

To The Chair LUTSF

10th Sept 2003

Thank you for the travel scholarship funds towards my attendance at Europeade 2003 Festival in Nuoro, Sardinia. 16th -21st July 2003.

Purpose of the travel:- I wore two hats for the festival. Principally to establish if the festival was a safe and exciting event to take Ashley's Rise Junior Morris to perform at, and secondly to see if I felt Bristol could host such a festival in 2008. As a direct result of the information I was able to give to the Council, it does look as though Bristol will be hosting the 2008 Festival. Made possible with your help.

In order to see the festival from the inside I volunteered to work with the Regie. They provide all the crew, stage management, and performer 'control' for the festival. They pay the same 80€ fee to attend. This covered accommodation and basic meals and management costs.

Highlights:- the entire festival exceeded my expectations. I was aware of the huge national pride in tradition, costume and dance. For me, as an English man working for a Flemish backstage crew the best part was the welcome and the keenness to share. Everyone welcomed everyone, there was no team competitiveness, only pride that they had got there and in showing their best.

Some rich teams stayed in hotels, but they were the losers, team spirit flourished in the makeshift school accommodation as everyone 'made do'. This bonded performing teams together. A rehearsal at 2am (it was too hot to sleep) by one team caused most of us to get up and applaud them.

Organisation for the 4000+ performers was good and accurate, only the arrival of breakfast seemed a problem.

If anyone wishes to follow in my footsteps with a view to taking a traditional amateur dance team to perform, then working for the Regie the year before gives you a good overview. They would particularly welcome you if you speak any Scandinavian/Baltic language or Italian.

For a researcher there is the potential to study a dance tradition, but the accommodation is strictly for performers & crew. I met an Italian Dance teacher who worked the festival as a translator to get cheap accommodation whilst she studied the Spanish team she was the guide / translator for. One note, for proposed performing teams is that they must be European and amateur traditional dance or song.

Sharing Information.

I am in the process of encouraging 10 other teams to be performers in the coming years as well as my own youth team. I am working with the UK Europeade Committee to produce a factsheet (in English, not Flemish). This will be freely available with the three Morris organisations and the English Folk Dance and Song Society. I will also send a copy to the LUTSF. Should anyone wish to have a personal copy please email cliffordjohnm@aol.com. I hope to have this agreed with the Europeade committee by mid November.

Report from Europeade 2003 Festival, Nuoro, Sardinia.

16th -21st July 2003

A huge, excitable melting pot for European Folk Culture by John Clifford

Underlying reasons for Research Project. There were 2 linked projects.....

1./ For Ashley's Rise Junior Morris

I act as co-ordinator for the group. We are an independent youth team established in 1993 to provide traditional dance training and performance for young people aged 8 to 16 in the Bristol area. The team were awarded in 2002 the Gordon Crowther Memorial staff for the team that "best represented the spirit of the dance" (Morris).

We were invited to attend the Europeade Festival in 2004 in Riga, Latvia. The festival usually attracts 4,000 to 5,000 performers to each year as it travels around major cities in Europe.

It's vision is that if groups with their wide cultural, religious and ethnic origins can dance together, play together and recognise each other's uniqueness, then the chance of us ever returning to war in Europe must be reduced. Fraternity and tolerance make this event really good to be a part of.

This year the festival was based in Nuoro Sardinia. Other cities have been, Valencia (S), Horsens (Dmk), Frankenberg (G), Annecy (F), Dortmund (G), Gijon (S), Limborne (F), Marrabella (S), Marche-en-Famenne (B), Munich (G), Rennes (F), Torino (I), Wein (A), Valadollid (S).

My task was to evaluate the festival so that the youth group I represented could have a smooth attendance at next years festival in Riga, Latvia. Europeade runs on a shoestring and this results in information usually in Flemish, (translated), coming from the HQ in a rather haphazard style.

I felt for the security of my group that we needed to know the nature of the festival, it's strengths and weaknesses before we attended.

2./ The Bristol Bid

I have proposed that this festival is based for the first time ever in the UK in Bristol, probably in 2008. We have the space and facilities to support this exciting event. I have to feedback my research to a 'Honorary Committee' for Bristol in December.

Basic Structure.

The festival is performance driven. It is divided into 5 major shows (numbers approx.):-

- a. 100 teams (2000 performers) in opening ceremony in a sports stadium Thursday eve.
- b. 100 teams (2000 performers) in closing ceremony in the sports stadium Sunday eve.
- c. 80 teams / choirs (1500 performers) in concert (This year in an amphitheatre) Friday eve.
- d. Procession / Parade For all 200ish dance teams, bands and choirs. 10am to 2pm Saturday.
- e. Smaller teams have a 20 min spot in 'The Forum' an intimate space for the audience to 'get to know' the team during the periods 10am to 1pm or 4pm to 6pm daily.

All teams will expect to perform at a and b, or at b and c. Everyone does d. Additionally all teams will work in 2 or 3 small performances in designated areas. (Residential homes, small parks etc.) More can be done if your team is restless! We have been

invited to dance at the British Consulate in Riga.

There are also two events of a more social nature...

1. a Grand Ball 8pm to 2am-ish Saturday night, sometimes this is private, as is planned for Riga, sometimes very public as in Sardinia. It blends the best of local and national dance bands in a 4hr bop. High energy, lots of alcohol, candy and 'fraternatie'.

2. Sunday morning there is a Ecumenical and very long multi-lingual Church service usually held in a Cathedral.

Both events are optional, but encouraged.

Accommodation .

Basic. This year at Sardinia we were housed in schools in team blocks on high quality 'camp beds' provided from the Army's civil disaster stock. This was supplemented by Air Beds. All you needed was a set of sheets. Most years in cooler climates they ask that you take a sleeping bag. Teams are given a room or two depending on size. Facilities are busy but just adequate. Avoid trying for a shower at 8am, or during the late afternoon changeover at 5pm. In Sardinia many were showering very late into the night to keep cool.

Food

Is supplied en-mass to either individual feeding stations or pre-packed to your hostel/school hall. I will say the food in Sardinia was merely to maintain you, not really sustain you. Most groups supplemented the food supplies. It was also poorly timed. Working in my role as Backstage Crew (the Regie) we lost out when food was delivered after we had left to prepare for the event. Bottled water was supplied free of charge and in huge quantities to all events for both performers and public.

From a dancers point of view.....

If you love dance, enjoy the development of international traditional culture, and would like to see the source of much of our 'traditional dance' then this is the place for you. It is expressly not for modern dance performance the one 'modern' dance performance, honouring, in memoriam, the recent death of the festival's founder and symbolising his spirit moving on etc was dismissed, politely, as a lot of wafting about.

The mass Dance Performance surfaces were first rate, although there was some concern with the road surface in the parade. The audiences here were very large, typically 4000 in the stadium and 6000 in the amphitheatre. For the parade, all 4 hours of it, every inch of pavement was covered with applauding spectators. This year the heat was intense even by Sardinian standards at 38°C most days and 30°C at night but we all coped if a bit wilted.

In Riga the concert hall is for 6000, and is air conditioned! It is expected to be full for every performance. Air temperatures are expected to be a reasonable 18 - 21°C.

The Festival has a very strong culture of pride in the presentation, national flags, national identity and authenticity of costume and style. It is in the main a high spirited event, with a renewed focus recently in attracting the younger dance teams (and teams from the UK).

Each major performance the host nation's teams open the show and the subsequent year's national teams present the finale. From this years performances there will be a lot of fine dancing as Latvians celebrate next year as host nation.

Money:-

All performers are amateur. All pay 80€, 60€ of this goes to pay the Food & Accommodation and 20€ to the management. The Senior Management (5 Staff) are waged with all other delegates and National Committee members apparently obtaining funding from their respective National Government (Except UK). Stage Crew, Lighting / Sound (collectively called the Regie) all pay to attend, although like the Management Committee they are treated to one free 'meal out'.

Everyone pays their own travel fare. There is some travel cost sharing for teams flying in to a festival... say 2 teams share the hire of a coach. Each venue has it's own variations depending on nearness to airport, harbour etc. For UK adult teams there may be funding from the British Council, but not for youth teams. It is always worth contacting the British Consulate or British Embassy of any country you may perform at, if you are adult.

How does a group go to Europeade?

Strictly the festival is open to all traditional amateur dance groups, in particular youth, but in practice all submissions are cleared by each nation's committee. The National Committee may act to co-ordinate the travel plans where appropriate. There is a shortage of UK performing teams which was why I was brought into the UK Europeade Committee as a traditional (Morris) dance contact. We (UK) can offer up to 8 teams per year to the festival. Each nation is given an allocation of team spaces assuming a group size of more than 12, less than 30. This includes musicians. Some countries offer teams of 50 performers, but get less team places as a result.

All music is live and from acoustic instruments, unless they are a dance band for the 'ball'.

All instruments are amplified in the large performances.

Where possible teams of the same nation are accommodated together.

It is useful for a team to produce some information or a Video of the team so that the stage management can best plan them into the performance schedule. In the event of there being more teams than spaces put to a national committee, the better the publicity the better the chances, although it must be said the UK has provided a very limited range of dance styles in the last 40 years. Mainly Scottish dance and a Ukrainian group from Reading.

For the UK contact Iain MacLennan-Browne, Europeade UK Commissioner
75 Old Farm Ave, Sidcup, Kent.

He also represents the MacLennan Scottish Dance group.

For a personal observation please contact me on ashleyrisemorris@aol.com or 0117 940 1566.

Europeade Headquarters:- Europeade, baron dhanislann, 20 bus 4 - b2000
Antwerp, Belgium Tel 0032 3248 0727

- Best English spoken by Hilda (pronounced Hild) Ryssart
- Website : www.europeade.be - email, info@europeade.be it's not really their medium, but they run a good festival!
- See www.europeade.lv for next year's plans and for some digital photo's of last year's Latvians at Nuoro. The site will develop over time.

Where are the future Europeade festivals?

2004, Riga, Latvia 2005, Frankenberg, Germany (Nr Munich), 2006 Sicily
2007 Spain Mainland 2008 Bristol (hopefully)

Thank you for the chance to visit the festival. I hope I can pull it off for the event to come to the UK. If you like the idea of the festival coming to Bristol - U/K contact the Mayor, Cllr Bill Martin c/o Bristol City Council, College Green, Bristol. BS99 2AY. Support always welcome.

If you want to see more of our team go to :-

<http://members.aol.com/ashleyrisemorris/arpage.html>

We hope to add Riga pictures to the site in only 9mths time!

John Clifford

