sloan was the Folklore Editor and Hans Sanders was the publisher. The newsletter was published 10 times a year and was typically about 16 pages per issue. We had just celebrated 25 years of dancing in Toronto, and you could dance in two or three different locations every night of the week.

It's hard to believe that we used to type the individual articles (yes, on typewriters). Initially we worked with whatever came our way, which sometimes meant two or three different fonts in a single issue. However, over the next two years, Heidi would gradually clean this up, with everyone using the same font and margins, so that you could no longer tell if one or several typists were at work.

Over the years we moved from typewriters to word processors (oh goody, I can fix that typo without retyping the article or drowning it in whiteout), to computers and into the world of desktop publishing. Pictures that were once screened to create an image that an ink press could print from have now (post my time) turned into scanned images, and the newsletter is produced on high-speed photocopiers; the miracle of modern technology. While my main focus was on the production side, I was persuaded to write regular reviews of camps, workshops and other events.

Until 1983, I mainly worked with Heidi and Walter Bye, associate editor. Producing the newsletter was a definite commitment. We ensured that nothing (work, family, illness or vacations) could interfere with our schedule. While we originally produced 10 issues a year, this would be reduced to eight effective January 1982 and later further reduced to seven. However,

while we were cutting back on the number of issues, the fact that the newsletter grew from typically 20 pages to often 36 pages (typically 32) meant that each individual issue did require many hours of work.

It was September 1983 when Heidi kicked Walter Bye upstairs, as it were, into the Editor's Chair and I became the Production Manager. This led to many late-night sessions at my office, with Walter writing and me typing. We actually had a Mac in my office, which was wonderful for the newsletter since its desktop programming software was much more sophisticated than the ones available on the PC. Walter was the source of many of the ideas for the columns that appeared and did a huge amount of research to keep them going. All aspects of folklore interested him, and this was reflected in articles on not just dance itself but the food (very important), costumes and culture that went into giving the dances a context and bringing them alive. "Hiers ek Wiers" (literally Here and There) was another Walter innovation, keeping the folk dance community aware of what everyone was up to. It could be births and deaths, but it was also a good place to describe an event that needed a little more space than was available in the Coming Events column but wasn't large enough to warrant a full article.

Stefania asked what it was like working with Walter for issue after issue. For the most part, it worked very well. I had a strict policy that only one of us could have a crabby day at a time. This meant that if he was out of sorts, I had to make it work. If I was in a bad mood, he had to behave himself. For the most part, this was pretty irrelevant. We each had our own skill set, and between the two of us we produced each issue and typically had a lot of fun in the process.

It's interesting to check out the back page of the newsletter to see who were our long-time advertisers. As a not-for-profit organization, our main source of income came from membership fees and these ads, as most events paid for themselves but didn't typically generate a lot of profit. Therefore, advertising was critical to helping us balance the budget.

Thanks to Gwen Peacher's influence, her husband, Doug, persuaded Sears to advertise for many years in our newsletter. Can-Ed Media (originally

Canadian Folk Dance Service) was another early supporter: a company started by Ernie Krehm and run by Jack Geddes for many years, where you could go and buy variable-speed record players (does anyone still know what a 78, 45 or LP is?). Those old Bogans were great machines because the teacher could literally slow down the machine while we were learning complicated footwork and then bring it up to speed once our feet had gotten the patterns sorted out. Can-Ed was also the source for music – again, records were the order of the day at that time.

In October 1985 we had the first ad from Yonge Distributors. They supplied individual cassette tapes so a teacher could put one dance on one side and another one on the reverse; no more hunting through a cassette with 20 dances on it to find the one you wanted. And the tapes were much lighter than all those records. Of course, in this day and age, when you can have an entire catalogue of music on a laptop, it makes us pause as we think of all of those years when teachers schlepped so many cases of records and then tapes to classes and camps. What a difference a decade or two can make to literally lighten our load.

Continuing on the ad theme: Along with full-page ads for many camps, workshops and cruises, we see the ad for Shan Shoes as a staple of the magazine since 1986. It should be noted that Margaret Whelan played a crucial role, for many years, in sourcing many of our ads.

In January 1985 we introduced a new layout inside the publication, with much thanks to Hy Diamond, who was able to take our ideas and rework the existing artwork to give the newsletter a much cleaner look.

During Walter's years, we would also share in the correspondence between "Gradina" and "Baba," not to mention letters to "Natasha." While the intent was that people would write to Natasha and get answers, we didn't always get enough questions, so, as we said when we shut down this column, what we often got was Natasha's view on life through dance-focused lenses.

It was September 1989 when Walter made his first pitch for someone to come on board and replace him as Newsletter Editor. He would continue as Editor for over another year, since for some reason no one seemed to want the job. His last issue as Editor was the June 1991 issue, although I had material come my way from him for the first fall issue that year. Sadly, in

the next issue I would write the saddest article I have ever had a hand in, which was to talk about Walter after he died. It is always tough to find a partner who truly shares the workload on a project. He was definitely missed.

There are still some people out there who have questions from our time, such as, "Who is Gradina?" and "Who is Natasha?" However, part of the mystery of these two columnists was that other than Walter and me (and them, of course), no one knew who they were. And I think I will leave it like that – unless they decide to "out" themselves.

This was one of Walter's many skills: that he managed to find all kinds of people and persuade them to provide material for the newsletter – definitely the toughest job of the editor, to fill those pages without having to do all of the writing yourself. This is why it is always so great to open current copies of the newsletter and see multiple authors. What brings it to life is having different perspectives, sometimes on the same topic. In a way, in this modern era of 140-character tweets, it's our old-fashioned message board where people can and should comment on what they're reading and share their ideas and trips and events with the wider folk dance community.

It was an amazing experience, and I'm proud to have been a part of the chain that produced this publication for so many years.



Walter Bye and Ruth Ostrower at the appreciation night held to honour them for their contributions to the Ontario FolkDancer, March 2, 1991, at the Cecil Street Community Centre, Toronto.

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Welsh Folk Dance History

By Dale Hyde

Upon looking at the history of Wales, one wonders how the culture of language, music, dance and other folk traditions survived. Obviously the Welsh were strong in keeping their language and culture alive through the 16th to 19th centuries despite the government and the clergy.

In 1536 Wales was incorporated in England with the stipulation that no Welsh-speaking person should occupy any office within the King's dominions "unless he or she use and exercise the speech or language of English." Welsh is one of the oldest and still surviving languages spoken in Europe. Since the majority of Welsh-speakers could not communicate in English, there was little opportunity for them to hold any official office. It was not until 1942 with the Welsh Courts Act that some degree of recognition was given to the Welsh language. Finally, in 1993, the Welsh Language Act established the Welsh Language Board to "promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language."

The church of the 18th and 19th centuries regarded dancing, singing (other than hymn singing), festivals and traditional customs as sinful. The people had to conform to the pressures of the day to maintain good standing in the church. There were those, of course, who did resist and continued to dance and sing when they were sure they would not be found out. It's thanks to these brave souls that we still have some of the old Welsh dances and other Welsh culture.

William Jones (Llangadfan) and Edward Jones saw the great damage that was being done to the culture. They, along with other publishers such as Thompson, published collections of the dances that were being danced. John Playford had been publishing Welsh dances such as Lord of Caernarfon's Jig and Abergenny since the mid-17th century. Walsh was another publisher in the 18th century who published dances such as Meillionen (1726) and Evan's Delight (1718), choreographed by Nathaniel Kyneston of



Gwerinwyr Gwent folk dance group.

Trewylan. (Many folk dancers will recognize one of his other dances: Softly, Good Tummas.) During this period, there was a lot of exchange and borrowing between the countries of the British Isles and Europe. Many Welsh dances went into the British/English collections. They tended to keep their original Welsh names in translation to English. The dance Hoffedd ap Hywel became Powell's Fancy, for example.

The Rev. Richard Warner, in *A Walk Through Wales, in August 1797* (1797),

has written, of his observations of a genuine Welsh Ball in Pontneathvaughn, of his "complete inability to unravel the mazes of a Welsh dance. 'Tis true there is no great variety in the figures in them, but the few they perform are so complicated and long, that they render an apprenticeship to them necessary in an Englishman."

By the start of the 20th century, folk dancing contributed very little to Welsh culture. In the 1920s, Hugh Mellor and others started to take interest in the old dances. In 1918 he met Mrs. Gruffydd Richards from Llanover, who recalled dancing the Llanover Welsh Reel as a young woman. This was the first of the Welsh dances to be rescued. Another from the same area is Rhif Wyth.

The dances from Llangadfan were found in the National Library of Wales among the papers of Edward Jones. The dances Aly Grogan, Lumps of Pudding and The Roaring Hornpipe were noted in a letter he received from William Jones in 1790.

In the 1940s, Lois Blake and Gwyn Williams were important to the revival of the Welsh dancing tradition. Mrs. Blake is considered the driving force behind the revival of folk dancing in Wales. She travelled all over Wales researching and collecting dances. Almost single-handedly she rescued Welsh traditional dances from extinction.



The Nantgarw Dances were published in 1954. These dances were recollected by Mrs. Margretta Thomas from her childhood in the 1890s. She often described the dances from her childhood to her daughter, Dr. Ceinwen Thomas, who had the foresight to note them down on paper. Dances from this area include Rali Twm Sion and Ceiliog y Rhedyn.

In the 1960s, Patrick Shuldham-Shaw reconstructed and interpreted many dances (e.g., Llanthony Abbey) and music from early Welsh manuscripts. He helped the growth of Welsh dance so much that he soon came to be known by his bardic name “Padrig Farfog.”

From a greater understanding of the figures and music, Pat Shaw was soon choreographing dances in this style. Two of his most popular dances still danced in Wales today are Dawns y Pistyll and Ty Coch Caerdydd.

The British folk dance and folk song researcher Maude Karpeles has said that “the authenticity of folk dance lies not so much in origin, but to the amount of participation in the dance. If the people adopt a dance and translate it into their own medium, then, in the course of time, it can be considered part of their own tradition” (Blake 1972). Today many dances are being composed and finding themselves accepted into the Welsh dance culture.

Many dances with a Welsh name or “feel” to them came from the early collections, with the old import that, perhaps, they had nothing to do with Wales! By reviving and creating dances and with much research and practice, Welsh folk dancing has developed into a lively, visible, colourful and living part of the Welsh culture. Alice Williams (1985) has said, “There is something of a different character that makes the Welsh dances differ from those of England, Scotland and Ireland. It is very difficult to define this subtle difference, since it does not lie in the music alone, nor in a step, movement or figure. Perhaps revealing it in our dancing is enough.”

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Many Happy Returns to
Gib Whittamore
on his 90th Birthday, April 1, 2012

Gib and Evelyn Whittamore have danced with Olga Sandolowich and the Don Heights Folk Dancers since 1984, and their Markham farm has been a regular advertiser in the *Folk Dancer* for many years (see ad on p. 25).

The OFDA would like to acknowledge
Olga and the Don Heights group
for their generous donation
in honour of Gib's 90th birthday.



OFDA's Hungarian Csango Café

By Patricia Stenton

Saturday, February 4 was marked as a special day in our calendar. OFDA was hosting a Hungarian Csango Café, with Andrew Komaromy and dancers of the Toronto Kodaly Ensemble as the special feature.

As always, the evening began with a scrumptious ethnic potluck supper. There were several Hungarian specialties offered, including poppy seed bread.

After dinner we officially welcomed the Kodaly Ensemble to entertain us with a set of dances starting with Mezöségi. This was a particular treat for Conrad and myself. We met folk dancing in Hungary many years ago, studying this same dance cycle. Fond memories for us. Second was a Romanian Invirtita, followed by a slow and quick csárdas.

Then it was our turn to dance. Andrew taught us Öves ("belt"), a lively stomping dance. We all did our best to keep up with the energetic dance patterns. Second was Ördög Utja (its Hungarian name), or Drumul Dracului (its Romanian name), meaning "Devil's Way." Next we enjoyed Kecskés (the goat's dance), a delightful mixer, where pairs went around in a circle while instructions were shouted. Last in the program was Bulgarjaszka, in which rows of dancers had great fun dancing towards and away from each other.

The Hungarian Café brought additional fond memories to Conrad, who danced with Fekete Föld Együttes (a Kodaly spin-off group), in the 1980s.

International folk dancing followed as usual. The wish list brought us an enjoyable mix of dances, and for us, time passed way too quickly.

We are already looking forward to another opportunity to come down from Midland for more dancing with our folk dancing friends.



Photos by Bev Sidney

▲ *Kodaly Ensemble performs the Mezöségi cycle of spinning dances from the village of Bonchida, Transylvania.*

◀ *Andrew Komaromy teaches dances from the Moldva region, inhabited by Csango Hungarians.*



Doing the taught mixer called Kecskés. The woman closest to the camera is Dorothy Archer; to her right is Patricia Stenton.

Spain to Toronto Via Croatia, Part 1

By Murray “Indiana” Forbes

Folk dancers and fearless travellers Murray Forbes and his wife, Lavinia, live in the town of Órgiva in southern Spain, whence they retired from Canada in 2009.

Normally when I plan our trips there is a moment in time when all the pieces seem to fall more or less into place. Not that we necessarily follow our plan, especially since retirement has eliminated the time-and-timing constraint, but there are typically certain fixed events that have to be planned around, and the cost of air travel varies so wildly that I normally try to tie this down at an early stage.

The fixed events on this trip were a Serbian village dance workshop in the beautiful medieval village of Bale on the Istrian peninsula at the Slovenian side of Croatia, and a family-intensive trip to Toronto in Canada which included our four-yearly clan gathering – this year [2011], roughly 130 relatives spanning four generations.

From the outset, this trip was not normal. I spent months on the Internet hunting for rational and irrational flights to find some reasonable passage both in terms of cost and routing to take in these two fixtures. Nothing fell into place at any stage. In despair, I gazed at the map of Europe and, basing this on our experience in North America, reckoned that we could probably drive through it in about three days. Whereas we did more or less drive from the south of Spain to Croatia in three days, it was not at all like crossing the USA. I tend to lock my car into cruise control at the speed limit, thus rarely having to overtake anything, and pass many relaxing hours merely concentrating on not hitting things until the tank needs to be filled up again. For some unaccountable reason, however, in Europe every other car is involved in some sort of racing event in which speed limits play no role, and driving here is not relaxing at all. I guess, with America being so big, most people have worked out that the few hours saved on a multi-day trip do not compensate for the high blood pressure and energy expended in trying to out-drive everyone else.

Caving in to the wheel still left many planning issues – tolls versus non-tolls, Germany and Austria versus Italy and Slovenia, and so on. In the end we decided that if we were prepared to dole out

large sums in road tolls we could follow the Mediterranean highways and cross Italy to the Adriatic easily in three days. Then, on the day before departure, we were more or less ready and waiting, and decided instead to leave that afternoon and join the Mediterranean highways the next day at Barcelona so as to spend a night in Aranjuez, which we have always wanted to visit.

Aranjuez is unique in Spain as being the only town we have ever visited that has been easy to get into and easy to get out of, and we were even able to park on the street right in front of our hotel. It was very hot, and after some debate which my wife won decisively, we rushed into the Summer palace just before closing to admire nymphs and cherubs and gawk at how the rich once lived their luxurious lives. It always amazes me how the French, having cut off the heads of all their aristocrats, go to no end of effort to admire their magnificent lifestyle. In fact the palace is quite exquisite in a rather French sort of way, and one can travel the world from room to room without ever having to leave Spain. We also wandered around the gardens and the town and searched in vain for somewhere we both wanted to eat. It was so hot that I thought perhaps we could just drop a couple of eggs on the sidewalk and scoop them up with some bread, but Lavinia is a fussy eater and we finally ended up at a reasonable Italian restaurant right next door to our hotel – serendipity at its highest.

However easy Aranjuez was to get into, Girona wasn't. The chaos was enhanced by some major road works that sent our GPS into eternal recurrence until I took control and made a wild guess at the direction of the old part. Not a hope of a parking spot, and eventually we found an underground parking lot not too far away. I had booked a bed-and-breakfast in an historic building right in the old part, which sounded agreeable, if pricey. Once we found the building it was, indeed, magnificent, and my arms are now at least two inches longer from carting the luggage up three flights of ancient stairs. The young

proprietor was helpful in the extreme and totally appalled that we were paying for parking. With the aid of a map he carefully outlined how, by driving up to the railway tracks, we could park for free. The décor was modern minimalist style, and we had the only room with a bathroom en suite. At this point we discovered that, except for the price, everything in this establishment was extremely minimalist – the comfort, the breakfast, the convenience and so on. Our room had strange black tramlines around the edge of the ceiling and the bathroom was unromantically situated at one end of the room with no divide or door or curtain separating it. The strange-looking chairs were agony to sit in, and I am surprised that no chiropractor has agreed on a joint venture.

Girona is a very pretty old town and one can walk around the old city wall, which gives one an excellent view of the town and the surrounding countryside. Map notwithstanding, however, I was totally unable to find the railway tracks. We naturally had no idea where and in what direction we were facing when we got out of the underground parking, and so helplessly meandered from one corner of the town to the other. As I got more and more lost we did eventually find free parking but it turned out to be more or less on the outskirts and a massive hike through not-pleasant busy roads back to the old part.

On day three, we arrived without a hitch at one of the highlights of our trip. Even this had its traumas. In fact, our minimalist bed and breakfast being so uncomfortable and the lukewarm coffee with cellophane-packaged mini-muffins tasting of nothing but sugar did not detain us either, so that we arrived in Magagnosc (France) by late morning. We were to stay with good friends from Canada who'd retired back to their lovely old family home in these mountains just below the parc de Mercantour. GPS was able to steer us around the complicated maze of Grasse and deposit us in Magagnosc but had no clue as to the address of our friends. In fact, neither did Google Maps or MapQuest, and our friends sent us a French online map link that located them, but it was too complicated for me to follow. We tried phoning them but were cut off as they were in the mountains. It was Sunday and nothing was open and there was no sign of life anywhere. Eventually we located the road that we thought we needed to go up to get to

their house but after gyrating tortuously upwards at an alarming incline for a while we lost courage and struggled back down again.

At the bottom of this road was what looked like a roadside restaurant that was open. There was a party going on inside, and although late for eating in France, the owners assured us that we could eat there if we did not mind eating on the terrace. Then the menu arrived and we realized our mistake. This was very haute cuisine at very very haute prices and not at all the midday snack we were hoping to grab. The owner was charming and in no way made us feel like the cheapskates that we were as we made a hasty retreat. Lavinia then saw some sign of life at the far end of the village in the form of a lady carrying a filled shopping basket. She also had not heard of our friend's address but assured us that shops were open in the adjoining village and that the centre of Magagnosc was down a vertical track off the edge of the mountain where the one-track road between houses was ominously governed by a traffic light. We found the last parking spot by the church and then set off on foot to the next village. Here we found a first-class patisserie/boulangerie which had a few tables and we were able to have a very late but very good lunch there. The lady serving in the shop also had not heard of our friend's address. Later the baker himself came back and we asked him. He took great pains to point out to us that the address was in the adjoining village and so of course he had never heard of it. Some half an hour later he came up to us apologizing profusely for not being able to locate the address; he had apparently been diligently researching the issue to the exclusion of all other effort since we asked him, without any success.

Needless to say, we were eventually able to get through to our friends, and spent a very enjoyable afternoon and evening with them and exploring the rather highbrow neighbouring villages and mansion row facing the park, no doubt inhabited by the people eating at the restaurant that we fled from and probably playing golf in Antibes and sailing their yachts in Nice, all very close by.

Next day, having struggled across Italy on horrendous highways being harassed constantly by sports cars trying to drive us over the edge, descending on our bumper at least 200 kms/hr with arms flailing

and horns blowing, not to mention the lane slalom practised by the mega-trucks, we arrived at the Slovenian border without a toll ticket. I guess when I pulled off for fuel it must have been just before ticket dispensing, and when I pulled back on it, the toll authorities had not provided ticket dispensing. While the cars built up behind us in contented Italian phlegm a formidable tolls lady laboriously filled up form after form, and we were sure that we would be arrested on the spot. Fifty-nine euros later we were handed a lengthy document and told to surrender ourselves to some not-clearly-defined location further down the highway, and the document threatened that we would be pursued by the full might of the law and never allowed to drive in Italy again if we didn't.

We never did find the building that we were meant to surrender ourselves to and are now fugitives from the law but we did in fact pay the full amount of the tolls across Italy so our conscience is clear even though our lives are under threat.

Slovenia has some of the cheapest gas in Europe and makes up for it by requiring one to buy about a month's worth of expensive vignette (toll ticket) in order to use its motorways. There is a way around this if one has steady nerves and clairvoyance. The lady organizing the workshop had sent us elaborate route details for staying off motorways, which we immediately invalidated by taking the road marked "Slovenia" as opposed to the one marked "commercial establishments." Our GPS had concluded that Europe ended in Italy and was of no help. We also managed to leave our book of maps at home. In Slovenia, every gas station is manned by incredibly helpful and patient people who speak English, certainly Italian, probably German, no doubt Serbo-Croat and Russian and maybe French and possibly also Slovenian. However, all roads lead to vignette-endangered motorways and staying off them requires great skill. Three or four gas stations later, we managed to get within sight of the Adriatic and by keeping that on our right limped across the border into Croatia.

At this stage, having vastly overdriven, I experienced one of those rare occasions where retirement and age come together in perfect harmony. It started with a casual inquiry from my wife as to what day exactly the workshop was meant to start. We arrived in Bale a day early. No problem, other than unleashing a wild outbreak of activity. We were

nicey accommodated where we were to stay for the next 10 days.

Serbian and some Macedonian dancing occurred every morning and a party for those still standing, every evening, leaving afternoons free. The dance classes were accompanied by two very talented young musicians and taught by a performance dancer from the Kolo national dance company of Serbia. It is very energetic stuff and there were many moments when we no longer felt young. The participants were mostly French, many of whom were members of an international dance club in Lyons. There was also a group of four women from the mountainous middle of Norway and one retired banker from Japan who was a great hit with the Croatians, largely because he was the only one apart from them who could take slivovitzes (a kind of lethal plum brandy good for removing paint, starting cars, etc.) neat for breakfast. He also had a highly idiosyncratic way of speaking English that caught on like wildfire and did wonders for Japo-Croatian relations.



Where the dancers stayed in Bale, Croatia.

Having the car, we were able to explore Istria far and wide, including the mountainous interior and its ancient towns and villages, some with varying degrees of tourist infrastructure to lure tourists from the beach and others unrevitalized with all their fading charm intact. We also strayed into Slovenia and on one of the days we played hooky and drove all the way to beautiful Ljubljana, avoiding the motorway with some difficulty. It is a most attractive part of the world. As a bonus, so many Italians visit Istria that when one can take no more of the solid meat-centric Croatian diet one can find first-class Italian food everywhere.

The next fixture on our plan was a visit to Toronto and this also did not in any way fall into place. It was impossible to find any reasonably priced flights. Finally I found one with a Ukrainian airline which offered to fly us two hours in the wrong direction from Budapest to Kiev in a tiny plane that one could not stand up in and then 10 hours packed like sardines with no distractions across Greenland to JFK airport in New York in a behemoth, and in theory back again.

After the workshop, somewhat worn out from the wonderful but highly energetic dancing, we managed to rent a holiday apartment in Zagreb for three days. Having now a good map and having studied in detail Google maps, I felt easily up to the challenge of arriving in Zagreb. All went beautifully until our designated route was blocked completely by road works, with no detour signage provided. Luckily, it was a national holiday and all Zagrebians were on the Adriatic, swimming, so that our tenuous and aimless meander through Zagreb, completely lost, did not cause any major outbreaks of road rage. Then, by some miracle we sort of bumped into a street that was on our route. This is a lovely laid-back sort of city, and our apartment was roughly within walking distance of the pretty old downtown (we could have taken a tram), and our vast communist-style apartment was comfortable and well-equipped, but in hindsight two days would have been ample.

The highway from Zagreb to Budapest is straightforward. The only issue occurred when, in pouring rain, we had to make our way right through the centre of the city in rush hour to the far-lying suburbs where our hotel lay in hiding. Of course we had no maps on the GPS and we were off our map and

the notes I took from Google Maps relied on one being able to read road names, which is generally impossible. Whereas Croatians and Slovenians generally speak some English, Hungarians do not, and no one other than Hungarians speak Hungarian. After a number of false turns and many reversals we found someone who spoke a few words of Spanish and in fact drove us right to our hotel, which we would never have found as it was completely camouflaged and off to the side across some disused tram tracks.

Kiev airport has got to be the worst on earth. People everywhere, and nowhere to sit, a queue round the block for the two functional ladies' toilets, two lots of James Bond-style security checks and some fumigation (no explanation; just step into the cubicle and surrender to some unidentified substance being blown at one). Disinfected and secured, we were then herd-packed cheek and jowl into a room to stand for



Lavinia Forbes, Nymph of the Lily-Pads, in a park in Zagreb, Croatia.

hours and try and synchronize breathing. We got talking to a young American who had been teaching film at a posh summer camp in Austria and was on his way home, which slightly helped pass the time.

By the time we arrived in New York with very little food (and that which was produced was totally inedible) and no other distractions other than half the plane being filled with children who ran around without pause and kicked seats to make sure that no one drifted off into wasteful sleep, we were in a state of living death. I had, however, rented a car to drive us to Toronto. This was yet another piece that did not fall into place. I had rented the car from an online agent, having misread the complicated Spanish flight itinerary and erroneously booked the pick-up for the morning following our arrival. When I discovered this, I tried to make the change online and was told that it would cost me an enormous premium to do so. As the rental car company was Budget I thought I would probably be better off arriving at their doorstep, as in North America car rental companies are quite keen to rent their cars. This is not, however, so easy at JFK, where one has to first get to and then work out in what direction to take the skytrain to where the car rental companies are located.

No problem about the car, of course, but although well after midnight European time it was the height of the rush period in New York, and at this crucial moment, with heavy cloud cover GPS refused to find any satellites. Wild guesswork in New York traffic got me stuck right in the midst of downtown Manhattan with nothing moving in any direction. A uniformed porter at a rather posh hotel allowed us to leave our car temporarily blocking its guests while the receptionist hastily printed out a MapQuest for us. However, once back into the car, not to be outdone by competing technology, our GPS sprang to life and decided that we ought to go in the opposite direction, which actually made some sense: heading up Harlem River Boulevard through the Bronx and other prime shootout locations. Our experience was further enhanced by the beloved boulevard being reduced to one lane by roadworks. Finally, without one holdup or shooting or anything other than lots of cars, we started getting out of New York. USA is the easiest place on earth to travel as wherever one goes there is an endless supply of roadside motels to stay at – that is to say, other than anywhere near to New York. By about 4 a.m. Europe time we saw our first motel – a real gangster-movie special – where we collapsed into glorious sleep.

[To be continued...]

*The following article is the third of the series **Folk Dancing: Then and Now***

Reaching Out: 1984–91, Part 1

By Stefania Szlek Miller

Walter Bye, editor of the *Ontario FolkDancer* from 1984 until his death in 1991, left an impressive legacy, especially in reaching out to areas beyond the local and Ontario folk dance scene. As Ruth Ostrower indicated in her article [in this issue; see p. 5], Walter was involved with all aspects of folklore, and his regular “Hiers ek Wiers” columns provided extensive information about people and events. He also attracted many talented contributors to the magazine, such as the still-anonymous “Natasha” and “Gradina.” Aside from their humorous commentary on the folk dance scene, they also addressed serious issues such as Natasha’s discussion of the effect of AIDS on folk dancing (December 1989). While writing this series,

I tried to bribe Ruth to reveal the identities of Natasha and Gradina, but the lady was not to be bought.

Walter made a point of inviting contributors who did not necessarily share his views. He was not afraid of stirring up controversy, such as the lively, and sometimes bitter, exchange of views about the nature of social folk dancing in our region marking the 20th anniversary of OFDA. This editorial independence is one of the reasons why I decided to focus on periods, marked by different editors of the magazine. Each editor brings her or his own special talent as well as skill in attracting reviewers and contributors. The constant is that the magazine remains the main source for the history of folk dancing in our

region and beyond.

Full disclosure: During the time of Walter's editorship, I became seriously involved with folk dancing by being elected to lead the Hamilton folk dance group after David Green, our first instructor, left for McGill University in 1985. With the enthusiasm of a new convert, I became immersed in the frenzy of workshops and camps to learn new dances and approaches to teaching them. I also served on the OFDA executive council and contributed to the *Ontario FolkDancer*. This included an intemperate letter that I wrote in response to Karen Bennett's review of OFDA's 20th-anniversary party.

OFDA: Ed Thompson, Margaret Whelan, Fred Slater and Marg Murphy were outstanding presidents of OFDA during this period, and they drew to the executive a large number of people from Toronto dance groups as well as representatives from regional groups. As a result of this outreach, I served on the OFDA council representing Hamilton. In their annual reports, published in the magazine, members were informed of major policies and activities. The organization incorporated, sought savings as a non-profit corporation (thanks to the chartered accountancy skills of Fred Slater), and addressed important issues, such as liability insurance. By its 20th anniversary in 1989, some 450 members paid the annual membership fee of \$15 (\$20 for family), and 120 different people had served on the elected OFDA executive during the 20-year period (January 1990).

Major regular events included ethnic dinners, fall harvest parties at Denis Bowman's residence at King City, and annual general meetings. Fundraising events for the OTEA scholarship (named after Olga Sandolowich, Teme Kernerman, Ernie Krehm and Al Gladstone) included the very successful "top 40" party where participants danced to their favourite dances based on a survey of members (June 1989). Jean McAdam and Sheryl Demetro designed attractive logos for folk dance shirts, which many of us bought and still wear. The same design was used on notecards to commemorate OFDA's 20th anniversary. Terri Taggart transferred membership data to a computer program, facilitating a more efficient communication network.

In cooperation with the Community Folk Arts Council of Toronto (thanks to Ed Thompson's contacts), OFDA in 1987 assumed responsibility for leading eight international dance evenings at Harbourfront during the months of July and August. As Margaret Whelan reported (December 1987), these were great opportunities to promote international folk dancing, and she thanked local teachers for leading each evening. According to Marg Murphy, some of the Harbourfront sessions attracted as many as 430 people (October 1989). This was a major recruitment initiative, since participants were invited to join international folk dance groups in the area. Fred Slater also challenged local folk dance instructors to assist or start new clubs outside of Toronto (June 1989).

Folk dancers were also encouraged to participate in Canadian folk festivals, including the annual week-long folk festival in Drummondville, Quebec. This non-competitive festival, with more than 20 different international groups participating, attracted some half-million visitors each year (September 1989). Some of the performing groups also travelled after Drummondville to Ontario folk festivals or concert engagements. OFDA assumed responsibility for looking after 54 dancers and musicians of the Bulgarian "Yane Sandanski" ensemble, which included billeting and organizing concerts for the ensemble in Toronto (July 1987).

Another major highlight was the October 1988 Toronto concert by "L'Ensemble Folklorique Mackinaw," sponsored by OFDA with financial assistance from the governments of Quebec and Ontario. Mackinaw was formed in 1974 in Drummondville and was one of the founding partners of the Drummondville festival initiated in that city in 1982. Mackinaw's 45 dancers, musicians and singers gave a superb performance in Toronto, with Walter Bye, who spoke impeccable French, serving as master of ceremonies. Folk dancers also had an opportunity to learn more about French-Canadian dancing at workshops and social gatherings (September and October 1988 issues). It was a great cultural experience with our neighbours from Quebec.

Margaret Whelan represented OFDA at the first international conference on the preservation of cultural heritage in Montreal in the fall of 1990. The conference, hosted by Folklore Canada International,

was attended by some 150 delegates from 50 countries. The keynote speaker was Gerry Weiner, Canadian federal cabinet minister responsible for Multiculturalism and Citizenship. He stressed: "Folkloric arts are a visible expression of Canadian identity as well as a unifying force" (report in December 1990 issue). While this may be seen as a federalist position meant to counter the separatist voices in Quebec, many of us share his sentiment.

Ontario Folk Dance Groups: In 1988, the Settlement House Dancers celebrated their 40th anniversary, which was followed soon after by a tribute to Ernie Krehm, who was retiring from folk dancing. Started in 1948, Settlement was the longest continuous folk dance club in Toronto at the time. It was also one of the founding groups of OFDA in 1969 (see my first article in the December 2011 issue). Many of OFDA's signature events, such as ethnic dinners/dances as well as summer dancing in the park, were initiated by the Settlement group (April 1988). Tributes to Ernie on his retirement demonstrated the dominant role that he played in fostering the folk dance movement in Toronto (June 1988).

While the Settlement group disbanded soon after Ernie's retirement, many of the teachers involved with Settlement over the years were already playing leadership roles in teaching and promoting social folk dancing in their own clubs and/or as guest instructors. This included: Hy Diamond, who ran dancing in the park for many years as well as teaching a group with Reva Diamond at Temple Sinai; Al Gladstone and Diane Gladstone, who led the College YMCA Coffee House; Dale Hyde, who taught with Teme Kernerman at the then YM-YWHA and would go on to, amongst other things, choreograph a Canadian suite for the Folk Ballet Theatre in 1984 (review in December 1984 issue) as well as create, and serve as the artistic director of, the "Canadian Dance Tapestry" performing group. The talented dancers and musicians of this ensemble were students and alumni of the Toronto Claude Watson School of the Performing Arts, where Dale was a teacher. Teme Kernerman, who is well known for her Israeli expertise, taught international and Israeli classes for students of all ages, as well as creating the "Rikudiyah" dance festival for children and the "Chai" performance group made up of seniors. Teme was recognized by the Jewish Community Centre in 1987, and was also awarded the Ontario Folk Arts

Recognition Fellowship in 1991. Olga Sandolowich, long our window into the Macedonian community of Toronto, created the international Don Heights dance group. Sandy Starkman, who, besides teaching along with Teme and others at the Toronto Jewish Community Centres, was (and still is) the chair of the organizing committee of the annual Ontario Folk Dance Camp.

The new kids on the block were also no slouches in promoting folk dancing. The University of Toronto International Folk Dance Club (IFDC) celebrated its 15th anniversary in February 1989. According to Walter Zagorski, over 225 people attended the anniversary party, with many former teachers participating. Judy Silver, who started with the club at its beginning in 1974, was the constant driving force of this very dynamic club. She also was instrumental in starting the performing group "WomenFolk," which, with the addition of men, became "VillageFolk." The ensemble performed at various folk dance events. By 1989, IFDC had evolved from a university- to a community-based folk dance group offering classes from beginner to advanced levels. It also hosted many folk dance workshops with guest teachers (Walter Zagorski's article in April 1989 issue). An update in the December 1990 issue indicated that IFDC attracted 30 to 50 people to their regular Friday evening sessions and that the club offered specialty classes at other times, such as Sunday night sessions focusing on intermediate to advanced dances.

Outside of Toronto, Ottawa celebrated its 20th anniversary in 1989 at the Chateau Laurier with the "Flying Bulgar" Klezmer band providing entertainment. Some 150 people attended (December 1989). Peterborough and London hosted a number of English Country Dances. While there was no regular folk dance group in St. Catharines, Keith Atteck was a guest instructor at numerous clubs in the greater Toronto area as well as director of a number of performing groups. Keith introduced a very young Ahmet Lülecı at a 1985 Turkish workshop in St. Catharines. Despite Gloria Grindlay's heroic efforts to keep the Waterloo folk dance club going, it folded for lack of regular instructors. In a recent e-mail to me (February 2012), Gloria paid tribute to the many guest teachers who contributed to the Waterloo club from 1984 to 1988.

Based on my own experience, leading a folk dance group is very challenging. I was used to teaching political science to captive university students who already had foundations in the discipline and were tested by exams and other requirements to complete a credit in a specialized program. Teaching folk dancing to a social group required a different approach, since there are no prerequisites or credits given, and participants vote with their feet if the activity does not engage them. When the current Hamilton club was formed in 1984, we had some 10 participants, and there was no differentiation between beginners and more experienced dancers. As the club grew, some of the more experienced dancers felt that they were being held back by this policy, and wanted separate classes for advanced-level dances with the potential of forming a performance or demonstration group. The majority of the members decided on maintaining an undifferentiated approach, offering a varied repertoire with some challenges throughout our regular three-hour sessions. The club has also declined invitations to perform at various functions since the emphasis is

on social or recreational dancing, and a performance group is normally not inclusive. Guest instructors, such as Miroslav Marčetić (Hamilton was one of the first to invite this talented teacher for a workshop), have greatly augmented our repertoire. The Hamilton club also benefited from workshops with guest teachers from Toronto, which included Walter Bye, accompanied by Marion Newlands, who danced with us for many years before moving to Halifax. We still dance Trip to Bavaria, one of the dances that they taught to our group.

By its seventh anniversary in 1991, the Hamilton club had grown to 40 regular members, with many others joining us for parties or special occasions (March 1991). The focus of our club, then as now, is on sustaining a community spirit – i.e., the social side is as important as a diverse repertoire. This does not mean that everyone was happy or satisfied with this approach. This was as evident in our club's experience as it was for some of the folks who attended OFDA's anniversary party.

[To be continued...]



VillageFolk Ensemble of Toronto, about 1990. From left to right are Angela Hennessy, Jane Aronovitch, Edith Klein, Walter Zagorski, Susan Han, Michael Wagner, Susan McCarrel, Erica Tanana, Marg Murphy, and Bill Baird holding his and Judy Silver's daughter, Shaina. Not pictured: Judy Silver, who founded the ensemble in 1979.



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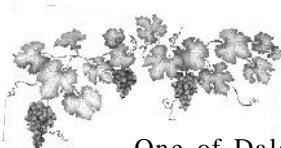
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The Back Page...

One of Dale Hyde's current projects is the interpretation and reconstruction of dances from a 1793 Canadian manuscript.

Starship Pinafore; or, The Lass Who Loved a Trekkie, an adaptation of the 1878 Gilbert and Sullivan operetta *H.M.S. Pinafore* that's set in the *Star Trek* universe, was performed by the North Toronto Players in February and early March. Chris Linge and Walter Zagorski sang in it, as did Chris's (non-folk-dancer) sister Terri Spanjer. Some elements from English country dance were to be seen, such as heys for three and elbow turns. Dozens of Toronto/Hamilton-area dancers turned out to support Chris and Walter.

Stefania Szlek Miller writes, "At the Hamilton Folk Dance Club on 17 February 2012 Karen Bennett taught two wonderful dances that she learnt at the 2011 Stockton camp: Tokyo Polka (U.S.A.) and Syrtós Kitrínou (Greek). Aside from sharing the dances with us, Karen provided information about them, especially the Greek Syrtós, which is danced to 'Nas Balamo' (a haunting Romani

folk song, sung by Eleni Vitali). Karen is on the Dance Research Committee of the Folk Dance Federation of California."

In April, Stefania Miller herself is taking a Mediterranean cruise holiday (non-dance-related), and, in the summer, a trip to Nova Scotia and Vermont.

If you haven't yet seen the recent video of 99-year-old Kitty Cohen dancing with a reggae band in Jamaica, you can find it via the OFDA Links page (www.ofda.ca/links.html). Well worth the click!



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Request for Submissions



Each year the OFDA Executive Committee accepts applications for the OTEA (Olga Sandolowich, Ieme Kernerman, Erne Krehm and Al Gladstone) Scholarship.

The deadline for submissions for 2012 will be May 31.

The purpose of this fund is to assist people involved in any folk-related activity to further their studies, attend workshops/courses, etc., and thereby enrich themselves and benefit the Ontario folk dance community.

The applicant should specify: (a) what the gain will be for him/herself and the folk dance community; (b) a proposed timetable, including time required to complete project; and (c) a proposed budget (maximum about \$200 this year).

Forward OTEA Scholarship Fund applications to OFDA Steering Committee c/o Bev Sidney, 35 Touraine Avenue, Downsview, ON M3H 1R3, or bvsdny@gmail.com

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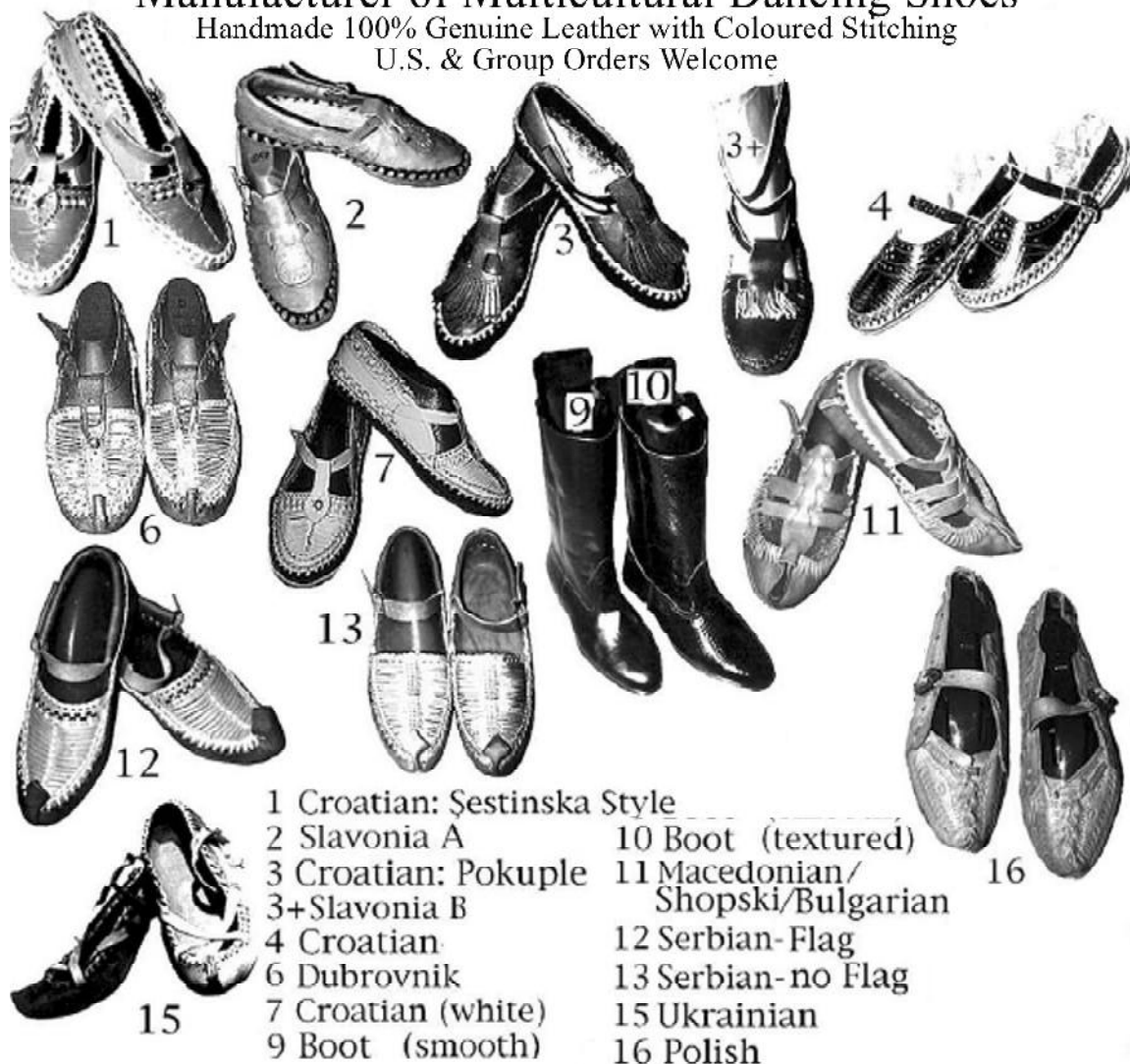
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