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Folk Dancer Online

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Cover Image: *Tenzin Choekyi was guest teacher at the OFDA Tibetan Café. See review. Photo: Judith Cohen.*

In This Issue

(Click On Bolded Titles To Go Directly To The Page or Article)

FOR THE DANCE CALENDAR	See http://ofda.ca/wp/calendar/
FOR DANCE CLASSES/GROUPS INFO	See http://ofda.ca/wp/dance-groups/
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RETURN TO OFDA WEBSITE.

In Praise of Longways Sets

by Dorothy Archer

Longways sets are not the favourite of some dancers. Contras, English Country Dances and Scottish Country Dances have set patterns which allow little or no room for innovation and it is difficult to cover up a mistake, especially if it breaks the pattern. Newcomers to this form of dance often panic because they lose their partner and no amount of assurance makes them comfortable until the partner comes back to the proper place. Others, who probably haven't done this kind of dance when young, seem to find it just too foreign to try. However, once they venture out and complete a dance successfully, most find out how enjoyable it is. Thanks to Maxine Louie, I came by an article on the difference between contra and English Country Dance and received permission to reprint it. I hope it will encourage you to try one or the other.

There is usually a caller for these dances so it is necessary to listen carefully but if you still slip up, and someone makes a rude remark, remember this true story. Some years ago, a folk dancer decided to try Scottish dancing. She was very new so wasn't performing as one of the ladies in the group would have liked. Our folk dancer turned to her and said "I hope when I dance as well as you, I'm kinder to learners."

Mirdza Jaunzemis has been travelling again, this time to Australia and New Zealand. Mirdza is very adept at remembering statistics; one wonders how she does it. If she's writing them down, how does she see anything – and she sees lots. Her description of the trip she and her sister, Mara, took will make you feel you have visited some of these places or that you would like to. And if you have been there, then it is fun to remember your own experiences.

Nancy Nies writes again about diversity in California. From afar, it seems a land of movie stars, sunbathers, and computer types but Nancy is proving wrong anyone who thinks like that. Sheryl Demetro has given a true description of dancing at the Tibetan café. The teacher was so charming and we tried so hard, but we lacked her experience and gracefulness. Nevertheless we all enjoyed ourselves. A bonus this spring was the excellent workshop "Mixers you've never heard of" presented by Karen Bennett. The music, too, was new except to Susan Han whose face lit up at the strains of a Taiwanese folk song.

The recipe this issue is a salad for summer. Watch for it at the buffet at the AGM café and you can sample it before making it yourself.

Hurray, summer cometh. Have fun.

ARTICLES WORTH READING

Yet another in an increasing number of research findings which point to dancing as an anti-aging strategy. This particular one appeared in the March 29 New York Times: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/29/well/walk-stretch-or-dance-dancing-may-be-best-for-the-brain.html?_r=1

And Prince Charles must have been reading that article, because he was photographed here joining the dance circle when visiting Romania in March: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/30/prince-charles-tries-traditional-dance-romania/

VIDEOS WORTH WATCHING

The May/June issue of Northwest Folkdancer includes a link to a PBS-TV program about world dancing, hosted by Mikella Mellozzi: www.travelbarefeet.com.

Some episodes can also be seen on YouTube.

Thanks to members Glyn Webber and Pauline Hill for their generous donations to the OFDA!

Portuguese Culture on Parade

by Nancy Nies

What has prayer, animals, singing, two queens, a parade, a traditional stew, perhaps a bullfight—and folk dancing, too? A Portuguese festa!

Until recently, I had no idea how active California's Portuguese community was, and had never heard of a festa. In her article on the festas of California's Central Valley (Via Magazine, May-June 2003), Jennifer Reese speculates that the community is not well known "because it is not concentrated in cities but scattered in small agricultural towns up and down the center of the state." According to the Portuguese Fraternal Society of America, no fewer than 130 festas took place in California in 2016.

The festas are rooted in the Catholic faith of California's Portuguese, most of whom trace their ancestry to the Azores. Those islands, Reese writes, stage "elaborate religious festivals and, on the island of Terceira, bullfights." The week-long California festas begin with a nightly praying of the rosary, and some of the larger celebrations conclude with a Portuguese-style, "bloodless" bullfight.

The VisaliaTimes-Delta reported that the Visalia Portuguese Association's June 2016 festa, like most such events, also featured: the "blessing of the cows," a procession of animals serenaded by singers; the crowning of two queens, ages 16 and 9, in memory of Portugal's 14th-century Queen Isabella, who fed the poor; a parade and mass; the serving of sopas, a beef stew, to the public; a dance and "grand march"; and performances by Portuguese folk groups.

Turlock's Our Lady of the Assumption Church, which offers both masses and classes in Portuguese, holds its yearly festa in August. Joseph Sousa, a leader of the Turlock-based Portuguese folk group Mar Alto, says that the ensemble regularly performs at that festa, as well as at other Portuguese and international cultural events in California. See them in action, at San Jose's 2009 Day of Portugal festival, here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvoNPliljgs.

I hope to see Mar Alto perform at this year's festa in Turlock, one of the many California towns where Portuguese culture will be on parade this summer.

Photo: Courtesy of Grupo Folclórico Mar Alto.

A Comparison of Contra and English Country Dancing

by Anna Rain

Reprinted, with permission, from Folklore Society of Greater Washington Newsletter*, March 2012.*

A confession: The first time I participated in an evening of English Country Dancing (ECD) – spring of 2001, in the early days of establishing myself as a DC-area contra caller – my exact words at the end of the evening were "Why would I want to do slow, boring English dancing where I don't even get to touch anyone?" I am fairly sure a whole lot of contra dancers reading this have thought the exact same thing.

Why might some prefer contra? Contra dancing offers experiences that most people are less likely to have while dancing English. Many couples thrill to the currently popular practice of improvisational contra styling. The repetition of dance after dance to the same length of tune often creates a hypnotic experience that the variety of ECD tunes does not invite. Many contra dancers cite exercise as a motivating factor for dancing; hence, the constant motion of contra is appealing for some. (Most English dances include phrases when at least one person in the figure does not move, a practice that remembers the roots of community dance as a form of courtship. A time to admire your partner!) I've also found that one evening of contra is often enough to convince a new dancer of its joys; the subtleties of English are best appreciated after more experience.

Photo: Bev Sidney.

"Most English dances include phrases when at least one person in the figure does not move..."

Why would anyone who loves the community, the stomp, and the excitement of a Glen Echo contra dance (which, when the music is superlative and the caller skillful, remains one of my favorite activities in the world) consider a venture to the weekly English dance on Wednesdays at the Glen Echo Town Hall? I offer my reasons why English appeals to (increasingly more of) those whose first love is contra.

Variety of figures: while current dances are much more varied than those dances 30 years ago, the finite scope of contra figures pales against those regularly included in English dances. Two hundred year old English dances and modern compositions alike offer movements that cleverly extrapolate the relatively simple spatial forms of contra. English figures are not necessarily more complicated or more "interesting;" there are, however, more of them, which leads to a delightful variety of movement in an evening of English dance. That there is no set expectation of "Partner swing, neighbor swing" in each dance frees the form to allow many different expressions.

Range of music style and challenge of phrasing: most contras are danced to interchangeable 64 bar reels or jigs (occasionally marches or hornpipes.) Each English dance has its own tune, and when the tune is played, experienced dancers immediately identify the unique figures that belong to that dance. English dances differ in tempo; they differ in how many beats or steps to the phrase (and the phrases themselves are not uniform.) The dances vary in length , each has a distinct feel, which invites a particular way of moving. English dancers learn to use the phrase of music to inform their dancing, and I find that contra dancers who have discovered English bring that phrasing back to the contra floor, which makes for better contra. In an evening of ECD, the movements one's body might be invited to express could range from bouncy to flowing, from stately to rambunctious. All good dancers seek to challenge themselves: learning new figures keeps us fresh, and the variety of traditional figures plus those in new compositions keep us – often literally – on our toes.

Nuance of interaction: English dancers engage with touch of hands and connection of eyes. Because there is less touching, there's (usually) less pushing, and dancers seek more subtle ways of involving each other. For those who struggle to express themselves verbally, or for those who are sensitive to being under another's physical control (as in a contra swing), ECD can be a way of engaging other dancers while retaining agency over one's own space. I find the more I dance English, the more fluent I become in eye-centered communication. In ECD, there is time and space for extensive non-verbal conversations.

Dancing with the whole room: While a resounding "long lines forward and back" unites all contra dancers to step with the music and with each other, the figures in English invite – nay, beg – that each dancer

considers not only her partner but also the person next to her (and often the person the next line over) throughout the dance. The opportunity to style one's dancing to match others' is one of the features that makes ECD so satisfying . When the figure for instance is back-to-back (a do-si-do in contra), dancers generally do not twirl, but instead will match their movements to the person next in line , creating a lovely effect that connects every dancer on the floor.

Will you dance the next dance with me? I would be most honored.

Perhaps, in the following dance videos you can observe the differences that Anna Rain describes in her article.

In this youtube video, you can see an example of Contra dancing, filmed in 2008 by Mid Missouri Traditional Dancers of Columbia, MO with Footloose band playing and Robert Cromartie calling. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KvJ23HkTuk&feature=share

A little closer to home, you can see videos of English Country Dancing, on the video page of the Toronto English Country Dance Assembly website: www.tecda.ca/videos.html

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Tibetan Café, April 1, 2017

by Sheryl Demetro

More photos can be viewed on the website: http://ofda.ca/wp/photos/ .

Tenzin Choekyi, who was our guest teacher, is a second generation Tibetan born in India, her grandparents having left Tibet in 1959. She was 11 years old when her family emigrated from India to Canada. For the café, she wore a dark green silk traditional half-dress (as she called it), sleeveless with a v-neck and a long skirt with a deep pleat in the back to allow for freedom of movement. Her blouse was green-gold embossed silk complementing the green dress beautifully. She wore an apron comprised of three narrow panels of colourful horizontal stripes, worn traditionally by married women.

Photos: Allen Katz.

Tenzin playing the dramnyen.

First, Tenzin played an Amdo song from eastern Tibet on a traditional stringed lute called *dramnyen*, which was handcrafted for her. At the head of the lute is a carved horse's head with three sets of double strings running the length of the neck. The base of the neck curves out to a point and then curves in to form the body. The *dramnyen* is played throughout Tibet. Although Tenzin played the *dramnyen* this evening, her favourite instrument is *yung chi* (hammered dulcimer).

Tenzin explained that of the many Tibetan dialects, *phaykey* is the one spoken outside of the homeland.

The two circle dances she taught were popular dances people would enjoy doing socially. So Dhang Yala from eastern Tibet had uncomplicated footwork. It was when Tenzin showed us the lyrical, flowing hand movements that accompanied it that we were a little less co-ordinated. The second dance Sonam Pangye from central Tibet had manageable footwork too but the hand movements were even more challenging. With her good humour we did our best and she generously gave us two thumbs up for our efforts. We repeated So Dhang Yala later in the session and were able to relax and enjoy ourselves dancing it.

Detail of the dramnyen's *carved head.*

Mastering the hand movements was a real challenge.

Tenzin teaches at the Tibetan Canadian Cultural Centre (TCCC) in Toronto with a fellow teacher, Sonam Chokey, who was originally scheduled to guest teach for this café but who could not be with us due to a research opportunity in India. They are the only two who began as students at the Centre and are now teachers. The other teachers at TCCC are professionals from The Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts situated in Dharamsala, India.

Tenzin will finish her Honours Registered Nursing degree very soon and from our experience with her this evening, we know she will make a fine nurse. Good luck, Tenzin.

Gemma Rosario and Rita Winkler behind the scenes at the cafe.

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The Lands Down Under

by Mirdza Jaunzemis

My sister, Mara, and I left Toronto for Australia on November 2, 2016 and arrived in Sydney on November 4th. Australia was the last place to be "discovered" by Europeans; it had already been inhabited for tens of thousands of years before then by the Aborigines, who, it is believed, migrated from South Asia. In 1779 the British Parliament decided to send thieves to help settle this "new" land and, as a result, we always hear that the original white people of this continent were convicts. This is only partially true because there were already settlers there from other countries, thus the arrival of lawless types was not a positive development – but all that is now history. Australia is a huge, vibrant country, albeit the major settlements are around the periphery since the central area is quite uninhabitable. The population of Australia is about 24.2 million, and there are about 69.2 million sheep in the country.

Sydney is in the state of New South Wales and is Australia's oldest and largest European settlement. It has the third most expensive housing in the world at this time. Russell Crowe lives here, and Nicole Kidman has an apartment where she stays when she is visiting. Its most famous building is the Sydney Opera House, which we were able to tour. The sail-like roofs were actually inspired by palm fronds. Its construction began in 1959, with a projected cost of $7 million, but by the time it was completed in 1973 (after many delays and lots of politicking, causing the architect to quit in disgust) it had cost $102 million. Its first opera, fittingly, was *War and Peace*, and a possum came onto the stage during the performance.

Photo: Mara Kulnieks.

Mirdza with Sydney's Harbour Bridge in the background.

Sydney's other famous landmark is the Harbour Bridge which links the northern and southern shores of the city. If you are fit and willing, you can do the bridge climb, which involves walking along the upper arch 134 meters above the water – we passed on this. You wear a special bridge suit and are harnessed in and walk with a group and a guide. It takes about three and one half hours and costs $248. We strolled around the harbour area and took a ferry ride to a beach on the far side. This was summertime – blooming jacaranda trees everywhere. We also had a lovely boat ride around the harbour.

At the Featherdale Wildlife Park we were able to hold and pet a koala bear and see many other forms of Australian wildlife: kangaroos,

wombats, wallabies, a crocodile, dingoes. small and large birds. From the Park, we drove to the scenic Blue Mountains, a World Heritage Area. The many eucalyptus trees found here give the area its blue colour. On the way back to Sydney, we stopped at the Mt. Tomah Botanic Gardens which had a variety of plants from around the world, many secluded spots, rockery, and natural and man-made waterfalls. A very relaxing spot with a view of the Blue Mountains.

After three days in Sydney, we flew to Uluru (Ayers Rock.) It is a spectacular spot in the desert in central Australia. I enjoyed the vegetation, which was quite varied and plentiful. We stayed at Emu Walk apartments, in a mini-city within the desert, with a pool, various activities, including an aborigine demonstration, and even camel rides. Camels were imported into Australia between 1860 and1907, and used to help the settlers in the dry areas. When they were no longer needed, they were released into the wild, and there are now free-range herds. The city produces its own solar-powered electricity and water from underground sources, but everything else has to be brought in. All the waste materials are taken out, thus the environment is pristine and very natural.

Kata Tjuta.

Photos: Mirdza Jaunzemis.

Our first outing here was the sunset tour of Kata Tjuta, also known as the Olgas – an agglomeration of 36 huge red boulders that have their roots six kilometres underground. The rock is arkose sandstone. The colour of the rocks changes from a daylight red-gray to various shades of rusty red as the sun sets. The next morning we were up at 4 a.m. to catch the bus to see the sunrise at Uluru, 50 kilometres from Kata Tjuta. We met our guide and walked around Uluru – 12.5 kilometres. This took all morning, which was just as well, because, although we had lovely breezes during our walk, the afternoons are so hot that the walk is closed. Uluru is not smooth all around as most pictures portray it: there are many grooves, hollows, pits, even a waterfall in one spot.

Uluru at sunrise.

Mara and Mirdza on the walk around Uluru.

It is 348 metres high at its highest point, and is roughly triangular in shape from the air. At the end of our hike we all got a certificate stating that we had "walked the walk".

Uluru and Kata Tjuta have spiritual significance for the Aborigines and are associated with many of their creation stories. As a result, in some sections we were not allowed to take pictures of Uluru. Only men from the local Anangu tribe are allowed in certain areas close to the rock, and then only men that have been initiated into the inner circle of Mala ceremonies. Aboriginal women cannot even look at Uluru or Kata Tjuta.

That evening we were taken by bus to an open-air restaurant on sand called The Sounds of Silence; it was equidistant from Kata Tjuta and Uluru and we had great views of both rock formations. After canapes, drinks and didgeridoo entertainment, the sun had set and we walked along a sandy path to an area with tables beautifully set and a buffet meal of chicken, kangaroo, crocodile and other meats. During the meal there was only candle light, and after dessert even the candles were snuffed, and only the moon provided light. Unfortunately there was a partial cloud cover, so very few stars were seen, but visible constellations were pointed out to us.

The next day we flew to Brisbane to spend a very full day with some women we had met on our Mediterranean cruise some years ago. They took us to a koala sanctuary where we were able to spend time with koalas, lots of kangaroos and wallabies, snakes, birds, emus, etc. We observed a sheep herding demonstration by amazing sheep dogs.

"Bougainvillea walk" in Brisbane.

After visiting a look-out point, we walked along the "bougainvillea walk" beside the beautiful

Brisbane River. There is a huge pool for swimming nearby with several adjoining pools – one of many in the Brisbane area. Queenslander houses were pointed out to us – homes built on "stumps"- above ground with an area under the house to allow for ventilation, run-off for downpours, also storage, and to protect the house from termites. This space is often closed in with decorative screens. The house has a verandah which extends the living space, especially useful in very hot weather.

Our friends are of Latvian heritage, as we are, and they took us to the Latvian House in Brisbane where an afternoon event was being readied. There are just under 1000 Latvians left in Brisbane and these few do what they can to keep the Latvian language and culture alive.

Photos: Mirdza Jaunzemis.

Coral of the Great Barrier Reef.

Our next destination was Port Douglas, by way of Cairns. Port Douglas used to be a sleepy fishing village in North Queensland, but now it is very popular with a lovely beach and great accommodations – laid back and sophisticated at the same time. From here we took a boat ride to visit and explore the Great Barrier Reef. The reef is 2000 kilometres long and is visible from space. it is actually 2600 separate reefs and different sections of it are anywhere from 2 million to 18 million years old. It contains 400 different types of coral as well as many other inhabitants. Sadly, the warmer waters of the oceans, due to climate change, are causing the reef to die slowly.

Aborigine playing didgeridoo.

We had a day-long trip to the rainforest area of Queensland which is designated a World Heritage Rainforest. First we explored the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Centre, a park, a camp, a museum and an art gallery, dedicated to preserving and presenting Aboriginal culture and their way of life. Using 20th century technology, the Aboriginal creation story was presented to us. Our hosts demonstrated an ancient method of cooking meat in an earthen pit; they also explained the use of herbs and plants in everyday life and for use

as medicine; we had a chance to learn how to throw a spear and a boomerang. There was also an explanation of various types of didgeridoos, and how to produce sounds with them.

Afterwards we took a cable car ride to Kuranda, a rainforest village, where we strolled around and enjoyed the sights. Our return trip from this mountain town was by way of the Kuranda Scenic Railway, a very pleasant and scenic ride over the Barron Gorge. That night we went to the ocean to view the amazing full moon over the water. During our last day in Australia, before flying to New Zealand, we hiked to the highest point in Port Douglas and swam in the ocean.

New Zealand

The population of New Zealand is about 4.5 million, and there are about 30 million sheep. So, the ration of sheep to human population of New Zealand is higher than that of Australia but in both countries the numbers of sheep are declining and there are now more cattle than before. The flocks of sheep in both countries were lovely to see. One thing New Zealand and Australia have that we do not is deer farms – they were introduced as wild animals and were beginning to multiply far too rapidly, so some entrepreneurial persons decided to harvest them and set up farms.

This country is vigilant about what products it will allow in. Its vegetation and animal life have been compromised many times in the past, with the result that some intruders have invaded and have taken over, and others have caused different species to become extinct, or very nearly extinct. It could be compared to the Galapagos Islands, because new species of anything upset the eco-system, many times irrevocably. Australia has this same problem. Thus, one is not allowed to bring in any unprocessed food. At the airport, you must declare anything of this type, and often if you do, it will be confiscated. If you do not declare what you have of this nature, and if it is discovered in your luggage, you have an instant $400 fine. In the luggage pick-up area, while I was standing and waiting for my suitcase, a sniffer dog came over and wanted to check my purse. I had had a banana in there earlier that day, which I had eaten, and he could smell it. His handler came over to check the rest of the contents of my bag – luckily all was okay. But my sister had some eucalyptus honey, which she had declared, taken from her. We were surprised.

After an overnight in Auckland, we were taken by bus to the town of Paihia on the Bay of Islands. Here we visited the Waitangi Treaty House where in 1840 an historic agreement was signed by the British and the Maori, forming the nation of New Zealand. The Maori conceded the lands of these islands to Queen Victoria, but not all chiefs of the Maori people agreed, and there are still disputes as to land claims today, as well as issues regarding self-government. Outside of the Waitangi Treaty

house there are three flags: the New Zealand, the Maori, and the Union Jack. Maori is one of the official languages of New Zealand, along with English and sign language. The Maori are a people very distinct from the Aborigines of Australia – they migrated from the Polynesian Islands about 1300 years ago. They are very skilled at wood, bone and stone carving, and at weaving. They have assimilated more smoothly into the culture of the English, Scottish, and Dutch immigrants who arrived about 350 years ago. However, they are still keeping their culture alive, and are willing to share it with tourists and others. They have totem poles, usually red in colour, representing ancestors.

Our first excursion was to take us to Cape Reinga, the very tip of the North Island. On the way there we stopped at the Puketi Kauri Forest, one of many rain forests in New Zealand to view the Kauri trees, one of the oldest species of tree, they can live for 2000 years. They can grow tall and straight to about 50 metres, and can be about 16 metres in girth. We saw one that had a staircase built into it which was once inside the house of a prominent individual. They were once used as ship masts, and kauri gum (resin) was harvested from them to make varnish. However, they were often used indiscriminately, and their numbers have declined. Also, there is a type of fungus now attacking the roots, and no one has been able to remove this blight, since it moves underground. Conservation efforts are being undertaken. Our next stop was Te Paki stream where people could go sand boarding on the many high sand dunes. Our guide had the sand boards and she gave a demonstration. Many of the younger people tried it out.

Mara in front of Kauri tree staircase.


Sand boarding at Te Paki stream.

Then to Cape Reinga where there is a lighthouse, and one

can view the area where the Tasman Sea meets the Pacific Ocean. The waters here are quite rough and there is always a stiff breeze. The Maori consider this a sacred spot: from here the souls of the departed leave this world. On the way back to Paihia our bus took us along Ninety-Mile Beach which is actually about fifty miles, on the western side of the island. We drove right along the beach with the waves crashing about 20 feet from the bus. Afterwards, we had to stop at a restaurant while our guide washed the bus because it was covered with salt and sand – a necessary chore or the bus and its undercarriage would soon deteriorate and have to be replaced.

Our excursion the next day took us into the Bay of Islands itself, on the ship *The Dolphin Seeker*. Our captain and crew knew where to find the dolphins and there were many, bobbing and weaving near our boat. This Bay has many islands, also a hole in a big rock in the water; on a calm day our boat could ride through this hole, but today it was just too windy and rough to do so. We stopped at one of the islands to see the view, then on to Russell, the village across the way from Paihia, the first permanent European settlement in the North Island. It is very small and quaint, with a British feel to it. We took the ferry back to the mainland where we got our bus to take us back to Auckland and a visit to the Sky Tower, similar to the CN tower, but about 200 metres shorter.

Our next stop was Hamilton, just south of Cambridge, where we spent about a week with my friend, Rosemary. She took us to see her neighbourhood, which is known for its stud farms and race horses. This area is very hilly, so we saw some beautiful surrounding mountains. We visited Sanatorium Hill, where there was once a TB hospital. Sanctuary Mountain, Maungatautari, is an ecological island comprising 3400 hectares enclosed by a 47 kilometre fence, where mammalian pests (other than mice), pets and livestock are prevented entry. The aim of the people working here is to protect and promote the diversity of native plant and animal species. In order to do so, all predators must be kept away. There is a goal in New Zealand of wiping out stoats, ferrets, possums, weasels and rats, even feral cats, from both islands – any animal with fur – because they are not native and because they are eating the eggs and the young of the many flightless birds that used to be very plentiful but are now in danger of extinction. Since the kiwi is nocturnal, we did not see any of the 20 in this enclosure. We were also introduced

Lush epiphytic plants in the rain forest.

to the silver leaf fern which has become an icon of New Zealand. Its leaves are green on the top side, but the underside is silvery, and glows in the dark. At night Maori hunters would mark their trail through the woods by bending back the leaves of the fern so they could find their way back out of the forest. There are many epiphytes in the rain forests of New Zealand such as ferns and other tropical plants, that grow on trees and are often of a symbiotic nature. And there are many, many varieties of ferns.

A highlight of the visit in Hamilton was the botanical garden, part of which has a section divided into "rooms" devoted to different cultures: Italian Renaissance, Tudor, Indian, Chinese, Modernist, Japanese. Many other areas are in the proposal stage: Egyptian, Medieval, Baroque, etc. There is a Maori garden, also a tropical one, a herb garden, a kitchen garden, a rose garden, and so on. At the Maori museum we saw a life-size war canoe: they are often 40 metres in length and hold up to 80 paddlers; they are made of a single hollowed-out trunk of the totara tree. Other examples of Maori wood carving, paintings and artifacts were exhibited. The Te Waihou Walkway took us along a spring-fed waterway from the Blue Spring, which takes 100 years to filter the water, and is used for 70 percent of New Zealand's bottled water. The water is so clear it seems to be blue.

Maori performance at Te Puia culture centre.

Our next visit was to Rotorua, a famous geothermal region, where we visited Te Puia, a centre showcasing Maori culture. We attended a typical Maori performance, and visited woodcarving and weaving schools. The Pohutu geyser is located here, also mud pools and a natural steam cooker. In Rotorua there is a Faith Church that has the famous "Galilee Window", where Jesus, etched in glass, seems to be walking on water.

Since we had missed seeing a kiwi at Sanctuary Mountain and at Te Puia, we went the next day to a kiwi rescue centre, Otorohanga, run by the local Rotary Club. There we saw two kiwis in their "day-for-night" enclosure. There were other birds as well: kea, kuka, oyster catchers, red-capped parrots and the tuatara, New Zealand's best known lizard, whose

Rescued kiwi on display at Otorohanga.

ancestors were the dinosaurs.

The Mangapohue Natural Bridge in Waitomo, near Hamilton, was an amazing spot. It is not on any tourist map, and is quite a small area. After walking across a swinging bridge, one comes to a huge cave/rock formation left over from an ancient cave system. It is open at both ends, thus the rock forms a beautiful arch about 17 metres high, with rain forest type foliage all around, and one can walk through it. Marokopa Falls, our next stop, was a beautiful 35 metre high waterfall. We continued driving along the winding road that led to the western side of the island amid spectacular scenery. We strolled along the black sand beach area off the Tasman Sea, and watched some fishermen catching whitebait. This is a small fish, about 25-50 millimetres in length, and is considered a delicacy; all of the fish is eaten – head, bones, intestines, etc.

We visited the Windsor Park stud farm the next day, and the breeding process was explained to us. There were some beautiful animals but very skittish and temperamental. Afterwards we drove to the eastern side of the North Island, to Mount Manganui, an extinct volcano in Tauranga, connected to the mainland by a sandbar, thus there are some nice beaches.

It was time to say goodbye to Rosemary, our excellent hostess and tour guide, as we were taking the bus to Wellington, a very windy city. It is New Zealand's capital and sits on an earthquake fault line. It has experienced several earthquakes, thus the buildings are built to withstand tremors. The east coast of New Zealand is part of the Ring of Fire, an area that is prone to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions due to the movement of tectonic plates around the perimeter of the Pacific Ocean. As a result, New Zealanders have accepted that these natural events will occur, and have a fatalistic attitude but they also prepare for them by way of setting out building codes and other measures. (While we were still in Australia, an earthquake had hit the Kaikoura area, about three hours north of Christchurch on the South Island.)

From Wellington we flew to Christchurch, site of a major earthquake in 2011, from which the city has not fully recovered. The Anglican cathedral in downtown Christchurch has not yet been repaired, and at one end the interior is exposed to the elements. The restoration has not begun because

The Anglican cathedral, damaged by an earthquake in 2011, and still in disrepair.

there is an ongoing dispute: should they reinforce the building to withstand earthquakes, a very expensive undertaking, or should they just repair the existing structure? All along, only the lawyers have been making money but there is to be a decision from the courts soon. To allow worshippers to have Sunday services there is a "cardboard cathedral" built in a different section of town. There is also a "restart mall" which is a conglomeration of containers, each one holding a boutique-style store – popular with the tourists. Other buildings also are still in need of repair, with many holes in the ground and construction cranes dotting the city. We visited the botanical gardens and the former University of Canterbury, the oldest university in New Zealand, built in neo-gothic style. It also suffered damage during the earthquake, and since then a part of it has been demolished – but it is still a beautiful building, and is now an arts centre. The University itself has relocated to a suburb in the city.

Our 380 km train ride took us across the Canterbury plains through the magnificent Southern Alps. We arrived in Greymouth, on the west coast, where we got the bus to take us to the Franz Josef glacier. This ride was not so picturesque as it was raining. But the rain forests in this area were all they should be: lush, dense and green. We also missed seeing the glacier because of too much rain and fog. It was named by an Austrian geologist in honour of the Emperor of Austria. It is very steep and a river flows from it into the Tasman Sea.

The next morning was still rainy as we left this area, but as we went along and through the Haast Pass, the sun came out to reveal more lush vegetation and glacier-fed rivers, mountains, and a salmon farm at one point. Lake Wanaka, called Mirror Lake, is a beautiful glacial lake in this area: it is 56 km long and 300 metres deep, and is 262 metres above sea-level.

Queenstown, on Lake Wakatipu formed by a glacier, was our next stop. This town had experienced a gold rush starting from 1862, which caused its population to increase very rapidly. Today it is known for great skiing on the Remarkable Mountains and for water sports and bungee jumping. Arrowtown, one of the gold rush towns, has a Chinese village, somewhat like an outdoor museum. Here are the sad and cramped huts of the Chinese labourers who were imported to work the gold mines but by the time they arrived there was not much gold left. They were ostracized by the locals, in spite of their efforts to interact with the surrounding community. Very little is known about their lives here, and what happened to those people as time went on.

There are a few wineries in this area now, and we visited one of them, Gibbston. The original plants came from France, and the winery produces both red and white wines, but a narrow selection. Nearby was the home of Gibbston Valley cheese. A scene from the *Lord of the*

Rings was filmed here and we visited the site. A gondola ride took us to the top of the mountain overlooking Queenstown with a great view of the town and its lake and environs.

We noticed that in many areas of the South Island great swaths of trees on the mountainsides were brown and dead. We were told that it is a certain species of pine not native to New Zealand and the government has decided to eradicate them by poison because they are very invasive and are squeezing out the native trees. We were hoping that at least the lumber would have a use – and is it possible to eradicate all these trees? Another invasive shrub is the Scottish broom, originally introduced to curb erosion; however, now it is everywhere, and in the spring whole hillsides and meadows are a mass of yellow blooms.

Invasive Scottish Broom covers whole hillsides with its yellow blooms.

That evening we took a boat ride across Lake Wakatipu on a grand vessel: the *TSS Earnslaw,* also called *The Lady of the Lake*, believed to be the oldest coal-fired steamship in the southern hemisphere. We enjoyed a sumptuous meal at Walter Peak High Country Farm, after which we saw some sheep dogs rounding up a small flock of sheep. A knowledgeable young man explained to us how these dogs are trained, and then he gave us a sheep-shearing demonstration, along with information about the techniques used to do this well and quickly. At competitions. the winners shear a sheep in about 21 seconds.

TSS Earnslaw, *believed to be the oldest coal-fired steamship in the southern hemisphere.*

Sheep-shearing demonstration.

The next day we took a long bus ride to Milford Sound. The way there was through several spectacular

mountain ranges in Fjordland National Park; we saw many small glaciers, avalanche runs and lovely waterfalls cascading down the mountainsides. We found these mountains to be more impressive than the Canadian Rockies because we were much closer to them and travelling along a two-lane road, not a four-lane highway. There was a single-lane, 1.2 km long tunnel through one mountain – the Homer Tunnel built in 1954 which opened up into a beautiful valley. Our final destination today, Milford Sound, where we took another boat ride, is 15 km long and is enclosed by 1200 metre high mountain walls rising vertically from the sea; the most spectacular peak was the conical shaped Mitre Peak. There was also Bowen Falls, cascading into the water from a height of 161 metres. On the way to and from the Tasman Sea we saw fur seals, some dolphins and yellow-footed penguins, as well as some gorgeous scenery throughout this area.

Dunedin's Railway Station.

On our last stop in New Zealand we had a driver take us to Middlemarch, where we took the 78 km Taieri Gorge Railway ride to Dunedin, a very Scottish town, in the Otago Region. It was an antique train that took us through tunnels and over viaducts, past gorges, with very different scenery: lots of rocky hillsides covered with broom and other vegetation. We arrived at Dunedin's Railway Station, a beautiful old building with a stately clock tower in the centre, and a mosaic floor in the main entrance hall. Dunedin is the Gaelic form of Edinburgh, and its architecture has a definite Scottish feel; it even boasts a distillery – producing scotch, of course. It has New Zealand's oldest university, and still has a privately-owned castle, Larnach Castle, high on a hill. We were taken to the Otago Peninsula, first to visit the Albatross Centre. The Royal Northern Albatross is about 1 metre tall and has a wingspan of about three metres. It can fly at speeds of 120 kph, and goes on migrations across waterways to Chile, a distance of about 9000 km. Young birds usually take these flights, and they can be at sea for about five years before they touch land again. They rest on the water, utilize wind currents and glide a lot. An adult mates for life, which can last over 60 years, and the female produces eggs every other year, all her life. Only guided tours are allowed in the Centre, because here again, there are many predators that attack the young and the sanctuary is not to be disturbed by tourists tramping about, upsetting

the colonies. An observation platform, and a guided silent walk were the two possible means of viewing them on the ground.

This area also has nesting areas for the little blue penguin, the smallest species of penguin, about 33 cm in height. Its back and head are blue in colour, and its chest is white. It is a shy penguin and can best be seen at dusk when it comes in from the waters. We also went to the sanctuary of the yellow-eyed penguin, an endangered species threatened by ferrets and stoats. One could view them in dead silence only at their hospital and from a type of blind that visitors pass through. *The Monarch*, a tourist boat took us through the waters of the Otago Harbour to view this wildlife from the water – a rocky boat ride. We saw many fur seals resting on rocks, cormorants and other marine and bird life.

On our last day in New Zealand, we explored a display of artwork at the railway station, and visited the Maori Settlers' Museum close by. Then we strolled through town and went to the Otago Museum. That evening we flew back to Auckland and the next morning were up at 5 a.m. to catch our flight to Sydney, then non-stop to Vancouver. and on to Toronto. At some point we regained the day we had lost going over.

There were many highlights during this trip, and I have tried to mention them all, but our overall impression was of two beautiful countries, each very different, but with spectacular scenery. We loved the Norfolk pines and the Pohutukawa tree, which has blooms that change from white to red just in time for Christmas. We had a chance to sample a real Pavlova, and some New Zealand Spring Lamb. The varied landscapes and the many species of wildlife in these lands down under are unlike those in the northern hemisphere. It was a thoroughly enjoyable and exciting adventure.

The population of New Zealand is about 4.5 million, and there are about 30 million sheep.

Mixers You've Never Heard Of with Karen Bennett

by Dorothy Archer

More photos can be viewed on the website: http://ofda.ca/wp/photos/ .

The dances taught were, indeed, ones we had never heard of nor were we familiar with the exceptionally nice music that accompanied them. Karen learnt most of the dances at Stockton Folk Dance Camp in California and, lucky for us, prepared this workshop for May 6th. It was an enjoyable afternoon. A nice balance was maintained between fast and slow numbers. The dances were comparatively easy except for Vigga Schottis from Norway and Sweden, which had a complicated arm hold and a novel pattern of advancing to a new partner called Greek Border Meander. After several practices, the dance was performed without mishap and the dancers gave it, and themselves, a generous applause when finished. Other dances learnt were:

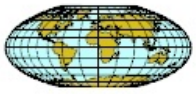
Amédé Two-Step Mixer (U.S.A.)
Le Bal Breton (France)
Diou Diou Dang (Taiwan)
Dream Waltz Mixer (England)
Greičius (Lithuania)
Minet (Czech Republic)
Nemelem (Czech Republic)
Pērkonītis (Latvia)
Stockrosen (Norway and Sweden)

CDs, a video and dance notes were available so let's hope that these dances become part of the weekly classes. They are too good to lose.

Photos: Bev Sidney.

Karen (closest to camera, on the left) demonstrating, with the assistance of Helen Winkler.

Link to Jim Gold's website.



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From the Folk Dance Cookbooks

Submitted by Anita Axtmann to Ontario Folk Dancer Cookbook vol. II

Three-pepper Salad

1 sweet red pepper
1 sweet yellow pepper

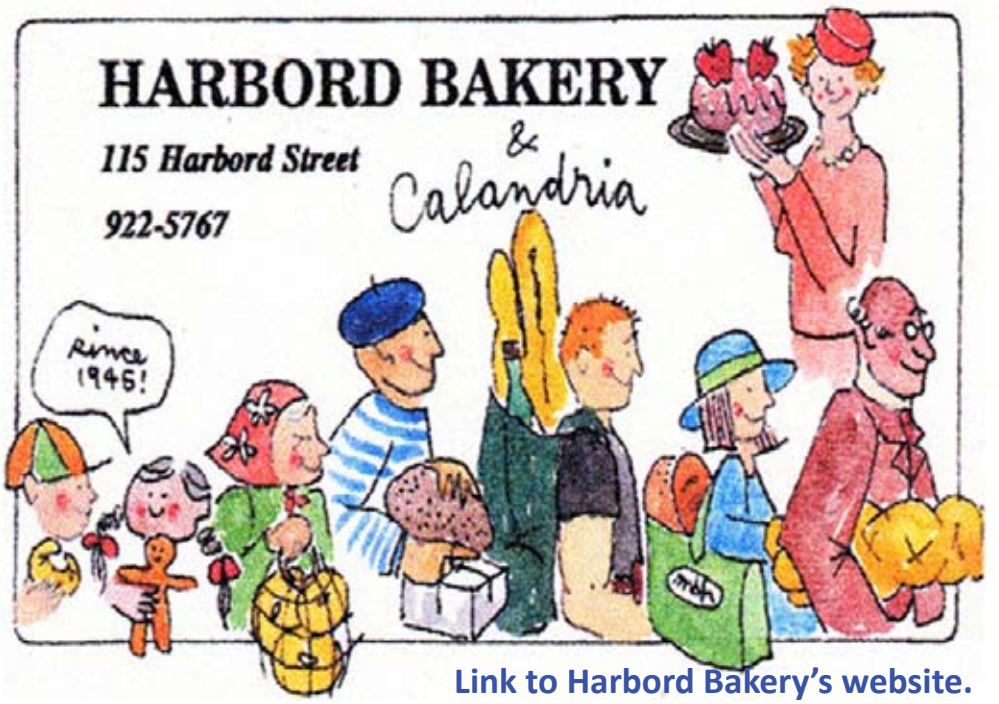
1 sweet green pepper
1 red onion
Mozzarella cheese cubes (optional)

6 tbsp. olive oil
3 tbsp. white vinegar

1 large tsp. Dijon mustard
1 tsp. dry oregano
Salt and pepper to taste

Cut peppers into strips. Slice onion into rings. Combine pepper, onion and cheese and set aside.

Combine remaining ingredients in a jar and shake until well-blended. Pour over vegetables and toss. Let stand for about 45 minutes before serving.



Link to Harbord Bakery's website.

The Grapevine

Walter Zagorski played the role of a senator in the North Toronto Players recent production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe*, which was adapted for the Canadian Sesquicentennial. Many folk dancers attended the performances which are always good fun and thoroughly enjoyable.

Nora Brett reports she is improving, slowly but steadily.

More than 60 people gathered at Ralph Thornton Centre on the evening of March 25th to exchange memories of David Yee. Folk dancers, current and former, members of Mensa, and David's brother, Anthony, told stories about David resulting in many remembrances and sometimes laughter. David loved Pogo, children and animals. His passions were math, linguistics, folk arts and food. Anna Todorovich and Fred Slater said that they could enjoy holidays because they knew David would look after their animals and, often, their children. Marie Hori related how he led his Thursday morning class in folk dances and Al Gladstone credited David with unfailing support in teaching classes. Paula and Peter Tsatsanis spoke about helping David get used to his failing eyesight and Adrienne Beecker was credited with giving great help to David after his loss of sight. Kevin Budd and Judith Cohen provided music and Olga Sandolowich and Walter Zagorski co-programmed the dancing. Since David's birthday would have been two days earlier, there was cake to celebrate.

Ev Whittamore.

Evelyn Whittamore died in April at the age of 92. She and her husband, Gib, danced with many groups over the years and since 1984 had been members of Olga Sandolowich's group, The Don Heights Dancers.

Efrim Boritz and Naomi Fromstein were in Melbourne, Australia in March where Efrim was involved in a research project at Monash University. They also visited Auckland, N.Z. and Rarotonga and Aitutaki in the Cook Islands. They attended a church service with choral singing by several Maori groups, as well as a Maori cultural evening.

Riki and Stav Adivi visited their daughter in Armenia in April.

Toronto English Country Dance Assembly held its third "12 Dresses Ball" on April 14th at the Adivi home in King. Forty-two dancers enjoyed the music of Rick Avery and Ben Bolker with Cathy Campbell calling.