



BILLINGHAM

INTERNATIONAL

FOLKLORE FESTIVAL



BIFF NEWSLETTER No 9, January 2009

45th BILLINGHAM FESTIVAL – 1st August 2009 – 8th August 2009
THE Festival of Fun and Friendship

I would like to firstly take this opportunity to with you all a very Happy New Year.

There has been some major changes to the Festival since our last Newsletter the main one being due to the change in accommodation, the dates of the Festival are now **Saturday 1st August 2009 to Saturday 8th August 2009.**

With Bede College which has played “Home” for the past Four very happy years, being demolished we found ourselves “Homeless” yet again, and had the long and arduous task of searching for accommodation which is large enough to house our International Guests. However Lady Luck must have been shining on us, as we are very happy to announce that Billingham Campus has kindly agreed to house the groups for the duration of the Festival. We would like to thank the Head Teacher and all Staff of Billingham Campus for their generosity, as without their help our Anniversary Year would have been in jeopardy.

We would also like to thank Mrs Miriam Stanton, Principal of Bede College for all her help and co-operation during our time at Bede and wish her well with her next ventures.



The next major problem we are facing is the closure of the Forum Theatre for refurbishment. The Theatre is scheduled to close in June for 18 months, which again causes us major problems with this, our Anniversary Year. Following several discussions Riverside Leisure agreed to keep the Theatre open till after the Festival, but wanted what we consider to be an extortionate £30,000 + VAT on top of the current £8,000 +VAT that we currently pay. As you will all appreciate, the Festival CANNOT afford this amount as it constitutes nearly half our budget, so again so as not to disappoint our Theatre Supporters we are looking into alternative venues, and we will keep you updated of our progress. You never know we might find somewhere better than the Forum Theatre and start a new “Era” for the Festival.

Since writing this News Letter, we have had “Stop Press” news, this year for the first time ever in the history of the festival, we will be holding TWO Evening Concerts outside of Billingham. Middlesbrough Theatre formally

Middlesbrough Little Theatre, has agreed to host TWO Evening Shows on Saturday 1st August and Thursday 6th August 2009, with NO ADDITIONAL COST for Promoting and Advertising our unique event in their Theatre Programme and Website. One additional Evening Performance will be held at the Arc in Stockton on Tuesday 4th August again with NO ADDITIONAL COST for Promoting the Festival. You will see from the enclosed leaflet the Arc is holding some English Folk Music nights prior to the Festival, so if you are supporters of English Folk, why not go along for a great night of entertainment to keep you going until August.



We also have secured an outstanding Group with the help of our friends in CIOFF Poland, an amazing Polish Group from Warsaw, as throughout the years Poland has become one of our favourites, we thought it was only right to invite them for our celebrations.



On to the Good News....

Never before have we been so inundated with applications from groups wishing to come and participate in the Festival. We have had literally Forty to Fifty applications from all corners of the world, which has enabled us to choose the Crème de la Crème for our 45th Festival.

We are extremely excited to announce that in conjunction with Confolens Festival in France, we proudly present the Cook Islands. Marton born, James Cook travelled to these Islands in 1773 and 1777 and they named their Islands after him. Imagine that, a local lad with Islands named after him, and the islands inhabitants, coming to Billingham to dance 236 years later. Maybe we should send them to dance at the James Cook Hospital.

To add to our extensive list of invited groups we have with co-operation of the Egyptian Embassy the National Dance Company of Egypt from Cairo, who have proved again to be extremely popular.



For a little bit of History for our 45th year, Urpin from Slovakia, who have visited the festival twice before, asked if they could attend this year. They first appeared on our stages at our 2nd ever Festival in 1966, and still have our pendant on their wall of their practice venue. They have just celebrated their 50th anniversary, guess we are all getting old together.



For a little bit of Asian influence, Mongolia applied to the Festival, before 2008 Festival finished. They are currently still looking for sponsorship, so we will have to keep our fingers crossed.



Also Thailand, with co-operation of the president of CIOFF, we are able to bring to you one of the best groups Thailand has to offer, Mr Sakmungwong, searched and searched until he found a group that is good enough to participate in our Festival, as he knows we are very hard to please.



This leads to the South America, we again have been extremely fortunate to be included on the European Tour of this exciting and professional Peruvian Group from Trujillo, who come from a Bi-National Peruvian American Cultural Centre. We have several other South American groups who are desperate to attend the Festival, but with the early acceptances of the groups this year, and the limited funds and accommodation, sadly we have had to put them on Stand-by in case of late cancellations of any of the above.



The Festival would not be a Festival without our old friends from Russia. We have managed to find an outstanding group from St Petersburg, who will delight us with typical Russian dancing which has kept us entertained for most of our 45 years.





ONLINE FESTIVAL SHOP

On 1st October 2008, we celebrated our 1st Birthday with our Festival On-Line shop and we are happy to report it has been a great success. Sales of DVD's from previous year's festivals, CD's, gifts, old programmes etc, have contributed considerably to the continued success of the festival, with several orders coming from abroad especially USA and Turkey. Due to the outstanding success of the e On-Line ticket sales last year, and the closure of the Forum Theatre Box Office from June, we will be selling Festival Tickets On-Line again this year. We are hoping to be able to "Open for Business" by the end of April, so you might be receiving your Booking Forms for Friends and Members of the Festival earlier than usual.

The Festival On-Line Booking helped us to attract a much wider audience than ever before with our promotional videos on You Tube reaching over quarter of a million viewers and "Hits" on our Website not far behind, has been a major boost to ticket sales and hopefully be a continued success this year.

If you enjoyed this year's Festival, you are able to purchase a DVD, made by professional Film Makers of the final Saturday Farewell Gala, and Closing Ceremony.

Also available are two separate DVD's featuring Colombia Viva and Krusheva, Russia,

imagine, a whole DVD featuring ONE of these outstanding groups, a great nights entertainment or keepsake of 2008. We have several other DVD's of previous years and special DVD's featuring particular outstanding groups that have appeared at the Festival over the years. Why not stop by and have a look, OUR SHOP NEVER CLOSES.

We are always looking to expand, if you have any ideas for our Online shop or wish to make suggestions for merchandise, please contact us either by e-mail or post and we will do our best to provide them. All proceeds go towards the continued success of the Festival, as costs are always rising.



Expansion of Website....

We are also looking to expand the Website to include not only news of what's happening within the Festival, but also funny stories which

has happened during the Festival, photographs, memories etc. Any ideas are welcome.

FUN AND FUNDRAISING

As you all know we are always interested in new ways to fund raise to ensure the continuation of this fantastic Festival. If you have any novel and interesting ideas, we are always ready to listen. Or if you would like to join any fundraising that continues throughout the year, ie Car Boot Sales, Boat Trips, Coffee Mornings etc or have any goodies that we could sell, please contact us, we would be very grateful.

Anyone who has an interest in Ebay, can register to donate a percentage of your sales to

Billingham International Folklore Festival. You can donate from 10 – 100% of your sales. Great cause, great idea, it helps de-clutter your house, two jobs done in one. Great!!!

WEB NEWS

Anybody who has access to the Internet can go onto our Website and take a look at the Photographs of 2008, and soon 2009, again courtesy of Alex Wilson. We also have small video clips for you from 2008 on our Website and as soon as they are available we will be putting sneaky previews of this years major attractions.

Any ideas that you would like to see on our Website or any improvements you think we could make, again please contact us.

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NEXT PUBLICATIONS OF BIFF NEWSLETTER

The new Billingham International Festival Newsletters is published **3-4 times per year**:
The next BIFF newsletter will come out in June 2009, unless we have any major News or Updates to inform you about

If you would like to make any comments regarding the Newsletter, or receive the

previous edition of the Newsletter by e-mail, please contact us on:

info@billinghamfestival.co.uk

If you do not wish to receive our Newsletter in the future, please e-mail us back with a word “**unsubscribe**” and we will delete your e-mail address of our mailing list.

See you all Soon – 6 months and counting

Take Care - Lisa

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