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# *Folk Dancer Online*

The Magazine of World Dance and Culture



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# Folk Dancer Online

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**Cover Image:** Rina Singha performing in her concert "Storytellers", celebrating 50 years of kathak dancing.  
Photo: Allen Katz.

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

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[RETURN TO OFDA WEBSITE.](#)

## *International in More than Dance*

by Dorothy Archer

If you missed a holiday abroad this year, you might find this issue some consolation. While people frequently travel within Canada or to the U.S.A., going further requires some effort and so is often postponed for a “better time” – a decision often regretted, but that’s another story. Well, some of our associates have taken the plunge (to sit at an airport for eons!) not least of whom are Murray and Lavinia Forbes.

Indonesia was the destination of the Forbes and Murray has written his usual entertaining saga complete with a wonderful photo of the two of them with a Komodo dragon. It looks far more fierce than the ones I saw when they came to the local zoo; they weren’t nearly so large and they just lay there. Maybe that is what they do but I fancied them showing a bit of action. The article is very long so, reluctantly, it will appear over two issues (and the dragon won’t appear until the February issue – something to look forward to).

Dale Hyde went to England to conduct dance workshops and we believe him when he says he did but he also had some nice side trips. He has included descriptions of them and so, we armchair travellers see a bit of England. Nancy Nies went to Martinique several years ago and gives an account of the dancing there. As usual, she has included links to videos which will have your feet tapping. May Ip writes about dancing in Grey and Bruce Counties in Ontario but included in her article is a most interesting account about her introduction to folk dancing in Hong Kong.

Rina Singha gave her final performance of Kathak dancing this fall. This presentation of the beautiful and mesmerizing style of Indian dance was enjoyed by many members of the folk dance community. At the October café, Adam Kossowski took us to Russia, Ukraine and a place we don’t hear about too often, the Carpathian Mountains. Adam spoke a bit about the areas and the background of the dances which adds to the enjoyment, and then he took us to Greece.

The recipe this month might sound exotic but I cannot assign a culture to it, I can only tell you it is a favourite of Carole Greenberg’s and mine. I will be bringing it to the next potluck and Carole will bring the rice to accompany it.

I hope you have a nice trip reading this issue. Bon voyage!

## VIDEOS WORTH WATCHING

*Did you know that the OFDA website has a “Links” page containing interesting, informative, or amusing links related to dance? If you haven’t checked them out, here’s a video to whet your interest:*

[Jitterbug with the band Odessa](#)

## WEBPAGE WORTH VIEWING

*Also to be found on our links page is [Around the World in 20 dances](#) a Pictorial Folk Dance review*

OFDA website’s Links Page:  
<http://ofda.ca/wp/resources/links/>

## ARTICLES WORTH READING

### [Brain Health & Dance](#)

is a new page that has been added to the OFDA website

It contains links to a number of articles on recent research findings related to the health benefits of dancing, especially to the benefits of dancing to people’s bodies and brains as they age.

Here is an example of what can be found on the Brain Health & Dance page:

[Teen Brains Found In Elderly Dancers Who Participated In 18-Month Age-Reversal Experiment](#)



*.A very Happy Birthday wish to Carl Toushan , and at the same time, many thanks to Carl for his kind donation to OFDA!*



**Erratum** – In the October 2017 issue, article El Dia de los Muertos (Nancy Nies), the Jalisco Costumes photo credit for Paul Gipe was inadvertently left out.

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5. Vlasi Style Opanak (OTH MOD 18)
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## *Vive le Grand Ballet de Martinique!*

by Nancy Nies

In this chilly month of December, how about a virtual visit to the sunny Caribbean island of Martinique? Imagine stepping off your cruise ship in Fort-de-France, and being welcomed by smiling dancers performing the biguine in traditional costume. (See [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_UvR-OTTHBs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UvR-OTTHBs) for a December 2011 video).

As a French teacher on sabbatical in 1989, I arranged to rent a gîte (vacation home) on Martinique for two weeks in April. Thus, Paul and I had enough time to get to know the island a bit. We enjoyed the beautiful beaches, explored the island's mountainous interior, and saw the sights. What stands out in my mind as the highlight of our stay, however, was seeing Le Grand Ballet de Martinique perform.

The dancing was impressive, the varied repertoire including the biguine, the mazurka, the Creole waltz, the tango, and more. My dictionary defines the biguine as "a vigorous popular dance of the islands of St. Lucia and Martinique, that somewhat resembles the rumba." Equally impressive were the many costume changes, each more eye-catching than the last. Brightly-coloured madras cloth from India is an essential element of many of Martinique's traditional costumes and coiffes. A woman's coiffe can be a square of madras tied around her head, or a small hat made of madras.

The Grand Ballet's website (<http://www.grandballetdemartinique.fr/>) provides information in French on the ensemble's past and present, including photos, videos and press coverage. Founded in 1946, the group's mission is to maintain and perpetuate Martinique's traditional music, dances, and costumes. This world-class traditional ensemble stages 900 shows a year, has done 20 four- to six-month tours, has circled the globe five times, and has been called "the Caribbean's most remarkable ensemble."

The dancers of Le Grand Ballet not only greet cruise ships, but also perform regularly at various island hotels. (For another sample, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZsDXP9Suo>) If you visit Martinique, be sure to seek out a performance. You'll spend an exciting evening immersed in the island's colourful traditions, and you won't be disappointed.



*Dancers perform in Martinique in 2006, wearing traditional madras costumes.*

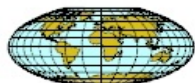
Photo: Frameme, Wikimedia Commons.



[Link to Jim Gold's website.](#)

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### **POLAND June 11-25, 2018**

Led by Richard Schmidt: Kraków, Rzeszów, Zakopane,  
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### **NORWAY/DENMARK/SWEDEN June 12-25, 2018**

Led by Lee Otterholt  
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### **ROMANIA July 1-12, 2018** Led by Lee Otterholt Bucharest, Sibiu, Cluj, Sighetu Marmatiei, Piatra Neamt, Brasov

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### **SCOTLAND September 9-22, 2018** Led by Richard Schmidt Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stirling, Loch Lomond, Loch Ness, Fort William, Mallaig, Isle of Skye, Inverness, Aberdeen, Perth

### **SPAIN October 12-22, 2018**

Led by Jim Gold and Lee Friedman  
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# *An Invitation to Dance in England*

by Dale Hyde

It all began in the summer of 2015 when I attended the Society of International Folk Dance summer school at the University of Wales in Swansea. During that week, I was asked by the director of the course if I would teach an afternoon class of Canadian folk dance. I agreed and on the Thursday afternoon taught the class which was attended by more than half of the participants at the school.

As a result of this class, I was invited by Gill Morell of the Nutbrook (Nottingham) folk dance group to return to England in 2017 to teach workshops to her groups. I agreed. Gill also remembered that I had once mentioned to her about learning Mexican and South American dances so I was asked also to include a few of those dances. I soon realized that with all the couple dances involved it would be a good idea to have a partner who knew the dances so I asked Helga Hyde if she would like to come along on this tour and, luckily, she agreed. A year and a half later, on March 16th, we were on our way. By this time Gill also had arranged for us to teach workshops in other parts of England.

Our first engagement was in Southampton to teach a workshop to the Hursley dance group. We were hosted by the group's leaders, Jean and Ron Wilks. Ron had suggested that when we arrived at Gatwick airport we might be able to change our bus tickets to Southampton if we were early. We then could text him and he would come to the bus depot in Southampton earlier than the original plan. We were able to change our ticket but had only four minutes to race out to the bus before it left. The buses, we were told, all had Wi-Fi, so we weren't too concerned – until we discovered that the Wi-Fi didn't work. Even the Wi-Fi at the Southampton bus terminal was not functioning. So we sat in the unheated terminal, shivering with cold and wet from the rain, for the next hour. Even the public phone was broken.

Finally Ron and Jean showed up and we were on our way to their home to get dry and warm. Ron and I spent the afternoon preparing for the workshop on Saturday. Ron set up his computer system with my music and matching screens that projected the names of the dances on large tablets as I was teaching them and, later, when I reviewed the dances.

The workshop went very well. Helga and I were surprised and pleased to see that four dancers we had met at summer school had driven three and a half hours from London to attend. After the workshop, everyone was invited to Jean and Ron's house for a potluck supper. It was also a good opportunity to visit and get to know other dancers. This was followed by more dancing in a very large room at the front of

the house designed for this purpose – just roll up the carpet and there was a beautiful dance floor. It was interesting to see that the dance repertoire was quite different from ours in Canada. But this difference gave us the opportunity to learn new dances which I was madly notating. Later some of the dance teachers from London helped me to clarify my notes. A great ending to a fun day.

The next day was a chance for us to rest up a bit. In the afternoon Jean and Ron took us to nearby Winchester to do some sightseeing. It was almost the end of my ability to do any more dancing. We had stopped at Jane Austen's last home just a street away from Winchester cathedral. To get some good photos of the home, I had climbed on a stone wall on the opposite side of the street. I could hear Jean and Helga calling out that they were on their way and I called out, "I'll be right there" but forgot that I was standing on the stone wall. As I turned to run to catch up, my first step had me tumbling off the wall. Luckily the dampness from the rain made the ground a little mushy so my knee was only bruised and my pants grass stained.



Photo: Helga Hyde.

*Memorial for 200th anniversary of Jane Austen's death.*

Monday was exchange day when Ron and Jean would drive us to Upton Hall, a national trust site, halfway to Nottingham where we would be met by Gill and her husband, John, who would then take us on to Nottingham. The day was grey when we left Southampton but we had a torrential downpour when we reached Upton Hall. Umbrellas up and a mad dash along the pathway to the house where we settled in for a nice hot lunch. This was followed by a wonderful tour of the house and gardens. The house dates back to 1695. In the 1930s it was purchased by the Bearsted family who remodelled and enlarged it. The family collected many paintings of the Old Masters as well as beautiful ceramics and porcelain. When WWII broke out, there was a fear that these treasures might be destroyed in the bombings. Many artifacts from the National Gallery were being moved to deep mines in Wales and Mr. Bearsted got permission for his huge collection to be stored there also. He then renovated the house further to create many offices and dormitories. He was head of a London bank and had all his employees transferred to Upton House and all business of the bank was then run from this country estate.

Finally, we got ourselves transferred into Gill's car and we were on our way to Nottingham. She and John were to be our hosts for the rest of the trip.



Photos: Dale Hyde.

*Barlow folk dance group, Manchester, in Russian costumes.*

Tuesday morning we were on our way to Manchester to teach a workshop for the Barlow folk dancers. I was surprised to see that there were six teenagers in the group. Later, I enquired of the leader how the group attracted young people. Apparently they had the same problem as many groups with diminishing numbers and members getting older. Their solution to the problem was to run two folk dance classes at the local community centre. One group was for children 8 to 12 years old and the other group was for 13 to 16 years old. After a year in the teen group, those dancers were also invited to dance with the adults for the first half of the evening but had to leave at the break. They also had to maintain attendance in the community teen group. This has worked well for them and the group continues to grow.

Gill knew that I was a ceramist so made a detour to Stoke-on-



*Gladstone Potteries Museum, Stoke-on-Trent.*

Trent, home of famous potteries such as Spode, Wedgwood, Gladstone and Royal Doulton. At one time there had been more than 2,000 bottle ovens (kilns) in the town but now there are only 47. Many of these are now part of the Gladstone Potteries Museum. As we toured through the museum it was interesting to see that the techniques have not changed in over 200 years.



The next morning we left Manchester and headed back to Nottingham but with a stop to visit Little Morton Hall, a wonderfully maintained 1605 Tudor home maintained by the National Trust.

We spent the next day wandering around Nottingham city centre. It had been 55 years since I lived there and so many things have changed. I had hoped to go to the Nottingham lace factory outlets only to find that the area is now a historic site and none of the factories exist anymore. One place that I



*Little Morton Hall.*

Photo: Dale Hyde.

remembered was Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem Inn. It still exists so, of course, we had to go there for lunch and some local cider. This is the oldest inn in England and the Knights Templar would stop here on their way to the Crusades. Built on the rock above the inn is Nottingham Castle which is now a museum. The most well-known character connected to the castle is Robin Hood and we just had to stop for a photo shoot with his statue.

That evening we taught a workshop to the Nutbrook group. This was the host group which initiated the invitation to come to England and teach Canadian folk dance. It was a good warm-up for the group and us as most of this group would be attending the weekend workshop.

We had more free time on Friday so we headed to Derby to visit the Royal Crown Derby porcelain and pottery works. Learning that I also had a ceramic studio in Canada, we were given a private tour of the factory and had the opportunity to tour areas that tourists don't usually see. It was most interesting to see that the production of this fine china was almost identical to what I do in my own studio.



*Helga and Dale with Robin Hood.*

Photo: Gil Morell.



Again, as in Southampton, there were several dancers at the weekend workshop that we had met at summer school in 2015. A very pleasant surprise was to see Anne Leach (who taught at Ontario Folk Dance Camp this past May) walk through the door. She had driven all the way up from London with a few other dance teachers we knew.

Helga and I were quite 'knackered' after the day of teaching but had only a short time to have a delicious potluck supper, a cup of tea and then to start preparing for the evening party. It was more relaxed than I had expected as Gill had arranged for herself, Geoff Weston (from whom we had learned some Manx dances at summer school) and myself to alternate teaching throughout the evening. Again it was great to be able to learn some more dances that I didn't know. I was running short of paper and grabbed a blue envelope to write on. That dance, The Weaver's Jig, is now forever known at one of my seniors' classes as the "blue envelope dance." After helping to clean up we were ready for another cup of tea, then off to bed to be ready for another early day as we had to drive to Sheffield for our final workshop.

Our final day was a visit to another National Trust estate, Kedleston Hall. This estate was owned by the Curzon family. George Curzon was the Viceroy of India at the turn of the 20th century. After his death, the estate passed through other generations of the family. The generation that presently owns it was unable to pay the death taxes on the property when they inherited it so made an arrangement with the National Trust to donate the house and the massive properties in return for the right to live in the left wing of the house rent free in perpetuity and also no longer have to pay taxes on the property. A good arrangement indeed.



*Kedleston Hall.*

Photo: Dale Hyde.

It seemed that the time just flew by. Our hostess, Gill, was always ahead of us in the planning. She did such a wonderful job of organizing that I suggested she might want to become my agent.

The reception Helga and I had from all the groups was wonderful. They were interested not only in the dances but any information we could share about the dances and their origins. The ability of the dancers is of a very high calibre. I think they are so fortunate to have teachers from all over Europe come to England to teach workshops. I think how wonderful it would be to move back to England for a few months each year just to be able to attend all the dance workshops and work with all these wonderful teachers. (I can dream, can't I?)

# *Grey Bruce International Folk Dancers*

by May Ip

My name is Kee May Ip --- everybody calls me May. I started the Grey Bruce International Folk Dancers in 2012. The question I am often asked is, "How did a Chinese immigrant from Hong Kong get involved in international folk dance in Canada?"

I was born and raised in Hong Kong, which has long been described as the melting pot of eastern and western cultures. International folk dance was a compulsory unit in physical education in my senior primary school years and throughout secondary school. I learned my first dance from another country when I was 11 and in grade 5. It was Chestnut Tree from England. After that, international folk dance was an essential part of my life until my mid-adulthood. Then I immigrated to Canada and started a family. Six years ago, after having "hung up my dancing shoes" for almost two decades, I was itching to get back into folk dancing and fortunate enough to find a few others in the community who shared my interest.

Grey Bruce International Folk Dancers are based in Owen Sound, a city with a population of about 20,000. Our weekly indoor drop-in sessions used to be at the Owen Sound Family Y, but are now held in the Parish Hall of St. George's Anglican Church. We meet on Mondays from 10:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The sessions are free to all adult and senior residents of Grey and Bruce Counties as well as visitors. Participants are welcome to join in the dances, or just sit and watch. The indoor sessions are held until the end of June. In July and August, we host weekly outdoor sessions at Harrison Park on Thursdays from 6:30 p.m. until sunset.

The goal of the Grey Bruce International Folk Dancers is to foster appreciation of cultural diversity through folk dance activities. In addition to our year-round weekly sessions, our core group regularly perform in nursing homes. Sometimes members help with my programs



Photos: Murray Smith.

*Performing at the Seasons Nursing Home.*

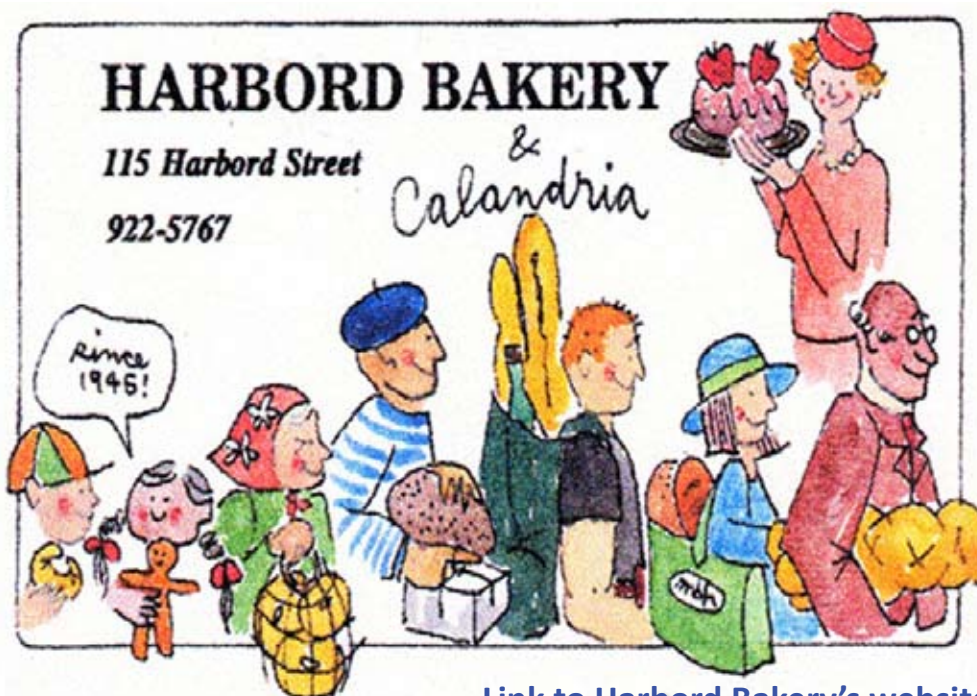


*Canada Day Celebration at Kelso Beach 2016.*

in elementary schools. To date, we have learned dances from Albania, Armenia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, China, Croatia, England, Greece, Hawaii, Hungary, Israel, Macedonia, Mexico, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

How to effectively promote our sessions and other activities has always been a challenge. Our experience is that the best way to bring new people out is through word of mouth. For the public, the best way to find out what Grey Bruce International Folk Dancers are up to is to like and follow our Facebook page. YouTube is another source

and you can see us performing at <https://youtu.be/CPwjaBYnRQs> and <https://youtu.be/b15oMTC-Ya4>



[Link to Harbord Bakery's website.](#)



## *From the Folk Dance Cookbooks* *Curry & Mustard Chicken*



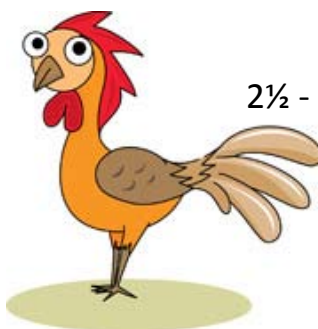
*Submitted by Reva Rossman to Ontario Folk Dancer Cookbooks vol. I*

1/8 cup butter

½ cup honey

¼ cup mustard

1 tsp. curry powder



1 tsp. salt

2½ - 3 lb. of cut up chicken

Heat all the ingredients together (except chicken). Dip each piece of chicken in the mixture and coat. Place in baking pan in a single layer. Pour rest of sauce over all. Bake uncovered at 375 degrees for one hour.



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# *Rina Singha in Her Farewell Performance*

by Dorothy Archer



Rina Singha celebrated 50 years of Kathak dancing in Canada with a three-day performance, *Storytellers*, in Toronto. Finding a word to describe it is a challenge – magical, ethereal, powerful, elegant – all do it justice. Rina is a dancer, a choreographer, and a teacher. She is recognized internationally for her artistry and especially for her interpretation of Bible stories. It was an honour and a pleasure to see her dance for what she says is her adieu. Fortunately, her students, who took part in the performance, will carry on.

Kathak dancing tells a story. It originated in the temples in northern India but when it was adopted by the courts of the Moghuls it became more sophisticated and secular. With graceful hand movements and rhythmic stamping, details and emotions are passed to the audience. The *Story of Creation* and excerpts from *Veshu Kathak: the Story of Jesus* were choreographed by Rina and presented by dancers trained by her. *Aamad + Dadra* also was choreographed by Rina and danced, solo, by her. It is a heart-rendering story of a woman's love forsaken. Here we could appreciate the finesse and expertise of this extraordinary performer.

Danny Grossman, a long time friend of Rina's, was special guest for the performance. He choreographed *Beguiled*, a moving piece about abandoned women who turn to each other for comfort. It was danced by members of his dance group to ballads sung by Nina Simone.

The final number was a powerful story about a politician who leads his people to war, starvation and desolation. This piece was choreographed by Rina and Danny. The politician was played by Danny and the dancers were from Rina's group.

Rina will continue to teach and, no doubt, will be called on for consultation on aspects of Kathak dancing. These performances were a brilliant farewell and closure to her professional dancing in Canada.



*Rina makes a cameo appearance in a story from the Bible.*

Photo: Allen Katz.

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# *OFDA Café featuring Adam Kossowski*

by Dorothy Archer

The first café of the fall season began as usual with dancing and then a potluck supper. The cooks outdid themselves, with seven salads, smoked salmon, chicken, chili con carne, dolmades, and more. The dessert table was dominated by pumpkin pie.

When he lived in the U.K., Adam Kossowski, the guest teacher, performed with a Polish folk dance group. Since coming to Canada, he has danced with the Hamilton International Folk Dancers and leads the summer dancing outdoors. He teaches dancing in Hamilton, Kitchener and Brantford and has presented workshops in Hamilton, Ottawa, and Rochester.

The first dance Adam taught was a women's dance from Russia, Zimushka, meaning "little winter". We then moved to the Carpathian Mountains of Eastern Europe and learnt the upbeat Karcmaroscka. Adam explained there were many ethnic minority groups living in this region in the 1890s. The choreographer

learnt the dance from his father who in turn learnt it from his father. He found it difficult to determine the actual source of the dance, so he took the stance of saying it – and other similar dances – were "shared" between the various ethnic groups in the region. No music was known for it. After much research, the choreographer found a band in Poland, Buraky, who played music that was reminiscent of the style and feeling his father gave to him in his teaching, while being true to the village roots. The next dance taught was Circle Hopak, a vigorous Ukrainian dance choreographed for recreational groups. It was danced to a song popular in the rural areas of Ukraine. Although outside the theme of the evening, Adam finished with a Greek dance, Hassapico Mozart, with music featuring the award-winning Greek singer, Dimitra Galani. This dance has been a top favourite with the Hamilton International Folk Dance Club since Adam introduced it in 2016.

Thank you, Adam, for bringing us these interesting and enjoyable dances with such great music. You made the evening special.

Photos: Bev Sidney.



# *The Rainy Season in Indonesia – Stories Good and Bad, Part I*

by Murray Forbes

**Itinerary:** Singapore (2 nights), Java- Jogjakarta (5 nights), Bali – Seminyak and Ubud (4 nights), Lombok – Kuta and Senggigi (10 nights), Flores – Labuan Bajo (3 nights), Bali – Undisan village near Bangli (3 nights), Singapore (1 night)



Photos: Murray/Lavinia Forbes.

*Murray Forbes.*

Until the recent surge of Islamic fundamentalism, Indonesia had been one of those countries where nearly all the major religions had passed through and been absorbed and merged into the traditional Animism. Even now Hinduism is very evident on Bali and Christianity on Flores. Encouraged by this my wife, Lavinia, and I, as born again followers of Ra (the sun god) directed this year's annual warmth pilgrimage to Indonesia.

Now it is not that easy to practice Ra-ism with fully amplified calls to prayer five times a day starting at 4:00 a.m. and lasting up to two hours, but by 7:00 a.m. the sun always seems to have risen even when well-masked by rainy season and the end of the monsoon. Both hotels where we stayed in Lombok managed to be within ear splitting distance from the microphones and I think I have learnt the tunes but my wife reckons that as a Jew I am not qualified to apply for the job.

Singapore is one of those amazing anomalies in South East Asia. It is clean, remarkably safe, friendly, well-organized, orderly and incredibly easy to get about in. It also has most impressive and creative modern architecture. Nearly everything works as it is meant to but we managed to find the one exception. Arriving after our grueling flights, including a twelve-and-a-half-hour hop from Paris to Singapore, we had no difficulty following the clear signs to the MRT rail system. The ticket office had a large sign up assuring the public that it did not sell one-trip tickets which had to be bought from a machine. There within view were three such machines. The only problem was that two of them were not functioning and the third only took coins (which, having just arrived, one is guaranteed not to have). We did eventually manage to persuade the ticket office to give us some coins but it was such an unusual event that I had to share it with you.

Singapore is almost a complete mystery. It ought really to have been located amongst the German spa towns or in the Austrian Alps. However, we think that we may have unraveled the mystery to a certain extent. While wandering along the coastal park from Changi Village we saw this warning sign, a sort of tradition in Changi. Evidently persuasion works.





*Taking protected places seriously.*

I had found what in Singapore passes for a cheap hotel down by the Singapore River. We immediately got crushed into Chinatown, ten minutes walk up the road, during the New Year Festival of the Year of the Kentucky Fried Chicken. We and Colonel Sanders joined the celebrations without even spotting a pickpocket. However, regulating breathing to four seconds in and out seemed to me discriminatory against yogis but the authorities don't seem to care.



*Larger than life dragonflies.*

Saunas are altogether unnecessary there in February. We staggered down both sides of the river and around the straits and into the fantastic Gardens by the Bay. Here in addition to the beautiful flora are man-made giant trees and manicured Chinese Gardens, a genetically mutated dragonfly sculpture about 1000 times larger than life and, yes, we did queue for tickets to walk the skywalk between man-made

trees. In between bouts of rain the sun oozed through the various shades of grey to maintain temperatures at just off boiling point. We discovered that although street food is cheap, good and safe it is not always easy to tell the difference between one of these joints and a regular restaurant. Perhaps the telltale sign is no one intercepting you to



*Skywalk between man-made trees.*

encourage you to eat in their establishment. In what we believed to be a street food restaurant on the edge of the river, we had one of the best and most certainly the most expensive Indian meal we have ever eaten. There is a lot of money in Singapore.

In contrast Jogjakarta in Indonesia was not clean, nor orderly, nor particularly safe. In fact we spent much of the Indonesian trip carrying out an in-depth study of road congestion and the plague of the three million motor scooters. We were attending a conference in a massive hotel/conference center in Mataram City just on the edge of Jogjakarta. This impressive and comfortable building is located right in the center of nowhere but a short taxi ride takes one into the Sultan's palace and the downtown chaos. One highlight came unexpectedly when, exhausted and hot and frustrated as yet another bank machine refused to recognize

our Canadian Access card, we saw a hotel set back from the road chaos at about lunchtime. The Hotel Garuda turned out to be one of those massive old local hotels of a bygone era. We were the only people in the enormous dining room when, at the opposite side of the cavernous grand central hall, a three person gamelan group started to play and sing in the background. The food was pretty awful but the ambiance made up for it.



*Gamelan Group entertaining in the Hotel Garuda.*

and on the opening night, in addition to the cutting of the yellow rice pyramid (an acquired taste), there was a full- sized gamelan orchestra banging away at gongs and drums and gambangs (sort of bamboo xylophones). Then the women dressed in their colourful traditional costumes with highly painted faces did their incredible sinuous dances in which they manage to bend their hands in unbelievable angles, shift their necks Indian style and roll their eyes in no doubt symbolic ways. It was most enjoyable. Later a group of highly decorated men danced in a manner that was meant to be ferocious but without machine guns it lacked a bit in terror. To add to the lack of terror, they kept tucking their heads down to one side like a duck going to sleep and then flicking them back with a hideous expression. Still it was a fascinating spectacle and one had to admire their balance as they did something like a cross between yoga and martial arts balancing on one or other leg without the slightest waver.

There were over a thousand participants at this conference





*Lavinia at the Buddhist temple in Borobudur.  
(Students in background)*

The day we chose to go to Borobudur, an enormous Buddhist temple built in the 9th century, every school child in highly populated Java was on a similar quest. It was a bit like visiting a subway station in downtown Manhattan during the rush hour. In blistering heat we tried hard to appreciate this wonder of construction as children swarmed around us. To add to the experience, for which foreigners pay ten times the local entrance fee (a massive \$60), the children had been assigned to waylay foreigners to practice their English. Every two minutes a group of them would sidle up to see if we were busy which regrettably we always were. Eventually, while hiding out on a bench behind the temple in the shade of a banyan tree, but not far enough away from the madding crowd, I really could no longer pretend to be horribly occupied and to speed the

encounter I awarded 100 percent marks to the conversation largely because I had no idea what the young girl was saying. Grade inflation seemed to be the most efficient passage to peace and tranquility. The ultimate fulfillment from the outing came, however, when our taxi tried to get us back to the hotel. It seems that there was some carnival going on in Jogja into which every vehicle that could be made to move was pouring. It would most certainly have been quicker to walk but much more dangerous.

One of the most disagreeable features of traveling in South East Asia for me is the lack of a fixed price for anything. If one finds no joy in haggling and has no notion what a reasonable price might be in any event, it becomes terribly tiresome. Not that I mind paying more for being a foreigner but there is no proportion behind the inscrutable smiles. Once one has been fleeced the ante goes up and one is fleeced more next time and so on.

Bali must have been magnificent forty years ago but Seminyak, at any rate, is now party centre for Australian rowdies and the fleecing capital of Indonesia. Luckily we were in a spacious and nicely landscaped hotel which was probably the safest place to be. Wandering through Seminyak and then along the litter-cluttered beach to Kuta we were incessantly

hassled by itinerant vendors especially taxi drivers all of whom wanted to know where we came from and what our names were. Later on our way back to Singapore, we had an early flight and so stayed in Kuta for the night. The beach further up towards the airport is much cleaner although swimming in it would be out of the question. We got to watch the sunset and a party of exceptionally rude young Chinese tourists yelling at the waiters every two minutes, from a hotel by the water's edge.

Ubud is inland, away from party land, but also extremely discovered. I had chosen a small hotel on the edge of town which was charming and relatively quiet but also a rather long walk in the grueling heat from the well-patronized attractions. Being on the tourist circuit, the street hassling was nearly as intense as in Seminyak. We joined a large number of fellow tourists in the attractive monkey forest. Basically, they bribe monkeys to hang out there with gifts of food and promises of free glasses and handbags from foreigners. Notwithstanding all this, the forest is set around a spectacular gully with a small river at the bottom and some decaying temples so it was, on balance, an enjoyable outing.

It is hard to relate to the Hindu temples without doing an awful lot of research into the myriad gods and although some of these temples were spectacular a little goes a long way. However, for some unknown reason, the water palace was a bit of a sanctuary and we spent some time here recuperating from acute "throng-itis." On the way out, however, we were nabbed by a Balinese dance ticket salesman. That evening, in extremely dubious weather, we were unable to find a taxi. We discovered later they are all unlicensed, and so unmarked, and one has to either order them or bend to the roadside offers. We wanted to get good seats on a first come first served basis and rushed across the broken sidewalks avoiding the open manholes and dodging the descent of the scooters with great motivation. Successfully we got the last front row seats facing the open stage set in the middle of the palace with half-an-hour until gong-off. Then the stifling weather started rumbling and flashing, progressing into drizzle and then steady rain and two minutes into the opening gong beats there was a mad rush for cover as the skies opened



*Young Balinese Dancers.*



and torrents poured upon us. Totally anointed, having carried umbrellas around all day except this evening, we found ourselves up at the top of a nearby building with a fine concrete floor to squat on and a reduced show took place. The musicians and all the dancers were women and some of the dancers were very young. It was a delightful performance notwithstanding the acute discomfort of watching it. The youngsters were incredibly talented and must have put in many hours of practice. This was definitely another highlight.

Our hotel in Kuta on Lombok was a bit out of the centre and turned out to be an international surfer hangout. We have not become surfers in our dotage and, shall we say, did not blend in. Pretty though the place was, the weather was terrible and the grounds permanently flooded from the frequent torrential downpours. It was also right next door to the loudest of the mosques and in the centre of a circle of them so the competing calls to prayer were overwhelming. Less tourist-developed though Kuta is, this did not mean less hassling but it did mean that the beaches were more littered. Although we tried, we did not really take to the place.

Halfway through our stay we thought that we would visit the local market. This was located, as it turns out, in a muddy area only accessible by traversing an enormous muddy puddle. Undeterred, we both visited a local shop to buy flip-flops and waded through the filth to what turned out to be a most uninteresting market. We had in mind to then walk up the steep hill overlooking the bay to a restaurant with an amazing view. As luck would have it, there was a hotel with a restaurant close to the market where we went for a drink and to wash off our feet. The locally run place was delightful with a lovely garden and a few rooms around a swimming pool all with a certain peacefulness that was definitely lacking where we were staying. That evening I negotiated my way out of the hotel we were in and into this new one and hired a driver to move us and then take us on a day trip to some waterfalls in the mountainous interior. We loved our new hotel where just about nothing worked as designed. The impressive looking bathtub for instance had been installed incorrectly and the fiberglass had cracked so that the water would not stay in it. We also enjoyed being right in the centre from where we could get to restaurants without a life-threatening walk in the dark against oncoming traffic. Peaceful, however, did not mean excessively quiet and we enjoyed, increasingly towards the Nyale festival, the piercing shriek of unmuffled scooters and, with slightly less volume, the amplified call to prayer. In addition to the Imam's passionate call, the local mosque had managed to persuade some women to make their way out of deep cover sufficiently to croon down the microphone very audibly to the naked ear.

Our walk up to the restaurant proved to be a bit of an adventure. In Indonesia no one walks. Surfers all rent motor scooters at \$6 a day

and join the scooter terrorism. Halfway up the steepest bit with no shade and no verge an enormous motorcade descended on us. We found out later that someone important was in town and for someone important there has to be an important number of hangers-on. When we finally got to the restaurant, we arrived before the other tourists and got beanbags right at the front of the covered terrace with a totally magnificent view. Then partway through our drink there was a loud noise resembling a landslide or strong wind and a mad stampede by the locals for the concrete interior of the restaurant which we blindly followed. It was apparently an earthquake and they rushed for safety in fear of the roof collapsing on the terrace.

We liked our driver and he obviously liked us, probably because he exploited us to the maximum. We didn't really mind. He did not own the vehicle but was a small time farmer minding three cows and was trying to pay for his daughter's high school education (10 million rupees – about \$1,000). I took care that he didn't get it all from us. As a result we stayed together for our entire stay on Lombok and we have to say in exchange for exploitation he did look after our interests and drove safely. In fact, in marked contrast to India the driving, while equally lacking in order and full of the unexpected, was calmer and more courteous – and slower.

Our outing to the waterfalls in the Taman Nasional Gunung Rinjani Park was another of the highlights of the trip. Our driver insisted on getting us there early so we were able to enjoy these magnificent falls in tranquility. In fact it was our day really. With the full moon passing, the weather improved immeasurably. We discovered that the true colour of sky is not really grey but bluish. Cut into the sheer rock gullies in deep jungle, the entrance fee had paid for steps to be carved and the paths well-cleared

of vegetation and stray poisonous snakes. Our young guide was a very amiable young man who had that great mark of pleasantness of speaking comprehensible English. The first set of falls was quite close to the ticket office but we wandered on to a second set which was even more spectacular but also busier. We had not realized that one could swim in the pools under the falls so did not come



*Waterfalls at Taman Nasional Gunung Rinjani Park.*

prepared for this but the walk was very enjoyable and we got to see a family of grey monkeys making short shrift of a banana tree. On the return, as Lavinia's knee was still not repaired, we diverted along a small dirt road encountering the odd scooter but also enabling us to see the local cultivation. This was particularly interesting to me as much of what was grown was the same as where I spent my childhood in the mountains of Jamaica – a significantly long time ago: coffee trees and both types of cocoa tree, etc. Our guide, no doubt the son of a crofter, took a great interest in pointing things out to us. Later our driver dragged us into someone's croft to yank out a peanut shrub revealing peanuts clinging to the roots. The things one learns. I thought that they grew in cellophane packages with salt sprinkled on them.

On the way back, I suppose to justify the amount we paid for our ride, we were deposited with coach loads of fellow victims at a hard-sell location for hand woven batik sarongs complete with women attached to looms. It is very skilled work and traditionally a young girl would spend months weaving the sarong for her husband-to-be, but such is the progress of our times, she now weaves them for the highest bidder.

Luckily, having hired wheels, we were able to escape the piranhas with some flesh intact and were then deposited at a "traditional village". This was a rather sad sight really. In order to survive, the people of the village, which is still a living place, invite tourists to come and see the extremely primitive facilities of this way of life. It was not an attractive tourist attraction which probably explains why there were no tourists other than ourselves. The young guide spoke good English and we got to see the dung hardened (and smelling) floors and the thatched roofs and attractive rice storage huts on stilts. On our way out we passed some elderly gentlemen practicing on gamelan instruments and as we were marginally more interested in this than the wonders of cow dung, they played a bit for us.

*To be continued...*

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## *The Grapevine*

Marylyn Peringer visited Iceland in September. Dale Hyde also travelled in September and October and visited several places in Europe, including cruises on the Rhine and Danube Rivers. Peter and Paula Tsatsanis cruised on the Rhine in September and visited Paris, Amsterdam and Bruges.



*Carl Toushan.*

Hamilton folk dancers set Friday, November 24th to celebrate Carl Toushan's 90th birthday. Carl has been dancing in some fashion or other for 74 years.

Kalina (Lina) Serlin is back dancing after a hip replacement operation. And Sandy Starkman is back at the helm for Wednesday night classes at Prosserman JCC.

Joe Graziosi was in town in mid-November and gave two workshops, one in Toronto at the Wednesday night class at the Prosserman JCC and the other with the Hamilton International Folk Dancers. Both were well-attended and thoroughly enjoyed.

Nora Brett died October 30th. She taught school in Toronto and often brought Mariposa in the Schools to the classroom to teach folk dancing. Upon retirement, she divided her time between an apartment in Toronto and the family home in Barrie. Nora was popular for her wonderful sense of humour and her many stories. She was a very active person: learning to horseback ride, learning to surfboard, performing as a caring clown, acting, writing plays, volunteering with CARD (The Community Association for Riders with Disabilities), Scottish dancing and, of course, folk dancing. She danced at the University Settlement and then with the Don Heights Folk Dancers. And, always, she had a dog as her companion.



*Photo: Allen Katz.*

*Nora Brett at. Cecille Ratney's 95th Birthday Party in 2011.*



### *Celebrate on New Year's Eve*

Dance Party with Potluck Supper at the home of  
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