

# S.I.E.D. NEWS

HAPPY  
CHRISTMAS

HERZLICHE  
WEIHNACHTEN

UON  
ATALE

JOYEUX  
NOËL

FELICES  
FIESTAS



DECEMBER 1977

STANDARD

HAPPY

CHRISTMAS

JOYEUX

HERLICHE

HELVETISCHE

NOËL





SECRETARY'S NOTES

By the time you read this issue of the SIFD NEWS you will have received your Agenda and papers for the AGM, and the meeting will only be a few days away. You will have received the Sub-Committee's Report for setting up Branches. If you are unable to attend the meeting but would like to express any comment, please let any member of the Committee know before their next meeting on 8th January. Better still, come along on 4th December and join in the general discussion.

We were pleased to hear from the Music Sub-Committee that our new record will very soon be available for sale. We look forward to its becoming very popular. There is certainly a great deal of work involved in producing such an item - from rehearsing the band to sticking centre labels on the finished article. We are indeed indebted to the Sub-Committee, headed by Wilf Horrocks, for all their time and care in its production. Full details will be published soon. In the meantime, some of us have had an opportunity to dance to a 'proof copy' cassette and it really does sound quite good.

At the time of writing it seems a little early to do so, but I take this opportunity of wishing you all a very Happy Christmas.

EDNA FOSTER,  
Hon. Secretary.

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"JACY TACY" JUMBLE SALE

SATURDAY, 28TH JANUARY 1978 AT 2.30 P.M.

BROMLEY PUBLIC HALL, BOW ROAD, E.3

Please contact me or any member of the group if you have unwanted clothing, books, bric-a-brac, gifts etc., and collection of them will be arranged. This sale is to help us refurbish and replace costumes, and pay for musicians and transport when giving charity demonstrations.

BETTY HARVEY,  
Tel: 01 980 9650

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ALL MATERIAL FOR PUBLICATION IN THE JANUARY ISSUE  
MUST REACH THE EDITOR IN WRITING BY 15TH DECEMBER.

## MEXICAN FIESTA, August/September, 1977

In late August 1977, the Mexican Fiesta Group from Guadalajara University came to London for a fortnight's season. They were performing in the Horniman Museum Park one Saturday afternoon at the same time as the Mexican Exhibition was showing at the Museum itself.

The path that led to the dance floor in the park was decorated with patterns made up of flower petals, dyed sawdust, and green grass. (The custom of making flower patterns in the streets came to Mexico from Spain where it is still practised in several towns like Sitges, Barcelona, Malaga and other cities, and probably stemmed from the worship of Isis and Persephone - The Goddess of spring - both in ancient Greece and in Asia Minor).

It was a lovely sunny day, and we foregathered in the open around a platform prepared on a terrace in the gardens. Everyone took a chair where he could and placed it where he thought it likely to be a good spot to obtain a good view. The place became crammed with spectators long before the dancers appeared, late of course. At last, eight musicians arrived and stood next to the platform. They were smartly dressed in tight, long trousers, short jackets - all beige - with brown embroideries, and extremely broad-brimmed straw hats, turned up at the back. The young men played their entrancing tunes in broken rhythms with impeccable accuracy. There was no conductor. They sang several songs reminiscent of Castillian songs of old, to their guitars, guitarron (outsize guitar), two trumpets and three violins. These must be a recent acquisition for violins, modern style, don't belong to South American or Spanish traditions. They could hardly be heard anyway, in the open. The songs were love songs.

Next came two couples of dancers from Jalisco. They performed a lovely courting dance entailing graceful sweeping semi-circular movements of the very wide skirts of the girls, and equally sweeping gestures of the boys. Their arms seemed to depict half-moons in the air, from above the head down to knee level and back up again into the air high above the head, then turns and twists, back to back, and face front once again. (By 'front', I mean face partner.) The dance ended in what appeared to be a long kiss. The next item was performed by one couple from the same district but with a lot of stamping and step-dancing rhythms by both dancers. In general wherever the provenance of the dance might be, similar sweeping movements were used; also a provocative amount of skirt-play on the part of the girls, and obvious courtship on the part of both sexes - delightfully rendered, be it said. The first two couples performed again, but this time the men bent forwards then backwards, almost double, in their eagerness, with hands behind their backs, following the girls, while these escaped, yet enticed their partners. All in a quick tempo, doing intricate footwork and stamps.

### The Costumes

The girls in this first group were dressed in very wide, grey, check cotton skirts that must have had a circumference of about twelve metres with an added frill at the bottom, a short-sleeved white voile blouse with a huge lace collar and a low decollete. Flowers in their hair and quantities of gold beads and chains round neck and down the breast added to their attractiveness. The men wore spotless beige trousers and short jackets; brown embroidery



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down the side of the trouser leg, round the cuffs and collar, and down the back of the jacket, and the most enormous finely-plaited straw hat imaginable. It looked like an umbrella and was tilted up at the back, so it protected the eyes from the sun.

### Tobaco

This group performed some intricate footwork, stamping, going round the partner, throwing the hat on the ground and going in circles - but they did not dance on the hat, which is one of my favourite dances. Skirts also played their part - it was another courting dance. But, in correct style, the girls never showed their legs!

### The Costumes

The girls came on brilliantly dressed in bright green, red, orange, yellow and blue dresses picked out in contrasting colours with flounces and edging, which was quite startling. In art schools we are often told never to use such colours together, but here they were enchanting in the bright sunshine, making their wearers look like beautiful parrots or exotic birds of Paradise. Their throats were swathed in gold beads and even their hair was adorned with gold-looking combs. The men wore white cotton trousers with four strips of white lace round the legs; over these, leather pants, white shirts and a red kerchief as a baldrick, a red sash and the enormous straw hats.

This group sang local songs accompanied by a set of five musicians playing guitars. These wore brown trousers and short jackets heavily embroidered front and back, and large felt hats that gave their wearers a look as of umbrellas on stout poles. Then they danced courting dances fairly similar to the previous ones we had been shown, but with variations in rhythm and of a simpler style, albeit using swaying movements from the waist up, leaning over backwards while turning away from their partners, then facing them again using step-dancing.

Next a puppet show 'Mexican style' was announced as taking place on a green sward high up on the slope on a terrace. However, the crowds were so dense that it was quite impossible to see anything. We queued up for ices instead, taking our places in the 75-yard long line of people waiting for refreshments.

Next came a group from Guadalajara itself. The male dancers wore exquisite immaculately white doe-skin trousers, white shirts and a red sash, the usual large hats. They looked so smart and tidy that our young people in the audience were made to seem even more bedraggled and their hair even more unkempt than usual! The girls wore long dresses of the style of 1900 with leg-o-mutton sleeves, tight bodice and cuffs, a high collar with a frill and very wide skirts, and quantities of gold beads down to the waist.

The dances were also courting dances but more in the style of the man showing off his agility and the girl turning, enticing and more restrained in movement, although the criss-crossing of legs in intricate stepping was more complicated than heretofore. The girls were graceful and enticing but they did not lean backwards as much as those of other groups.

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Unlike the programme of another Mexican group that came two years ago, this time no ritual dances were performed at the Horniman Museum Park, regrettably, for Mexico is rich in ritual dances. However, the general impression was that of refreshingly bright colours (showing us up to be dressed in drab colours), broad, natural smiles 'because they enjoyed their dances and not because they were trained to show their teeth' like most eastern European groups are. They were spontaneous, like their programme! They showed us uninhibited dancing, well suited to a hot country like Mexico, in a style free from regimentation. We enjoyed what we saw.

The exhibition at the Horniman Museum was well worth a visit. What a colourful people these Mexicans are in their wares too. Their toys, sweets (including those made to represent death heads!), their furniture, baskets, ceramics - they were all based on an 'idea' like their decorations, and should be an inspiration to our modern so-called 'artists' who lack purpose and life in their work. The decorations were stylizations of a philosophical standard and form of symbols that were fundamental to popular background. In fact, they 'had a meaning' - and therefore were worth doing.

On Sunday, 10th September, the television presented a programme purporting to represent "traditional, authentic" folk dances, performed at the Billingham International Festival. The same Mexican groups were shown there, but what a difference! The dances had been choreographed for the stage and were as reminiscent of the music-hall and as 'phoney' as the Russian ones - for propaganda.

LUCILE ARMSTRONG

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#### A NOTE OF APRECIATION

In giving her thanks to helpers in the production of your SIFD NEWS, I think Lily was unfair to an apparently nameless "somebody".

Somebody has to organize the whole thing; collect contributions, edit them, be a totally reliable centre, make sure it is printed on time, get all the envelopes addressed, chase up people who persistently don't send in required information, and generally be responsible. We all know who that somebody is!

To give the readers an idea of the enormity of the whole task which has provided you with your monthly SIFD NEWS, I have looked back over the last eleven years, for which I have some records. 132 issues have reached you; average, say, 12 pages per issue, plus 132 covers supplied by our few artists, that is 1,716 pages; 1,716 stencils, plus more for circulars, etc. For an average of 300 members that means 475,200 text pages plus 39,600 covers - well over half a million. Just think of one task alone - getting 40,000 envelopes addressed over these years. Not a service to pass without saying  
THANK YOU LILY.

WILL GREEN

## GROUP OR CLASS?

I disagree with George Sweetland's basic assumption made in last month's SIFD NEWS that there is no difference between classes and groups.

All last summer I debated with myself about the class I might attend this winter. Living in London, I have apparently a multitude of choices. I want folk dancing, national dancing, for pleasure, for company, for its music, its variety, and so on. I have in the past tried a number of our classes, and visited several groups (or Groups), as well as some English groups; yet this year I couldn't find a class quite to my taste. I don't want to join in displays, nor wear a costume, nor sit out while those who do rehearse; I don't want to be a teacher; I don't aspire to perfection in any form of dancing. I just enjoy national dancing in good company for "fun", learning a few more dances from time to time. It had to be a group, not a class.

Some classes were too formal - some too slap-happy (two always started 20 to 40 minutes late, with a half-hour interval later); few gave opportunity to meet my fellow dancers; only some classes made me feel welcome; some asked "What are you here for?".

However, in one place, a group, I fell into the swing quite quickly, and I formed the opinion that this is one of the few places in London where real international folk dancing is done regularly, apart from our Cecil Sharp House dances. At Hillel House people seem to dance for all the right reasons, in the right spirit. The happiness of the 100 or so dancers is obvious. Their smiling welcoming of friends and their easy acceptance of strangers is heart-warming. It is primarily for Jewish students, but many dancers are not Jewish, many not students. Every Thursday an hour of tuition is followed by an hour and a half of boisterous cheerful dancing, with no intervals, no wasted time, few announcements. You can dance all the time, or sit out, just chat - no-one minds. Most dances are Israeli, but there are Armenian, Turkish, Balkan, and Romanian dances too. I've done Tarantella, Dinga, Alunelul, Kiigadi Kaagadi, and many more. Partners are many, for the person next to you is usually your partner. Girls ask boys as often as boys ask girls. Most of this could not happen in a class. Teachers aim at "standards" and want to demonstrate how their class is progressing by displays. Standards at Hillel vary from nil to expert. A class on a separate night is given to the display team, membership of which is by audition and invitation.

A valid criticism of Hillel might be self-centredness. Very few members even know of the existence of SIFD and of other groups and classes, and other forms of dancing. This might also be said of a lot of our other groups and classes too, of course.

The 30p admission even includes ad lib cold drinks - which you certainly need before the evening is over. I always come away tired and happy. I wish we had more groups something like this one. I would certainly join them. Instead, apart from this group, I have taken up birdwatching!

WILL GREEN



I agree with Will that there is a difference between a group who just meet for social get-togethers and a class who take their folkdancing a little more seriously, but please Will, don't knock the classes. The principal aim of the SIFD is to preserve folkdancing and maintain standards, and we are lucky to have quite a few people who are dedicated to this end and who devote all their time to studying and teaching authentic style and steps. If this is a little too serious for you, Will, O.K., but please don't imply that the Hillel way is better, and that more fun is to be had. Doing a dance properly, in the company of a partner, or a team, or a set of people all doing the same style and to the same high standard can beat anything else for sheer enjoyment, whereas a "free-for-all" where you are squeezed in with people who never bother to go to a class but are only interested in muddling their way through the dance can put you off ever going to the 'group' again. There is probably room for both types of organizations - just as there are places for ballroom dancing, old-tyme dancing, and punk rock - but the aim of the SIFD is best served by the people who care enough to learn the dances properly, teach them at classes (with, I might add, plenty of fun thrown in), and run social dances for everyone to enjoy. Happy birdwatching!

LILY SOUTHGATE



POLISH DANCING (Plus a little Finnish)

at MOORFIELDS SCHOOL, Bunhill Row, off Old Street, London, E.C.1.

on SATURDAY, 3RD DECEMBER 1977, 2.30 to 10 p.m.

2.30 to 5.30 p.m. Teaching/recapitulating the Polish dances taught by Radek Kowalczyk in London this summer.

6.30 to 10 p.m. A Polish Dance. This will include two short sessions during the evening when some of the Finnish dances taught at the Edinburgh School will be remembered and taught by David Trenaman and Janet Loader.

Refreshments (pate, cheese, rolls, etc.) will be on sale from 5.30 to 6.30 p.m. and again during the evening dance interval.

Please wear costume if possible.

Cost:	SIFD members:	2.30 to 5.30 p.m.	30p
		6.30 to 10 p.m.	30p
		Both sessions	50p
	Non-SIFD members:	50p a session or 75p for both.	

The Course and Dance will be taught and organized by Betty Harvey and members of JACY TACY. Musicians: C. Allen and Caroline Thomas.

TEACHERS' DAY COURSE

The Day Course for Teachers, held on 29th October, went off very well, with seven prospective teachers attending.

The morning's programme consisted of talks and discussions, followed by practical teaching sessions after lunch. The talks and discussions were on four subjects:-

Recorded music - types of recorders and amplifiers, indexing of dances, etc.

Planning a term's syllabus and evening's programme.

Writing down instructions for dances.

Recognising costumes.

All the candidates for the course were very attentive and each talk was followed by some worthwhile discussion. All the information covered in the talks was very useful to would-be teachers, and also to those attending who had had some teaching experience.

In the afternoon practical methods of teaching dances were demonstrated. Again, this was well thought out and most useful to people new to teaching.

The next Teachers' Day Course will be held on 11th March 1978.

LILY SOUTHGATE

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Dear Lily,

The Teacher's Course was super! I much appreciate the amount of work the organizers have put into it. It seems to me that over the years I've been a member the SIFD has become far more professional in outlook. While I maintain the right for duffers like me to do dances of doubtful pedigree for the sheer physical joy of it, I do enjoy a dance more when I can do it correctly. It's nice to know that the SIFD versions are "right". Someday perhaps I'll manage to get a badge or two myself.

LINDA SINGER,  
39 Crafts End,  
Chilton in the Vale,  
Nr. Didcot, Cambs.

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SILVER BADGE EXAMINATION  
(BERT PRICE PROFICIENCY BADGE)

As announced last month, the next Silver Badge Examination will take place on 11th February 1978. Application forms are enclosed with this month's issue of SIFD NEWS and must be received by Charles Steventon by 15th January 1978 (not the 1st as previously announced).

## MIDLAND BRANCH CRAFT SALE AND FOLK DANCE - CHANGE OF VENUE

The Midland Branch Craft Sale and Dance to be held on 3rd December and advertised in last month's issue has been transferred to KINGS NORTON UNITED REFORMED CHURCH at the corner of Watford Road and Woodfall Avenue, Cotteridge, Birmingham, and the Craft Sale will now start at 6.30 p.m. followed by the Dance.

The Midland Branch New Year's Eve Dance, on 31st December, will also be held at the same hall, at 7.30 p.m.

Admission to both Dances will be 50p to non-members of SIFD, 40p to SIFD members.

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### S.I.F.D. ASSOCIATED CLASSES

#### ISRAELI

Every Thursday at Henry Fawcett School, Bowling Green Street, Oval, London, S.E.11. 6.15 to 7.15 p.m. beginners. 7.30 to 9.30 advanced. Tutor: Fiona Howarth.

Every Wednesday at Kidbrooke School, Corelli Road, London, S.E.3. 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. Tutor: Gaye Saunte.

#### EUROPEAN NATIONAL

Every Tuesday at Henshaw's School, Bogs Lane, Starbeck, Harrogate, Yorks. 7.30 to 9.45 p.m. Tutors: Jean & Ian Willson. Contact Harrogate (0423) 55006 for details.

Every Wednesday at St. Alban's School, Baldwins Gardens, 6.00 to 7.00 p.m. beginners; 7.15 to 9.15 p.m. general and advanced. Tutor: Janet Woolbar.

Every Monday at Rutlish School, Watery Lane, London, S.W.20. Beginners 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. Every Wednesday at the same school Advanced 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. Tutor: Charles Steventon, Tel: 01 542 3831.

#### ROMANIAN

Every Thursday at Pimlico School (Chelsea/Westminster Institute), Lupus Street, London, S.W.1. 7 to 9 p.m. Tutor: Alan McLean.

#### HUNGARIAN

Every Friday at Pimlico School (Chelsea/Westminster Institute), Lupus Street, London, S.W.1. 6.30 to 9.30 p.m. Tutor: Alan McLean.

Every Monday at Ashburton High School, Shirley Road, Croydon. 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. Tutor: Alan McLean.

#### POLISH

Every Monday at Christopher Hatton School, Laystall Street, Rosebery Avenue, London, E.C.1. 6.45 to 7.45 p.m. beginners. 8 to 10 p.m. general & advanced. Tutor: Betty Harvey

SIED AFFILIATED GROUPS

CANONS FOLK DANCERS meet every Tuesday at Park High School, Thistlecroft Gardens, Stanmore, Middx. (nearest station Canons Park) from 7.45 to 10 p.m. during term time. Further details from Joan G.S. Goodman, 13 Woodgrange Close, Kenton, Harrow, Middx. Tel: 01 907 9857.

BARNET INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE CLUB meet every Friday from October to June at Hadley Memorial Hall, Hadley Highstone, Barnet, 8 to 11 p.m. Further information from Janet Heathfield, Tel: 01 368 5345.

BARLOW INTERNATIONAL FOLKDANCE GROUP meets every Tuesday at Wilbraham Road United Reformed Church Hall, Chorlton, Manchester 21, from 7.30 to 10 p.m. Further details from Alan Williams, 47 South Drive, Manchester (Tel: 061 881 7744) or Philip Lloyd, 268 Upper Chorlton Road, Manchester (Tel: 061 881 3613).

HARROW GREEN FOLK DANCE GROUP meets every Wednesday during term time at Daneford School, Turin Street (off Bethnal Green Road), London, E.2. 7 to 9.15 p.m. General International with some English. Tutor: Kelsey Blundell plus occasional guest teachers. For further information contact the Secretary: Alex Beauclerc, Tel. 01 701 3785.

RAINMAKERS INTERNATIONAL DANCE GROUP meets every Friday from 8 to 10 p.m. at The Catholic Church Hall, Albert Street, Old Stevenage, Herts.

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NOTICE TO AFFILIATED GROUPS

If you have asked me specifically to include your group in the above list and it still hasn't appeared, I'm afraid the fault lies with "the system". In accordance with the Constitution, affiliated groups have to apply to the Committee, who decide whether to accept them. When they are accepted and the fee paid, the Committee should notify me so that I may add them to the distribution list and also include them in the above list, if they ask me to do so. This is where the system seems to fall down. In several cases I have not been notified by the Committee - hence the omissions. I am sorry about this and am endeavouring to sort it out with the Committee. The groups themselves may also like to take it up with the Committee to see if things can be improved. ED.

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WOULD ALL MEMBERS WHO CHANGE THEIR ADDRESS  
PLEASE NOTIFY THE EDITOR, AS WELL AS  
THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

SUNDAY DANCES

Dec. 4th Cecil Sharp House, Regent's Park Road, London, N.W.1.  
M.C. Margery Latham

Jan. 8th Cecil Sharp House, Regent's Park Road, London, N.W.1.  
Four M.C.s

7 to 10 p.m. Admission: 50p members, 75p non-members.

On 4th December there will be a demonstration by ANACHNU Israeli Group (taught by Gaye Saunte).

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WHAT'S ON

Dec. 3rd MIDLANDS BRANCH CRAFT SALE & DANCE. See notice on page 10.

3rd POLISH HALF-DAY COURSE & EVENING DANCE. See page 8.

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\*\* Dec. 4th SIFD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING at Cecil Sharp House in "Storrow" \*\*  
\*\* 4.30 p.m. \*\*  
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Dec. 9th CHRISTMAS PARTY at Hadley Memorial Hall, Hadley Highstone, Barnet, organized by Barnet International Folk Dance Club. 8 to 11.15 p.m. M.C. Henry Morris. Musicians: Caroline Thomas and Henry Morris. Admission £1 including wine and refreshments. Enquiries to Janet Heathfield, Tel. 01 368 5345.

10th BALKAN PARTY organized by Ken Ward's Yugoslav Class, at Moorfields School, Bunhill Row, E.C.1. 7 to 11 p.m. Tickets £1.25 IN ADVANCE from John White, 10 Durnsford Avenue, Wimbledon Park, S.W.19. Tel: 947 2417 (enclose s.a.e.).

10th ITALIAN DAY COURSE Hugh Myddelton School, Corporation Row, Clerkenwell Green, E.C.1. 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Tutor: Margery Latham. Fee 50p SIFD members, £1 non-members.

16th/18th WEEKEND AT DUNFORD

18th YATRAN UKRAINIAN DANCE COMPANY at Wembley Conference Centre, 7.30 p.m. Tickets from £1.70 to £3.80.

31st IVAN STEPANOV & HIS BALALAIKAS & DANCERS. Traditional Russian songs, music and dancing. Queen Elizabeth Hall, London. 3 p.m. and 7.45 p.m. Tickets from £1.00 to £2.80.

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Fiona Howarth will be organizing another HAMA'AGAL WORKSHOP AND PARTY on SATURDAY 4TH MARCH 1978 at the Oval, London. More details later.



A  
Merry  
Christmas  
and a Happy  
New Year!

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Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia i Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku  
Glad Jul och ett Gott Nytt Ar  
Joyeux Noel et heureuse année  
Feliz Natal e Prospero Ano Novo\*  
Room said Joulu Puhi ja Uut Aastat  
Sarba tori Fericite La Multi Ani!  
No lag Vah Guith Agus Blen Nua Fey Wa sha  
Eado kun Haw Bruk ha Ou Shu to kun Brukhta  
Zoriontsu Eguberri Zoriontsu Berri Urte  
Yeni Yilinizi kuthar Saadetler Di lerim  
She no raavor Nor Dariyev Pari Gag hand  
Kala Chris tou gena kai Ef tik hes to Neon Ethos  
Maliga yang Pas ko Masaga nang Ba gong Taon  
Furaha Nyin giza Siku-kuu Raha Nyin giza Du hosa  
Una feliz  
Navidad y  
\*prospero  
año nuevo  
Il-Milied  
it-Tajjeb  
\*\*Is-Sena  
it-Tajjba!

Kana Nofagoya hot Pleel Jamia Ahna!

Buon Natale e felice Capo d'Anno!

Kobotama Na Yesu! Sretam Božić!

Nadolic Llawen! Feliç Nadal!

Betarin arozo baray salnow!

Priecigus Ziemas Svetkus!

Subha nath thalak Vewa!

Gledileg Jol og Nyar!

Selamah Tahun Baru!