

GRAPEVINE



Volume 13 Number 5, October 2001

Grapevine is the newsletter of the Perth International Folk Dance Group. The Group meets Monday evenings at **St Margarets Church Hall in Nedlands (Cnr Tyrell and Elizabeth)**. The evenings begin at 7:00pm with a 90 minute dance lesson, followed by general dancing until late. For further information please call John ((08) 9444 4736) or Martin (9445 2072)

We are now deep into our 25th year and have enjoyed many celebrations. Hopefully you have been to and survived these special events. I also hope that you are revved up to the final big event of the year. The arrival of Tineke van Geel for her Armenian workshops over the week-end 27 – 28 October. An event not to be missed. **Hope to see you there!**

Tineke will be visiting Canberra and Sydney before flying to Perth, so hopefully she will be relaxed, over any jet-lag and in a good Aussie frame of mind when she arrives in Perth. She has not visited Australia before so come and say 'hello' and help her over any culture shock.

Generally I feel that our Jubilee year celebrations have gone well. Following on from our 'old dances revisited' theme earlier in the year the Monday night teaching has also focussed on some older dances with Saeynu, Hora de la Adunati, and Floricica being taught by Eve in the last couple of months.

In this issue we focus on some traveller's tales. From Gisela Gmeinder who chased the Victorian snow in the winter, from Laurel de Vietri, who sent us another dispatch from France, and from Palenque Blair who attended the Yves Moreau workshops and later attended a Folk Dance Teacher training workshop in Canberra. On behalf of the Group I would like to thank Palenque for her effort here, even if it may mean that we get more exercise as a result of the more focused teaching!!

Talking of travellers we heard from Pam Massey recently. She emailed us from the Cook Islands in the Pacific. We had been getting long updates on her travels headed Chapter 1, Chapter 2 etc. Apparently Chapter 3 got lost in the ether and her last email was a sorry ten-liner talking of paradise! We missed out on some good reading but really holidays should be about enjoying yourself not being hunched over a keyboard!

Martin Williams

President

The Folk Dance Australia – Folkdance Teacher Training Course

by Palenque Blair

Having been in Canberra exactly one month earlier at the Yves Moreau workshops, I headed off to Canberra again in July for a seven day teacher training course that was supposed to make me a brilliant and confident teacher of International Folkdance! The course was originally modelled on the design of a similar course taught in Holland to invited participants, who train for two years on a part-time basis. The demand being less in Australia, the course is open to all who care to participate (and can take the time and money to get to Canberra!). On arrival in misty, overcast Canberra – which it stayed all week – my hosts Michaela and Michael very kindly met me at the airport. I had one day free – in which I saw some of the National Park surrounding Canberra and walked along muddy tracks in Eucalypt woodland with smatterings of snow. The animal prints in the several-day-old fallen snow were the most exotic! We even managed to take a snowball home on the windscreen for Michaela's kids Edward and Harriet.

Next day the course began. I met the participants: Mary, tango dancer Suzanne and Michaela (all from Canberra), Krista from Hobart, Jeanette and Fiona from New South Wales. Also present was Fiona's husband Paul and of course the teachers. Course coordinator was Lesley Rose – a Canberra resident, and member of Folk Dance Canberra and Folk Dance Australia. She was supported by Christine and Jim Battison – a long-serving folkdance couple and founders of Folk Dance Canberra. Christine had run previous teacher training courses since the reins had been handed over from André Van de Plas, but her main role for our course was to organise morning and afternoon tea everyday. Christine and Lesley had both recently returned from Romania and Holland where they had participated in dance workshops, experienced ethnic cultures and learnt many dances. During the week we heard much about the experience – including watching some video and photos at an evening at Christine's house.

The course itself involved dancing every day, and theory (approximately half and half I guess). Specialist teachers were brought in for many of the lessons – including music theory, theory of learning, lesson preparation etc. Dance and music analysis were taught by Jim Battison whose career was electrical systems analysis and hobby dance analysis and notation, particularly using a notation system known as Romanotation (and not surprisingly sourced from Romania and particularly adapted for notating Romanian dances!). We enjoyed ourselves, and the collection of challenging dances presented to us, although confidence and smiles certainly melted when the video recorder came out.

Each of the students was given the opportunity to teach to a group of 15-30 Folk Dance Canberra “Guinea Pigs” twice during the week. The group being generally on the over 50 side, we all learnt the simple dances taught by each student teacher. The most challenging dance to my mind being a Bulgarian dance taught with a latin hip swing and rhythm, although probably most challenging for the “guinea pigs” was the “Basic 8 Tango”. One innovation that was new to me involved a couple of easy dances taught by Krista (of Finnish extraction I believe, or was it Norwegian?) that she had created herself. One called “Kiss of the Ancients” had an environmental story to it and was apparently created for performance at a protest event!

Mid-week, to increase my folkdance experience in Canberra, Michaela, Edward, Mary and I went to the Canberra International Folk Dance Association (CIFDA) dance evening. The group was very small, but friendly, with several grand-kids along with the attendees, it being school holidays. (Oh, and it cost \$8!). The group organised itself by a formal roster for members as teachers, DJ, tea and supper organiser and hall-openers, which didn’t leave more than that many again to relax! I do think that PIFDG has got the best Folkdance group in the country, although maybe FDC’s hall has something to be said for its size and airconditioning!

Well, apart from major doses of colds going around the group (of which I was unfortunately the first and hardest-hit casualty, coming down with it after one day in Canberra! – so much for holiday leave!). The symptoms were partly soothed by Paul’s efforts consisting of plying me with endless lemon-honey drinks – which I greatly appreciated. An interesting and not always appreciated aspect of Paul’s presence, is that he became the handyman for the week, and spent at least half the week up ladders

around the room, repainting the hall (phooee!). I’m not quite sure what was wrong with the original colour, although it certainly wasn’t as bright as our kindy-themed hall.

The week ended with a party on the Saturday night when Mary’s husband Nick brought his band who were practicing their Macedonian music (their favourite!). We did a lot of dancing, including several of those taught by students during the week and half a dozen to live music. I lead An Dro to the band’s music. More biscuits and cakes later and the group thinned out. Finally Jim Battison (always dancing in his opanke shoes) put on as many energetic (and mostly unknown Balkan) dances as he could think of to try and wear me out – which really it didn’t take much, particularly as I had a lovely 6am flight to catch to Melbourne the next morning!

Article removed+

The completion of a work contract and the looming threat of loosing frequent flyer points due to their expiry led to a couple of weeks “over east” recently. In addition, after many years of living in WA, I finally wanted to see the “Australian Alps” and “Australian Snow” since I was fairly familiar with the Austrian variety. And indeed there was plenty of it to be found in the Perisher Blue/Guthega (NSW) and Mt. Hotham/Falls Creek (Vic) where I quickly got over the strange look of snowgums (instead of fir/pinetrees) and enjoyed 3 days to their full lengths on skis. It left me wanting more but that had to be enough for this season.

Passing through Melbourne/Canberra/Sydney gave me an opportunity to visit a Folk dance Group in each place.

The Melbourne Group met in the Suburb of Box Hill in a very small building, used for teaching ballet and other dance forms, situated on a wide median strip of a highway – and unfortunately often being mistaken for conveniences from a distance by passers by! The female group was small and friendly, mainly drawing from a repertoire of dances from André’s workshops.

Next was Canberra where Michaela Hill introduced me to the Monday class not far from her house (nothing is really very far in Canberra – especially in comparison to Melbourne, or worse, Sydney!!) The Group was still alive with dances that Yves Moreau had taught just recently, and again was very welcoming and mixed, with two men participating.

Photo of the ‘Reindeers’, aka Ray and Deidre Kidd, in their native habitat!





Finally off to Sydney and there the theme was definitely Bulgarian!! No wonder considering that the leader Chris Wild and two other participants that night, Jo and Bridget, had been part of our group tour to Bulgaria with Belcho Stanev in 1997. Ray and Deirdre Kidd also joined the group for part of the night. We all remember their talented poetry and rhyme presented in Bulgaria as part of our farewell “concert”. They kindly hosted me while I was in Sydney and they send their regards to our Perth Group which they visited about this time last year, including a trip to the local Araluen Folk Festival. Deidre is very interested in joining a group from Australia (organised by Christine Battison from Canberra) for a folk seminar in Romania next year. Perhaps this may also attract participants from Perth!

All Groups that I visited graciously accepted me as a guest and in this connection made me feel more at home in all the places. Yet it was good to be “home” again too and recognising the strength of numbers and enthusiasm of our own Group in Perth. And yes it is just 15 minutes ‘up the road’ without incurring bridge tolls, missing the last bus, greedy parking meters and other small inconveniences.

Thank you to all the Groups, Michaela, Ray and Deirdre and John Whaite who provided some initial contacts.

Notice of AGM

The Group's Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday 26 November at St Margaret's Hall, starting at 8:30 after teaching. Members are invited to come along and vote for the 2002 Committee.

Recent Monday Night Teachings

Sylvrianos Syrto	Greece
Chaj Zibede	Albania
Varnenski Predsvatben	Bulgaria
Vidinsko Horo	Bulgaria
An Dro Retourne	Brittany
Saeynu	Israel
Hora pe Bataie	Romania
Dospatsko Horo	Bulgaria
Krki Krici Ticek	Croatia
Ijswals	Holland
Hora De la Adunatii	Romania
Moj Dragane	Croatia
Nigun Shel Yossi	Israel
Setnja	Bulgaria
Horlepiep Hopsa	Holland
Gunnega	Armenia

Two more photos from our collection

Pam and Martin Williams after the last Dance Week performance:



and at the Ethiopian Restaurant after the 25th party

