

FOLK

North West

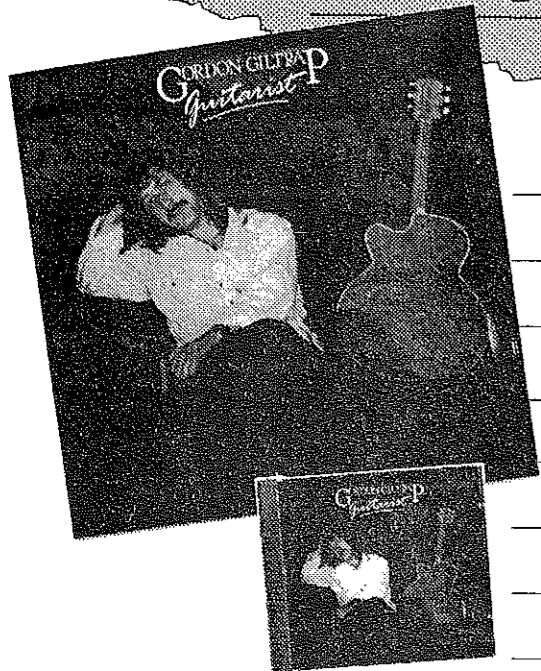
Spring 1989 50p

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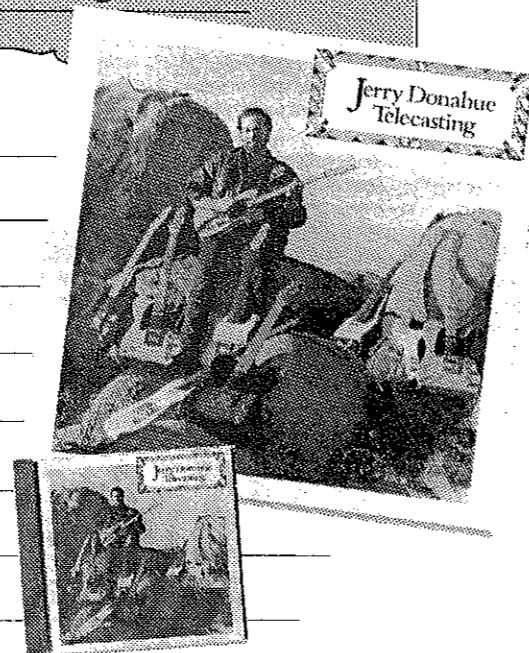
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The views expressed in this magazine
are not necessarily those of either
the Editor or of the Federation.

The Editor accepts no responsibility
for contributions claimed to be
original or for any inaccuracies
therein.

Comment:

Welcome to the third issue under our new title 'Folk North West'. I hope you like our new image; no new logo this time, we haven't found one we like yet, but we are still working on it.

Here's a salutary tale recently related to me (as they say in the movies - this story is true, only the names have been changed).

A new club had been running just three weeks when the landlord said 'I'd prefer you to come on another night, this one isn't convenient any more'. The club organiser, ever anxious to please the landlord, says 'Well actually we've guests booked over the next few weeks, but if you can allow us a few weeks to reorganise ourselves we'll be glad to change nights'. The landlord replies that he could only allow them a couple of weeks and no more. The organiser then explains all the trouble they've gone to in arranging guests and guest residents etc., to which the landlord retorts that if that was their attitude, they would have to change nights immediately. Result? The club has found a new venue and the landlord has lost the folk club for good! And the moral? Don't call your folk club after the pub in case you have to move for uncooperative landlords or redevelopment plans by breweries!

That's all for now, see you all next issue.

Nigel Firth
EDITOR

Closing Date for our next issue which covers June/July/August is April 25th

Editorial Address:
118, Bolton Road,
Aspull,
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WN2 1XF

OUT &

CLUB NEWS

Yeah - OK, I know it's been Christmas (or 'Yule' for the ultra-trad folk-pagans out there!). And yes, I appreciate the fact that most folk-clubbers managed to get as wassailed-as-newts at the club chrissey party (have you tried singing three-part harmony accompanied by two turkey sandwiches?) and I do understand how the New Year holiday provides a much needed rest and time to fix the bellows on the concertina (the one they told you was a wheatstone at the flea market); and yes some of you might have moved house to get away from the nutter next door, who was in the habit of taking his Northumbrian small pipes and portable folding organ to bed, to play the theme tune from 'Neighbours' all night long, but really, that's no excuse for the lack of "CLUB NEWS" this issue!

There is one piece of good news though; Terry Seeds informs me that, "Chorley Folk Club is DEAD!" (No - that's not the good news!) but phoenix-like from the ashes rises "Chorley, Adlington and District Folk Club" (try saying that one Mike Billington!).

Terry tells me that the old club at the 'Gillibrand Arms' has been pushed out by the installation of flashing lights, the strains of Rick Astley and an influx of trendy young poseurs who wouldn't know a folk song if they fell over one!

The new club will have been launched (successfully, I hope) by the time you read this. The new venue is Sunday at The Clayton Arms, Adlington, Lancs. As the club is only on a 3 month probationary period (you get more than that for not returning your library books!) it needs your support. Don't let the newest member of the Federation disappear. Don't be a goon - switch off Harry Seacombe and listen to some real singing - you know it makes sense!

Obituary

Alas, another post-festive morality; first the great Salvador Dali, and, now, Rochdale Folk Club! It never rains . . . But, Chrissie Waldren hopes to run a series of 'one off' concerts featuring visiting American friends - OK ya'all!

ABOUT...

Talking of deceased folk clubs - I've spent several wasted Sundays waiting for the advertised guests to appear at the King's Head, Deane. First week Nic Dow turned out to be Roger Westbrook - not quite the same! - and the following week, instead of Brian Peters and Jamie Knowles, an empty room with a darts game in progress. Shouldn't somebody have been told - like the M.E.N. folk diary for instance?

'Agraman' from the Malt Shovels in Altrincham (lovely little place, too) runs a somewhat bizarre folk club on Tuesdays that encourages a very broad spectrum of 'performers' in an attempt to attract a 'younger clientele'. (Now, I've seen this folk-loony prancing about at the Green Room and feel sure that Tuesday's at the Malt Shovels will be both entertaining and thought provoking).

Fleetwood Folk Club at the Mount Hotel each Thursday at 8.30 is hoping to go on to greater things but currently offers a 'Weekly Sing Around' with an invitation to all to perform, listen or just enjoy a 'Fisherman's Friend'.

The Victoria Folk Club (Thursday 8.30) of Warrington Road, Rainhill, Merseyside seems to have the right ingredients, plush room, decent chairs, bar, p.a., and even a landlord that likes folk music! (Wot no Rick Astley?) In fact, it sounds so comfortable, I'm thinking of moving from my yuppie coal-side apartment and moving into the pub toilets. If the beer's OK then heaven really does exist! See if you can catch 'Cadre Ceol' on March 16.

Oh and here's a good 'un - if you've a floor singer (and not afraid to admit it!) you can host a night as 'guest resident' if you contact the club. 'Fame . . . I wanna live forever . . .'

Bury Folk Club - an old stomping ground of mine and a friendly place, too - is preparing a celebration season for the Club's 25th anniversary (Blimey! It's only Buddy Holly's 30th!). Plans include a festival-type weekend in October 13/14/15 and past regulars/performers et al are all most welcome. Rumour has it

that the 'Valley Folk' might re-form for the occasion. Should be a most memorable event - bring the tissues!

P.S. If anyone knows where Lee Nicholson (Nick of 'Dave & Nick') or Jack and Lynn Taylor (co-founders) or has any interesting info or memorabilia contact Jean Seymour 061 761 1544.

Horwich Folk Club is holding its Dialect Poetry competition shortly and further info can be obtained from Brian Clare on Westhoughton 815771

'Folk At The Nest' becomes the 'New Seven Stars Folk Club' and has a special night with Jim Couza on April 12th. Space is limited Steve Chatterley promises, enigmatically, that 'the evening will be almost on a one-to-one basis'. (Mum . . . I've played gigs like that!) Sounds rather exciting, intimate and almost erotic - wow! Tickets are £1 ring (02572) 67654.

The Brewery Folk Club is holding family ceilidhs every second Tuesday in the month - children dance free. Get 'em while they're young and show 'em that us folkies invented warehouse parties first!

Here is a late item of Club News: There is to be a new folk club held monthly at the Parlour, Mill at the Pier, Wigan on every third Saturday of the Month. There will be a guest, but there will also be opportunity for floor singers; please phone the organiser, Laurence Hoy on 0942 492149 if would like to sing so a programme can be worked out. The club is being supported intially by Wigan Metro Leisure Department. This year's Song Contest run by Kath & Paul Holden is also to be held at the club, and more details can be found in the advert, or from Kath & Paul on 0942 58459.

STOP PRESS:

The Victoria Folk Club have moved already! It is now called Rainhill Folk Club and meets at Rainhill Labour Club, Warburton Hey, Rainhill. All other details are as listed elsewhere in the magazine.

Maghull Folk Club has a temporary venue from the beginning of March until 18th April. For this period, they will be at the Priory in Litherland (formely called the Litherland). For directions, please call Dave Day on 051 526 6661.

OUT & ABOUT

MANIC MUSIC HALL?

Nat Clare will be co-hosting a new 'alternative' entertainment slot the first Friday in every month as part of Bolton's Octagon Theatre's new season. He would like to hear from folk performers poets, story tellers, alternative comedians and any one with a 15 minute act that they will perform for expenses. It should be a prestige showcase; so if you have an original, thought-provoking, stimulating, bizarre or just plain funny act (sawing Rick Astley in half??) get in touch with Nat on (0204) 393463 or write to Simon Stallworthy at The Octagon Theatre, Howell Croft, Bolton.

TUTOR LINE

The Abraham Moss community music project is setting up a 'TUTOR LINE' described as "a comprehensive, computerised register of instrumental and vocal tutors in the region". So, if you want to learn and you can't find a handy American hobo or railroad bum to take you under their wing for thirty years or so in the classic folk-blues tradition, contact Claire Mooney, Tutor Line, Abraham Moss Centre Theatre, Crescent Road, Crumpsall, Manchester M8 6UF.

PRESTON GUILD HALL

It looks like the chances of seeing a quality folk-act or in fact any folk act at all really is 'every Preston Guild!! Preston Guild Hall's programme for January, February and March - undoubtedly excellent eclectic in its own way - included next to nothing in the way of folk I'm afraid. (That is of course if you, ignore "Max Boyce in Concert" on February 16th - and that's exactly what I'll be doing!) You could, however, see "The World Indoor Bowls Championship" in March - it'll be much funnier than Max Boyce!

BROADSTAIRS FOLK WEEK

Do you like 'activity' holidays? - no - not those kind, you naughty rascals! I don't mean 18-30 rave-ups on the Costa Bonka but a "folk week" where you can sing, drink, sunbathe (!) and Morris dance your head off! There'll be children's events and loads of opportunities for folkies of either gender to meet folkies of the opposite gender - should they so desire - so the brochure promises.

The week is from 11th to 18th August and is packed full of folk events. So, if festivals are your scene write for info to: Pam Porritt, The 24th Broadstairs

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Folk Week, Foreshore Festival Office, Harbour Street, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 1EU.

G.M. ROOTS

As you all probably know by now, 'Folk Like Us' has become 'G.M. Roots' and broadcasts live on Thursdays from 6.30 - 7.30. Mike Billington carries on in his own inimitable manner and good-on-him for keeping a corner of the airwaves safe for local folk. Also a little bird tells me that we might be seeing 'Rebec' reborn? Will it be synthesisers this time, lads? ("I used to think that 'Rebec' was a pair of training shoes till I discovered G.M. Roots!").

"STEELTOWN"

Roger Watson, famous folkster, has written the music for the impressively - revved 'oral history' play "Steeltown". If you enjoy live theatre, about real issues, based on the experiences of ordinary folk, "Steeltown" should provide a stimulating and entertaining evening. Locally, the production can be seen at; Padiham Town Hall on the 8th March, Leigh Drama Centre on the 9th and Bolton's Octopus Studio, Octagon Theatre on the 10th.

FOLK ON EDUCATION

Not a comment on the state of the nation's schools but an innovative departure from Hereford and Worcester County Council. If you're involved in education and interested in the folk arts, Susie Stockton-Link (ex 'Malt Shovels' if my memory serves me well) can be contacted about how to establish an L.E.A. working party. Further info from Susie at; 44 Sebright Road, Wolverley, Worcs DY11 5UA.

SOUTHPORT SWORDS

If you aren't afraid of losing a few limbs and want to find out the difference between a "North Skelton Longsword" and a "Newbiggin Rapper" then you could do worse than flashing your Wilkinson sword with the young blades of 'Southport Swords' who meet most Tuesdays at the Blundell Arms, Upper Aughton Road, Birkdale, Southport. (You can recognise the pub because of the Blood Transfusion Unit parked nearby!) If all this phallic symbolism seems a bit sexist there is also a women's "side" practising on the same night - Touché.

Cont'd on P.9

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Leyland Morris Centenary



MORRIS DANCERS AT LEYLAND - PART I

Beginning in late May, the Leyland Morris Men will be starting on a twelve month celebration of their Centenary Year. Apart from wanting to make the most of the excuse for a celebration, they can't be exactly sure as to the date of their foundation! It's probable that the decision to form the team came sometime between May, 1889 and May 1890.

At that time the Friendly Societies (Shepherds, Buffaloes and such) held an annual perambulation of the village. Leyland took it as a holiday, and people travelled in from a wide area around. The event had begun to lose some of its 'zip', although the crowds were still turning up. As "an adjunct to the Leyland Club Day" the teachers of the Sunday and Day Schools attached to St Andrew's Parish Church decided to organise a May Festival for the children. It took place on Wednesday, 29th May, 1889; was repeated on Saturday and was voted a great success.

The second Leyland May Festival was held twelve months later. It had widened its scope considerably and now included "a company of Morris Dancers" recruited from the younger men of the Parish. They were taught by Mr (Josiah) Kirkman - head gardener at Broadfield House - and led by Mr John Rose - a local greengrocer. Their appearance at the event "excited a great deal of interest". The Club Day hardly rates a mention after that, although it did continue as a sort of 'church parade' event for a few more years.

By 1895 a team of 'miniature Morris Dancers' was also in existence. Their appearances in the event seem to have been rather less consistent than those of the men's team. There was no Festival at all in 1901 or 1902 due to 'epidemics', nor was it held during World War I, but come 1919 it started up again and lasted until 1936.

The outfits for the Morris Dancers, along with those of the many other

characters in the event, were loaned out for the occasion and then collected in again. They were repaired or replaced by a Ladies' Sewing Committee, and stored away until the following year. I'm sure that the Festival Committee would have thought long and hard about loaning out the costumes for the Morris Dancers to attend an event other than their own, in case of damage etc., and you'd assume that the team rarely danced anywhere else. However, recent researches have shown that the team did attend other events locally, and that several teams seem to have sprung up in those places they had visited, shortly afterwards.

Some locals believe that representatives from Leyland had travelled to Knutsford to see the Royal May Day even before the first Leyland May Festival took place - no doubt to see if there were ideas they could incorporate into their own event. To date it has not been possible to prove the theory, but we do know that they were there in both 1890 and 1892. Little wonder, that a comparison of the characters in the two events shows many similarities. IF they went to Knutsford before their own Festival began, might these people have also brought back the idea of a troupe of Morris Dancers? We know that visiting Morris teams were a regular feature of the Royal May Day, the Godley Hill (Stockport) team being one. Might the visitors have carefully copied fragments from several teams? Or might they have simply obtained a general impression, gone back to Leyland, and made the rest up for themselves? We don't know, but when Maud Karpeles travelled from London to interview the Leyland Morris Dancers of 1932 they claimed that their dances had been brought from Lower Peover - a small village close to Knutsford.

The mid-1920's saw a split between the Parish Church - responsible for organising the event in the first place - and most of the people who then served as the Leyland Festival Committee. There were then TWO events! The Leyland May Festival and The Leyland Parish Church May Festival - sometimes being held on exactly the same date! Well, you can imagine the turmoil! There was no Church event after 1934, the the final May Festival was held in 1936 - when it went bankrupt, I believe.

The present team is totally independent of all such organisations, but owes a great debt to both. On Sunday, 21st May, 1989, we shall attend

OUT & ABOUT

BORED WITH RURAL VIOLENCE?

Then how about leaving out the lager and shaking a leg (your own, preferably!) at 'A Grand Ceilidh' at Hoghton Village Hall, 7.30, Saturday March 15th. Tickets are £3 and include supper. "Cats In The Village" provide the music but hopefully not the supper!

CAN ANYONE LEND ME TWO SHILLINGS?

This is the advertised price of 'The Bothy Blag' a newsletter/info sheet desk-top published (if they published my old desk top it would definitely be one for the obscene publications squad!) by the Bothy Folk Club of Southport (address elsewhere) Articles, ads etc welcome.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

A fund exists to support this amazing collection of folk dance and song - if you feel that you don't deserve your new-found yuppie prosperity (OK I know it's the North West!) unload some of the guilt by flashing your plastic in this direction. All the money goes to the library with no deductions! Write to: Martin Williams, Hon. Treasurer, National Folk Music Fund, 16 Ogle Street, London W1P 7LG.

How about holding a benefit night?

HUNGARY HUNGRY

Got a letter from Mike Duffy, who (as a true "world-music" fetishist) has developed a bizarre fixation on the folk music and dance of Hungary.

Mike would like to share this obsession with others who might feel a similar fascination and are currently at liberty from their restraining institutions.

Mike's planning to visit Hungary soon - fancy the trip? Write to: Mike Duffy, Oakfield Cottage, Beckside, Old Hatton, Kendal, Cumbria LA8 0NF.

"COME ALL YE DAMP BOTTOMS"

Folk Festivals - don't ya just love 'em? Stock up on the diarrhoea tablets, pitch your tent next to the loony-Scandinavians-who-sound-like-members-of-the-Waterstones, don your ethnic wellingtons, tattoo your address inside your left ear in case you're found in the beer tent rambling incoherently and come on down to the Whitby Folk Week from 19th to 25th August, 26 Marine Avenue, North Ferriby, East Yorkshire HU14 3DR; or sing dance and fall over at The Beverley Folk Festival (maybe there's a new supergroup here - "The Silly Beverley Sisters"??) from 16th to 18th June. Tickets/details from Chris Wade, 2 Star Row, North Dalton, North Humberside YO25 9UR.

The 15th Chester Folk Festival takes place over the Spring Bank Holiday Weekend (May 26-28) at the Morris Dancer, Kelsall, Chester. It features Albion Band, June Tabor & Hugh Warren, Kathryn Tickell, Maxi & Mitch And many others. Weekend tickets are £16.00 in advance. More details 0244 350502.

The 4th Wigan/Billinge Folk Festival takes place on 23-25 June at Lowton Civic Hall. It features Tannahill Weavers, Doonan Family, Cosmethka, Whippersnapper and many others. Tickets are £15.50 in advance. More details from St. Helens 53058.

STOP PRESS

The Annual General Meeting of the North-West Federation Of Folk Clubs is to be held on Sunday 4th June from 12 noon at the Hare & hounds, Maghull. There will be a showcase for those wishing to perform before an audience of folk club organisers. If there are any items for discussion at the AGM, please contact Ian Wells on 0772 813267; for the showcase, Dave Day on 051 526 6661.

Lancaster Maritime Festival takes place over Easter Weekend (Friday to Monday inclusive). There are a number of Folk Music events and these feature The Shanty Crew, Charlie Gillow & friends, Abram Pace-eggars. Details from David Wright, Lancaster 39741.

Morris Dancers at Leyland, Continued . . .

St Andrew's Parish Church for Morning Service to show our appreciation of the part it played in the founding of the team. That will be the official opening of our Centenary Year. We have invited along half a dozen teams whose founding, or re-founding, owes something to the Leyland team. Representatives of a number of other teams having close connections with LMM will also be invited. There will be a procession to and from Church, and a bell ringing team of LMM members and families will be in action.

Our next event will be to take part in the modern Leyland Festival (not "May" 'cos nowadays it's held on the first Saturday in June!) which has arranged a very full programme to celebrate its own centenary.

What happened after 1936? Watch this space for Part II!

BROADFOLK

Connoisseurs of body language will have enjoyed seeing Alan Yentob on Open Air under pressure about folk music. He writhed, he bobbed, he weaved - and he waffled. But finally he snapped and conceded "The answer is I promise you there will be some programmes about folk music on the air in the next two years for sure". Don't take this at its face value: he'd earlier said: "I think the idea of there being a series is going to be difficult to achieve, ... but I hope we're going to get some of that kind of music ... on to the screen more often than we do now". It took a fairly bloody minded set of interruptions by a viewer in the studio (known to readers of the magazine as 'the Chairman' and to broadcasting executives as 'not him again') to cut through the Beespeak and get even this grudging commitment. It will need a lot of follow up pressure. Keep it up.

Away from promises: what about the actual music? Once again, the TV approach has been along the lines of 'if we do allow folk on, it mustn't be English'. Channel 4 - jointly with RTE - celebrated the Dubliner's Dublin, with nine songs included in the nominal hour. They also used Ali Bain Meets the Cajuns as their Hogmanay treat from Pelicula films. (Ali will be turning up again 'with friends' from STV after I've written this.) BBC2 brought back Rhythms of the World, still with an English shaped hole in their world, repeated Arena on Guthrie, and had some Irish trad in another Arena about an Irish travelling theatre company. Otherwise, we were back to catching snatches mostly as background. On BBC1, Songs of Praise from Barra included a Gaelic churning song, BBC2's Boxing day gut-churning trip round 'The Shape of the Nation' used snatches of English and Scots song, Clannad backed BBC2's Atlantic Realm, and just one more time we sought the Northwest Passage in Wideworld's repeated search for Franklin.

Cosmotheke sang about pickles on (naturally) The Pickle Programme. The Oldham Tinkers had a play-on part in the BBC North West Lovatt Road and were used without acknowledgement in a Radio 4 repeat of a World Service series, Green & Pleasant Land. Equally unacknowledged was the Northumbrian pipe used both in a documentary about Catherine Cookson and in a dramatisation of one of her novels, but it sounded Steel Skyish to me. Good old reliable Woman's Hour had a feature on Folkworks with Alistair Anderson and snatches of Steel Skies, and in a piece about WRPM (the women's lib record distributors) played a snatch of Janet Russell's 'Secretary's Song'. And Radio 2's No Strings Attached had the Trio Bulgarica and Sweet Honey in the Rock but no English a capella groups ...

An unusual Radio 4 feature on The School Strike of 1911 cheerfully restaged, with modern school children, the strike songs of 'Fall In and Follow Me', and another to the well known 'Vote, Vote, Vote ...' tune. Then, "... as the strike spread, there was even a music hall song about the School Board Man" - sung, in the inimitable Geordie style, by Tom Gilfellon. Radio Scotland's award winning documentary on the failed colony of Darien had music arranged and sung by Archie Fisher. And talking of features, a series called 'Classic Features' re-ran Singing the Fishing.

Between the writing of this and it's printing, Richard Baker will have talked to some folk musicians and Kaleidoscope will have considered the influence of acoustic style and interviewed Martin Carthy. Will BBC2's Late Night Show (with a brief that includes both high art and popular culture) discover our very own music? Find out next issue.

FOLKEAR

LETTERS

SONGWRITING CONTEST

Although Hindley Folk Club is no more, the annual Songwriting Contest will go ahead as usual - see ad- despite our little radio controversy.

As Organiser I can only say that the incident was unfortunate but unintentional and Mike Billington has made full restitution. I think it's only fair to point out that Mike does his outside broadcasts in his own time and would still earn the same fee if he spent one hour a week in the studio playing records, and a fat lot of good that would do the local scene.

This year will be the fifth Contest that G.M.R. - as it now is - will have covered and I have always received wholehearted support both from Mike and from programmes organiser John McManus, as have other local events.

This event is a good platform for up and coming songwriters and I am delighted that some of "our" songs have gone on to better things. Even if you're not a writer, the finals evening is thoroughly entertaining.

Hope to see you all in May.

KATH HOLDEN

MORRIS CENTENARY

From May, 1989 to May, 1990 the Leyland Morris Men will be celebrating their Centenary year. We would be pleased to hear from anyone who has photographs, colour slides, cine film or video of the team. If a copy can be provided we would pay the cost; if they can be borrowed, they can be copied and returned.

Please write to:

Roy Smith
7 Southgate
Fulwood
Preston
Lancs
PR2 3HX

COMPLAINTS

I received a copy of the new-look gloss "Folk North West" in December for which many thanks. It is as informative as ever.

Unfortunately, however, this letter is not so much a compliment on your new style or useful content but rather a complaint about the comment your "Out and About" columnist made on my agency's (Stoneypot Agency) current brochure listing the artistes we represent.

On the positive side the piece did lead the column with our brochure and

included photographs of two of the artistes we represent (Dick Gaughan and Robin Williamson). That was very nice. Thank you.

But, did the piece really have to be spoiled quite so comprehensively with the references to "a very glossy brochure" and "any organiser who can pay those prices" and "umpteenth other big names", all classic innuendos about agents. Overall the piece sounded like a put-down of the successful artistes for whom we work and the whole thing was, as a result, extremely annoying to put it mildly.

I am very aware of being part of the general attempt to drag the folk world into the late 20th century by trying to obtain fees for artistes from folk clubs, and others, which would purchase more than a few ales and a copy of Folk North West. I try to present folk music and musicians in the best possible light to all who express an interest in them. This is an international effort including not just the folk clubs, concerts and festivals but arts centres, radio, television, and press of all kinds. To assist in achieving that end I produce the brochure in question annually listing the artistes we represent and this is sent to 1000-plus interested parties. The brochure is produced to a standard as high as the artistes can afford for it is they who agree to share out the cost of its production and mailing and usually the feed-back from its recipients is favourable indeed.

Your columnist's misguided comments therefore were not a swing at the agency (which is what it read like) but a swing at the artistes we represent since it is they who pay for this brochure in an attempt to invite promoters to think well of them for trying that bit harder than the competition in catching the eye of said promoters.

Unfortunately, it seemed to catch your columnist's blind spot.

For the sake of accuracy and good journalism I do wish your columnist had asked me what the fees actually were before going off half-cock. Then I could have told your readers that the fees of the artistes we represent are set by the artistes themselves who tell me what they believe to be the fee necessary for their continued existence as musicians at their place in the market place of music.

The fees for the artistes we represent can range from as low as £60-£80 for some of the artistes through

The £100 to £200 range up to more justifiably highly paid artistes where negotiation may result indeed in a fee of £300 (shock!! horror!!) or more depending on the event. In fact there is a concert/ceilidh band (Spaelimenninir) coming to the UK from Scandinavia in July, we hope, who have to get fees around £500-£600-plus to defray their travelling costs.

I hope that the club organisers and promoters in your area will read this letter and contact me rather than believing everything they may have read in black upon gloss white (they might also appreciate the irony of your comments about my glossy brochure appearing in your glossy magazine). They will find that, I hope, having variously been a singer, a folk club organiser, a festival director as well as an agent and concert promoter, my experience over almost 25 years of folk music will allow me to listen to and deal with their enquiries on their merits while bearing in mind the need for the artistes we represent to be able to make a living. The agent, contrary to most legends, can have an honourable existence bringing performers to the notice of promoters and hence audiences. I like to think that my agency slots into this picture favourably.

Finally, perhaps the organisers and promoters who believe the prices that artistes ask too high, should ask themselves too high in relation to what? Also, they might ask themselves, why is it that they apparently can not afford these artistes? This leads off into a whole new ball game of arts funding and marketing as applied to folk music. I would bet that some club organisers and promoters complacently reckon that two A3-size posters are an adequate request for publicity to promote a gig! The moral? Well, it might be something like, do not always blame the artiste, agent or management for your failure to promote adequately, raise the necessary ante and generally hustle to the best of your ability. Now, there's a seasonal chestnut and traditional can of worms. Your editorial did refer to controversy.

DR JOHN BARROW

STONEYPORNT AGENCY (SC1148)

Nat Clare replies . . .

Goodness gracious but what a proverbial hornets nest Steve Rostron stirred up last issue in his nine line (!) review of Scotland's Stoneypornt Agency.

In response, the agent, Dr John Barrow, passes on a complaint (if you see what I mean!) and, indeed, found Steve's words " . . . extremely annoying to put it mildly".

If you remember, Steve referred to the agency's 'very glossy brochure' and the high prices charged by some of the 'big names'.

Although, Dr John does make some valid points, for example, he points to the inadequate promotion of many folk events, he fails to address a central issue.

Much regional folk music - since the revival and beyond - began as, and has remained, a roots movement with roots music, being both accessible and non-elitist. The music was created by, performed by and shared by (owned by, if you like) ordinary people, the FOLK.

These people regularly congregate in crumby, little, cold, pub rooms listening to, or helping create, music, which may be a little rough around the edges but is none the less real, exciting and living. We do this not because we don't like comfort or appreciate quality but because limited financial resources don't exclude you from participating. The distance between 'artist' and audience is minimal.

Sure, we like seeing 'big names' but realistically, like it or not, their exclusivity distances them from roots folk club scene. (Maybe they could do a Leon Rosselson and perform really cheaply sometimes?)

Isn't it just horses for courses? No-one expects to see the Royal Ballet kitted out in clogs at the local ceilidh or Suzanne Vega busking in Bolton, so if you want to see Gaughan or Williamson (and allow Dr John to earn his honourable crust in the process) then a theatre or festival is where to do it. If you wait for them to pop into your club to do a floor spot you'll wait a long time!



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Chairman's Rant

Are we seeing a start to acceptance that English folk music exists? Is our almost private pleasure in it going to go public? Are we seeing a real break in the apathy and ignorance surrounding the national media? Well, maybe.

Respectability on Radio 4, survival on BBC local radio, Fylde on the box, if only in the North West, promises from the Controller, BBC2, and now a folk column in, of all places, the Daily Telegraph. Admittedly, it's only in the northern optout, the Friday Outlook, every second or third week - but it's another outlet to tell people about how much fun folk music is, and where to find it. So make sure you keep me in touch with what's going on at your club and your festival - the format will include a few short news items each time - and you may get a mention. No guarantees, because it is to cover the whole of northern England, not just the Federation area, and I don't control the subbing, but inevitably it will be easier for me to mention the area I know best.

As I write this, I've been ringing round some of our clubs with the bad news about outstanding bills. Bad news for them, having to fork out a large lump sum all at once when they could have paid it a bit at a time when it came due. Bad news for the Federation as whole if we can't pay the printer because we haven't got that cash. If you've a problem, please let us know. Someone once asked how the Federation helped clubs - well, sometimes it's simply by extending credit while carrying on including a club. We can only help the temporarily embarrassed clubs if the (probably equally temporarily) solvent ones pay up on time. You'll have got another Folk North West invoice and the '89 membership demand by the time you read this - so please pay promptly. Advertising is up - but we need to be able to quote paid circulation to sustain Stop press:-

Fylde festival mini-series is now scheduled to go out on Fridays, April 28th, May 5th & 12th, on BBC2 from 8.00 to 8.30pm, in north west England only.

Ian Wells

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Brian Peters - Song Carrier for the late eighties

Listening to Brian Peters' first LP 'Persistence of Memory', although his individual style was showing through, some influences seemed obvious. So that was the equally obvious, if cliched, first question I put to Brian in his Glossop home in the shadow of the millstone grit hills - and the local bus garage. Harry Boardman, of course, and The Incredible String Band? Fairport Convention ... and the Copper family? Yes, Brian Peters is a normally complex human being, and no simple clone. He says now that the Coppers appealed as being simple and unfussy - while decoding those String Band variant guitar tunings pushed him towards musical knowhow.

That musical ability is certainly displayed in Brian's mastery of three instruments. He's best known for concertina, which he's been playing for about 10 years. Why does he like this instrument? "It's got a limited but full sound, can be rhythmic or subtle". And Brian's further comment on this instrument could apply to him as a performer: "... pure sound but powerful".

Powerful certainly describes his style on the melodeon: he thinks of it as loud, aggressive, brassy but capable of delicacy - possibly the reverse of his singing, which always seems to me to be delicately accurate first but with fire and power where needed.

The folk tradition is carried on in two main ways: by song carriers and by entertainers. That's not to say that song carriers aren't entertaining, or that entertainers don't preserve songs for future generations, but it reflects a difference in attitude. The entertainer will often put a slant on a song that stops other people using it because of identification with a particular arrangement - the song carrier can present a new interpretation that opens up the song to a new audience. I think of Brian first as a song carrier - his performances open us up to the real meaning of a song rather than limit

us to a superficial interpretation. He's also excellent with recently written songs that fit into the tradition.

When I talked to him, he had just finished recording his new record for Harbourtown, and so he played me preliminary tapes of what will become 'Fools of Fortune'. We're in for a treat. Much of it is recorded 'live' - voice and one instrument simultaneously, with multitracking limited to some tracks only and very much subordinated to the primary vocal line. That approach - giving a sound very similar to his club appearances - works at it's best on the traditional songs, especially the ballads. I heard snatches of a Newfoundland version of John Barbour, and also The Unquiet Grave. His version of Sir Patrick Spens is taken uptempo with some overdubbing and I'm waiting for the final mix to judge this.

'Fools of Fortune' also has several new songs and some brisk instrumentals. There's a version of Pete Morton's The Last God of England, backed by the Mossley Dukes (which should please Simon Jones). Brian has included The Lost Fourteen Hundred, a song about HMS Hood by Dave Rawlinson, formerly of Chapel-en-le-Frith, and his own Shelter from the Storm, written for a Shelter fundraiser. He tells me that he doesn't see himself turning into a singer-songwriter, unlike our other melodeon man, Keith Hancock, but enjoys giving a wider airing to good songs that might otherwise never travel beyond the regular club of their writers.

On the instrumentals, listen to the fiddle of Jamie Knowles. I'm hitting 600 words too soon to be fair to Jamie's work in exhuming north west tunes - so keep an eye out for a further article. 'Fools of Fortune' should be out in March and Brian is at Frodsham on the 17th of March, Bury on May 20th, and will be at Fylde. Otherwise, try the south coast, the north east, or Holmfirth festival.

Ian Wells

Folk Clubs & Performing Rights

The Performing Rights Society (PRS) issues licences to venues which make use of the Society's repertoire of copyright music. Traditional music is included in this repertoire, as is any music written by PRS writer-members or published by PRS publisher-members. For all practical purposes, most of the music performed in folk clubs is a part of the PRS's Repertoire, and as such needs a licence under which to be performed.

The responsibility for obtaining the licence lies not with folk club organisers, but with the landlord of the public house concerned. (I will deal here solely with public houses, as these are the usual venues for folk clubs).

During 1985/86, the PRS conducted lengthy negotiations with the Brewers' Society & and National Union of Licensed Victuallers regarding the tariff for public houses. These negotiations which were very protracted resulted in a new tariff from October 1986. The original figures were transitional ones, with agreed increases to follow and the full rates from October 1988. I quote below from the Performing Right Yearbook 1988-89 regarding these full rates:

THAT PART OF TARIFF P (PUBLIC HOUSES) RELATING TO FEATURED MUSIC

- i. For occasional and spontaneous piano performances by customers the annual royalty is £29.40.
- ii. If the licensee's annual expenditure (on performers) is £10,000 or more . . 15% of such expenditure.
- iii. Cinema and video performances in rooms being used primarily for that purpose and with specially arranged seating, are charged at the per session rate, for the first 100 persons capacity of the room, of . . . £1.68 and for each subsequent 25 persons capacity of the room £0.84.
- iv. All other featured performances, whether live or recorded (such as discos) or a combination of the two, are charged at the per session rate, for the first 100 persons capacity of the room, of £3.36. and for each subsequent 25 persons capacity of the room £0.84.

The rest of the tariff is concerned with annual royalties for jukeboxes, televisions, radios, record/tape players, music centres and video players, and the individual licence will cover those facilities offered by the licensee. Folk club evenings are covered by (iv) above. The rates are subject to annual adjustment in line with the Retail Price Index.

It may be of interest to note that because of the tendency of music users not to seek the Society's licence until approached by its Inspectors, the PRS finds the cost of issuing new licences is very high. For this reason the royalty for the first year of a licence is more than the normal charge unless the music user voluntarily seeks a licence.

Ordinarily, none of this should be the concern of the folk club organiser. If a landlord sells alcoholic drinks, we assume that he has the relevant licence to do so legally. Similarly, if he allows a folk club to meet on his premises, we should be able to assume that he has the relevant licence. In neither case should the club organiser approach the landlord about what is purely an internal administrative matter for the pub, because to do so would imply a lack of confidence in his ability as a landlord.

But sometimes a situation occurs where a landlord has not included the folk club sessions in his licence, and is 'rumbled' by the local PRS Inspector. This should affect the folk club. I have been involved in a club where this has happened, and other than the landlord mentioning in passing that he had had to increase his licence, nothing happened as far as the club was concerned.

What are the benefits to the landlord of obtaining a licence? Or alternatively, of expanding the existing licence to include the regular folk club evenings? Obviously, this will bring him within the law, and enable him to freely use the folk club to attract and entertain customers, without forever looking over his shoulder wondering if any PRS Inspectors are watching him. So legality and peace of mind are two benefits.

But what about financial implications? Well, if the cost to the licensee is £3.36 per session, then to make the evening worthwhile, he would have to make more than this in bar profits. If his profit on one drink is, say, 20p (a conservative estimate), and if each folk club attender buys on average three drinks in an evening (and many buy more), then simple arithmetic will confirm that even six attenders will cover the per-session cost. Anything over that is pure profit which would not have been made had the folk club not been meeting. And it is the landlord's responsibility to obtain the licence to allow it to meet. P.17 →

In your own Backyard

TALKING TURTLE

The two Johns tell Simon Jones goodwill alone doesn't run a record label.

"I'm determined to be a songwriter," says Jon Poole, one half of the founding team behind Turtle Records.

"And I wanted to set up a label that pushed acoustic music," chips in John Erasmus, the other half.

"We met up and I said to John, well since you want to start a record company, why don't you put out my album?" Poole goes on, "I had offers and ideas from other labels, but after much deliberation decided to do my own. So the time I came across my partner here was ideal".

Turtle Records has a logo of a turtle in battered trilby and an air of Tommy Trinder, sort of cockney spiv. Not that there's anything in the least reminiscent of a wide boy operation. Despite what they admit were "sort of ramshackle beginnings" Turtle Records is off and running with it's first release and more planned.

"We put on our first press release that we were the only label specialising in roots and acoustic music in Manchester, but of course there's Harbourtown and Big World too".

Room for all thinks the hack, and each concentrating on different angles. Harbourtown breaking the nouveau folkist things, Big World hopefully getting cosmopolitan, which leaves the Turtle to clean up in the acoustic writer and everything else stakes.

Jon Poole's first vinyl is now available at a record shop near to you. "And Now The News", bears the number 002, so what happened to 001?

Poole grins ruefully. "When we began we had the idea of a compilation album, you know, send in a demo and we'd see if we like it. Issue a selection of what we thought was good. Well there was just so much and everything took so much time, but we hope it is coming soon".

Who's on it?

We'd have liked Iain McDonald to be on there, but is looks like he'll be on a folk charity tape we've got planned. In the pipeline are tracks by myself, Pressgang a really keen folk rock band from Reading, and Claire Mooney whose album we're going to be doing anyway. John Booth who used to play with Oakenshield and who's just put out his own "Autograph" album. He sent us this tape, it's rather folk pop. Have a listen. So we do, and it is.

old hat?

"May be," says Erasmus, "but since it's for children who suffer from cancer then I think it's damn worthwhile".

Lots of local names as well as that of Highland songsmith Iain McDonald are banded about. Iain is actually present during all the chatter, down south of the border on a rare tour around the local clubs set up by Poole and Turtle. Concert organisers as well?

Somebody should book him a more protracted jaunt, his casual strummings this afternoon were extremely promising. So enamoured of McDonald's songwriting was Poole that he covered the anti apartheid number "No Fun City".

"I first got into this through listening to the likes of Billy Bragg and then going to various clubs and finding out that I could preform my songs that people would actually listen, clap and like it. As well as hear so much other good stuff," enthuses Jon like a true convert.

His zeal is refreshing, though, "There are clubs where people sit like zombies, and you wonder if you've made an impression". I hope yours isn't a club like that dear reader.

"The Malt Shovels in Altrincham's a good one, all lively, young people in a small space. Some weeks they have to take the chairs out and stand. It runs on a minimal budget, but you see some great music there. Nor do they stick to folk, you get all sorts of styles, country, blues, loads". It would appear that Mr Poole likes playing the malt Shovels as do others on the Turtle roster. Claire Mooney, a surefire political angel is a future Turtle label person, her debut already in the can and just needing polishing.

"I much prefer the likes of Claire, who've actually got something to say, to any female acoustic guitarist, I mean the likes of Tanita Tikaram . . . I ask you . . ." Jon Poole sighs.

All Turtle efforts are being centred on his first plastic, the more than a little unsettling "And Now The News", which pits the lads own songs, ranging from sloppy lovey dovey things, via Shetland fiddle inspired ditties and rants about students who can't survive on meagre grants. Basic arrangements give it the folkist connections, but really Poole's a rag bag of influences that hint at more to come.

Is he satisfied with it?

"As you can be. I mean it was done

BACKYARD (cont'd)

on a budget, and yes, I'll be happy to just make the money back on it . . ."

Ever the optimists Turtle Records are a bawling infant, perhaps a touch naive in the big band commercial world where so many labels vanish into the night. Hopefully however this eclectic set up will weather the storms to see their star shine a little brighter. Revolt among the yuppie suburbs of Altrincham . . . let's have more.

PERFORMING RIGHTS (cont'd)

A landlord may on the other hand consider that the folk club itself, rather than his bar profits, should bear the cost of the relevant part of the licence, and may decide to charge £3.36 for the previously free room. The finances of many folk clubs will not cover this level of extra expenditure, and most organisers, if faced with this situation, would be forced to look for an alternative venue with a more sympathetic and sensible landlord. The original landlord would thus lose all bar profits on the folk club.

So, for the relatively minor cost of the licence for folk sessions, the landlord is legally entitled to leave his customers' entertainment in the capable hands of experienced organisers giving their services free of charge, and thus to increase his bar profits with no extra work other than serving extra customers. It makes sense!

JOAN BLACKBURN

BOTHY CEILIDHS

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MARCH DATES

WEDNESDAY	1ST	8TH	15TH	22ND	29TH
NEW SEVEN STARS CROSS KEYS WHITEHAVEN WHITE SWAN	Singaround L & B HARDMAN (a) No Dates SALAMI BROS. (b)	Singaround MIKE RILEY ALISTAIR ANDERSON	Singaround FERRET PIE BERNARD WRIGLEY	Singaround HOMETOWNERS Singers' Night	Singaround JIM ELTON ROGER WILSON
THURSDAY	2ND	9TH	16TH	23RD	30TH
BURNLEY COCKERMOUTH DARWEN FOLK AT THE CASTLE FLEETWOOD MAGAZINE ORMSKIRK VICTORIA WIGAN	ROY BAILEY ALAN BELL BAND Singers' Night CLOSED Singers' Night Singaround Singers' Night No Dates Singers' Night Singers' Night	Singers' Night Singers' Night CLOSED Singers' Night Singaround RAY FISHER Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night	Singers' Night FIONA SIMPSON Singers' Night CLOSED Singaround Singers' Night Singers' Night CAIRDRE CEOL Singers' Night	Singers' Night BRAM TAYLOR CLOSED ROB JOHNSON Singaround Singers' Night Singers' Night DEREK GIFFORD (c) Singers' Night	Singers' Night Singers' Night TONI BUNNELL CLOSED Singaround Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night
FRIDAY	3RD	10TH	17TH	24TH	31ST
BEE BLACKBURN NORTHWICH POTTERIES	Singers' Night Singers' Night TICH FRIER Singers' Night	MIKE HAND Singers' Night KIPPER FAMILY G & E PRATT (e)	Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night Irish Night	25TH ANNIVERSARY(d) Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night WILSON FAMILY	Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night MARILYN M-POLLOCK (f)
SATURDAY	4TH	11TH	18TH	25TH	
BURY BREWERY ARTS (i) POYNTON SOUTHPORT ARTS CLUB CEILIDHS	LEWIS/MCGURK (g) No Dates TITHEBARN SPECIAL (j)	ROB MALANEY ALAN PRICE(10)	GEOFF HIGGINBOTTOM SHEENA NA GIG(17)	CEILIDH (h) GREGSON/COLLISTER	
SUNDAY	5TH	12TH	19TH	26TH	
BOTHY CHORLEY/ADLINGTON EAGLE & CHILD KING'S HEAD LEIGH LLANDUDNO RAVE ON	FIRST PRINCIPLES Singaround McCALMANS No Dates BLACK DOG Singers' Night No Dates	GORDON TYRRALL Singaround Singers' Night Singers' Night	Singers' Night Singaround SALLY BARKER DAVE SUMMERS Singers' Night	ALISTAIR ANDERSON Singaround CLOSED CLOSED Singers' Night	
MONDAY	6TH	13TH	20TH	27TH	
HORWICH POYNTON PRESTON TRITON	Singers' Night Singaround No Dates Singers' Night	TRILOGY Singaround JENNY WRIGHT	Singers' Night Singaround Singers' Night Singers' Night	Singers' Night Singaround Singers' Night Singers' Night	
TUESDAY	7TH	14TH	21ST	28TH	
BLACKPOOL MAGHULL YARROW VALLEY	No Dates TURNER/FAUX (k) Singers' Night	D. DAY/C. LOCKE(1)	FORSYTH/McKENZIE(1)	THE SISTERS(1)	

Notes for March:

- a) Lyn & Barry Hardman
- b) 7th Birthday Celebration
- c) Derek Gifford's Singers' Night
- d) 25th Anniversary Bee Folk Club
- e) Graham & Eileen Pratt
- f) Marilyn Middleton-Pollock
- g) Pete Lewis & Eddie McGurk
- h) Ceilidh at Derby Hall with Riot Band/ Jean Seymour
- i) Brewery Dates: 10th Alan Price
14th Family Ceilidh
17th Sheena Na Gig (St. Patrick's Night)
31st Gregson/Collister Band
- j) Melling Tithebarne: Vin Garbutt/Armpit Jug Band
- k) Steve Turner & George Faux (MAGHULL)
- l) Singers' Night hosted by named artists

CLUB RESIDENTS

- BOTHY - Clive Pownceby, Pete Rimmer, Paul Reid, Bev Saunders, Neville Grundy, Keith Mandle
- CROSS KEYS - Phil Chadwick & Alison Dean
- BLACKBURN - Ian & Hilary Hornby
- DARWEN - Joan & Dave Molloy
- EAGLE & CHILD - Caught on the Hop, Quartz, Colin Wilson & Jean Wrigley, Eminently Forgettable
- FOLK AT THE CASTLE - The New Seven Stars Band
- HORWICH - Joyce Riding, Tom Ferber
- HINDLEY - Pennygate
- LEIGH - Influx, Calico
- LLANDUDNO - The Rambling Boys
- MAGAZINE - Dave Locke, Ranting Sleazos, Jack Coutts, Frank & Helen McCall, Gill Burns, Adrienne Coutts

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APRIL DATES

SATURDAY	1ST	8TH	15TH	22ND	29TH
BURY BREWERY ARTS (c) POYNTON SOUTHPORT ARTS THE PARLOUR CLUB CEILIDHS	STRAVAIG S.E. ROGIE(5) No Dates No Dates	GEORGE FAUX FAMILY CEILIDH (11)	STEVE TURNER ROCKET '87 (14)	Singers' Night TED EDWARDS bothy(d)	IAN WALKER DEIGHTON FAMILY (b)
SUNDAY	2ND	9TH	16TH	23RD	30TH
BOTHY CHORLEY/ADLINGTON EAGLE & CHILD KING'S HEAD LEIGH LLANDUDNO RAVE ON	STEVE TILSTON Singers' Night LES BARKER No Dates MARILYN M-POLLOCK (a) No Dates No Dates	Singaround Singers' Night SILEAS JIM COUZA	ARTISAN Singers' Night FIONA SIMPSON Singers' Night	Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night GORDON TYRELL	TOM GILFELLON Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night
MONDAY	3RD	10TH	17TH	24TH	
HORWICH POYNTON PRESTON TRITON	Singers' Night Singaround No Dates Singers' Night	MAGHULL CLUB VISIT Singaround Singers' Night	Singers' Night Singaround LENNON/HIGHAM (f)	Singers' Night Singaround Singers' Night	
TUESDAY	4TH	11TH	18TH	25TH	
BLACKPOOL MAGHULL YARROW VALLEY	Singers' Night NEAL HIGGINS (e) BOB WALSER	Singers' Night BERNIE DAVIES (e)	Singers' Night TERRY MURPHY (e)	Singers' Night TONY HUGHES (e)	
WEDNESDAY	5TH	12TH	19TH	26TH	
NEW SEVEN STARS CROSS KEYS WHITEHAVEN WHITE SWAN	Singaround KEN PEARSON No Dates HARVEY ANDREWS	JIM COUZA JOCK PAT RYAN	Singers' Night TNI BUNNELL JOHN KIRKPATRICK	Singers' Night ALLAN TAYLOR VIN GARBUTT	
THURSDAY	6TH	13TH	20TH	27TH	
BURNLEY COCKERMOUTH DARWEN FOLK AT THE CASTLE FLEETWOOD MAGAZINE ORMSKIRK VICTORIA WIGAN	Singers' Night KEITH HANCOCK CLOSED Singers' Night Singaround L & B HARDMAN (g) Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night	Singers' Night DICK MILES Singers' Night CLOSED Singaround Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night	Singers' Night Singers' Night CLOSED Singaround Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night	Singers' Night JOHNNY COPPIN Singers' Night CLOSED Singaround Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night	
FRIDAY	7TH	14TH	21ST	28TH	
BEE BLACKBURN NORTHWICH POTTERIES	Singers' Night Singers' Night TONY GIBBONS (h) Singers' Night	GEOFF HIGGINBOTTOM Singers' Night BOB WALSER (i) LEON ROSSELSON	Singers' Night Singers' Night GORDON TYRRALL ARTISAN	Guest TBA Singers' Night Singers' Night Guest TBA	

Notes for April

- a) Marilyn Middleton-Pollock
- b) Deighton Family at Derby Hall (BURY)
- c) Brewery Dates: 5th S.E. Rogie (Roots)
11th Family Ceilidh
14th Rocket '87 (blues)
- d) Ceilidh with Melons for ecstasy at St. John's Hall
- e) Singers' Night hosted by named artists (BOTHY)
- f) Mike Lennon & Steve Higham
- g) Lyn & Barry Hardman
- h) Tony Gibbons & friends
- i) Held at Davenham Players, Northwich

- MAGHULL - Gordon Mackenzie, Harry Forsythe, Dave Day, Tony Hughes, Mike Lennon, Len Nolan, Neal Higgins, Pete Jackson & Cathy, Alan & Steve, Phil Boardman & Harry Hayes, Chris Kelly
- NORTHWICH - Sandy & Sean Boyle, Tony Howard, Sarah Burdon, Ian Sherwood, Jamie Anderson, Graham Sowerby
- POYNTON (Mon.) - Pete Hughes & friends
- RAVE ON - Full House
- TRITON - Ages Apart, Chris Lock, Neil Higgins
- YARROW VALLEY - Derek Gifford, Phil Hartley, Nothing Yet, John McCallister
- WHITE SWAN - Hollerin' Pot, John O' Hagan, Geoff Higginbottom, Dave & Helen Howard, Andy & Alison Whittaker, Pete Morton

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MAY DATES

MONDAY	1ST	8TH	15TH	22ND	29TH
HORWICH POYNTON PRESTON TRITON	Singers' Night Singaround No Dates CLOSED	Singers' Night Singaround HANDS IN POCKETS	DIALECT POETRY (a) Singaround Singers' Night	Singers' Night Singaround Singers' Night	Singers' Night Singaround CLOSED
TUESDAY	2ND	9TH	16TH	23RD	30TH
BLACKPOOL MAGHULL YARROW VALLEY	No Dates CLOVER (c) Singers' Night (d)	PHIL BOARMAN (c)	SUE HOWARD (c)	DAVE BRESNAN (c)	LENNON & HIGHAM (b)
WEDNESDAY	3RD	10TH	17TH	24TH	31ST
NEW SEVEN STARS CROSS KEYS WHITEHAVEN WHITE SWAN	Singaround GEORGE NORRIS No Dates MIKE SILVER	Singaround MAGGIE BILLINGTON JAKE THACKRAY	Singaround STEVE TURNER KIPPER FAMILY	Singaround BRAM TAYLOR JAMES & WALKER (e)	Singaround NICK DOW Singers' Night
THURSDAY	4TH	11TH	18TH	25TH	
BURNLEY COCKERMOUTH DARWEN FOLK AT THE CASTLE FLEETWOOD MAGAZINE ORMSKIRK VICTORIA WIGAN	Singers' Night PETE MORTON CLOSED STEVE TURNER Singaround GEORGE FAUX No Dates Singers' Night Singers' Night	Singers' Night Guest TBA Singers' Night CLOSED Singaround Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night	Singers' Night EDDIE WALKER CLOSED Singers' Night Singaround KEVIN MITCHELL Guest TBA Singers' Night	Singers' Night Singers' Night LEIGH COLLINSON CLOSED Singaround Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night	
FRIDAY	5TH	12TH	19TH	26TH	
BEE BLACKBURN NORTHWICH POTTERIES	Singers' Night Singers' Night NICK DOW Guest TBA	GERRY HALLOM Singers' Night Singers' Night Guest TBA	Singers' Night Singers' Night Singers' Night FOLK FESTIVAL (h)	MELANIE HARROLD (f) Singers' Night PHIL CUNNINGHAM (g) Guest TBA	
SATURDAY	6TH	13TH	20TH	27TH	
BURY BREWERY ARTS (i) POYNTON SOUTHPORT ARTS THE PARLOUR CLUB CEILIDHS	Guest TBA FAMILY CEILIDH (9) No Dates No Dates	Guest TBA GONE TO EARTH (12)	BRIAN PETERS STAN WEBBS (17) SONG CONTEST * POTTERIES FESTIVAL	DAVE SUMMERS	
SUNDAY	7TH	14TH	21ST	28TH	
BOTHY CHORLEY/ADLINGTON EAGLE & CHILD KING'S HEAD LEIGH LLANDUDNO RAVE ON	Singers' Night Singers' Night JOHNNY COLLINS No Dates RICK CHRISTIAN No Dates No Dates	ROY BAILEY Singers' Night KEITH HANCOCK PATTI REID	KEVIN MITCHELL Singers' Night Singers' Night BRAM TAYLOR	CLOSED CLOSED LEON ROSSELSON Guest TBA	

Notes for May

a) Dialect Poetry Competition: Brian Clare 0942 815771
 b) Mike Lennon & Steve Higham
 c) Singers' Night hosted by named artists plus local Morris side
 d) plus local Morris side

e) John James & Eddie Walker
 f) Melanie Harrold & Ollie Blanchflower
 g) Held at Davenham Players, Northwich
 h) Potteries Folk Festival - see Advert
 i) Brewery Dates: 9th Family Ceilidh
 12th Gone to Earth
 17th Stan Webb's Chicken Shack

Advance Dates for June:

3rd Johnny Collins	Bury
5th Johnny Collins	Triton
7th Cilla & Ray Fisher	White Swan
11th Tom McConville	Eagle & Child
14th John O'Hagan & Dave Howard	White Swan
21st Jez Lowe	White Swan
29th Janet Russell	Magazine

4th WIGAN-FOLK BILLINGE FESTIVAL 23-25 June 89

LOWTON CIVIC HALL

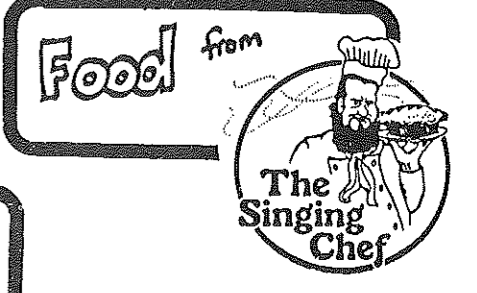
TANNAHILLWEAVERS

WHIPERSNAPPER the DOONAN FAMILY

Katherine Tickell Sileas COSMOTHEKA

Caidre Ceol: Ranting Sleazos
Stanley Accrington
Quartz

Johnny Collins: Jim Couza
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Sally Barker



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COLIN & JEAN; COSGLER'S BREW!

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WEEKEND ADULT £15.50 (£17.50) AFTER
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Live Reviews

WHITBY FOLK WEEK

Reviewing one Whitby Folk Week is pretty much like any other. They run to a fairly set formula which has wide but not universal appeal. OK, I'll admit it, I'm a committed fan but not just because the folk happens to suit my taste. As a fishing village -cum- seaside resort with lots of historical interest (whaling, Captain Cook, a 12th century abbey) plus the glorious Yorkshire moors, Whitby works great for me as an annual holiday.

Like the town itself the Folk Week has masses to offer but on its own terms. You won't find the all-too familiar pantheon of superstars of the day or the currently fashionable internationalism. That said, the typical Whitby programme is neither lightweight nor conservative.

In recent years they've had new-wavers Pete Morton, The Deighton Family and Kathryn Tickell alongside bearers of the traditional like Fred Jordan, Lizzie Higgins and The Stewarts - alongside some of the revival's finest including The Watsons, Strawhead and Tony Rose. The resultant mix is folk at its broad-based best with a rare and therefore welcome leaning towards British traditions.

You can high step it in dances and ceilidhs of every description, some especially for novices, some for experts, mostly just for good fun. A perennial highlight is the Bop Till You Drop with Dave Burland's group of aging rockers Shagpile, an occasion to be experienced and survived to be believed.

Kids' sessions include a daily playgroup, courtesy of Mags Whiting, where the little darlings can be deposited for a few blissful parental hours.

The vast array of workshops, singarounds, sessions and concerts far outstrips other festivals' programmes, even allowing for the duration. And because so many of the events are repeated you don't have to worry about trying to rush from venue to venue.

On the fringe, every pub in town seems to be hosting a gathering. The Spa bar is a regular late night meeting place for impromptu song sessions in the company of the likes of Cockersdale, Bread & Roses and Peter Bellamy. That's where I spotted a breathtaking fiddlers session of Roger Wilson, Tom McConville and George Faux.

Another nice touch is that the festival gives something back to the town. Twenty dance teams in all - morris, clog and rapper - performed in public while Dr Sunshine gave numerous hilarious street shows for kids and adults.

It's difficult trying to single out particular artists for special mention from this year's excellent crop but here goes.

Amongst the new talent to watch out for were an exceptionally fine 3 piece band Shady Lady (average age then 15 and whose fiddler Lynn Tocker went on to win the South Bank Young Tradition award) and a brilliant button accordionist Simon Edwards.

Janet Russell utterly knocked me out but then she always does; ditto the mighty Swan Arcade. Of the many excellent dance bands Hookes Law (with line-up that includes Chris Coe and John Adams) took first prize. For being absolutely everywhere and doing everything superbly well Eddie Upton takes the biscuit. And Sid and Henry Kippof unbelievable.

Whitby isn't the only claimant of 'the friendly festival' tag but I reckon it has to be the top contender and the '88 edition was well up to the usual high standard. The indefatigable organisers - Malcolm Storey now with a crack management team in support - know what works, what their regulars want and what slight touches on the tiller are needed from year to year to bring in fresh followers.

And that's what they deliver, perfectly predictable and predictably perfect.

JACK COUTTS

MARIE LITTLE - LES BARKER - THE DEIGHTON'S Melling Tithebarn

Such a feast of 'goodies' were on offer over the Christmas period, it was difficult to decide which ones to miss out. For me, however, this one was definitely a MUST.

Arriving early gave me the opportunity to renew acquaintances with The Deighton's, get in the drinks, and find a front row seat in readiness for a good evening: I wasn't disappointed.

Marie Little opened the evening. She immediately puts any audience at their ease with her warm Salford/Geordie accent, and lighthearted chatter. People just feel comfortable with Marie - it's like sitting in your own living room with a friend. Her songs are however definitely not lightweight, most of them are very strong in their 'message content', and she

compels you to listen to her every word. The funny ones she does are as equally compelling, in fact the one she does about having a touch of 'flu is so realistic you find yourself reaching in your handbag for the Beechams. My only complaint is that she arrived late and cut her set short, much to my disappointment. Les Barker then regaled us with thirty minutes of poetic lunacy. There's no point in me raving on about what Les does; if you've seen him you already know, and if you haven't, you wouldn't believe me if I told you. The following day, I sat down and read one of his poems, and wondered why the audience had been near hysterical - after all, when I read it, it wasn't that funny. That answered my question. "It's the way 'e tells 'em".

Fifteen months ago, the Deighton's had appeared at the Tithebarn, and been booked on the spot for a return visit. Now it was up to them to finish the night off, in their own inimitable style. What can you say about them that hasn't already been said? Apart from voice microphones, they did a totally acoustic set, which given the natural acoustics of the Barn, was wonderful. Good foot-tapping stuff this, from a highly talented and extremely likeable family. The audience said it all with a rapturous response - they loved them.

And as if all this talent wasn't enough for one night, I must mention the two 'floor spots' from our own local talent. Andy Anderson sang and played the clarsach, a Gaelic harp, which I consider a small wonder in itself, as I have trouble with six strings, but when you consider he made it himself, and it is so very beautiful, words fail me.

The second floor spot of the night belonged to Steve Higham. Who is a highly talented singer. With incredible voice control so that when he sings, everyone listens. Nice one Steve.

Credit goes to Dave Day for putting an evening like this together, and for a good job as an MC.

It was a happy evening, and a delightful run-up to Christmas.

CHRIS LOCK

The Folk Centre Park Lane Poynton Cheshire

POYNTON'S 17th. EASTER FOLK FESTIVAL
GOOD FRIDAY, EASTER SATURDAY & SUNDAY

(MARCH 24th., 25th. & 26th. 1989)

ARTISTS INCLUDE :- THE WILSON FAMILY :
ALAN HULL (FROM LINDISFARNE) : ROSIE
HARDMAN : ALISTAIR ANDERSON : JOHNNY
COLLINS : GEOFF HIGGINSBOTTOM : TONY
NYLAND : TONI BUNNELL : JOE BEARD :
NIGHTSHIFT : BRYONY O'SULLIVAN :
I TWO MANY : CAUGHT ON THE HOP : PLUS
MANY, MANY OTHERS. COMPERE - OWEN LEWIS
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FOLK CONCERTS

SAT 2nd. MARCH - ARIZONA SMOKE REVIEW
SAT 18th. MARCH - GONE TO EARTH
24th. 25th. 26th. MARCH - EASTER FESTIVAL
SAT 1st. APRIL - KATHRYN TICKELL
SAT 15th. APRIL - LEON ROSSELSON
SAT 29th. APRIL - EWAN MacCOLL & PEGGY
SEAGER

SAT 6th. MAY - COSMOTHEKA
SAT 3rd. JUNE - OLDHAM TINKERS
SAT 15th. JULY - THE McALMANS



BOOKSHELF

'THE SOUND OF HISTORY', Roy Palmer, Oxford University Press

Oh, thank you Father Christmas! If I had been granted a wish for the book of 1988 that I wanted to hold in my sweaty little paw, this would have been it. Roy Palmer, of 'Everymans Book of English Country Songs' fame, calls this book an examination of songs and social comment. How far reaching it is, looking as it does at songs and ballads from the earliest days of the oral tradition up to the works of such luminaries of the present day as Tim Laycock and Leon Rosselson (our very own Bernard Wrigley's 'Our Bill' features on page 226).

The subjects covered in this study range through Country, Town, Industry, Crime, Pastimes and the Sexes, War and Peace and naturally Politics. Each of these subjects is illustrated with songs and snatches. The book is also lavishly illustrated with photographs, prints, engravings and facsimiles of street ballads, each one breathing yet more life into a work already vibrant with the reality of our heritage and our future.

Yet this is no book for scholarship alone, this is a book to be read and enjoyed by all who have ever been touched, in any way by the words or sentiments of song. Throughout the work are priceless gems such as this written when tax was 2/- in the pound providing you earned above £60 per annum.

'From the tax upon income invented by Pitt, though the great ones continue to lose nothing by it, yet we who have little are sure to be hit, GOOD LORD DELIVER US!'

- nothing has changed in 200 years!

This is a 'weighty tome' in terms of the amount of work that Mr Palmer has put into it, but in no way is it purely for the learned professor, it is a book for 'Everyman', a book full of enjoyment. although the price is 'weighty' at £25 if five maiden aunts have each given you a £5 book token this is the one to indulge yourself upon.

PETE GLEAVE

PENNY GATE presents

6th HINDLEY FOLK/ROOTS SONG-WRITING CONTEST

FINALS NIGHT SAT 20th MAY

THE PARLOUR, Mill at the Pier, Wigan.

7-30pm

admission 1-50p

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Wigan wn2 2re

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closing date for entries — 30th April 1989

Record Reviews

MARTIN CARTHY, "Right of Passage", Topic 1275452

1982. That was when Carthy last graced us with a proper album. 'Out Of The Cut', since you've asked. OK, There's been some Brass Monkeying about and the odd track here or there but that's no consolation for his followers.

Well, now he's back and how!

Opening with Leon Rosselson's quirky parable of the canny and the careless, 'The Ant & The Grasshopper', our hero is as compelling as ever. He makes it entirely his own just as he does with Mike Waterson's superb 'Stitch In Time', a cautionary tale of the biter bit.

Instrumentally, he's as marvellous as ever. Check out his treatment of 'All In Green Came My Love Riding' with the inimitable Swarbrick guesting on fiddle. His guitar on 'Banks Of The Nile' is well nigh perfect. I doubt that there's another performer who could create such a mood.

And, after all that, the best is yet to come in the shape of 'Company Policy' which is a Falkland's broadsheet of utter majesty. So sharp, you should wear gloves to handle it.

This album's 11 tracks (13 if you get the C.D., which is enough to almost make you buy one) reconfirms Carthy's sheer genius. It's magnificent and, if you don't possess it, then it's entirely your loss.

BERNIE FORKIN

JEZ LOWE, "Bad Penny", Fellside FE 070

Over the years, since the Bothy first booked him, I've watched Jez Lowe develop his craft from modest singer-songwriter, to the mature, self-assured social commentator we see today. Thank goodness he preserves enough of the former's charm to prevent the current incarnation from being boringly insufferable!

Here is the 4th solo album for Fellside and it is sublime. There are spectres at this musical feast that stalk its content, and not just from his own past either. Two years ago, Lowe went back to live in the village in Co. Durham where he was brought up, after a long time away. "Things had changed," he says "but hadn't REALLY changed. I remembered more people than remembered me, I'm sure and a lot of them are scattered around on this record".

True enough. There's the old friend in 'A Small Coal Song' - an incisive, harsh and self-analytical piece who asserts "you come to me with damn-fool questions of things I'd just as soon forget".

Quite apart from this localised quality I can hear echoes of Eleanor Rigby in 'Father Mallory's Dance' - a finely observed, exquisite memory of a local hop we've all been at but could never conjure with the affectionate sadness here. 'A New Town Incident' recalls Pete Bond's descriptive realism at its best - dark end of the estate love where dreams don't just die - they never get born.

In fact there's a windy bleakness to much of the material here, but at times it's a beautifully created hopelessness that wraps itself around you like a clinging mist.

Lighter moments? Of course, it wouldn't be Jez if songs of the 'Midnight Mail' - an excremental (not execrable!) eulogy and wistful items such as 'Dandelion Clocks' weren't included and make no mistake, this is a major work, comparable with the best of modern writing by Randy Newman.

There are places I'll remember all my life, though some have changed, Hmmm-mm, strikes a chord? Well, if this is his 'Rubber Soul' Jez Lowe's 'Revolver' should really make the world listen.

CLIVE POWNCEBY

FAIRPORT CONVENTION, "Red & Gold", New Routes RUE002

Well, here they are again, you just can't keep an old trooper down can you? The truth of the matter is that Fairport are a very good band, and with the past firmly behind them, this 'new' line up is trying to establish an identity all their own. And for the first time for many years they appear on another label. They've licenced this one to Rough Trade, the independent distribution barons. And so finally to "Red & Gold" . . .

"Set Me Up" from the pen of Dave Whetstone fires off, a typical left footed rhythm which carries a gritty Nicol vocal and a skirling tune into Allcock's "Noise Club", the most inspired folk tune on the set. Elsewhere instrumentals weave between nouveau pastoral and wayward jazz as Ric Sanders changes moods. The expected "Trad Arr" gets shunted to one track only, a harking back to Swarbrick days, "The Beggar's Song", which extols the virtues of booze.

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"Dark Eyed Molly" arranged from Archie Fisher's original has Peggy getting all soppy, but has a gorgeous floating keyboard by Mattacks, who again does the honours on "London River", the finest cut on the entire album. A song about ploughing up, down and around on a Merchant ship, only two and a bit minutes long but it's as bouncy as you'd expect of a pseudo shanty. Again Simon Nicol gets his mid range round a tricky lyric and the back line support him to the hilt.

The sleeve shows them clutching pints as chummy and crazy as they ever were. Sanders bears a 'pretty damn cosmic' slogan on his T shirt. Perhaps not cosmic, but it's always reassuring to have a Fairport album about. Tough stuff from folk rock's favourite uncles.

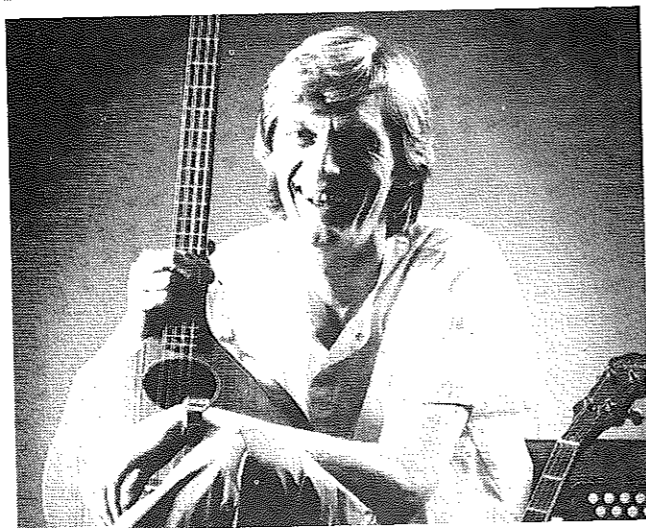
SIMON JONES

PETE COE, "A Right Song And Dance", BACKSHIFT B.A.S.H. 43

It's always more difficult to review a recording by a performer you have known both socially and professionally for many years and especially so when the first impression on playing it is one of mild trepidation. However, remembering the reviewer's code of 'play it again Sam', I duly repeated the exercise and immediately realised the problem; it's the engineering that is more at fault than the performers. Everything sounds a little subdued and dull; it lacks the sparkle that I know Pete Coe is capable of.

Having said that, there is so much substance in the material, much of it self-penned, that it will stand many replayings. It starts well with 'Pennine Way' which is punchy though overlong, a criticism which could be applied to a few other tracks. 'The Seven Gypsies' is a classic in terms of Pete's ability to interpret traditional material. The outstanding track for me though is 'When The Red Rose Blooms Again' which, although I'm not especially a political animal, expresses my own feelings admirably on the way the country is being run . . . down!

'Jackdaw' is an interesting song but the cello arrangement sounds incomplete unlike other tracks where it is used so effectively. The small pipes on this one are played beautifully by Dave Shaw as on other tracks but he is let down by sloppy recording techniques when at the end there is a distinct 'dying' of the pipes which could easily have been faded out.



Mastering faults are also apparent on 'Sons of Freedom' where the chorus sounds quite noticeably out of synchronisation with the lead on a couple of occasions spoiling what is an otherwise impressive song. Pete's original arrangement of 'Poverty Knock' would have been better if he'd cut out alternate choruses. The result of this slow tempo version is that it becomes rather tedious.

The tune tracks are played by Pete's ceilidh band 'Hooke's Law'; fine, but what are they doing on a 'Pete Coe' album? Surely they are proficient enough to produce their own album and not take up space on someone else's recording even if he is heavily involved with them! I would much rather have heard more of Pete's own renditions.

If the criticisms of recording techniques are ignored there is no doubt that this album of Pete's matures with repeat listenings. Awful cover though! Tell you what - forget this review and the record - go and see him live and be devastated by the man's musical ability.

DEREK GIFFORD

JANET RUSSELL, "Gathering Fragments", Harbourtown HAR003 - PETE MORTON, "One Big Joke", Harbourtown HAR004

The enfant terribles of the folk scene keep them coming. The unabounded enthusiasm and promise that the Harbourtown issues have given to the juvenile rung of the folk club ladder is really incalculable, and here with this pair of matched albums that tradition continues. Only the best will do, and why not? Janet Russell, a vocal ringer for early Barbra Dickson recorded this disc under her own steam, but it bears the Harbourtown label and wears the influence bravely on it's sleeve. Janet is an intensely Scottish vocalist, the political punch isn't pulled down among the bonnie red roses, this is a wicked old world as she sees it. There is something, brooding, even unsettling about tracks like "Old Woman Is Watching", even though "The Band Of Shearers" and jigs lift the air. Sally Barker gets some long overdue session work and Sileas drag their electro harp along too boot.

Pete Morton's second vinyl outing, shows how much the process of maturity has caught up with the bloke. If you call your record 'One Big Joke' and grin on the cover, can you be all that serious? Yep. Morton no doubt benefits from the Harbourtown musicians gathered as a backing outfit, but to pretend that they make a crucial difference would be criminal. The fact is that Pete Morton's the gaffer and the material speaks oceans about his unique ability. That choppy, but chancing acoustic guitar has been wrapped around a set of zippy and plentiful numbers that range from morose to jaunty via reflective. The folk tradition forced into tales of the modern day under dog. I must admit I'd love to see this guy get his mits round an electric guitar and blast these cuts out with a full blown rock band.

Heads or tails, these are value and spiffing.

SIMON JONES

BISIKER & ROMANOV, "Bisiker & Romanov", FE068 and FE068/c

This debut album by a Birmingham duo is primarily relaxing. Mick Bisiker sings, plays guitar and bouzouki extremely well, and writes his own material. Al Romanov fiddles, with a very rich tone, but neither impose any sense of urgency onto the material presented here. At first I thought the opening track, 'The Wey and Arun Canal' was carefully matched in tempo to its subject, but the second song is the same, and even the marginally

faster 'Jarrow March' is more of a stroll. Mick has a very musical voice, sings with excellent phrasing but has offered us no chance to judge him with dramatic songs.

Naturally the violin led dance tunes are faster, especially the Hungarian ones, but even with the rapid cascades of notes, immaculately played, it is smoothly brilliant rather than having gypsy guts. The technical perfection of the playing is such that even the full speed czardas sound relaxed.

The high technical quality is what we expect from Fellside, exactly expressing the musicality of two excellent performers. My only quibble is that the cassette omits writing credits: all the songs are by Mick except Grahame Pratt's 'The Fox'. They are appearing around the area: try and catch them live when I'm assured they're very exciting indeed.

IAN WELLS

RICHARD THOMPSON, "Amnesia"

Can he get any better? I asked myself that after 'Hand of Kindness' four years ago. And again, after 'Daring Adventures', last year. And now, I'm asking myself again . . . Is it possible that anyone could be so good, for so long, and still be unknown to so many of the nations record buying punters?

His writing is better than almost everything currently available. 'Yankee Go Home' is an all time Thompson classic right off the bat. He's got to be one of the best electric guitarists in the world. Seriously. Knopfler, Clapton, Robertson . . . can you think of another, other than Thompson, in that league. And he's got a better voice than any of the others.

Yet, ask for his album in Boots or Woolies and they'll look at you as if you'd asked for a ferret. Say he's a 'folk singer' and they'll look as if they've been asked for a lightly grilled ferret in a sesame seed bun. So it goes. And yet he carries on making incredibly good music . . . folk, rock . . . who cares . . . and playing THE INTERNATIONAL instead of the N.E.C. and Wembley.

Prediction. One day he'll write some fearfully trite little song for a giggle and some witless disc jockey on Radio 1 will play it and . . . Boom. No.1 overnight sensation.

Alternatively, the rest of the world could catch up with him and begin to appreciate a great artist for being just that.

27 BERNIE FORKIN

BREAD AND ROSES

Bread and Roses comprise four girls who not only offer superb harmonies but are also accomplished musicians, playing between them guitar, harmonium, concertina and bowed psaltery. Some of their songs are unaccompanied, others have a very light instrumental backing, leaving their voices to express the music.

The 'subject matter' of the album is predominantly womens songs, not the feminist songs which you may expect to be sung by such a group, but those with the more traditional theme of the woman being left at home while her loved one goes off to be a soldier.

The tracks I particularly like are 'Daughters of the Revolution' which is much more lively than many of the other tracks, and 'Bay of Fundy', a sea song which lends itself particularly well to the close harmonies of these girls. In addition there is a lively French instrumental which has a definite Breton flavour to it.

I think we can certainly expect to see much more of these girls during the coming months but I feel they would appeal to a wider audience if they varied the tempo of their songs a little more.

LESLEY BLUNDELL

BOYS OF THE LOUGH, "Sweet Rural Shade", Lough 003
DAVY SPILLANE BAND, "Out Of The Air", Cooking Vinyl 016

Here's another winner from Scotland's most traditional custodians.

Several sets of excellent tunes with special mentions for Christy O'Leary's courageous assault on the Scots tradition with uilleann pipes on the opening track 'Out On The Ocean' and Aly Bain's ferocious lambasting of the Finnish tune 'Forest Flower'.

A couple of fine songs from Christy ('Once I Loved' and 'The Hills Of Donegal') though the best moment belongs to Cathal McConnell with his charming rendition of the title track 'Todd's Sweet Rural Shade'.

All in all, good listening.

The Spillane Band, while certainly more fiery and adventurous than The Boys Of The Lough, don't do themselves too many favours with this release. Don't misunderstand me, as an entity it's a very fine album indeed, but half of it duplicates the previous release 'Atlantic Bridge'. Explanation. After 'Bridge' made waves, Davy was invited by that splendid promoter of Roots music Andy Kershaw to do a session for his excellent programme. So he did. And now, having

seconded another four very literable tracks, they've released them on this album. Odd.

The old tracks are, of course, interestingly developed versions of the studio takes on 'Atlantic Bridge' with, perhaps, the old Moving Hearts showcase 'The Storm' coming off best. While the new tracks are all splendid, especially 'The Road To Ballyalla'. So, there you go. A good album but one not destined to sell zillions unless people are willing to buy just the four new songs.

BERNIE FORKIN

DICK MILES, "Playing For Time", Greenwich Village GVR 238

This latest album by Dick Miles oozes gentility and expression. He doesn't so much sing a song as caress it with loving care and delicate concertina playing. Even the more 'up-tempo' polka tunes are played with such finesse and technical excellence that they need careful listening to rather than as background music.

The tracks are a mixture of tunes, traditional and Dick's own songs like 'Sweetheart Of The East' which is about Bury St Edmunds the ethereal 'The Singer And The Song' and the topically pertinent 'Eighteen Year Jack'. His tune to 'The Soldier's Prayer' is suitably spiritual if a little too mournful although Sam Richards' piano work on this is especially effective.

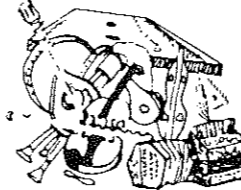
Of the traditional material my favourite is 'On One April Morning' whilst 'Careless Love' is certainly given a different slant using the concertina for accompaniment as is Robert Johnson's blues 'From Four Until Late'.

Dick plays three 'tune' tracks on this album of which Lennon and McCartney's 'Yesterday/All My Loving' is the most original and adventurous as far as the English concertina is concerned. 'Town Green' and 'Spring Lane' are indeed 'rousing polkas' but 'Italian Galop' and 'Hamburger Polka' (his spellings not mine!) sound more like an English tea dance rather than their continental origins.

If you're in the mood for music that is softly performed and pleasant on the ear than this album will not disappoint you and if not, buy it anyway and save it until you are.

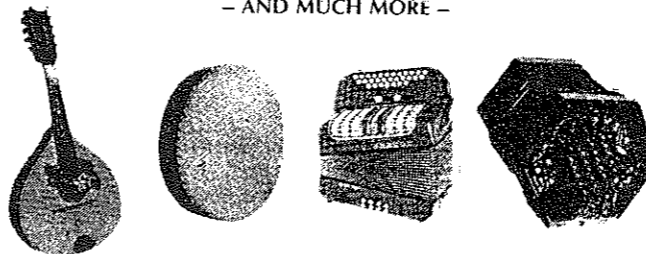
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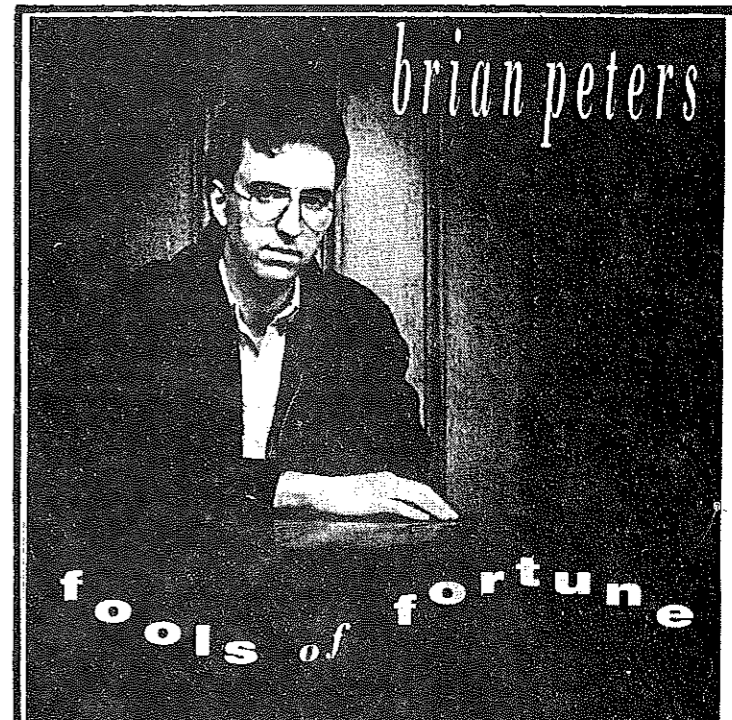


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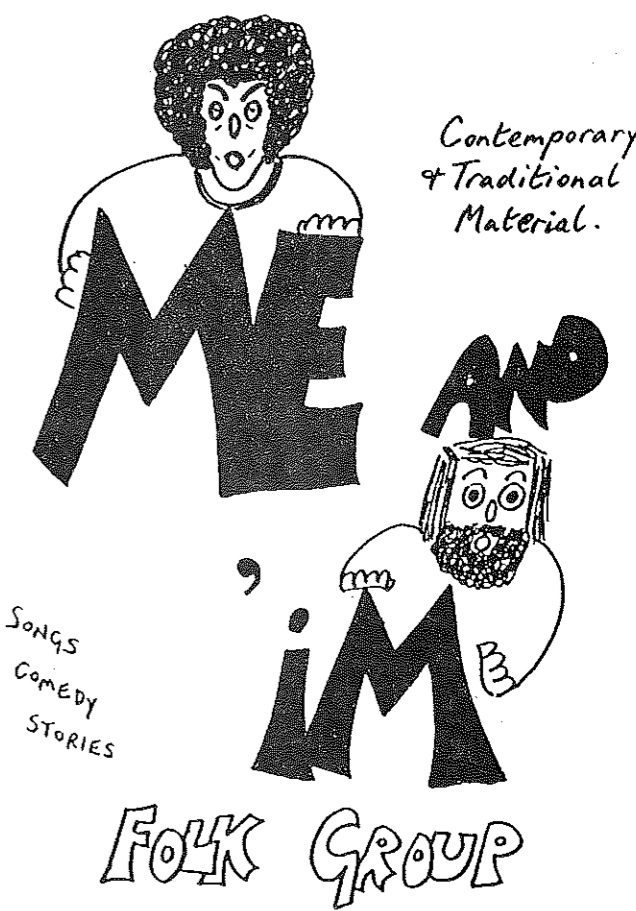


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RING 'O' BELLS COUNTRY DANCE BAND,
"Ceilidh Saturday Night", Beechwood
Records BEE 004
THE OLD TRIUMPH BAND, OTB1

Before reviewing these cassettes I asked myself 'Why do I buy tapes?' the answer, in my case, is to listen to other bands, get some new ideas and tunes but not to dance to them. I much prefer to dance to live music! That having been said I know that many clubs and some callers do use recordings and these two will be of benefit to them.

When reviewing two tapes comparisons are bound to be made and I am aware that these bands are very unlike in style. However, to those who are just wanting to listen the former is disappointing whereas the latter has much more life about it and would appeal more to the younger person whom the folk world should be wooing.

I don't want to take anything away from Ring 'O' Bells, as an English Country Dance Band they are perfectly capable musicians and their selection of tunes and dances on the tape, ranging from 'The Guid Man Of Ballangigh' to 'The Accumulator', would certainly make any ceilidh go with a swing. Unfortunately, I do not think the production does them justice.

I particularly liked 'waipole Cottage', it's a super tune and the use of the glockenspiel and recorder helps to overcome the tedium of the set tune. The tunes for Edinburgh Rock gave individual musicians the chance to go through their paces.

Overall a good tape for its purpose and the accompanying book with the dances and tunes written out makes a welcome package to any caller or club organiser.

Turning to the Old Triumph Band, this really had me toe tapping. A good selection of traditional tunes including, 'Kendal Ghyll', 'Sir Roger De Coverley' and 'Old Mother Oxford'. Their interpretation and the use of sophisticated recording techniques gives the tape the edge over the former. All the band members are given a chance to show their paces with obvious lead instruments, while the electronic gimmickry is used on occasions but never enough to be a distraction.

The series of tunes, gradually builds up in fervour but never loses its clarity. The highlight must be the bands rendering of 'Speed the Plough'. This starts innocuously enough but soon develops into a rocking good thrash. I can easily imagine an 'Eclectic' dance group having a great time fitting dances to the guitar riffs, drum solos and harmonica counter melodies.

The only drawback, and in these times of trying to gain more recognition for composers and arrangers it is a serious one, is that The Old Triumph Band have not included details of the sources of the tunes or any other production information. Perhaps their next offering will rectify this. I certainly look forward to hearing it.

KEVIN WALSH

STRAVAIG, "Stravaig", Dunkeld, Duncas 8

Some of my recent reviewing may have sounded a bit jaundiced. If so, it was a reflection of a certain weariness with high-tech approaches to folk music.

But in the first two acapella tracks, STRAVAIG blew away my boredom with their commitment to the feel of folk music. Four good female voices, all Scots, three from singing families, all four enthused about folk music - that's a recipe for enjoyment. This Dougie MacLean engineered tape captures both the quality and the vigour of their singing. It's mostly traditional songs - but not always the version you'd expect.

I'd love to list and analyse every track, but we don't have enough space, so here's a taster. 'Spinner's Wedding', a Dundee song, shows off their interpretation; 'Jeannie Jenkins', a children's song, infects you with enthusiasm until you sing along; and a four voice version of a song we're used to hearing in duet from Scold's Bridle, 'Foolish, incredibly Foolish'. Next to last, it's a fascinating variant, with a 'Heigh Ho Morning Dew' chorus to the story line familiar to us in 'Boots of Hay' - an apposite choice for a female troupe!

That would have made a good last song, but the actual finisher outdoes it. 'Children of Africa' - yes, the one The Spinners use, but with three additional topical verses, the addition of an anonymous instrument that sounds like a didgeridoo or a bass jew's harp, and that ingredient X that marks out the best folk performers, commitment. 'Stravaiging' is a word I've run across in Scots writing about walking and climbing: seems to mean 'wandering' but with aggressive overtones. Well, STRAVAIG can trample over my patch anytime, but you won't have to head north to see them. They're conducting a border raid this spring: Poynton Easter festival and Bury on March 1st.

STRAVAIG is the title of the tape as well as the group, and it's on Dunkeld, Duncas 8. Buy quickly - if quality counts, it will sell out rapidly.

IAN WELLS

ALAN HULL, "Another Little Adventure",
Black Crow CRO219

The gritty Geordie muse of Alan Hull was a decade or so ago, a distant cousin of the political balladeers like Billy Bragg and James Varda. The difference was that Hull operated and still does move with Lindisfarne, one of the first rock bands to play in a distinctly English style. That the works of Alan Hull are often ignored in favour of Thompson or McTell is nothing short of criminal, whilst he hasn't the burning guitarist of Thompson within him or the cosy history of McTell, he has a reality, a street level feel to his music that those others never did.

This live set concentrates mostly on songs culled from his 70s solo outings and is a welcome resurfacing. 'One More Bottle Of Wine', and 'Money Game' sit neatly alongside the Lindisfarne cuts, 'Poor Old Ireland' duplicated from a recently issued Peel session and 'Malvinas Melody' still rings ironically now the Falklands are filling up with Yuppies.

A natty little piece of vinyl. I'd love to see a new studio set from Alan Hull, but in the meantime 'Adventure' has more than enough pleasant overtones.

SIMON JONES

NANCI GRIFFITH, "One Fair Summer Evening", MCA MCF 3435

America was presented in a rather more flattering light when I was young and I used to while away double physics with rosy dreams of hitching the tracks with my guitar and a slim, country girl of indefinite origins and agreeably lax morals. With any luck, she would play guitar, sing and look a lot like Nanci Griffith.

I like Nanci's America very much. It isn't Bush's or Disney's . . . the land where the almighty dollar is deified and paranoid citizens with money need Guardian Angels to protect them from paranoid citizens without.

Nanci's America is the one Steinbeck and Kerouac travelled in and the one Woody Guthrie sang about. She sings songs of innocence and freedom, of loves present and gone, of quarter moons in 10 cent towns where it's always about noon just before the war. How she can do all this and still sound state of the art puts her on a par with that other romantic chronicler of the American Dream, Bruce Springsteen.

And this? This is a collection of some of her best songs performed, to an audience that clearly loves her, with an affection and honesty that's heart warming.

BERNIE FORKIN



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REVIEWER COMPETITION WINNER

The winner of the new record class was 'Agraman' (name and address supplied) with a review of the Silly Sisters record. The old record revisited winner was Henry Peacock for his look at the splendid Nic Jones' LP, Penguin Eggs. Chris Kelly won the live event class with his already published review of the Lennon/Higham duo at the Snig's Foot. Honourable mentions go to Mally Dow for her review of Swinton Festival - but it was twice as long as we asked for - and both of the record class winners sent us other entries nearly as good. 'Agraman' actually got our deputy editor out looking for a Henry Normal disk. Overall winner is (by a whisker) the Silly Sisters review. ISW

CONTEST WINNER - BEST OLD RECORD

Nic Jones, "Penguin Eggs"

On 'Penguin Eggs' Nic Jones reached a new height of accomplishment. His voice is confident and his phrasing assured, whilst his guitar work maintains an unflinching rhythm and complements perfectly the melodies. The first notes of 'Canadee-i-o' give a thrill of anticipation that lasts the whole album through. Generally Nic sings to his own guitar accompaniment, but from time to time the melodeon of his friend Tony Hall is prominent. There is one beautiful guitar tune, 'Planxty Davis', and Nic's violin can be heard on one track.

On this album Nic broadens his repertoire to include traditional and contemporary songs, presenting a wide range of emotions and situations. The happy conclusion of 'Canadee-i-o' is followed by the tragedy of 'The Two Lovers'. Whalers are depicted unashamedly at their work, then passing the winter months in drinking and fighting (and eating penguin eggs!). There is the humour of 'Barrack Street' and the haunting enigma of 'The Flandyke Shore'.

A glorious chorus song finishes each side - 'The Little Pot Stove' by Harry Robertson and 'Farewell To The Gold', introducing the work of Paul Metsers. The choruses are augmented by the dark chocolate voice of Dave Burland. How could they fail to be moving?

Every piece has a strength of its own, and the sum of the parts of the album is monumental. Its influence can still be felt today. Although Nic's career was arrested by his accident, there are rumours of further recordings. Dare we hope for a successor to 'Penguin Eggs'?

HENRY PEACOCK

CONTEST WINNER - BEST NEW RECORD

Silly Sisters (Maddy Prior & June Tabor), "No More To The Dance", TOPIC

A fine album of harmonies, with inventive arrangements of both contemporary and traditional songs from diverse eras and sources. Various blends of instruments are tried, for example, bass guitar stalks Chinese flute, electro-harp strings along cello, hurdy-gurdy buzzes half-long bagpipes, clarsachs coerce keyboards; but always it's the Breton brilliance of Dan Ar Braz which inspires - his echoey guitar notes soar above the minimalist landscapes of such tracks as 'The Old Miner', a traditional song given a whole new dimension by the innovative setting.

Considering the wide scope of ideas harnessed, personal preferences do emerge:

The flow of side one is spoilt by 'Cakes and Ale', a short and rather inconsequential exercise of a 'catch' (a type of musical round) by Henry Purcell. 'Hedger and Ditcher' is another bummer, its basic and tedious jaunty tune sung in disappointing unison, when a few more of June Tabor's deeply - plunging resonances would have been a relief. However, in between are two glittering gems of moody magnificence - the mournful melody of 'How Shall I Your True Love Know' from 'Hamlet' and Lol Waterson's 'Fine Horsemen' which rides (neigh glides!) into dreamy fantasy as the girls caress the words.

AGRAMAN



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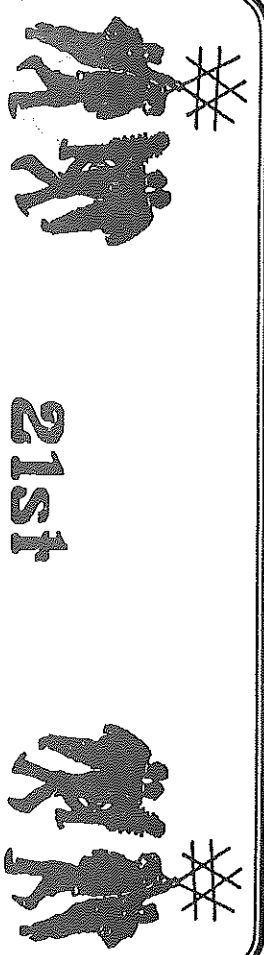
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Souvenir Festival Magazine @ Programme of Events 50p. WEEKEND CAMPING £2.00 PER PERSON.

Indoor Camping in Church Hall \$5.00 per person, (please book) for Weekend.

FESTIVAL ENQUIRIES: Fern Cottage, Dale House, Saltsburn, Cleveland
Tel: 0947 840928 and 0287 50833. Phone PREF after 6 p.m.