



SIFD NEWS

February

2002

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

Internet website: www.sifd.org

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The typing is done by Lily Avery. The printing, packaging and posting
is done by Dalila Heath.

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This month's cover was produced by Simon Guest and is from a photograph he took
at the Koprivshitsa Festival in Bulgaria.

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JUDY PENALUNA

On 11th January, Judy was admitted to Manorlands, a Sue Ryder home near Keighley. She has been undergoing chemotherapy for ovarian cancer since July 2001, having had an emergency hysterectomy in September 2000. She is fighting a very brave battle and remains positive, her objective being to get well enough, using visualisation, meditation and diet, to be able to come home. We both attended the Bristol Cancer Help Centre last November.

Her dancing and membership of the S.I.F.D. are very important parts of her life and she sends love and greetings to all her friends. Your thoughts and prayers for Judy would be much appreciated.

Our son, Matthew (nearly 10), is fine and coping with the situation very well.

GEORGE PENALUNA

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We are very sorry to say that, since writing the above, Judy's husband, George, has informed us that Judy died on 18th January. Our thoughts and sympathy go to him and their son, Matthew.

Ed.

EASTBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL, 2002

In the November *News*, Julie Korth wrote to inform you that we have another excellent line-up of teachers, callers and bands for the International side of the Festival. Listed in alphabetical order, they include:

Armenian Dance Theatre Group
Cloudburst
Dunav Balkan Group
Kerry Fletcher
Roberto Haddon
Dalila Heath
London Bulgarian Choir
Cory Verheijen
Marina Wolstenholme

As you can tell from the billing, we hope to have a good mixture of Western and Eastern dancing, taught by experts. Please plan to be at Eastbourne from Friday 3rd May until Monday 6th May.

On the Social side, which is my brief, Julie will be easing you into Festival mood on Friday night with a Welcome Dance in the gym, to live music by *Cloudburst*. We welcome this band, led by Martin Butler, back to the Festival. On Saturday night I will be calling the General International Costume Dance to more music by *Cloudburst*. (I can't say anything too complimentary about the band as they were set up by me to play for the *Rainmakers* about 24 years ago and I play with them!) It's usually a varied and lively evening, with some workshop input and will include a dance demonstration by Dalila's Armenian Group.

We are delighted that the *Dunav Balkan Group* is returning to Eastbourne to play for the Sunday night Balkan Dance. Marina is leading the Balkan Dance so expect another excellent evening. We hope that *The London Bulgarian Choir* will be joining us for that evening.

Julie will be co-ordinating the usual International Tea Dance (with workshop reminders) on Monday afternoon, in the gym. This is for those who like to breathe and move, while I will be upstairs in the crush waving the 'international flag'.

Julie and I will be retiring from organising the International side of the Festival after this year. Janet Douglas (from Bognor Regis) has agreed to help Jan Mulreany who is already on the Committee representing the SIFD so, 'watch this space'!

Please come and support the Society – it's an excellent showcase for us at a major Festival, and we can only be successful if you come.

Jill Bransby.

Ed.Note: Attached to this month's SIFD NEWS will be a sheet giving details of this year's festival. Please detach and fold in two; also a booking form to be detached and sent to the address given.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Lily,

In response to Fiona Howarth's request for information about hand positions, I feel hesitant to venture into print as I have only been doing Polish dancing for a short period but I have asked around and this is what I have been told.

The normal position of hands in Polish dances is for the hands to be on the waist in the form of a fist with the back of the hands facing forward. I have been advised to place my hands slightly forward rather than exactly at the side but I believe this is to disguise a spreading waistline rather than an integral part of the style. Of course, this is far too straightforward for folk dancing and there are exceptions. In the mountains in the South, Silesia and possibly on the North coast they do not form a fist but have an open hand with the fingers pointing forward and the thumb pointing backwards.

MIKE GILBERT

Dear Lily

In delayed response to Fiona Howarth's querying versions of 'hands on hips' (December issue, p.11) I offer some Polish observations, now prompted by your chiding and a chat with Betty Harvey. Not that I can contribute very much on the issue, my personal experience being limited to only a few of the many regions of Poland. I should in any case doubt the wisdom of attempting to draw up any 'definitive list', even of Polish examples alone.

One may of course make generalisations. Betty confirms my memory that in *Jacy Tacy* we adopted a general rule of using clenched fists (Tony Parkins' example no. 3) for our arrangements of the 'national' dances (krakowiak, kujawiak, oberek, mazur and polonez), but fingers forwards thumbs back (Tony Parkins' example no. 1) for all regional dances. In the colour plates illustrating the *Atlas of Polish Folk Costume*, a series of volumes published in the 1950s and each devoted to a particular region of Poland, those depicting any hands-on-hips show the fingers-forward version except for those on Kaszuby (north Poland) and Pyrzyce (north-east) which both show clenched fists. This may be of no greater significance than mere coincidence, the posed individuals or couples depicted being stationary, not dancing. Illustrations in my other few books on the regions all tend to favour the fingers-forward concept, as it happens.

There are always exceptions. One in *Jacy Tacy* for example was Jacok, a dance from the Rzeszów region, which required the girls to have clenched fists rather closer together than on hips and held with some tension to allow the elbows to 'vibrate' in a manner peculiar to this region.

It should be observed that practice may also be influenced by the dictates of costume. In the mountainous regions in the extreme south of Poland an essential feature of the men's costume is always a substantial broad belt of thick, elaborately-tooled, leather fastened by buckled straps across the front and worn fairly loose around the hips. This item would make the clenched-fist version very uncomfortable and so the fingers-forward version is always seen here, and adopted by the women also. The same sort of belt is intrinsic to the men's costume of the Sądecka region leading to the same practice. In the Cieszyn area, where town fashion has largely ousted the mountain costume, women wear a beautiful lattice of fine chains as a girdle over skirt and apron which defies a clumsy clenched-fist approach, but is proudly promoted by the more decorous fingers-forward version. In *Tatry* and other current Polish groups the fingers-forward version tends to be reserved for these Śląsk and Góraliski regions and clenched fists used elsewhere.

To expound a little on 'clenched fists' perhaps one may add that Polish style requires the elbows to be held forward at a slight angle from the body rather than sideways in continuous alignment with it and with each other. The fist should be kept in strong alignment with the forearm; if allowed to bend at the wrist the sagging-elbowed KFC syndrome may result. In the fingers-forward version I think we hold the fingers rather straighter than in Tony Parkins' illustration, avoiding the 'Sergeant Wilson' look.

TONY LATHAM
Flat 9, 118 Avenue Rd
London W3 8QG

Dear Lily,

Reading Tony Latham's article, "Warszawianka Varsovienne Varsoviana" in the January NEWS set me thinking, when I came to the last two paragraphs concerning the right or wrong way from which positions regional Obereks and Waltzes should be started when in couples.

I, of course, remember, as Tony says, when Radek Kowalczyk was teaching Jacy Tacy Walczyk Lubelski (little waltz from Lublin) our dancers found it uncomfortable getting from the single circle into couple waltzing, with girls backing line of dance and stepping from the left foot and boys facing and stepping from the right foot for the turning step. In retrospect, I must admit I can't see why that seemed so awkward! Anyhow, Radek agreed to change it as we now do it - boys making a half turn towards the girls at the end of the single line waltzing, thus facing the girls for the more familiar start.

Our dancing stemmed originally from Jozef Walczak's tuition and I can't remember any Oberek or Waltzes starting from this position which we found uncomfortable (in any case, Walczak's Lublin Waltz was entirely different from our present one). Generally speaking, a great many Obereks start with flourishes, turns or accents and then flow easily into couple turning from across line of dance, with either ballroom or peasant hold, or into shoulder/waist hold for the Oberek "run".

Checking back also into my notes made when visiting regional groups in Poland, I can't find much detail about the matter but Walc Szybki (fast waltz) was certainly taught me by a village group in the Sacz region with couples facing across line of dance, and likewise Oberek Tostocki was taught me by a group in Poznan from that same position.

Anyhow, what I really feel is that there can be no rules, though guidelines are useful on the subject. Polish dancing has so very much diversity. More important, I think, is to try and assimilate some of the character and style and achieve these lovely dances with both enjoyment and ease.

BETTY HARVEY
30 Regent Square, London E3 3HQ

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CAR STICKERS AND ENAMEL BADGES

We are always looking for ways to make the Society more well known, and one of the options is to redesign our car stickers to include the web address. If any budding designers have any idea for a suitable car sticker (much the same size as the existing one), please let me know (address on p.2).

If anyone knows where we can get enamel badges made at a reasonable cost, this is something we should also like to know.

MIKE GILBERT (Chairman)

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All material for the March issue of SIFD NEWS must reach the Editor IN WRITING by 17th February. Please print in BLOCK CAPITALS all names of people, places and dances, unless typewritten.

NOTICE OF BALKAN ROM & ARMENIAN CD RELEASES

"Fire in the Feet" and "Tutti Frutti"

As some readers will know, the Findhorn Midsummer Dance and Music Festival has for the last two years had a special focus on Balkan and Rom dance, for which the Australian-based Balkan band "Xenos" has provided fabulous live music. They won't be back this summer, alas, but their authentic and wild electric Gypsy sound can now be heard in your own home, thanks to the release of two new CDs. The first, "Fire in the Feet", is a compilation made specially for us of the greatest dance hits from "Xenos"'s first three CDs (My Mother Said, Let the Swine Loose, and New Moves). It includes the following tracks: Sao Roma, Zajko Kokorajko, Mazo Mazo, Tresnitsa, Oj Dada Sale, Kosovsko Oro, Ani More Nuse, O Postari, Yolla Sofer, Orfano, Lute Lute, Romanela, Linsey's Cocek, Davulja, Allah Allah/Kameñite, Pirava Daje. "Xenos" have travelled far and wide in the southern Balkans to learn the electric Macedonian Rom music they play, so if you are familiar with the music of Fergus Mustafov, Yuri Yunakov or Esma and Ansambl Teodosievski, you'll know what to expect.

I have compiled a 32-page booklet, sold separately, with accompanying descriptions for the dances, including Cocek and variations, Pravo/Valle and variations, Jeni Jol, Tsifteteli, Romska Gajda, Ani More Nuse, Indijski Cocek, Sa, Raikos, Embrobis, Tsourapia, Karsilama, Romsko Bitolsko.

The second CD is "Xenos"'s latest release, "Tutti Frutti", which received an extremely favourable review in the last issue of Songlines ("splendid, energetic and powerful...a triumph"). "Tutti Frutti" features searing vocals by twin sisters Anne and Lee Hildyard, plus Anne on saxophone, gaida, and zurna; Rob Bebster on cumbus and electric bass; electric guitar by Philip Griffin, whom some of you might remember from Zivko Firfov in the early '90s; and darabuka and other percussion by Fuat Sazimanoski, a Macedonian Rom ex-patriate in Australia. All the tunes are highly danceable, particularly the haunting Cirikli which is perfect for Jeni Jol. No dance notes are yet available but the "Fire in the Feet" booklet can be applied to "Tutti Frutti" as well if you know enough about the rhythms to choose appropriate combinations of steps and music.

Each CD costs £13, the booklet £4, and postage per order is £1. Order from Laura Shannon, Rose of the Heart, 227 The Park, Findhorn IV363TZ, Scotland (please allow 6 to 8 weeks for delivery), or from www.xenosmusic.com

"Gorani: Traditional Dances from the Armenian Homeland"

A new CD of Armenian dance music, produced and recorded in Yerevan by Laura Shannon and Shakeh Avanesian.

In May and June 2001, Shakeh Avanesian and I travelled to Armenia to research dances and to record a CD of traditional music. It was an amazing journey, full of encounters and adventures. The dances we learned made a deep impression on us as they are quite different from other Armenian dances we already knew. We were fortunate to work with Naira Kilichyan, an ethnographer specialising in my very favourite type of dances: women's village ritual dances, full of powerful symbolism - rain serpents, magic numbers, pagan goddesses, earth and sky, love and harvest. Her teachers were the ones who first began to collect Armenian folk dances from the many refugees who fled to Yerevan for sanctuary following the genocide of 1915, bringing little with them apart from their memories and their folk traditions. Naira is the direct inheritor of this lineage of research and was truly delighted to discover our interest and to pass her knowledge on.

As well as learning dances, we made arrangements to record a CD, partly including music for the new dances and partly recording new versions of traditional favourites such as Papouri. Shakeh had travelled to Yerevan in December 2000 to

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meet the fine musicians of the Shoghakn Ensemble and prepare the groundwork for the recording. Aleksan Harutyunyan, our music director, managed to assemble some of the very finest musicians in the country: Karine Hovhanissyan, Gevork Dabaghyan, Aleksan and Hasmik Harutyunyan; Norayr Davityan, Varazdat Hovhanissyan and Kamo Khachateryan. In our night sessions in the recording studio, hidden inside a crumbling mansion of dark pink tufa stone in the remote Gypsy quarter of Yerevan, the music and dances of ancient Armenia came to vibrant life.

These extremely skilled and talented musicians understood what we were after - an homage to the most ancient of Armenian dances, music and instruments, re-creating the landscapes and dance circles of former times - and did their very best to create it for us. They combined the most heart-opening of Armenian traditional instruments such as the kanoun, duduk, kamantcha and shepherd's flutes (and of course some zurna and dhol), and played sometimes for 6 to 8 minutes, absolutely wonderful for dancing. In the end they too were astonished at the beauty of what we created together. I will never forget how, at the end of our all-night mixing session, we all wept when we heard for the first time the exquisite and powerful Sheighana. All in all, the music they made is indeed some of the loveliest Armenian music we have ever heard, if we do say so ourselves!

The dances included are: Mairam Govand, Yerek Votk, Papouri, Hovs Bashi, Sheighana, Shavali, Nare, Tamzara, Shghkrtan Aghchig, Gorani, Maymuki, Lourke, Tzolaki, Asmarani and Nay Bar.

The Gorani CD also has an accompanying 32-page booklet of dance notes, sold separately. The CD costs £13, the booklet £4, and postage per order is £1. Order from Laura Shannon, Rose of the Heart, 227 The Park, Findhorn IV36 3TZ, Scotland (please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery) or from Shakeh Avanesian, Flat 3, Lister House, 11 Wimpole Street, London W1G 9ST (Tel: 020 7637 7684).

I shall be reducing my workshop teaching in 2002 to focus on the eternal dissertation, but Shakeh will be available to teach the Gorani dances at workshops both in the U.K. and abroad.

LAURA SHANNON



MILTON KEYNES FOLK FESTIVAL

Plans are progressing for the Milton Keynes Folk Festival. This is still dependent on the organisers getting the grants they need but if it does go ahead the dates will be Thursday, 4th, to Sunday, 7th July, with the workshops on the Saturday and Sunday and concerts on the Sunday. This festival is changing its format from previous years and the S.I.F.D. will have considerable input in arranging the workshops and providing teams for the display. We shall also need people to attend the workshops and see the concerts. So, put the dates in your diaries now.

MIKE GILBERT (Chairman)



ARMENIAN CLASSES

Dalila Heath is commencing her monthly Armenian dance class every THIRD Tuesday of the month (commencing 15th January 2002) at the Dance Studio, Priory Community Centre, Acton Lane, London W3 For details call 01707 642774.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Mar.2nd WORKSHOP IN IPSWICH WITH CORRY VERHEIJEN, 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. in Bealings Village Hall, near Ipswich. Cost: £10.00. Please book with Sally Fletcher, 106 Westerfield Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 2XN. Tel: 01473 252824. PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A CHANGE OF DATE FROM THAT GIVEN LAST MONTH (23rd Feb.).

S.I. Mar.2nd RAINMAKERS DAY COURSE with Marina Wolstenholme at Radwell Village Hall, near Baldock, Herts. 10.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. Marina will be teaching a variety of dances from Japan and Eastern Europe - Romania, Hungary, Russia, Bulgaria. Cost: £6.00 for full day, £4.00 for half a day. Further information from Peter or Jill Bransby on 01462 457791.

S.I. Mar.9th GREEK DANCE DAY COURSE with Maggie O'Regan at St.Ursula's School, Bristol, with the Bristol International Folkdance group. 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. with a lunch break; bring your own lunch. Cost: £5.00. Optional evening meal at a Greek restaurant. Further details from Christine Tollerton, 15 Chardstock Avenue, Coombe Dingle, Bristol BS9 2RY (enclose s.a.e.). Tel: 0117 968 3974.

Mar.9th BRITISH BULGARIAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY "MARTENITSA" PARTY, 3.00 to 5.00 p.m. at Brady Centre, 192-196 Hanbury Street, London E.1. English and Bulgarian dancing.

S.I. Mar.9th S.I.F.D. WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH SPRING DANCE, 7.30 to 10.30 p.m. at the refurbished, heated United Reformed Church Hall, Station Road (B4101), Knowle. M.C.: Maggie Kaye. £2.00. Bring-and-share supper.

Mar.16th/17th WEEKEND WORKSHOP WITH EDDY TIJSSSEN in Bognor Regis. Course £32. Optional Balkan meal on Saturday evening £10. Further details from Janet Douglas, 92 Rose Green Road, Bognor Regis PO21 3EQ. Tel: 01243 265010.

S.I. Mar.16th/17th ROMANIAN WORKSHOP WEEKEND WITH SILVIU CIUCIUMIS in Manchester and Calver, Derbyshire, organized by Barlow I.F.D.G. and Derbyshire Dancers. Saturday 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Sunday 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. £12.00 for one day, £20.00 for the whole course including a Dance on the Saturday. Further details from Helen Clancy on 0161 881 0442.

Mar.22nd/24th A SPRING DANCE CELEBRATION of dances from the Balkans, Romania and Russia at Freshwater Bay, Isle of Wight. Tutor: Bob Neal. Contact: Pamela Le Goaziou, 55 Mitchell Road, Bedhampton, Hants. PO9 3QA. Tel: 023 9264 1028. THIS WEEKEND IS FULLY BOOKED. WAITING LIST.

Apr.19th/21st BULGARIAN DANCE COURSE WITH EDDY TIJSSSEN at Derwent Bank, Lake District. Choice of General or Advanced course, or both courses. Non-dancing friends and family welcome. Full board en-suite accommodation £92.00. Each course £15.00. Details and booking forms from Cathy Meunier, 115 Chetwynd Road, London NW5 1DA. (s.a.e. please).

Apr.26th/29th 19TH GREAT ALNE LONG WEEKEND. See pp.9 & 10.

May 3rd/6th EASTBOURNE FESTIVAL. See p.3 and enclosures.

July 4th/7th MILTON KEYNES FOLK FESTIVAL. To be confirmed.

July 9th/14th INTERNATIONAL EISTEDDFOD, LL'ANGOLLEN.

July 27th/Aug.3rd S.I.F.D. SUMMER SCHOOL AT DURHAM. Enquiries to Roger Sturge, 0117 962 1802.

Events covered by S.I.F.D. insurance are marked "S.I.". Please note that the onus is on you to mark each event when sending in the notice if your event is covered by our insurance.

GREAT ALNE - Your Questions Answered

Have you ever seen adverts for the Great Alne Long Weekend and wondered what it was like? Well, now is your chance to find out - read on.

Where is Great Alne? Great Alne is a small village in Warwickshire, a 2½ miles east of the town of Alcester on the B4089 to Wootton Wawen.

How does it come to be the venue for an annual folk weekend? David and Linda Bradley live in the village and it was Linda who suggested using the village hall as the centre for the weekend, when André Hobro first had the idea of organising it.

What is the idea behind these weekends? To provide an opportunity for people to spend a relaxed and informal weekend in pleasant, rural surroundings and share a wide range of folk experiences.

How long have these weekends been taking place? 2002 will be the 19th year - the first one was held in 1984.

When do these weekends happen? Usually over the weekend before the May Day Holiday weekend. There have been exceptions because of Easter being late, but this year it will be as normal - from the 26th to the 29th of April.

What happens at these weekends? There is a programme of workshops each day, which cover all sorts of folk dancing plus music, singing and a variety of other activities. Over the years these have included handbell ringing, crafts, circus skills and short-wave radio - it all depends on who is there and what they want to lay on for other people to try. In the afternoons there are walks and cycle rides organised, and the evenings start with a music session followed by dancing, often to live music for much of the time.

What sort of dancing is involved? Anything that could loosely be described as 'folk' dancing has been included over the years: English, Scottish, Morris and Sword dancing and International folk from all over Europe and beyond. In addition there has been Appalachian, Line-dancing, Cajun, Salsa, Swing, Jive etc. Do I need dancing experience? No, anyone is welcome to come and have a go and you don't need to bring a partner. The dance workshops are run by a variety of teachers with experience in different types of dance and all dances are taught from scratch. Many regular attenders are experienced dancers, but all of us, including those who lead and teach, like to join in trying new things and we are always pleased to help newcomers along.

Can anyone join in the music sessions? If you have an instrument and can produce some sort of reasonably acceptable noise from it, you can join in! Reading music a bit helps, but is not essential - a lot of people learn folk music by ear. The sessions include British and American traditions, European dance music, often Balkan and Israeli amongst others. We play together for fun, to learn new music and styles, and for a good deal of the evening dancing. You can play as much or as little as you want, and if you want to try a new instrument or don't have one to bring, people will often lend you one.

How long does the weekend last? It usually starts early on the Friday evening and finishes on the Monday afternoon.

Do I have to book for the whole weekend? No. You can come for as long or short a time as you want. There is some financial advantage in booking and paying in advance, but many people just turn up and pay at the time. If it is your first time, try a day to see how you like it, or you can just come for an evening, if that is all you can fit in - maybe Friday evening, which is specially geared to dancers with less experience.

If I come for the weekend, where do I stay? There is camping by the hall or in a nearby field, if you have a caravan, camper van or tent and a few people sleep in the hall itself. If you don't fancy that, there are plenty of varied places to stay nearby - caravan sites, bed and breakfast, hotels or the YHA - more information is available on request.

What happens about food? Lunch is available to buy each day: a choice of soup, baked potatoes, sausages, cheese, rolls, etc. Tea, coffee and squash are provided mid-morning and evening and you can use the kitchen to make drinks etc. at other times. There is also a pub just round the corner, which does very good food, and a choice of take-aways and restaurants within easy reach. And talking of pubs, the club adjoining the village hall is open each evening and weekend lunchtimes and we are allowed to use their bar.

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What else is there to do nearby? Alcester is an attractive small town with half-timbered buildings. Coughton Court and Ragley Hall are two nearby mansions well worth a visit. The many attractions of Stratford-on-Avon are only 6 miles away, Mary Arden's house and Anne Hathaway's cottage nearer than that. There are pleasant walks in the Great Alne Hills, Oversley Wood - it is usually just about the right time to see the bluebells at their best - or try the Stratford canal towpath. That is only to mention the immediate neighbourhood - you will need to extend your stay to do the area justice.

What is on the programme for this year? All the usual things and some new ones: International dance will be taught by Karin Bellaart from Holland - this year her dances are from the new Interfolk CD; Israeli by Adrian Pointon; French by Roger Dennis; Cajun and Salsa by Linda Moon; Scottish, German and NW Morris by Paul Lindley. Paul will also organise handbell ringing once again; Music sessions of British, American and International folk will be led by David Bradley and Gordon Taylor, and, as last year, Don Ward will also be leading French tunes for those who play by ear; song workshops this year include Balkan with Erik van Schelven and 16th Century English with James Hobro. Weather permitting, there will be walks and a cycle ride. On Friday evening there will be some straightforward English Playford dancing with Frances Richardson as well as easy international. Saturday and Sunday evening International dances will be MCd this year for the first time by Anne Leach, interspersed with highlights from the day's workshop sessions. Together with surprise entertainment spots and late night singing round the fire for night owls, this promises to be the usual varied and exciting programme. Since last year the village hall has also been extended and refurbished, so it now has an improved hall with a stage at the end and changing rooms and toilets behind.

How do I find out more? More information and copies of the programme and booking form can be obtained by ringing André on 02476 - 418949 or 0121-770-6098.

Alternatively contact Linda Bradley, tel. 01789-488568 or e-mail Davidbradley@beeb.net or Carolyn Page, tel. 01372-722380 or Carolyn_olive_page@yahoo.com

Or you could ask me!

Maggie Kaye (0121-608-1437) or margaretkaye@cableinet.co.uk

PS. If you are already a convert to the attractions of these weekends, pass a copy of this on to your friends and persuade them to come along too!

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SIFD Weekends Away , 2002

The following are details of week-ends of folk-dancing and walking arranged for 2002.
Do join us!

(SI) Halsway Manor, Crowcombe, 3rd -6th May (Bank holiday, 3 days)

Halsway Manor, which is dedicated to Folk Dancing, is beautifully situated on the edge of the Quantock Hills and is located between Taunton and Minehead. It is close to both the North Somerset and North Devon coasts and to Exmoor. There are some beautiful walks in the locality and a full-day excursion will be organised on Sunday with a coach provided both to drop people at a suitable starting point, and to collect them again at the end of the afternoon. The weekend starts at tea-time on the Friday and finishes with a cream tea on the Monday

It is also possible to extend the visit until the Tuesday morning, thus avoiding return travel on the Bank Holiday. There will be varied dance programme and probably some teaching. Inclusive cost for 3 nights about 135 pounds. Accommodation in double and twin rooms and larger rooms, which may be used as twins. *Would those who signed the booking sheet last May, please confirm if they will be coming.*

(SI) Dunford, Midhurst, West Sussex., 13th - 15th December

This will be our usual pre-Christmas weekend (clear preference having been expressed by participants for this weekend rather than for 20th- 22nd December). Dunford is an interesting house, situated at the foot of the South Downs, formerly the home of Richard Cobden, well-known for his part in the passing of the Corn Laws. The week-end includes dancing, carols and walks, together with Christmas fare. All rooms have en suite facilities (singles, doubles and twins). Price about 113 pounds (dependent on numbers).

Further details and bookings: Jack Richardson, Chemical Engineering Dept, University, Swansca, SA2 8PP (Tel: 01792 295194, work; 403154, home)

CHRISTMAS YU-FOLK FESTIVAL 2001/2002 BELGRADE

Eight of us from England joined people from Holland, Switzerland, Italy and Germany to celebrate the life and dances of Ciga Despotovic in Belgrade over Christmas and the New Year. There was dancing day (and night for those who could last the distance!) Ciga didn't teach, but he joined in some of the dances and was serenaded by Serbian folk singers.

Paja and Curca taught dances we had attempted before at Bognor. Paja's two new dances were Svatorka and Smederevka (both from central Serbia). Milan Graovac also taught dances from central Serbia (Setnza, Baba Visnjo, Kacerac, Carlama, Golija, Hajducka and Moravac). His daughter Jelena explained that these are the essential basis of all Serbian dances; in fact the first two are children's dances. The style in central Serbia is proud and upright and when arms are akimbo; (re Fiona Howarth's Dec. letter) the lady's are on the sides at waist level, fingers forward, thumbs back, elbows out. The man has one hand resting in the other (palms facing away from the body) at waist level in the small of the back, elbows out.

Dragan Micic taught dances from Banat in North Serbia, notably Rukavice Prstima (only three not too difficult figures) and Ficko – an unusual wedding dance where the man swivels the woman's hips with his hands (great fun ... for some..). Macedonian dances were courtesy of Ibrahim Rizevski , he was magic, but the dances were still tricky with difficult rhythms especially Jedanestorka (11/8) a mixture of Macedonian and Bulgarian.

We were given a performance of folk dance and song by the Gradimir B team, and despite snow, ice and slush we all trekked to the Ethnographic Museum where costumes and artefacts from all the historic regions of Yugoslavia are on display. This photo shows traditional costumes from Montenegro on display in the museum..

JANET AND JOHN DOUGLAS

