



Let's Talk Folk Dance

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



Hi everyone,

It's exciting to celebrate the dance opportunities coming up in New Zealand over the winter months. There will be more detail in the FDNZ newsletter being prepared at present but in the meantime keep an eye on the FDNZ website for:

- **Mid-winter / mid-year dance celebrations in your area** – I know of historical dance-style dance party celebrations in Dunedin, Hamilton, and Auckland – Victorian, Regency and Early English respectively;
- **Folk Dance workshop** - Selections from the Andre Van de Plas 2016 collection in Auckland 20 August
- **Annual Auckland Winter Warm-up**
- **Rhythm and Grapevines Folk Dance festival** in Gisborne 23-25 September

Another international date coming up that begs folk dance participation is the **'Fete De La Musique' on the 21 June 2016** where the aim is to have music of all kinds resonating throughout communities throughout the world – google 'Fete De La Musique 2016 – World-wide music day'.

And of course 21 June is also the winter solstice – a great excuse for a **folk dance gathering**. Perhaps there's a community dance of some sort near you – gather some dance friends and celebrate making it half-way through the year – if not make your own party!

Why not send your stories to our editor Kieron at editor@folkdance.org.nz

Members are thinking about..... I (Editor) have been thinking about how to describe the fun of folk dance to others. You all know the situation – you're trying to suggest to someone they would enjoy a folk dance event or class and they ask "what is folk dance" – most people remember folk dance at primary school rather than understanding its role in adult culture and tradition, and perhaps the primary school experience wasn't very satisfactory, so you face an uphill battle in convincing them of the benefits. A trip to Wikipedia tells you 'folk dances are dances developed by groups of people that reflect the traditional life of the people of a certain country or region'. Another definition includes "... generally, a type of dance that is a vernacular, usually recreational, expression of a past or present culture'. On a more personal level the synergy between the music and the dance pattern may create a pleasurable and occasionally meditative experience. Whether it's the social pleasure of dancing a simple dance together, or the satisfaction of dancing complex patterns and steps – folk dance means many things to many people. How do you describe and define 'Folk Dance' to others? Have you read our definition on our webpage? Does it help you promote recreational folk dance in your area? Do you have any other suggestions?

Dancing in.....the Hawkes Bay

I (as Editor) chatted with Cleone Cawood – a longstanding member of FDNZ who dances in the Hawkes Bay: Cleone says that despite the regular international folk dance class being in recess for the past year or so due to lack of a regular dance leader, there is still plenty of opportunity to dance in the Hawkes Bay. Dancers with a bit more time on their hands (or *should that be feet?...Ed*) enjoy Israeli dancing on a Monday night, and a morning class on a Thursday. Mostly dancers get together to enjoy dances they already know and remember rather than focussing on learning new dances – "it's great for fitness and social reasons" says Cleone. Someone coordinates the sessions and keeps everyone on track.

As far as other dance styles go, there is a strong dance culture in the Hawkes Bay. The Hawkes Bay Ballet and Dance Academy run an annual festival which also attracts young Irish and Highland dancers. There is regular folkloric dance input into the 'character style' development for young ballet dancers, and Cleone says this is a very enjoyable and popular part of their dance curriculum (*How to keep them folk dancing Cleone? Ed.*).

Adults can enjoy a range of dance groups including the two Scottish Dance Society groups in Hastings. There are some expert folk dance teachers of various styles in the locality but the challenge is time and availability, and keeping the interest up amongst the 'middle ages'. Occasionally there is a style workshop held locally (e.g. Irish set dance) that provides a local burst of dance energy.

Dancers from the Havelock North International Dance class (as was) are welcome travellers to many other groups and workshops around New Zealand, where their love of folk dance keeps them on their toes.

Update from your committee: Calling for items for the FDNZ Newsletter - we want to know what's happening so we can share with others. We also want to know how to make FDNZ relevant to you in your dancing. Please invite people to join FDNZ – it is a relatively inexpensive token of support and recognition that Folk Dance is important in today's society.

Remember to check the FDNZ website for updates, happenings & contacts - plus as a member you can advertise your dance event for free...

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#4