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FOLK SONG & DANCE SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

AUGUST NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It has been brought to our attention that our current list of Victorian Folk Clubs is inaccurate. If any member can assist us in correcting errors in our activities listing we would be grateful to hear from them.

I draw the attention of all members to the fact that only those who have paid their current subscription will receive official correspondence and newsletters by mail. The cost of postage limits the amount of mail we can send out. This was discussed and decided at the last council meeting.

A big welcome to our new members, and the old faces that have returned. We hope we won't betray your faith in us.

Within the near future we hope to be able to inform you of our plans for future functions, festivals, etc., so keep your ears open around the clubs.

I am happy to inform you that the Tankard Folk, the Three Drunken Maidens and Butler's folk clubs have all become affiliated with the F.S.D.S.V. This means that our members now gain admission to these clubs at reduced prices. If any other clubs or organizations wish to affiliate we would love to hear from them.

Membership cards have been printed and will be mailed out to those still waiting as soon as possible.

To all those interested in dancing, Melbourne has two dance groups who practice regularly and are always keen to encourage new members. The Merry Melbourne Morris Men (and Women) practice at Butler's, 749 Heidelberg Road, Alphington, on Wednesday nights at 8pm - for further information contact Cliff 49-2793 or Lynne & Jenny 86-5371 most evenings. Musicians are also most welcome. The Colonial Dancers meet at the Niell Street Primary School, Carlton, on Monday nights at 8pm. On the Monday after the first Sunday in the month they have an open night where all comers are welcome to learn stepping, spinning and other basic skills, and for the more experienced some of the more complicated dances are taught. Next open night will be September 5th, the night after the F.S.D.S.V. dance at the Carlton Community Centre, Princes St. Carlton.

Mick Crichton
President

THE 2nd SOUTH PACIFIC FESTIVAL OF ARTS

The 2nd South Pacific Festival of Arts held in Rotorua, New Zealand from March 6th to 13th this year featured more than 1000 performers from 22 Pacific countries. I was rather ashamed to find that I hadn't even heard of some of these romantically named places, such as Niue, Tokalau and Tuvalu. My only excuse is that Australia still clings to its outdated 19th century concept of itself as an outpost of Europe, and our news media carry little news about even our closest Pacific neighbours.

The festival was held in attractive surroundings at Rotarua. Here the island people were hosted by the local Maoris and were accomodated in the various maraes (meeting houses) leaving the tourist accommodation for the visiting pakehas.

After the impressive opening ceremony in the large outdoor sports stadium with traditional Maori welcoming ceremonies and brief performances by the different island groups, the program settled down to its daily crowded routine. There were three main performance times daily, and each time slot offered a choice of some 5 programs. These included lecture recitals, concerts, plays, mime, programs of traditional song and dance, puppets, films, etc. There were also continuous craft exhibitions, with demonstrations, of many of the traditional skills.

The most popular series of programs were those featuring traditional song and dance, and these were arranged so that each one had three groups appearing. One group was from each of the three main types of Pacific people; Polynesian, Melanesian, and Micronesian. With such variety, it was often difficult to choose, and even more difficult to make sure of getting into the program of one's choice. The organisers had not realised that the festival would generate so much interest outside the Maori population, and in any case, it is always difficult in any large festival to find enough suitable venues for large audiences.

However, the programs were so enjoyable that the hour-long wait in queues were a minor disadvantage only regretted because the time could have been spent seeing more of the exhibitions and other additional festival activities, to say nothing of the interesting tourist attractions of Rotorua. The real meaning of folk culture became much clearer to me, and it is sad to realise what industrialization has removed from our lives. Some of the fine programs of song and dance I attended were put on by islands with total populations of only 2000 or 3000 people, equivalent to the population of just a few streets in the average suburb.

The Australian Aborigines were the most popular group.

Fortunately the money to send two Aboriginal and Torres Island groups had been allotted before the change of government so Australia was better represented than we deserved to be.

Despite the high standard of all the participating groups, the Aborigines with their different style were the most popular with the local people, and their demonstrations of spear throwing as well as the fine didgeridoo playing earned tremendous applause at the opening and closing ceremonies. One group was from the Tiwi people of the Bathurst and Melville Islands, north of Darwin, best known for their mimes. The other group came from Banyili, near Katherine, and included three performers of real star quality - a superb singer, dancer, and composer, Djoli Is'wonga; their didgeridoo player, David Blantji; and their leading comentator, dancer and spear thrower, Djaylama.

After the South Pacific Festival, these groups toured New Zealand and also appeared at the Auckland Festival later in the month. Everywhere they went they drew capacity audiences. The Australia Council is to be highly commended for organising this tour.

The Torres Island group of singers and dancers were from the Eastern Islands, mainly Murray and Stephen Islands. I was pleased to recognise some of the dances and songs that I know, including the one best know here, "Oh T.I." It was fine to see the Aboriginal performers so obviously enjoying the admiration of the local people, this being something they don't get much of at home in Aus'ralia.

3rd South Pacific Festival (contd....)

Seeing the high standard of so many of the groups at this Pacific Festival made me realise that in Australian folk circles we are often too tolerant of very amateurish ways of doing things. It is not only in song and dance that the island people are so impressive - they are remarkably good speakers, and in English too, which is only their second language. When I think of the number of times I've had to listen to Australian folk singers mumbling inaudibly into microphones, I wonder why they compare so badly with the island performers who expressed themselves so clearly and lucidly.

It was good to see that so much of the traditional culture had survived in many of the islands already subject to outside influence. For example the Hawaiian group presented a very interesting program of ancient dances with a most scholarly annotation from the compere. The only island program completely in the modern "western" style was that from Guam where it seemed that first the Spanish invaders, and later the American, had completely overwhelmed the indigeneous culture.

With so many good programs, it hardly seems fair to praise one above the other by my personal favorites included the simple and charming performances from Rotaman and Tokelau, the Solomon Island dancers and Pan-pipe players, the very funny mimes and plays from New Guinea, and the very professionally-presented programs from Fiji-Banaban, Tahiti, the Cook Islands and Hawaii.

The gay, uninhibited and very humorous people of the Pacific Islands are particularly adept at setting up an instant rapport with their audiences. Most of the festival audience would have been happy if it could have lasted much longer than the one crowded and exiting week. I will be saving up in the hope that the financial problems involved in finding a venue for the 3rd South Pacific Festival for 1980 will be successfully overcome.

Shirley Andrews

Dear Members,

Unfortunately last month saw the end (temporarily I hope) of the Bendigo Folk Club. It finally closed down on 31st July with an all-night concert, featuring most of the singers, musicians etc. who had appeared there in its history.

It did for quite a few months look like becoming an active and healthy little club, but support dwindled so much that the organizing committee reluctantly decided that it was not worth while continuing.

I think thanks are due to the stalwarts who got it going and did an excellent job running it, and struggled on against difficult conditions towards the end. I'm sure the organizers would wish me to thank all the people who performed there and gave service in other ways, free of charge on many occasions.

Perhaps in the not too distant future we may see some more activity in the Bendigo area.

Don't forget the Extraordinary General Meeting of the F.S.D.S.V. on 31st August at the Tankerville Arms Hotel, Tankard Room at 8pm. Let's see as many members as possible there to make it worth while. We're not just in it for ourselves!

Richard L. Leitch
for the Committee

V.F.M.C. WOOLSHED BALL

Saturday, September 18th at Central Hall, 20 Brunswick St. Fitzroy
8pm - 12.30 pm
Tickets: \$3.00 each. Bring your own grog and supper.
COLONIAL DRESS

Non-stop dancing to THE BARDS supported by V.F.M.C. musicians.
There are some tickets available for people who are not V.F.M.C.
members. Apply to Shirley Andrews (328-2276) or Jess Dunnedge
at (46-4078).

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FROM OUR CANBERRA REPORTER

The next dance at the Albert Hall is on Saturday 28th August
at 8pm. Good music, good dancing, and a licenced bar!

The July dance was highly successful in spite of the fact that
a few of the regular musicians were doing a splendid job
spreading folk music elsewhere. I was pleased to hear Scots
tunes being played for Scottish dances, and American tunes
for the Virginia Reel etc. A refreshing change.

Monaro Folk Music Society are having a concert on 21st August
at 8pm at the Canberra Playhouse (next door to where the Festival
Concert was at easter). Cost will be \$3.30 for members and
\$3.80 for non-members. Appearing will be Alex Hood (a long
awaited and welcome return to folk music), Gordon McIntyre,
The Possum Trot School Exhibition, Dennis Tracy, Dennis Kevans,
and others.

Alex Hood will be conducting a workshop on Australian Folk
Music at the A.N.U. Staff Centre on 20th August at 8pm.
R.L.I.

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The following folk material is available from the F.S.D.S.V.
through Michael Crichton (80-2868) or Steve Nethercote (83-3857)

RECORDS:-	7th National Festival	Mems.	\$4.50	Nons.	\$5.00
	Harry Cotter of Binalong	"	\$6.00	"	\$6.00
	Bush Tradition	"	\$6.00	"	\$6.90
	The Celtic Inheritance	"	\$5.00	"	\$6.00

BOOKS:- Take Your Partners - a dance book written
by Shirley Andrews \$1.50

CASSETTES:- Pageant - 24 songs and words \$5.50
see Mick Crichton.

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We hope to start a buying and selling section
in this part of the newsletter... so if anyone
has anything they wish to buy, sell, rent, teach,
etc... drop us a line and we'll include it in the
newsletter if possible.

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The closing date for all articles for next month's newsletter
is SEPTEMBER 11th, so keep those cards and letters coming in
folks! Letters to the Editor, Social Comment, Dirty Stories.
Whatever you like...to 26 Metung Street, Balwyn, or hand to
Richard Feitch, Keryn Randall, or Michael Crichton Phone 80-2868

STICKY-BEAK (a new section of news from around the Folk Scene.)

THE MIND BOGLES !

Eric Bogle, the author of the song "The Band Played Waltzing Matilda" and others, and a fine singer of traditional Scottish folk songs, is doing well in Scotland. He's been singing at quite a few of the clubs there and has been invited to take part in the Inverness Folk Festival. Also, Ian Campbell may be recording "The Band Played Waltzing Matilda", which should promise to be considerably better than the bloody atrocious Australian recordings that have been made of it. R.L.I.

You win some.....

WELCOME: Geoff and Joan Wooff from Brisbane - looks like Melbourne is in for some good music.

CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES:

To Kim McDuffy and his new wife.
To Keryn Randall, who got her promotion at long last.
To Lee Clubbs, who passed her nursing exams.

Its nice to see and hear a new group around the clubs - best of luck, HOLLYOAK.

Hear that Gordon McIntyre will be in Melbourne for a week at the end of this month.

You lose some.....

Sorry to hear that The Last Gasp has gasped it's last. We'll miss them.

Stoney has held her last wedding anniversary non-event. Watch out for her new event - an annual freedom fling.

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S T O P P R E S S

INTER-CLUB SPORTS SERIES

Next event - Softball challenge matches, Sunday 22nd August at Roddy Read's, Whitehorse Gully Road, Chewton (near Castlemaine) All welcome - players needed. Contact Butler 49-2793

MUFOLK DANCE

Friday 24th September, Trophy Hall, Beaurepaire Centre, Melb.Uni.

MALDON FESTIVAL

October 30-31. Camping will be available near Mt. Tarrengower, about 3 miles out of Maldon. There will be a dance on the Saturday night at the Baringup Hall, admission \$2. (the only event on the programme that will cost you anything!) Further information will be available shortly.

V.F.M.C. SINGABOUT

The first Saturday of every month at Carlton Community Centre, Princes Street, Carlton. 8pm. F.S.D.S.V. members are welcome, and admission for them is charged at the same reduced rate as for V.F.M.C. Members.

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"Sticky-beak" would appreciate hearing all the scraps of news that happen each month. Contact him through Michael Crichton or Keryn Randall (80-2868) or Lynne Stone (86-5371).

M E M B E R S H I P

May we remind you that Memberships are now due for the 1976/77 year. An application form is printed below. Please forward to The Membership Secretary, F.S.D.S.V., P.O.Box 96, Carlton 3053.

F.S.D.S.V.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I,, hereby apply for membership of the Folk Song and Dance Society of Victoria in the category of:-

- *ORDINARY \$ 5.00
- *GROUP (AFFILIATE) \$10.00
- *FAMILY 7.50
- *STUDENT/PENSIONER/INTERSTATE \$ 3.00
- *LIFE \$50.00

I declare that I am a full-time student/pensioner.
(Cross out if not applicable)

I agree to abide by the Articles of Association of the Society.

Herewith \$..... as full membership payment.

SIGNED

NAME

ADDRESS

.....POSTCODE.....

Copies of The Articles of Association are available from the Society for 50 cents.

Please forward to: The Membership Secretary
F.S.D.S.V.
P.O. Box 96
CARLTON 3053

P.S. Happy birthday to Jess Dunnadge our membership secretary

A SPECIAL THANKS TO LYNNE STONE WHO I DRAGGED OUT OF A SICK BED TO LOCATE A TYPEWRITER?, GIVE OF HER TALENTS AND TIME AND WITHUOT WHOM THERE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN A NEWSLETTER THIS MONTH.

Mick Crichton