

GRAPEVINE



Volume 9, Number 1, March 98

Grapevine is the newsletter of the Perth International Folk Dance Group. The Group meets Monday evenings at the Wembley Scout Hall in Jersey St., Jolimont. The evening begins 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 Joy ((08) 9386 7438)

In this issue you will find

- A flyer for the 1998 Beginners' Course
- A list of dances taught this year, with an invitation to come and join us!
- Some ideas on a Web page for the Group
- Messages from Gisela and from Pam Massey written after they returned from their 1997 trips.
- More on John's European trip of last year
- A new name for the Group and
- News of a Perth visit by Fiona Murdoch in September for some week-end workshops

We're still here; Where are you?!

Last year our Monday night attendances suffered somewhat, with so many of our members off travelling, mostly overseas. I am pleased to advise that recent Monday attendances have picked up very well. Numbers have been good and the atmosphere generally has been excellent. We have some new members and membership is up.

We are still here on a Monday night, same time, same place! So if you have been suffering withdrawal symptoms from dancing please come along and renew the acquaintance, we'd like to see you, and we know you'll enjoy it!!.

Recent Dances

Our thanks to Eve for teaching during January and February. Eve's dances have included the following, maybe there are some of your favourites in the list.

Delilo	Turkey
Trava Moya Trava	Russia
Dobrujanska Pandela	Bulgaria
Bül Bül Oy	Turkey
Garoon	Turkey
CitCit	Turkey
Hora Spoitorilor	Romania
Tropnalo Oro	Macedonia

A New Name

I am sure that you've heard it all before but the Group is contemplating a name change!! On page 4 we explore some of the issues and discuss the approach being taken.

Surfing or Dancing!?

The Group, whatever its name is, is considering its options for a Web page. A Web presence will allow us to promote ourselves, provide a calendar of events and profiles of our teachers, document dances, publish *Grapevine*, and a whole lot more. A number of Dance Groups around the world already have their own Home Page and they contain some interesting material. They are definitely more than a gimmick, so a PIFDG Web page is a possibility.

The problem is that to register a Web page of its own would cost the Group too much, so one possibility is to 'piggyback' onto an existing account. If you know a company, a Group or an individual that has a Web page that we could piggyback onto then please let us know. A suitable group might be a Uni, or a college, or one of the other Groups on the local dance or music scene that already has a Web page. Let us know if you have any contacts or ideas.

Call me on 9326 6077 at work or e-mail me at martin.williams@wpcorp.com.au

Memberships now due

Just a reminder that memberships are now due. We've put up a list on the notice board at the Hall of this year's members – check it out, or check out your cheque book stubs and if you haven't joined this year please see Peter Fallon our Treasurer.

As we reported last time the annual membership fees for 1998 are:

General membership	\$20
Concession:	\$14

Monday night attendance is now set at \$4 for Members and \$6 for Non-members.

Martin Williams, President of PIFDG

Greetings from Gisela

It's good to be back and especially to catch up again with the Bulgarian fellow travellers!

Whilst in Germany I joined a group in my home town meeting weekly to do predominantly German couples dances. They could afford to as they were well matched agewise and more importantly in their male-female ratio – in fact on a couple of occasions the men outnumbered the women!

It was a pleasant surprise to discover that there is much folk dancing activity over there – always has been, I just did not 'see' it before.

The group I attended went from 8 – 10:30pm. Everybody was encouraged to be there from the start and the evening ended with a final quiet circle dance together. This gave a sense of a well rounded gentle conclusion which I liked. This is something that our group might be interested to do. I brought the music – and the steps – of the last dance used while I was there. I am happy to show it if there is interest – I hope my notes mean something to me!

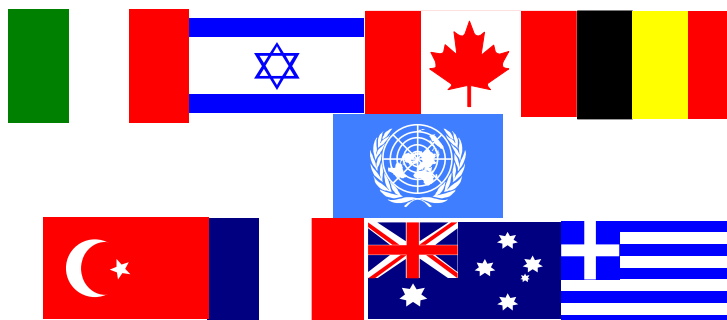
I see that the name of our Group is up for discussion again. I remember submitting quite a list of suggestions a couple of years ago – don't remember them though!! A couple of my new suggestions:

DIP – Dance International Perth

PID – Perth International Dancers

By simply dropping "Group" and "Folk" from our current name the term would adequately describe what we do and where we mainly do it; Perth that is. It still links us to the name that we previously carried, so those who knew us before can still recognise it. It also provides us with a simple snappy acronym.

As I said, it is good to be back and I am looking forward to dancing and rejoining the Performance Group at Fairbridge.



Massey Me-anderings

Last July I went to folk festival in England, in the small country town of Wimborne in Dorset. The weather was absolutely perfect – blue sky and warm to hot. I thought I'd got myself a bargain buying someone's second hand ticket for about £20, but there was so much happening in the streets I really needn't have spent a penny!!

Around every corner was a morris dancing troupe jingling their bells, and the 'Cornmarket' was the official spot for non-stop morris all weekend. They came from all over England, so there were various different traditions such as Cotswold and North West and they were almost all very good, colourful, energetic and entertaining.. One side had a band that outnumbered the dancers!! (Actually, I can remember one occasion when the Maids did too). Live vibrant music certainly helps the attraction.

A stage was set at the bottom of a pub garden, where Appalachian clog dancing displays by various groups happened all weekend. This too was vibrant and very popular.

I went to a Cajun dance workshop. I was curious. I know of Cajun music but I didn't realise that there was a particular style of dance to go with it. A slick couple demonstrated the dancing and made it look fun, then I got coupled with the biggest, fattest, tallest, sweatiest man at the festival!! He huffed and puffed over my head as I gazed into his navel. He had no feel for the music or rhythm in his feet, so all in all my Cajun experience was not very memorable!!

I was very excited to find that Chris While and Julie Matthews, who were such a big hit at the last Nannup festival, were on a concert spot here. Billed as the Chris While Trio, with a guy on guitar, they played some songs that Chris sang at Nannup, but not the songs that Julie led. They were the loudest act of the evening (a bit too loud), and they were not appreciated. I couldn't believe the difference in atmosphere! All the other acts were traditional and that's what the audience seemed to feel more comfortable with. When I mentioned to someone about the lack of multi-cultural content, he simply said "It's an English Folk Festival" RIGHT!!

The above article was received from Pam Massey on her trip to the UK in 1997

European Travels ... Part 2 John Whaite

In the December Grapevine we featured the first part of John's articles on his 1997 trip across Europe. Following his French exploits we now pick up the story in Catalonia

Festas Major (Major Festivals) in Catalonia, June to August, \$0 (free).

Catalonia is in the north-east of Spain, and during summer, each village, town and suburb has 3 to 5 days of festa major. I believe that this is common throughout Spain, but I only have firsthand experience of the Catalan festas.

A typical festa major has many activities: the kids eat melted chocolate and play in a mess of soapsuds made by the local fire engine, in the evening there is a fun fair, on one or two nights there is a dance, and on Sunday morning the town dances the Sardana (the Catalan national dance). Often there is a competition - cards or dominos, painting, photos, writing, house decorating or fancy dress.

The dance is usually held in the Plasa Major (Main Square). The kids finish playing at the fun fair at about midnight, and the bands play from then until about 5am. Most of the tunes are English language hits from the 60 and 70s, and most of the dances are simple couple dances (waltz and pasodoble), and I was delighted to see old couples (in their 70s) dancing at 4am.

That's the basic festa mayor, but there are many variations. One of the most famous is La Patum at Berga in June, where the plasa mayor is filled with fireworks - spectacular and, I'm told, quite frightening. These are three of the more unusual festas mayor that I saw:

Traditionarius at Pobla de Segur, 4-6 June

Traditionarius is an organisation that promotes traditional Catalan dance and music, so this is the festival for the folk dancers. As well as the late night dances on two nights, there were dances and traditional music concerts during the day, and on the Saturday evening there was a parade with a band, stiltwalkers with fireworks, and a crowd of hundreds crammed in the village backstreets.

This festival has a following of folk dancers, so the dancing is more varied, skilful and enthused. Also, the majority of Catalan folk dancers are aged 18-35, so the crowd is pretty energetic.

Trobada amb els Acordionistes del Pirineu (Accordionists Festival) at Arseguel d'Urgell, 26 July.

This little village perched on a flattish part of the Pyrenees Mountains has a world renown accordionists festival. The concert was held in the tiny plasa mayor with a main stage about 10 metres wide, but during the evening the musicians and singers appeared at windows, on roof tops, in windows, from the crowd, and on a small secondary stage behind the audience - there was never a dull moment.

And the accordionists were brilliant. Some were old folk who had played the festas years ago, some were the new generation, plus there were groups from France, Holland, Switzerland, Austria, the Czech Republic, a stunning Russian balalaika and accordion ensemble, and from South America the best accordionist I have ever heard.

Most of the singers were geriatrics, and one even forgot the words, but the crowd loved them. I regretted that I couldn't understand Catalan, and was told that they were bawdy ditties. The loudest applause was for a lengthy ballad about a man who cut off his penis.

My one quibble with the concert was that it was over 4 hours without a break, but it was certainly one of the best organised and cleverly presented concerts I have seen, and an absolute must for anyone who enjoys accordion music. But a warning, be early because the plasa mayor is small and there are lots of people, and late comers get to stand in side streets and see nothing.

Festa Mayor of Esterri d'Aneu, 6-9 August

This was just another festa mayor, except that it included a parade by students from Dansaneu Catalan traditional dance course, and it had correfocs - maniacs with fireworks.

As a Dansaneu student, I took part in the parade. We danced the traditional dances of Esterri along the main street and through the back streets. And it was great fun - in the back streets people brought us food and drink, in the main street irate motorists just had to wait as we went berserk (the dances were meant to be a little berserk). Actually, the typical male motorist acted a little irate, but the typical wife was beaming at the sight.

The correfocs are a traditional parade of drums and

John's Jaunts .. continued

fireworks. A correfoc dresses as a devil and carries a pitchfork or stick with a spinning candle on the end, which sends a shower of bright white sparks everywhere. At Esterri they were about 10 drummers and 20 fireworkers, two of the fireworkers were on stilts. There were posters around town warning people of precautions to take against correfocs. I was warned, but I was determined to take photos. When the music started, the fireworkers ran riot. They deliberately sprayed the feet of spectators, and most people hid down back alleys. I stayed in the main street and was rewarded with great photos and holes in my clothes, camera case, and remaining hair.

This festa also had the biggest budget - the first band at the dance had 13 musicians plus 3 singers, and the following bands weren't much smaller.

If you are interested in seeing the festas, I don't know of any central contact for them, but some are listed in the newspapers in Barcelona.

A new name for PIFDG!!

As we reported in the last *Grapevine* the Committee proposed a new name for the Group as part of an initiative to change its image and to attract new members. The original proposal, endorsed by the AGM in November, was to drop the word 'folk' from the title and shorten the name to **Perth International Dancers**, and to use this name on a short term basis while a competition is held to select a name in a more formal way in line with the Group's Constitution.

The Constitution demands that the Group's name can only be changed at a special General Meeting and that any new name must be accepted by a 75% majority of voting members who attend the meeting. This is a big ask, so the approach will be to have an initial vote to select a preferred name from all of the suggestions, followed by a final vote on the adoption of that preferred name as the new Group name.

The date set for the special General Meeting is

20 April

It is important that everyone gets the opportunity to contribute to a new name, so if you would like your say please put your new Group name in the Suggestions Box on a Monday night, add it to the list on the notice board, give your suggestion to a member of the Committee or post it in. Take the opportunity to have a look at the Board and to think about other people's suggestions.

STOP PRESS --- STOP PRESS --- STOP PRESS

Fiona's coming!!

We are very pleased to advise that Fiona Murdoch will be coming to Perth over the week-end of 19-20 September.

For those of you who know Fiona this will be an opportunity to catch up with one of our favourite teachers who left Perth some years ago to return to her native New Zealand. Fiona was a regular teacher with the Group for many years and she still has a lot of friends in the Group. For our new members this will be a rare chance to experience her unique talents as a teacher and a dancer. Many of our regular Monday night dances came to us through Fiona.

Fiona was last here in 1996 for our 20th year celebrations.

This is an opportunity not to miss!! So get in early and confirm your place. Details available soon.

Other Events??

At this stage we are anxious to arrange some other interesting events for next year so please let us know your ideas. Bush walks, workshops by the local Turkish Group or advanced workshops by our regular teachers are some suggestions.

What do you think? Please let us know.

Contributions to *Grapevine*

In the next issues of *Grapevine* we will continue with our series of articles on the 1997 world travels and trips by Group members. If you would like to contribute to this or if you have any other articles of general interest please send them to me, preferably in soft copy. See front page for my e-mail.

Beginner's Course

Many of our new members over recent years have been introduced to International dance by, or have benefited greatly from our beginners' courses.

The Group is proud to announce that the 1998 beginners' course will be held as eight Saturday sessions starting on 9 May and ending on 4 July. These sessions are strongly recommended for recent recruits to the Group. Members are also asked to promote the sessions to friends and to help to circulate the flyers through local libraries, local schools, colleges and the like.