SIFD NEWS APRIL 2002



THE BALKANS. Left: a couple from Shkodër (Scutari), Albania. Center: a man from Adrianople (Edirne), Turkey. Right: a woman from Thessaloniki (Salonica), Greece.

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

Internet website: www.sifd.org

EDITOR: Lily Avery (Mrs.), 16 Willow Drive, Little Common, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex TN39 4PX. Tel: 01424 845866.

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

The cover this month, showing costumes from the Balkans, is reproduced by kind permission of Dover Publications and is from their book, "Folk Costumes of Europe Colouring Book", part of their Pictorial Archive Series, published in the U.K. by Constable & Co. Ltd.

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CHAIRMAN: Mike Gilbert, 2 Clarendon Road, Cambridge CB2 2BH. Tel: 01223

700718. e-mail: Mike.G1@btinternet.com

TREASURER: Judith Payling (Mrs.), Rosebank, 56 Quickley Lane, Chorleywood,

Rickmansworth, Herts. WD3 5AF.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY & Alan Morton, 26 Durham Road, Harrow, Middx. HA1 4PG. GROUPS LIAISON OFFICER: Tel: 020 8427 8042.

PUBLICITY OFFICER: George Sweetland, 28 Hayes Court, Camberwell New Road, London SE5 OTQ. Tel: 020 7701 3785.

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S.I.F.D. DAY COURSE - FRENCH

<u>Date</u>: Saturday, 13th April 2002
<u>Place</u>: Trefusis, Cecil Sharp House
<u>Time</u>: 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.
<u>Cost</u>: £6.00 for S.I.F.D. members
£8.00 for non-members

This month's course will be French dances, taught by Joan and Simon Guest. There will be some new dances to add to your repertoire and an opportunity to revise and revive some "old friends" from various regions of France. If you have a special request you would like them to include, please contact Joan and Simon as soon as possible. Tel: 019925 77065.

JANET WOOLBAR

All material for the May issue of SIFD NEWS must reach the Editor <u>IN WRITING</u> by 17th April. Please print in BLOCK CAPITALS all names of people, places and dances unless typewritten.

SAFETY EQUIPMENT AND INSURANCE

Those of you who read "English Dance and Song" will have seen some articles on the safety of electronic equipment and in particular the use of Portable Appliance Testing (PAT). The articles give the impression that the E.F.D.S.S. insurers are insisting that all equipment used at any dance would have to have Portable Appliance Testing carried out. If interpreted strictly, this would include kettles, all cables, extension leads, plugs, microphones, cassette players, any equipment brought in by the tutor, fairy lights for decorating the hall - in fact everything you can think of. I do not know if that is actually the case, but that is the impression they have given.

This presents a number of problems in that the PAT tests were actually intended for equipment in the work place and applying them to leisure activities is not all that easy. Fortunately, our own insurers are less fussy and require that we (and all groups using our insurance) can demonstrate that we have exercised due diligence and not been negligent with equipment but do not require formal proof of testing. However, they do recommend that annual tests are carried out and also that Health and Safety legislation is complied with. Equipment should only be hired in or bought second—hand after proof of testing in the previous year is obtained. We will be ensuring that the more complex S.I.F.D. equipment itself does have the PAT carried out.

If anyone has any queries on this, please contact me.

MIKE GILBERT (Chairman)



PUBLICITY L'APEL BADGES

In spite of our best efforts, many enthusiasts in the dance and folk worlds know very little about the S.I.F.D. We are planning to produce a lapel badge saying something on the lines of "Want to know about International Folk Dancing? ASK ME" to be worn at festivals and dances by members who are willing to provide a suitable answer. Designing a badge which is legible from a distance but not too large will not be easy, so if anyone has hidden (or wellknown) talents as a designer, please get your thinking caps on and let me have your ideas.

MIKE GILBERT (Chairman)



BALALAIKA DANCE GROUP

As many of you will know, the Balalaika Dance Group has ceased to exist. They were a London-based group formed in the 1950/60s to perform and encourage greater appreciation of the dances of the Soviet Union (Russia, Ukraine, Moldavia, Georgia, Uzbekistan etc.) and to encourage friendship between the peoples of Great Britain and the U.S.S.R.

As part of their winding-up process, they have given us just ever £500 for which we are most grateful. Preferably the money should be spent on something related to their aims. One possibility is a workshop with a teacher we would not otherwise be able to afford, but all suggestions would be gratefully received.

MIKE GILBERT (Chairman)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Lily,

Please find enclosed my latest essay, "Finnish Folk Dances and Nationalism" (see pp.5 & 6). In "trailing my coat", so to speak, I have drawn in some interesting contributions from Overseas. There is clearly a largely untapped source of information that Overseas members are willing to share with us in our language. They are able to understand the texts in their language, which is difficult for us to do, and furthermore they know of the sources, which we do not. After all, there are many books, reports, journals etc. on English folk dancing but enquiry at one's local bookshop would be met with blank faces.

The SIFD NEWS is too short to accommodate such material. Many years ago I did suggest producing an Annual/Yearbook. This was berated at the time, mainly I think because of the lack of manpower to produce such a publication. Today, the Society embraces many more members country-wide. There are also many more interested in the background of the dances (witness recent request for information of sailors' dances and on German dances) these days. Perhaps some thoughts could be given to the idea of such an Annual/Yearbook? Perhaps some of the overseas members could be approached to check what contributions would be forthcoming?

G.D.TOWNER
7 Woolven Close, Pools,
Dorset BH14 OQT

Ed.Note: Since writing the above, Guy Towner has also sent me an article on German dancing (to follow) and Italian dancing (see p.9).

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Dear Lily,

I read with some interest Janet and John Douglas's article in the February SIFD NEWS and I wonder where they got the information about the costumes shown with the article as they are not Montenegran.

The lady on the left of the picture is wearing a festive costume from Western Kossovo, a part of Serbia with a mostly ethnic Albanian population. I remember this costume and I have it detailed in a booklet published by the museum. The lady in the centre is wearing a bridal costume from a group of villages in Skopskocrnogora, a formerly inaccessible region North of the capital city, Skopje. The man is wearing a costume from the same area. I am quite familiar with these and I had an identical long coat with heavy cord braid in my collection which is now in the Museum of Mankind (British Museum).

The costumes are interesting because they are devoid of any Turkish influence, excepting perhaps the man's jacket. The houses were built like fortresses and the area was never successfully annexed by the Turks. The Museum of Mankind also has a fine specimen of the woman's chemise that formerly belonged to the late Philip Thornton.

These costumes formed part of a private collection given to the Belgrade Museum in 1948, and were housed in the "konak", one of the last surviving wood and plaster so-called "Turkish" houses to survive.

KEN WARD Calle Angel Vidal 7-2° 08870 Sitges, Prov.Barcelona Spain

FINNISH FOLK DANCES AND NATIONALISM

by G.D.Towner

In an earlier NEWS, I proposed that the establishment of folkdance organizations for the preservation and promotion of folk dances had more to do with Nationalism than with the rescuing of a dying culture. My article on Norwegian folk dancing (October NEWS) provided an example supporting this proposition. Finland provides a second example, though my evidence is more circumstantial. The notes at the end list the sources that are available to me that I found useful.

In broad terms, the rise of Finnish Nationalism parallels that of Norway. Finland was subjected to Swedish rule for over 600 years, during which time Swedish was the official language of education and administration. In 1809 Finland became a Grand Duchy of Tsarist Russia under whom Finland enjoyed a large degree of local autonomy, though Swedish remained an official language. The greater freedom to run their own affairs favoured the growth of a sense of nationality, which was bolstered by the publication of the national epic entitled "Kalevala" (1835). Pressure to include Finnish in schools and Government offices followed in the 1840s, led by the philosopher (and later Statesman) Snellman, and success was attained in 1863.

The Finnish Literature Society (founded in 1831) included the study of the music traditions. Provinces adjacent to Sweden remained strongly Swedish speaking and a parallel Swedish organization was set up in 1885.

The association between Finnish Nationalism and folklore (which we may assume includes folk dancing?) seems to be taken for granted in texts on Finnish history. For example:

"Nationalism aroused interest in the language and folklore" (New World Library Volume 10 "Knowledge". Caxton 1966).

"The leaders of the burgeoning Finnish Nationalist movement were persons whose professions largely consisted of the handling of language; writers, teachers, pastors and lawyers. The study of folklore and the rediscovery and piecing together of popular epic poetry and led to the appearance of periodicals which served to standardise Finnish literary language on which stronger political demands could be advanced". ("Nations and States" by Seton-Watson, 1977).

And, not referring specifically to any particular country:

"....emblems of nation-ness, like flags, costumes, folk dances and the rest". ("Imagined Communities" by B.Anderson 1991).

Though there appears to have been some isolated recordings of the old folk dances by individuals during the latter half of the 1800s, the serious systematic study seems to date only from the beginning of the 1900s. Thus the Finnish Folklore Association was founded in 1901 by a group of enthusiasts, mostly teachers and students at the University of Helsinki, and a Swedish counterpart, Brage, in 1906. However, the Finnish Literary Society (founded 1831) included an interest in folk music traditions and Brage's instructional manual, "45 Dances", acknowledges the use of material drawn from the earlier records of the Swedish Literature Society in Finland.

An interest in regional costumes occurred earlier as evidenced by the founding of the Students' Ethnological Museum in 1874 to collect and display costumes. And there was encouragement among the educated classes in Helsinki during the 1880s to take up wearing them.

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The Finnish Folklore Association and Brage systematically collected and published descriptions of dances (see notes below) during the first decades of the 20th century. But activity remained limited, being largely confined to the Helsinki area, and it only became widespread after about 1920 when it was taken up by the Finnish Youth Organisation.

It therefore seems that the growth in the search after genuine Finnish traditions is related to a desire to present a Nation to the World that is uniquely and recognisably Finnish. The motivations of individual dance collectors is not explicit in the folkdance literature. The general texts on the history of Finland are in no doubt on the connection between the interest in folklore and Nationalism.

Notes

- 1) The information on the folk organizations was mainly drawn from the following leaflets published in English by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the general title "Finnish Affairs".
 - (i) "Finnish Folk Dances", 8pp by S.Heikkila (July 1982)
 - (ii) "National Dress", 4pp by R.Somerva (June 1982)
 - (iii) "Folk Music in Finland", 8pp by H. Saha (August 1984)
- 2) Anni Collan and Yngvar Heikel are the principal editors associated with instructional manuals covering Finland and Swedish-Finland respectively. Anni Collan's first dance manual was presumably published before 1915 when a translated version was published in the U.S.A. (note 3) dedicated to Anni Collan. The date of the first Brage manual, "12 Folk Dances", is not given in my source (note 4) but I deduce that it was probably later than 1910. A later publication, "30 Folk Dances", was published in 1931. Yngvar Heikel actually made a number of collecting excursions into the Swedish regions between 1910 and 1933.
- 3) "Folk-Dances of Finland". Translated and edited by Elizabeth Burchenal. Published by Schirmer (New York, U.S.A.) 1915. Instructions and music for 65 dances (66 according to the contents!).
- 4) "45 Folkdanser" published by 8rage Folkdanslag (Helsingfors, Finland) 1949. Very detailed instructions (in Swedish) and music.

G.D. TOWNER

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BALKANPLUS, 13th April at Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London N.W.1 7.00 to 10.30 p.m. £5.00. M.C.s: Norwich International Folkdance Group led by Claire Shearman and "Bear" Williams. The Balkanplus committee is absolutely delighted that Norwich I.F.D.G. have agreed to lead the dancing this month. It's a long way for them to come, so please give them all possible support. They will be presenting a selection of their favourite dances, some from tape and some with live music. "Bear" will be bringing his drum and no doubt singing along, so we can expect a lively, unusual and interesting evening. The next Balkanplus will be on 11th May.

I should just like to add a footnote to Michael Machin's letter to the March SIFD NEWS concerning the Day Course of Bulgarian dancing on 9th February. Michael offers congratulations to the S.I.F.D. for organizing the course but I should just like to add that it was in conjunction with Balkanplus, who arranged Yves Moreau's visit in the first place. Otherwise, I heartily agree with the sentiments expressed and am so glad, Mike, that you enjoyed such a thoroughly worthwhile day.

FRANCES HORROCKS

S.I.F.D. TEACHERS' COURSE

The first session of the teachers' course was held on 3rd March and it went very well. We have twenty-one candidates from all regions of the country from Leeds and Sheffield in the North to Norwich and Fakenham in the East and Bognor and Eastbourne in the South, so the idea of gathering people in from remote corners seems to have worked.

Caroline Thomas opened with an instructive and enjoyable session on first aid, testing the candidates on the notes she had provided by enacting various medical emergencies which they had to cope with; then Maggie O'Regan fielded questions on her advice on teaching techniques; then several candidates were brave enough to put their teaching skills to the test and have the rest of the group make constructive comments in discussion.

The next session is scheduled for Sunday, 23rd June, when we plan to consider the importance of knowing something about the background to the dances and also the value of knowing something about costume and its impact on the style of dancing. We will also have a session on planning a programme for a term and planning a class, plus more opportunity for practical teaching.

JANET WOOLBAR

IPSWICH INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

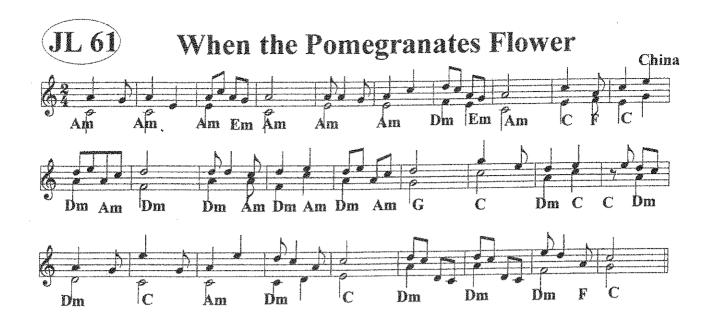
Saturday, 2nd March, saw a gathering of S.I.F.D. members at the Bealings Village Hall, a few miles East of Ipswich. Folk came from Cambridge, Norwich, Goudhurst, Surbiton, Colchester and, of course, nearer to home. About thirty people in all but including only half a dozen men.

The morning began with a thick hoarfrost and I had to use hot water to clear the car in order to make it legal to drive. However, by the time I arrived at the venue we were bathed in glorious warm sunshine. (My way to Bealings was along "Playford Road", a good start to any day, don't you think?). Before the day proper began I had a chance to meet Sally Fletcher and our tutor, Corry Verheijen, to chat and enjoy the sunshine sitting outside.

Although the event was advertised as an International workshop, it was in fact, apart from one Israelidance, all Balkan! - obviously anticipated and enjoyed by those present. Corry's clear and dedicated instruction showed every step and movement with clarity and conveyed confidence to the dancers for the complicated dance patterns and rhythms that followed during the day.

Lunch was a bring and share affair and again we found the warm sunshine a good place to sit, eat and chat. I was pleased to meet for the first time (I am a country member and do not get up to town these days) Frances Horrocks, and several times during the day we were able to get together and talk about friends of way back (the 1950s!) - Janet and Wally Coultrup who started the Harrow Green F.D.C., Ruth Coton/née Sharp, the wardrobe mistress, Marie Le Fort, Mike and Maria Lawrence (yes, I was one of the original Schuhplattler group), Pug Cyriax, Bert Price, Harry de Caux, Mourrie Pfeffer, Philip Thornton, Janet Morgan and my mate Peter Lilley - a wonderful time of bringing forth memories.

PAUL' (Trapper) BRADL'EY Elmsett, Suffolk



The tune is Chinese, but the harmony and, I think, the second part have been added according to Western theory.

MIKE GILBERT

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please note that as from 27th March 2002 my address will be as shown on p.2, 2 Clarendon Road, Cambridge CB2 2BH. Tel: 01223 700718. Any correspondence sent to the old address will be forwarded.

MIKE GILBERT



VICTORIA EMBANKMENT GARDENS

If any groups are planning to dance at Victoria Embankment Gardens this year, I should be glad if they would let me have details for the SIFD NEWS, in advance. L'ast year no-one did so and, apart from those directly involved, members who would have liked to have gone to see the performances and given their support were unable to do so as they did not know. Kay Kedge did an excellent job of co-ordinating these events but unfortunately no-one seems to have taken over this liaison, so perhaps groups could let me know individually. Many thanks. Ed.

ITAL'IAN FOLK DANCING AND FASCISM

PREL'IMINARY EVIDENCE

I have but one tentalising glimpse of organized folk dance in Italy and that belongs to the Fascist era under Mussolini. It consists of the French edition of a book, "Danses Populaires Italiennes" published in Rome by the O.N.D. (no date: see note). The O.N.D. was a Fascist organization set up in 1925 to organize the leisure activities of the population, particularly of the working class.

Rather than attempt to give an account of the Fascist use of folk dancing, I select extracts from this book relevant to the question, and leave the reader to judge, comment, and hopefully add more. The translations from the French are mine, hopefully more or less accurate.

The opening pages of the book introduce the O.N.D., using a strongly moralistic tone, including such phrases as, "....the worker is not considered as belonging to a lower human specie", and "....but really (the worker is) the producer of the natural wealth....". The O.N.D. is contrasted with, "....the pseudo-humanitarians of the old democracies". Perhaps innocently or ominously, "All the activities which the worker enjoys after work are co-ordinated and incorporated in the organization of the O.N.D.". (Incidentally, the "D" stands for Dopolavoro which is not in my dictionary but, separately, "dopo"="after" and "lavoro"="work"). In rather flowery and wordy language, the book harps on about the "people" ("peuple") and thus leads on to popular tradition.

"The aim of this publication is to underline all that the O.N.D. has done to restore to honour the popular Italian dances in which are openly and clearly manifest the ethnic foundations of our race".

"The dance is a typical manifestation of man".

"Its origins are mixed up with that of man".

After further expressions on dance and its place in life, we read, "....the O.N.D. gave it a special place in its programme of education".

The book continues with some interesting general information on Italian folk dancing, dance occasions and venues, musical instruments etc., followed by

brief descriptions and miscellaneous notes on a wide range of the many and varied Italian dences.

It is apparent from this book that the Fascist Government actively supported folk dancing. In spite of the references quoted to "ethnic" and "race", I am not sure that there was any racist basis for this support (as there was with the German Nazi ideology), but it was certainly nationalistic. There is no hint in the text that the dances were to be re-arranged or new ones created to satisfy social/political/community demands. Of course, this book may have been a smokescreen for foreign eyes(?).

NOTE: This French edition gives, "Mai XIII". It cannot be 1913 because the text refers to the founding of the O.N.D. in 1925.

G.D. TOWNER

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

May 3rd/6th EASTBOURNE FESTIVAL.

- S.I. May 3rd/6th S.I.F.D. DANCING/WALKING WEEKEND at Halsway Manor, Crowcombe (walking on Exmoor and Quantocks). Enquiries to Jack Richardson, Chemical Engineering Dept., University. Swansea SA2 8PP. Tel: 01792 295194 (work),403153 (home).
- S.I. May 11th BAL'KANPLUS.

May 18th KLEZMER KLUB will be performing at the Cellar Upstairs Folk Club, at the Golden Lion, 88 Royal College Street, London N.W.1 at 8.15 p.m. £5.00 (unwaged £3.50). Music from Klezmer and other Jewish traditions and from the rest of Eastern Europe on lots of different instruments. Some music for listening, some for dancing. Ring 020 7281 7700 at least two days before if you wish to attend (to comply with club laws).

S.I. May 26th ISRAELI DANCE WORKSHOP with Anat at Stone Cross Memorial Hall, near Eastbourne. 10.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. £12.00 (concessions £7.00). Shared vegetarian lunch. For bookings/information/map, ring Rowena Martin, 01323 503991.

June 21st/23rd The first ever U.K. performance by world-class Slovak dance group LUCNICA accompanied by acclaimed violin and cymbalon group "THE DEVIL'S VIOLIN" at The Linbury Theatre at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. £12, £8 (concessions) and £6 (standing) from O2O 73O4 40OO.

S.I. June 30th S.I.F.D. WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH ANNUAL COTSWOLDS SAFARI, from Moreton-in-Marsh to Stanton village, starting at 11.00 a.m. More details nearer the time.

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

S.I. <u>July 27th/Aug.3rd</u> S.I.F.D. SUMMER SCHOOL at Durham. Enquiries to Roger Sturge, 0117 962 1802.

Aug.4th/9th ISRAELI RESIDENTIAL DANCE COURSE at De Montford University Bedford, Lansdowne Road Campus. Various Israeli teachers, Advanced and Intermediate classes, workshops on teaching techniques etc., evening dances. Cost from £317 to £347 (surcharge of £20 for applications after 30th April). Further details from The Israel Folkdance Institute, Balfour House, 741 High Road, London N12 OBQ. Tel/Fax: +44 (0)20 8446 6427.

S.I. Aug.24th/26th WILLINGDON I.F.D.G.'s MINI FESTIVAL at L'odge Hill Centre (a beautiful wooded location) near Pulborough, West Sussex. Shared leading of International Folk and Circle dances. Non dancers welcome. £104 sharing, £122 single (limited availability). Send s.a.e. for detailed booking form to Rowena Martin, 60 Anderida Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN22 OPZ.

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

VENTZI SOTIROV RETURNS TO THE U.K.

Ventzi Sotirov will be making a return visit to the U.K. for a Bulgarian dance workshop on the weekend of 28th and 29th September 2002. While performing with the Pirin Ensemble from 1979 to 1991, Ventzi was voted "the No.1 dancer" by his fellow artistes and, since arriving in Chicago in 1991, he has taught at major folk dance camps around America. He also teaches regularly in Japan, where he will be again this April. With the emphasis on fun but also concentrating on styling, Ventzi teaches exciting dances from Pirin, Sop. Trakia and Dobrudja.

Ventzi was last here in the U.K. in 1995 so he's long overdue for a return visit. For those who missed his last workshops, make a note in your diary now for a weekend not to be missed. We hope that this time he will be accompanied by his wife, Zoia, who was a singer with the Pirin State Ensemble choir and who would be delighted to give singing workshops if anyone is interested.

The weekend workshop will be held at the Westwoods Community Centre in the delightful Cotswold town of Northleach. We have sole use of the Centre which has excellent facilities and ample parking. There are many B. & B.s and hotels in the surrounding area including Bourton on the Water, Stow on the Wold and of course in Northleach itself. For non-dancing partners, the Cotswolds offers plenty of interesting places to visit and things to do.

Ventzi will teach on both Saturday and Sunday and there will be a catered party on Saturday evening. Further details regarding prices for the weekend and a list of accommodation will be issued later but if you need any information before then, please call me on 01451 860289.

STEPHIE CLARK



ROSE FESTIVAL' HOL'IDAY - KAZANL'UK, BUL'GARIA 1ST TO 8TH JUNE 2002

Capital of the rose-growing region, Kazanluk hosts the annual Festival of Roses, where you can see the folklore displays and "rose-picking ritual", visit the Rose Museum, and experience the beautiful Valley of the Roses.

Nearby is the scenic Shipka Pass with majestic views over the Balkan hills.

Delyan Demirev will be teaching dances from this region and others in his usual vivacious style. Accommodation and meals provided in the Eidelweiss Hotel overlooking Kazanluk, sightseeing trips to the surrounding villages and areas of outstanding beauty daily, and plenty of dancing, music and fresh air! If you'd like to join us on this trip please contact Galina Turker and Elena Ganeva Robles on Tel: 020 8440 4184.

GALINA TURKER



ZIVKO FIRFOV FOLKLORE GROUP. Songs & dances from Serbia, Croatia and Macedonia.

The new term for this group starts on 22nd April and runs until 8th July (excluding 6th May and 3rd June - Bank Holidays). At the Abbey Community Centre, 34 Great Smith Street, London S.W.1, 6.30 to 9.00 p.m. Secretary: Rosemany Gibb, 020 8749 4613. Chairwoman: Joan Sach, 01634 302190.