

SIFD NEWS AUGUST

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 design was sent in by Dalila Heath and shows an Armenian costume from Yerevan. Suggested colours: scarf & hat, rust, blue and wine, around chin light green; collar ivory; coat dark blue, gold embroidery, light grey fringe, pink lining; dress front panels ivory background with gold, grey, dark blue and red designs, side panels ivory background with red, orange, green and dark blue designs; shoes red.

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

The S.I.F.D. day course in September will be organized in conjunction with the Armenian Institute. The tutor will be Shakeh Avanesian.

Date: 14th September 2002

Place: Cecil Sharp House

Time: 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

Cost: £7.00 S.I.F.D. members
£9.00 non-members

N.B. ADMISSION WILL BE BY TICKET ONLY, and there are only 25 places reserved for S.I.F.D. For tickets, please apply to:- Sr. Pam Radford, St.Saviour's Priory, 18 Queensbridge Road, London E2 8NS. Please make cheques payable to S.I.F.D. quoting your S.I.F.D. membership number. Please enclose s.a.e.

JANET WOOLBAR

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2001-2002

The final membership figures for the year from the 1 September 2001 to the 31 August 2002 from records are:

	2001-02	2000-2001
National members	494	508
Overseas members	<u>39</u>	<u>39</u>
Total membership	<u>533</u>	<u>547</u>
Associated Classes	20	20
Affiliated Groups	43	44

The SIFD NEWS production and distribution Team, (Lily Avery, Editor, Michael and Edwina Holdup, envelope preparation and Dalila Heath, photo-copying and dispatch) currently handle 546 copies of the SIFD NEWS per month, including two copies to each affiliated group (as required by the Constitution).

Annual subscriptions remain unchanged from the previous membership year and are due on 1 September 2002 and they are:

	£
Town Member *	17.00
Joint Town Members	22.80
Country Member	13.50
Joint Country Members +	17.00
Junior Member	5.30
Life Member ++	200.00
Group Affiliation	29.30
Music Group	24.00

* Address within a radius of 30 miles from Central London or Central Birmingham.

+ Any two members living at the same address.


++ Subject to two years continuous membership and Committee approval.

If you would like a receipt please enclose a stamped addressed envelope otherwise I shall assume that one is not required.

Many thanks to many members and group officers for prompt renewal of subscriptions.

Thanks are due to the many members who have in the past made donations and also thanks in advance are due to other members for helping in this way.

Best wishes for Happy Dancing for the next membership year of 2002-2003.


Alan Morton
Honorary Membership Secretary
& Groups Liaison Officer

Eastbourne International Folk Dance Festival

Now that the dust has settled and this year's Eastbourne is becoming ancient history (having finished two months ago) I would like to express the thanks of the committee and the SIFD as a whole to Jill Bransby and Julie Korth for all their efforts organising the International side of the festival over the past four years. Eastbourne is a major event on our calendar and an occasion when the SIFD is, in many ways, on show to the English folk dance community and it is very important that we put on a good show. So thank you Jill and Julie for making the event such a success in recent years.

Janet Douglas and Jan Mulreany are well ahead with plans for next year, so pencil the dates into your diaries and be there next May.

Mike Gilbert (Chairman)

Wilf Horrocks and the SIFD Band

Another thank you, this time even bigger, for Wilf Horrocks who has decided to retire as leader of the SIFD band. His last official dance was in July and I am glad that there was such a good turn out. The band, as is only to be expected, played excellently throughout the evening.

I have only been involved with the SIFD for about ten years so I cannot remember a time when Wilf was not a permanent feature of the Sunday dances. I was however more than a little surprised to find that none of the old hands on the committee, who have associations with the society going back over forty years, could remember a time when Wilf was not a permanent feature at the Sunday dances either.

Playing folk dance music is an art in itself and playing folk dance music from many different traditions is much more difficult and requires a great deal of skill and musicianship - not to mention stamina and a sense of adventure. So thank you again Wilf, you will be much missed. Come back to play with the band whenever you can.

I am glad to say that Martin Butler has agreed to take on the role of band leader.

Mike Gilbert (Chairman)

Publicity Officer

Another very long serving officer of the society who has also decided to step down is our publicity officer, George Sweetland. George is another name which has been associated with the society for very many years - also, I believe since the 1960s or even earlier. Much has changed in that time within the SIFD, and in society as a whole, and it is far more of an art than a science to work out which groups might be a suitable target at different times and how best to attract them.

The general public can be very fickle and the result of a publicity drive is not always commensurate with the time and money put into it. And of course folk dance and folk arts in general are never likely to get a good press in this country, so the role of publicity officer for an organisation such as ours is never going to be easy. So, thank you George for putting up with the frustrations over so many years and for all your efforts during that time.

Unfortunately at the time of writing we have not got a replacement for George so if you feel this is a role in which you might be able to contribute something to the Society, please contact me on 01223 700718.

Mike Gilbert (Chairman)

Notes from Camberwell

The Llangollen Eisteddfod is late this year, (July 8th-14th.) so my review will not appear until the September issue. To fill the gap, I thought that a few words on some of the June folk dance events might be of some interest.

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A group of settled gypsies from Gdansk in Poland have formed themselves into a dance company, 'Romani Rad', specializing in presenting a contemporary wedding, but showing how traditional customs have survived in to-day's world.

Stratford Circus, a newly opened theatre, is ideal for a dance show with its comfortable seats and a deep stage giving lots of room for the performers. The women's dances had affinities to Flamenco, but the men's steps were inspired by Hungarian Verbunks, but as they were wearing ordinary trousers and shoes, the sound of hard slaps on leather boots was missing. The musicians were very good but the vocalists were, as so often, over amplified. We took Betty Harvey to the theatre as it was thought there would be some Polish input, but this proved not to be the case. Naren was there with some friends and we had a chat in the bar.

By one of those co-incidences, Alex met Naren on our local bus on the following day, and he told her of a folk festival taking place in Tottenham on the Saturday. We duly made our way there, and it was, as they, something completely different. As we neared the venue, the wail of zurnas and thump-thump of the duvals made it easily identifiable as the covered basket-ball court. Inside, the echoing walls repeating the music several times over and the result was ear-splitting. I found the best place to be was right up by the musicians where you heard them only the once.

I couldn't find a programme, but I think the main part of the event was a competition for young people in the local schools and social groups of the Kurdish community and the standard of dance was, I thought, very high. I recognized some of the younger members of the London Kurdish Dancers from their appearance at last year's Eisteddfod. and there was a banner on wall with the name of a nearby girl's school, but I have no idea who the others were.

It was heartening to see these young people, a while ago dressed in the height of street fashion, now in their colourful costumes, performing the traditional dances of their country's culture with such enthusiasm. In between these items, there were guest spots, a good Greek group in Macedonian costumes, Israeli dancers from Golders Green with a suite of Central European Jewish wedding dances and a suite with Oriental roots, the girls having some very seductive movements. The Iberian group had also appeared but unfortunately before we arrived.

The largely Kurdish audience was enjoying itself, with mums, dads, aunts, uncles and friends strolling about, chatting and cheering, with the juniors consuming great quantities of ice cream and coke. I saw Naren in the middle of all this with his fellow adjudicators, trying to make considered judgements. Altogether, a most enjoyable afternoon.

In sharp contrast again was the show given by the Armenian Dance Group from Paris, 'Navasart', at the Logan Hall, Bloombury on the 29th. I would imagine they are a professional company as the production was so well staged and both the men and women dancers were quite wonderful. While the footwork for the women is relatively simple, they danced with their whole body; each finger, hand and arm forming an elegant line. The men who unusually outnumbered the women were superb. Strong, but moving beautifully, they performed leaps, jumps, and all manner of fast turns around the stage with verve. One of the most accomplished was small and when he took his huge fur hat off, was obviously about twelve.

Some of the items used folk movements choreographed to produce mini ballets, such a flowering cherry tree or of clouds in the sky. The comic interlude was about a girl street sweeper being teased by cheerful drunks and was quite amusing. Finally, a suite of dances from different Armenian regions

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and this was more folky. The costumes were less stagey and the dances in circles had much in common with those from other areas.

The music was especially good. Twelve musicians on various folk instruments, including two small cimbaloms, accompanied the dances and an ensemble of three end pipes and a hand drum had a solo spot and were much appreciated.

All in all, an excellent show..

George Sweetland



POLAND, 2002

After one or two visits to Poland when I have not seen any folk dancing, I was lucky this June that my visit coincided with rehearsals in Nowy Sacz with the teenage group from "Lachy" who were shortly to be giving a concert. I last saw their senior group in 1974 before visiting or writing about any of the several other groups within the area of this small town of Nowy Sacz.

"Lachy" has been in existence since 1956 and has a children's group besides those I have already mentioned and boasts over 200 members. It is to a large extent a "family thing". Small children progress to the teenage group, then on to the senior, and then their children often start the process all over again.

When I went along the corridors to the rehearsal room there was the same atmosphere I have encountered when visiting so many Polish groups over the years, rather different from here. There was a mixture of dancers not needed at the moment, snacking, gossiping, changing clothes, plus various officials, relatives and hangers-on, all milling around. There was also the familiar smell of old stone stairs, linoleum and sweaty clothes! I entered to the lively sight and sound of Polka Gwodz and Cieta Polka, dances which were part of our Jacy Tacy repertoire. How these young boys, who looked limp and awkward when standing around, held their partners firmly and turned them with impressive speed and precision. How strong also was the discipline when anyone didn't pay attention or fooled around!

As is mostly everywhere these days, there were more girls than boys, but the programme was built to absorb them. The girls' singing was terrific in the "mountain" or "white" voice, and ear-splitting in this fairly small hall, and the enacting by a group of them of the old New Year's Eve custom of telling their fortunes was very lively.

"Lachy" is classified as an authentic group, only performing the music and dances of their own region in the South, not others, nor the National dances such as Mazur, Polonez etc. They did show, however, for four of their most able couples, a short and fairly simple Krakowiak, Nowy Sacz being in the greater area of Krakow. It is good to see, when so many groups languished or even disappeared after the Communist system failed and they were no longer funded by the State or local authorities, that Polish folk dancing is so very strong again. "Lachy", incidentally, is now sponsored by a large number of businesses and organizations from this area.

BETTY HARVEY

STUDIA CHOREOLOGICA, VOL. IV. Edited by Roderyk Lange

These valuable little books appear once a year and always contain information on some aspect of folk dance and folk lore. The latest in the series would be of interest to S.I.F.D. readers as it discusses three studies concerned with the adaptation of dance folk lore for the stage.

Naira Kilichyan analyses the various approaches to "The Armenian Folk Dance on Stage" which developed in various periods from the 1930s onwards. Gergana Panova writes about "Bulgarian Folk Dances at Home and Abroad", and Bernard Kwilimbe discusses the process of transferring indigenous African (Malawi) dance to staged performances.

Well-illustrated, this issue was particularly informative. Obtainable from the Centre for Dance Studies, Les Bois, La Rue de la Pointe, St. Peter, Jersey JE3 7AQ, C.I. price £10.00 plus £2.00 p. & p. U.K., £3.00 Europe.

ROBERT HARROLD

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S.I.F.D. WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH AUTUMN DAY OF MUSIC & DANCE WITH ANNE LEACH
SATURDAY, 28TH SEPTEMBER 2002

At Selly Oaks Methodist Church Hall, Langleys Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham (just off A38 SW of City Centre). 10.15 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. S.I.F.D. members £7.00 all day, £4.00 half-day. Non members ££8/£5. Further information from Maggie Kaye on 0121 608 1437.

As a change from our normal day course format, the day will run as follows:-

10.15-11.15	International Music Workshop
11.15-11.30	Coffee
11.30-13.00	International Dance Workshop with Anne Leach
13.00-14.00	Lunch and West Midlands Branch A.G.M. (very short!)
14.00-15.30	Dance Workshop with Anne
15.30-15.45	Tea
15.45-16.45	Social Dancing including some workshop dances, hopefully to live music from the workshop band

We hope this will provide a more varied relaxed day and will encourage musicians to come along as well as dancers who find they cannot take in a full day's dance teaching.

MAGGIE KAYE

N.B. The above more up-to-date details from Maggie Kaye differ somewhat from those given last month by Mavis Lowe.

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FOR DISPOSAL - two books of music and notation:

"SVENSKA FOLKDANSER OCH SALLSKAPSDANSER" Pub.1944. Written in Swedish. In good, if used, condition. The price is a donation to club funds, plus postage incurred by me.

PAUL BRADLEY
9 Chequers Park, Elmsettt,
Suffolk IP7 6LY

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Lily,

Tony Latham postulates a connection between powolniak and hambo, possibly via kora. I confess to knowing little about powolniak and nothing about kora beyond what Tony himself has described, but I can confirm hambo's indirect connection with Poland and I can say a bit about some other members of the same family.

There are many dances in Sweden called "polska" (plural "polskor"). There is uncertainty about exactly when and by what route they first arrived, but the name means simply "Polish". The early pattern seems to have consisted of walking around the room to a 2/4 tune then turning on the spot to a 3/4 tune. At some time the change of rhythm was lost and both parts of the dance were done to a 3/4 tune. Then, apparently under the influence of the waltz, in most places the turning part came to be done progressing round the room. In most polskor the walk is now just a short preliminary to the turning part, as indicated by its name "forsteg", meaning "fore-step".

In different regions of Sweden, and even in neighbouring villages, different versions of the turn evolved, fitting different styles of music, but most of them have maintained the pattern of one complete turn per bar of music. Some polskor include additional parts besides the walk and the turn and resemble the dances variously known as "pols", "polsdans", "springar", "springleik" etc. in different parts of Norway. There are also a few choreographed figure dances called "(so-and-so) polska".

Hambo appeared some time in the late 1800s. Despite this comparatively recent date, its origin is not entirely clear, but in essence it is a modified polska. In a polska you do each part for as long as you like but hambo has a fixed sequence lasting for one musical phrase of eight bars. In many places, when hambo arrived the people adopted the fixed sequence but made the turn in the same way as in the local polska. Meanwhile, on the island of Fano, off the West coast of Denmark, they did as Tony describes for powolniak and kora, using only the 2/4 rhythm but still making the turn in three beats; many S.I.F.D. members must be familiar with sonderhoning.

I also have a minor corrigendum to my letter last month about Kinnersley. Although people often refer to "zweifache", I believe the correct form of the name is "zwiefache". Anyone with worldwide web access who is interested in this should look at <http://www.fff.at/fff/dance/dances/zwiefach/>

Yours sincerely,

RICHARD G. MELLISH
15 Lancaster Road, North Harrow
Middx. HA2 7NN

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Dear Lily,

Roy and I met up with Sue and Vic Clark in Roch, Pembrokeshire, as we do on our visits to St.Davids. We received a very warm welcome, as we usually do, and Cynthia went with Sue to her class which she enjoyed very much.

The next day we all went to a coffee morning in aid of the local church, after which we went for a pub lunch. In the afternoon Sue and Vic took us for a guided tour of "Havers" which was excellent despite the weather being cool.

Sue and Vic really do make you feel welcome and we thoroughly enjoyed their company.

Yours sincerely,

ROY & CYNTHIA LEWIS, 20 Elm Ave.
Oxhey, Watford Heath WD19 4BE

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

S.I. Sept.14th S.I.F.D. DAY COURSE - ARMENIAN. See p.2.

S.I. Sept.28th S.I.F.D. WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH DAY OF MUSIC & DANCE. See p.7.

Sept.28th/29th BULGARIAN WORKSHOP with Ventzi Sotirov at Westwoods Community Centre, Northleach. Further information from Stephanie Clark, 01451 860289. See p.12

Oct.12th/13th TURKISH WEEKEND WORKSHOP with Ersin Seyhan in Bognor Regis. £32.00. Optional meal on Saturday evening £10.00. Further details from Janet Douglas, 92 Rose Green Road, Bognor Regis PO21 3EQ. Tel: 01243 265010.

Oct.25th/27th ROMANIAN DANCE COURSE with Silviu Ciuciumis at Malhamdale. Choice of General or Advanced courses, or both courses, and social dancing in the evenings. Non-dancing friends and family welcome. Excellent location for walking and sight-seeing. Full board and accommodation £93.00 and each course £15.00. For full details and booking form, send s.a.e. to Cathy Meunier, 115 Chetwynd Road, London NW5 1DA.

S.I. Oct.26th TRADITIONAL DANCES FROM THE ARMENIAN HOMELAND with Shakeh Avanesian. 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. at Bishop's Cleeve Tithe Barn, nr.Cheltenham. For details and bookings, contact Chris Lee, The Studio, The Manor, Upper Slaughter, Cheltenham GL54 2JG. Tel: 01451 821487. No price given.

Dec.7th ZIVKO FIRFOV FOLKLORE GROUP CHRISTMAS PARTY at Moorfields Primary School, London.

Dec.7th S.I.F.D. WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH CHRISTMAS PARTY, 7.30-10.30 p.m. M.C.: Maggie Kaye. £2.00. Bring-and-share supper. Venue to be arranged.

S.I. Dec.13th/15th S.I.F.D. DANCING/WALKING WEEKEND at Dunford, Midhurst, West Sussex. Includes dancing, walks, carols, Christmas fare. All rooms en-suite (singles, doubles and twins). About £113.00 (depending on numbers). For further details and bookings, contact Jack Richardson, Chemical Engineering Dept., University, Swansea SA2 8PP. Tel: 01792 295194 (work), 403153 (home).

Dec.31st S.I.F.D. WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY, 8.00 p.m. - 2003 at Downing Hall, Knowle. M.C.: Grace Pittman. £2.00. Bring-and-share supper.

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



All material for the September issue of SIFD NEWS must be received by the editor IN WRITING by 17th August. Please write in BLOCK CAPITALS all names of people, places and dances, unless typewritten.

"LUCNICA"

Appearing at the Linbury Studio, Royal Opera House, from 21st to 23rd June 2002, the "Lucnica" group from Bratislava had the impact on the ex-patriot Czechs and Slovaks living in London, and the enthusiasts that attended, that they and their promoter had dreamed of. At the performance on Saturday, 22nd June, they practically raised the roof of the studio theatre with their exuberant and stylish production of a variety of dances and song-dances from all over Slovakia, plus some exciting pieces from the orchestra. As well as two violins, two violas and a double bass, the band was enhanced by a trumpet, French horn and flute, with a central spot being given to their cimbalom player. The two musical items raised as much reaction from the audience as the dances, with an encore being given following the second orchestral piece.

The young company showed a series of czardas (couple dances), girls' circle dances, work dances and woodsmen's dances in the various regional costumes and, in the case of the gypsy scene, members of the company playing guitars, double bass and a drum to accompany the songs and dances on stage, where the style and thrust of the performance showed very clearly just how different gypsy culture is in Eastern Europe. Many of the czardas were fast and furious and just as you thought they couldn't go faster, they did. Such energy!

One of my companions is able to see most of the productions in the Linbury Studio and she assured me that this programme was the best she had ever seen there. The whole evening was exhilarating and exciting and, if the audience had had its way, would have continued far into the night. The only downside was that this same audience was restless, noisy and given to taking flash photographs throughout the evening. As the management ascertained that the performers had no objection, they did not try to stop the photographers but my companions and I found the constant popping of camera flashlights most distracting. The other slight disappointment was the use of recorded music for one or two of the items in each half. These were song-dances and I find it hard to believe that the company and the excellent musicians in the pit could not have performed live for the whole programme.

The audience obviously included many Slovaks living here as, at the end of the evening, some of the young men were so exhilarated that they gave an impromptu "concert" in the bar to the amusement of those of us making our way out. Another pleasing touch was the fact that the programme, on a single folded sheet, printed in both Slovak and English was given to us free as we entered the auditorium.

However, this short foray to a dance venue in Central London was a tryout to test whether it would be feasible to bring this excellent company to London for a longer run next summer. If it should decide to return, do please try to see it; it is one of the best folkdance groups from Eastern Europe that used to visit regularly. This is a semi-professional company that has existed for fifty years and continues to delight audiences all over the world. Based in Bratislava, it travels widely and I, for one, certainly hope they can return here soon.

RUTH HOWARD a.k.a. Patricia

(Ruth/Patricia says that although many S.I.F.D. members may find it too "stagey" for their taste, the programme is based on Slovak folk dancing and shows what can be done with simple social dances to make them entertaining to the general, non-specialist public. As a long-time member of Beskydy Dancers, she found them inspirational and thoroughly enjoyable).