



Let's Talk Folk Dance



Membership network email update and musings on local folk, historical, traditional and community dance
Folkdance.org.nz

Hi Everyone,

There were certainly no fools at the April 1st Greek Dance workshop in Auckland with Kyriakos Moisidis. The lucky attendees were treated to some very enjoyable dances of the Greek people. Kyriakos was a thorough and patient teacher, sharing interesting background and stories about the dances. Thanks to Tauranga's Athena Dance Group for organising it – FDNZ was thrilled to sponsor this initiative.

After the workshop, FDNZ held a teacher / dance leader's problem-solving forum on teaching recreational dance which led to some useful discussion. Sharing ideas is great learning for all.

I want to share a special moment that occurred on 30th March at Dance Folkus' end-of-course Café Folklorico Dance Party. Some of our members also sing with an A Cappella group called World Voices. Director, Christoph Muabach, has been very willing to collaborate with me, and each term we both include in our own programmes songs that can be danced to / dances that have vocal accompaniment. On this particular evening for the first time, **everyone** there (about 40 people) was either singing, dancing or playing music for a Kalamatianos to the song 'O Haralambis'. **No-one** was 'just watching'. It was a joy realised!

Dance well this month Fiona

MEMBERS ARE THINKING ABOUT... Sue Watt of

Wellington has been thinking about being 'Hooked on folk dancing' – Folk dancing first wormed its way into my soul in New York in the 1980s with a large group of people led and taught by Karl Finger. This was very different dance and music from square dancing at primary school, and ballroom dance classes at secondary school, most of the time being pushed backwards by an awkward boy. And a lot more fun. Weird music and rhythms, weird steps, wild dancers holding hands in circles swinging and waving their arms, sometimes shouting, how could you not get hooked? It was a way to shed all the stresses and strains of job and family and feel connected to other cultures in a small way. A highlight was a two-week tour of Bulgaria, where we danced with folkloric groups, on a mountainside with an 80-year-old man leading the line, handkerchief waving on high, in villages and monasteries. The tour included three days at the Koprivstitsa festival where groups gathered from all over Bulgaria to celebrate their regional birth, wedding, harvest and other traditional dances. All were elaborately dressed, the women in layers of colourful finely embroidered and woven fabric that varied by region. And wonderful musicians playing bagpipes, wooden flutes and pipes, a sort of clarinet and accordions, plus the discordant women's singing echoing across the mountainside....So you can imagine when I returned to live in Wellington how thrilled I was to discover there was an international folkdance group, thanks to Marcel Baaijens and others. The magic of dancing has continued weekly, through several national workshops with local and visiting teachers, and folkdance trips to Bali and Armenia with Tineke van Geel.
Long may it continue.

[Sue is FDNZ's honorary auditor and we are very grateful for her time volunteering in this role for us – as we are with her taking the time to share her thoughts. Ed]

DANCING IN CHRISTCHURCH - CHANGES IN FARANDOL

Katy Sinton stepped down from the role of chief instructor of Christchurch group Farandol at the end of last year, and is delighted to say that Judy has taken on the role. In an email to Farandol members, she said it has been great fun and immensely rewarding, but the time had come to pass on the responsibility. She'll still be going dancing on Friday nights, and will continue as secretary for now.

"Alastair and I revived Farandol in late 1993, when we came to settle permanently in Christchurch. The group was founded in 1979, but by 1993 had been in recess for a few years. From 1993 until the late 1990s Alastair had the primary responsibility for the group. Since then, I have had the role. So between us we have been responsible for Farandol for longer than we have been parents. From a tiny handful of us back in 1993, the group has grown to the very healthy numbers that now come on Friday nights. It gives me great joy to know that Farandol is an important part of the lives of so many people. "Thank you all for years of happy dancing together! I'm really looking forward to many more."

Katy and Alastair, you both deserve a hearty round of applause in recognition of what you have achieved with Farandol. You brought great passion and a personal sense of enjoyment to the dances, which was very infectious. Succession planning is so important in small groups and nurturing dance leaders / tutors is a crucial step.

[Ed: When in Christchurch I try and make it to Friday night Farandol for some fun dancing – thanks to Alistair, Katy and Farandol members for always being so welcoming].

Update from your committee: There was interest in repeating the dance leader discussion forum to continue the dynamic at the recent forum; and we are wondering about doing this via skype....let us know your thoughts. Our full newsletter is coming out soon and will have updates on a number of action areas for the committee after the last AGM. **Your ideas and stories are valuable - Share them in the newsletter – send to editor@folkdance.nz asap**

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