

# FOLK NORTH WEST



Eric Bogle

WINTER EDITION 2005  
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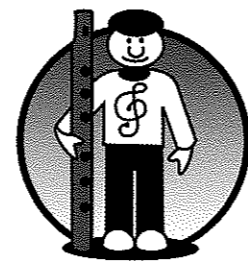


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ISSN 1350-8083

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## Folk North West Contact Information



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Tel 0151 678 9902  
e mail: JOHNOWENBTACKS@aol.com

### Articles for possible inclusion, letters, complaints, suggestions for improvement to the magazines, ideas for inclusion, compliments (if any) and if in doubt to

Ken Bladen, 36 The Oaks, Eaves Green, Chorley, Lancs PR7 3QU Tel. No. 01257 263 678  
e.mail: four.fools@virgin.net

### Advertising, subscriptions, club membership enquiries to

Paul & Kath Holden, 7 Sunleigh Road, Hindley, Wigan Lancs, WN2 2RE Tel. No. 01942 258 459  
e.mail: holdenpaul@tiscali.co.uk

### CD's or tapes for review (or reviews of) and live reviews to

David Jones, 4, Kingfisher Close, Swallowfields, Pleckgate Blackburn, Lancs, BB1 8NS Tel. No. 01254 54877

Please note that the copy date for the next issue is January 10th 2006.



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## EDITORIAL

At Maghull Day of Music, which was excellent by the way, Ann Green reminded me of an unbelievable fact:- Scold's Bridle are celebrating 30 years of performing as a duo. Synonymous with quality, they are established as one of the leading female duos in the country. The relaxed manner of their delivery conjures intimacy and belies the care and preparation that goes into each performance, where each set is crafted to match the audience. Exquisite harmonies are interwoven with sensitive interpretation to produce a spectrum of songs ranging from the poignant to the wistful, from ballad to rousing chorus. With stagecraft well developed and with warmth and open friendliness, interchanges and asides allow the audience to be a part of a perfectly timed and polished performance. Style, confidence and mellow maturity exude as these two introduce their material and once launched, their own enjoyment of the songs captures, enraptures and enthuses all. I nicked this from their website basically because I couldn't improve on it, since it says it all. They are the Women Left on the Shore (presumably having carried their men to the boats first) but they should not be the Women Left out of our thoughts in recognition of their sterling + 5 service to folk music in the North West. Well done girls.

Scold's Bridle offer songs ancient and modern, seasoned with warmth and wit and are the perfect act for a listening audience which is keen to participate. As it also says on their website:- 'They make feet swell, hearts tap and tears flow' - well I think thats what it said.

Ken Bladen  
36, The Oaks, Eaves Green Chorley, Lancs, PR 7 3QU  
Tel. No. 01257 263 678 e.mail: four.fools@virgin.net

## CHAIRMAN'S JOTTINGS

For once I'm stuck for words! Well, not really. It's just that I've moved to the Wirral to start a new business and, with all the time and effort that takes, I have been able to think of very little else for the past three months.

I hope you accept this apology and I assure you that normal service will be resumed for the Spring Edition.

Cheers for now

David Jones

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8.10 - 8.55am  
1.00 - 3.00pm  
6.00 - 8.00pm  
7.00 - 8.00pm

8.00 - 10.00pm

9.00 - 10.00pm  
9.00 - 10.00pm  
10.00 - 11.00pm  
10.00 - 11.00pm

### MONDAY

7.00 - 8.00pm  
7.00 - 9.00pm  
8.00 - 10.00pm  
8.00 - 9.00pm

### TUESDAY

8.00 - 10.00pm  
9.00 - 10.00pm

### WEDNESDAY

8.00 - 9.00pm

### THURSDAY

7.00 - 8.00pm

8.00 - 9.00pm  
8.00 - 10.00pm  
10.00 - 12.00pm

### SATURDAY

7.00 - 8.30pm  
9.00 - 10.00pm  
9.00 - 10.00pm  
10.00 - 11.00pm  
10.00 - 12.00pm  
10.00 - 12.00pm  
10.00pm - 1.00am

## What Folk programmes are on the radio TODAY?

compiled by Rob Dunford

RTE - MO CHEOL THU presented by CIARAN MAC MATHUNA  
BBC Radio Scotland - THE REEL BLEND presented by ROBBIE SHEPHERD  
BBC Radio Scotland - CELTIC CONNECTIONS presented by MARY ANN KENNEDY (Rpt)  
BBC Radio Merseyside - FOLKSCENE presented by STAN AMBROSE and GEOFF SPEED  
BBC Radio Shropshire - SUNDAY FOLK presented by GENEVIEVE TUDOR also on BBC Radio Stoke  
BBC Radio Cumbria - NORTHERN FOLK presented by ALISTAIR ANDERSON  
BBC Radio Lancashire - THE DRIFT presented by PHIL BROWN (Rpt)  
RTE - THE LATE SESSION presented by AINE HENSEY  
DOWNTOWN RADIO - FOLKAL POINT presented by MAURICE LEYDEN

BBC GMR - THE PARLOUR presented by ALAN KEEGAN  
BBC Radio Derby - FOLKWAVES presented by MICK PEAT and LESTER SIMPSON  
RADIO MALDWYN - THE FOLK PROGRAMME presented by YVONNE & JOHN HART  
BBC GMR - SOUNDS OF FOLK presented by ALI O'BRIEN

BBC Radio Scotland - CELTIC CONNECTIONS presented by MARY ANN KENNEDY  
MANX RADIO - THE FOLK SHOW presented by JOHN KANEEN

BBC Radio 2 - FOLK ROOTS & ACOUSTIC MUSIC presented by MIKE HARDING

BBC Radio Shropshire - FRETWORK presented by NONNY JAMES also on BBC Radio Stoke  
BBC Radio Lancashire - THE DRIFT presented by PHIL BROWN  
BBC Radio Scotland - TRAVELLING FOLK presented by ARCHIE FISHER  
BBC Radio Ulster - FRIEL'S FANCY presented by EAMONN FRIEL

BBC Radio Scotland - TAKE THE FLOOR presented by ROBBIE SHEPHERD  
BBC Radio Scotland - PIPELINE presented by GARY WEST  
RTE - CEILIDH HOUSE presented by KIERAN HANRAHAN  
RTE - FAILTE ISTEACH presented by DONNCHA O'DULAING  
BBC Radio Scotland - TRAVELLING FOLK presented by ARCHIE FISHER (Rpt)  
BBC Radio Ulster - FOLK CLUB presented by COLUM SANDS  
BBC Radio Wales - CELTIC HEARTBEAT presented by FRANK HENNESSY

### RADIO FREQUENCIES

MW 567  
MW 810  
MW 810  
FM 95.8  
MW 1485  
FM 96.0  
FM 94.6  
see below  
FM 95.5  
MW 567  
MW 1026

FM 95.1  
see below  
MW 756  
FM 95.1

MW 810  
MW 1368

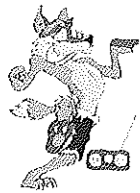
FM 88 - 90.2

FM 96.0  
FM 94.6  
FM 95.5  
MW 810  
MW 1341

MW 810  
MW 810  
MW 567  
MW 567  
MW 810  
MW 1341  
MW 882

The frequencies quoted are those forming the basis for reception in the North West. Expanded station details are shown below:-

BBC Radio Cumbria	FM 95.6 (North/West), 95.2 (Kendal), 96.1 (South), 104.1 (Whitehaven), 104.2 (Windermere)		
BBC Radio Derby	MW 756 (North), 837 (South), 1458 (West)		Tel:- 01228 592444
BBC GMR	FM 95.3, 104.5, 96.0 (Buxton)	MW 1116	Tel:- 01332 361111
BBC Radio Lancashire	FM 95.1, 104.6 (Saddleworth)		Tel:- 0161 2002000
BBC Radio Merseyside	FM 95.5, 103.9, 104.5,	MW 855, 1557	Tel:- 01254 262411
BBC Radio Scotland	FM 95.8	MW 1485	Tel:- 0151 7085500
BBC Radio Shropshire	FM 92.4 - 94.7	MW 810	Tel:- 0141 3398844
BBC Radio Stoke	FM 96.0		Tel:- 01743 248484
BBC Radio Ulster	FM 94.6, 104.1	MW 1503	Tel:- 01782 208080
BBC Radio 2	FM 92.4 - 95.4	MW 873, 1341	Tel:- 02890 338000
Downtown Radio	FM 88.0 - 90.2		Tel:- 08700 100222
Radio Maldwyn		MW 1026	Tel:- 02891 815555
Manx Radio		MW 756	Tel:- 01686 623555
Radio Wales	FM 89.0, 97.2, 103.7	MW 1386	Tel:- 01624 682600
RTE (Radio Teilifis Eirann)	via ASTRA Satellite	MW 882	Tel:- 029203 22000
		MW 567	Tel:- 003531 2083111



RADIO XTRA

The range of programmes has broadened to include several which, whilst not wholly devoted to folk, frequently include it and have potential to reward the discerning listener. These include BBC Radio 3's **Late Junction**, Monday to Thursday, usually 10.15pm -12.00 midnight, presenters Fiona Talkington and Verity Sharp, and the **Andy Kershaw** programme, also Radio 3, Sunday 10.15 - 12.00 midnight. Both for details on the above and for information on occasional programmes/items/short series with a folk flavour on Radios 2, 3 and 4, the Radio Times is always worth close scrutiny. Frequencies: Radio 3 90.2-92.4 FM; Radio 4 92.4-94.6 FM, 198 LW; BBC information : 08700 100 222.

Of variable folk content is BBC Radio Scotland Monday to Friday 10.00-12.00 midnight with Iain Anderson and BBC Radio 2 Monday to Thursday 10.30-12.00 midnight, presented by Mark Radcliffe. Radio Na Gaeltachta FM 93.5/94 (Tel: 00353 91 506677), broadcasts on Astra Satellite Channel 22 and carries a range of Gaelic Music/Language programmes including Lan A Mhale, 7.00-8.00pm Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

Note that local radio programmes may be subject to temporary alteration in day, time and delivery (AM, FM or DAB) when, for example sports coverage takes precedence.

Most regional/local programmes to a varying degree provide diary dates for clubs, concerts and festivals. The reliable standards set by for example, GMR and Radio Shropshire/Stoke for comprehensive and regular listings can, it is hoped, apply across the board. E.mail, website and Internet details are routinely given during programmes or can be found via the main telephone numbers and on-line searches. The number of programmes available on the Internet is increasing - some are retained for short period access - and it is understood that the whole of BBC Radio output should by now be accessible. The main BBC website is at [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk).

Telephone numbers for radio stations, plus directions to other forms of contact, have been provided so that event organisers and artistes can fulfill the important role of promoting their activities in the region. Given the propensity for radio programmes to devote much air time to new albums, the listing of programmes is also intended to complement the extensive CD review feature in Folk North West.

To demonstrate an interested and active profile of folk listeners, do liaise with any and all programmes, stations and producers. The North West is favoured with a wealth of programmes, which praise and constructive comment will help maintain. It is essential for listeners to provide feedback to the programme producers, for, as the song goes "You don't know what you've got till its gone".

Over the last couple of years, the North West's seen a good area get even better, with the addition of not only GMR's "Sounds of Folk" programme but also Radio Lancashire repeating "The Drift". Speaking to folkies in other regions and looking at the situation elsewhere, we've certainly got what many other regions haven't (and envy).

It is all well worth nurturing, not least for regional flavour.

Rob Dunford

## LIVE REVIEWS



**MARTIN SIMPSON supported by Tom Doughty, at the Grand Theatre Studio, Blackpool on 13 August 2005.**



Since the folk music 'revival' of the late 1950s, the acoustic guitar has become the omnipresent instrument in British folk clubs. Notable players have risen to prominence during that time (Nic Jones, Martin Carthy, Dick Gaughan, John Renbourn and others) but few have matched the expertise of the legendary Martin Simpson.

Martin has played with just about everyone on the folk scene and he's always had a foot in both the British and American guitar music scenes. His recent set at the Grand Theatre, Blackpool, showed his solo performance to be as good as ever. Support was provided by Cheshire-based acoustic lap slide guitarist Tom Doughty, who kicked off the evening with a captivating, laid-back, set which included many of his own compositions - all played with great slide technique and with his own characteristically relaxed singing style. Tom also managed to squeeze in a brief talk about his National Tricone and Hawaiian-built guitars. Anyone who has not yet heard Tom playing should do so as soon as possible.

Martin Simpson's set commenced with a selection of songs drawn from his most recent Topic recording 'Kind Letters' released earlier this year (see Steve Henderson's review in FNV Summer 2005) and included 'A Blacksmith Courted Me' and 'When First I Came to Caledonia' as well as the magnificent Doerflinger ballad 'The Flying Cloud'. Half way through his set, however, Martin was enjoying himself so much that he departed from the planned programme to play some less-recent tunes including some banjo-inspired blues pieces and a very polished version of 'Duncan and Brady' (as popularised by Tom Rush on the iconic Prestige recording of the early 1960s). Martin played his two Sobell guitars, which have a characteristic bell-like quality. The sustaining qualities of the instruments complement Martin's fluid style of hammering-on-and-off, allowing certain notes to hang whilst getting on with other parts of a tune, or linking passages with shimmering, cascading, runs. As usual, we were treated to great dexterity with bottleneck as well as sensitive use of the 'E-Bow' (a device usually associated with electric players but which seemed to work pretty well on the acoustic). Martin's use of CGCFCD (among other tunings) showed what a versatile tuning this can be in the right hands. The musicianship of the two guitarists was matched by the overall quality of the sound in the Studio, which was down to a great PA system, intelligent engineers and a quiet and considerate audience (apart from the plonker with the mobile 'phone!).

Two hours of top-quality musicianship and excellent songs - what more could one ask? Well, actually, on my way out of the Studio, I bumped into none other than 'Little' Jimmy Osmond who had just finished a gig downstairs with his brothers. Two legends in one day - not bad!

Pete Kirby

**KIERAN HALPIN at the Dalguise Village Hall, Perthshire on 20 August 2005**



I made a trip to the Dalguise Village Hall where Dogs Den Music Productions alternatively known as Nick Allmark had organised a return performance by Kieran Halpin. Dalguise is a tiny village in lovely Perthshire, just two or three miles off the A9 and although it might not be

high on the list of venues for many folk artists who might think that a crowd could not be gathered from the population of 250 or so to "make it worth their while" it is certainly worth a visit. Nick has worked hard over the past year or two and has put on regular monthly concerts with top quality artists coming in from Stateside and the UK to play at Dalguise. The Village Hall is, as one would expect, a small venue but it is something of a Tardis, it does have a stage and lighting and thus gives the impression of a much bigger hall. Or perhaps it was just the noise the large appreciative audience made that night that rose to the open rafters of the room that made it seem bigger. It is a very intimate venue and the warmth of the crowd was certainly felt, each table passed around corkscrews, crisps and canapés throughout the night. It is a "bring your own beer" venue and most people had come well supplied with enough to feed an army.

This night the concert started at 7.45 prompt and, Bob Davidson, local hero from Luncarty, opened the night with a 30-minute support spot. Bob was promoting the release of his latest CD "A Planet of Fools" and certainly warmed the audience up with his excellent performance. His songs are short and very entertaining as are his introductions and he was not allowed to leave the stage without giving a well-deserved encore.

From the response of the audience at his introduction it was obvious that Kieran has several big fans in the area and they showed their enthusiasm throughout his first set, which was effortlessly delivered. At first I thought the amplification a bit on the loud side for such a small venue but as the performance continued realised that this was Kieran at his best. He is a very passionate performer and that loudness of delivery should not be confused with just volume for the sake of it. This is what is wanted on some tracks; whilst on others he simply moves slightly away from the mike and with a softer tone in his voice gives a more mellow presentation.

After at least 45 minutes of performing a much-needed break for all was called with the announcement that a surprise guest would start the second half of the night. Angie Wright from Chester and a good friend of Nick's gave several excellent songs from her solo CD "coming through". I particularly liked her presentation of her composition "Cry of the World" which reflects on the selfish attitude of some and their impact on our small planet. I purchased a copy on the strength of her two songs and found the rest of the content of the CD equally entertaining.

Kieran returned to the stage and gave another excellent set. This time there was a dominance of tracks from his shortly to be released CD "A Parcel of Words and Tunes". This material seemed to me to be from a calmer man than that that on stage earlier, his material still very passionate none the less. He is clearly proud of his young daughter who sat in the front row throughout, and equally as proud of his second child, which is to be born soon, very soon (Before the time you read this). Perhaps it is this event that is giving him a greater peace but it certainly does not stop his ability to write provocative songs

nor present them.

His resident fan club demanded songs from him rather than requested them and this he did re-jigging and extending his set somewhat to please them, or was it to ensure his personal safety. Furthermore he was pressed into giving not one but two encores to end a great night at 11.00pm. Who says you don't get much for £5 nowadays.

After the show Nick invited a few friends back to his home for a dram. Me, I went along as well but I had to stick to cups of tea until gone 2.30am when I drove home. But I was lucky enough to hear more music from Kieran and the others. Can't be bad for a night out can it.

Noddy

**PLANET WOMAN, supported by Ember, 'Land of Peace Benefit' at the Woodley Sports and Arts Centre, Skelmersdale on 3 September 2005**



Planet Woman is an exhilarating collaboration that normally brings together a group of artists from the UK and New Zealand. At the core of the band are UK based artists Lorraine Jordan and Sarah Beattie and from New Zealand, Ora Barlow and Kim Halliday.

Ora Barlow is a singer and songwriter, guitarist, ukulele player, and percussionist; while Kim Halliday (NZ Scottish) is an accomplished guitarist and versatile musician. Lorraine Jordan is undoubtedly one of the finest and most talented folk singer-songwriters in Britain. She wrote the wonderful 'Winds of Freedom', which has become an essential part of John Wright's repertoire. Born in Wales to Irish parents, and now resident in Scotland, her Celtic pedigree is not in doubt and, last but not least, Scottish compatriot, Sarah Beattie, is a sublime fiddle player.

There was a stirring performance at the beginning of the evening from support artists Ember, a talented female duo blending two very different voices of Welsh songstress Emily Williams (violin and acoustic guitar) and Rebecca Sullivan from Utah (steel-string guitar and the occasional harmonica).

Planet Woman released their highly acclaimed Reeling In The Pacific earlier this year. It is one of best folk albums of the year and several tracks from the CD have been played on Frank Hennessy's Radio Wales Celtic Heartbeat programme. The band gave a great live performance despite some teething sound problems at a venue staging its first folk concert in aid of the Land for Peace project.

The performance featured several tracks from the album including the beautiful opening song, 'A Blessing' which, like many of the other songs, combines Celtic and Maori musical tradition and rhythms to great effect. There was also the beautiful lullaby, 'Smile In Your Sleep' and 'Send' that features resonant percussion and fiddle. The title track from their CD brought their first set to a resounding close.

Ora Barlow's Maori facial expressions (particularly her eyes) and hand gestures added to the atmosphere and the band's ambience throughout the evening, none more so than on 'All on a day', featuring Lorraine on vocals. In contrast there was the more sedate, but equally seductive, set of Scottish waltzes featuring the excellent Sarah Beattie on fiddle. Sarah showed her great versatility on the fiddle with her performance on a

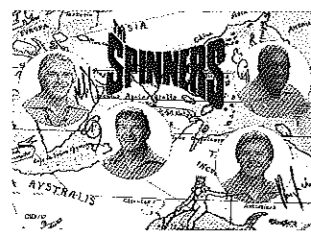


medley built around 'Orange Blossom special'.

The evening drew to a fulfilling and satisfying close with 'To see you again', featuring the New Zealand contingent's haunting whistle and wind introduction. For the encore we were treated to a further bout of fiddle virtuosity from Sarah, which had some of the audience dancing at the back of the hall (if not the aisles).

On the face of it you wouldn't think that the Maori and Celtic music would fit well together but Planet Woman disproves the point emphatically as they juxtapose English and Maori lyrics to compelling effect, supplemented by a unique blend of string, wind and percussive instruments. This calming venue provided the right type of backdrop for their music. **Lewis Jones**

**THE SPINNERS at The Everyman, Tuesday 13th September.**



Tuesday, 13th September 2005 will be, for all of us who were present at the Everyman Folk Club, Liverpool, a true night to remember. It was a night of joy and of sadness. 'The Spinners' were once again together singing. The first occasion since Christmas 1993. But it

was "definitely for the very last time". The occasion for the reunion was the celebration of the 80th birthday of the ever-young Cliff Hall. He had returned from his 'new' home in Australia with his wife, Dorothy, to celebrate this major landmark in his life with family and friends.

The evening was divided into two parts. Spinner Hughie Jones started things rolling. He is routinely a resident singer at the weekly Everyman Folk Club on Hope Street. He gave us a fine, rip-roaring rendition of 'Shanghai Brown', with all present enthusiastically joining in every chorus. Jacqui McDonald, of 'Jacqui & Bridie' fame, and an original member of 'The Spinners', sang. It was good to hear her again. Stan Francis, also a very early member of the group, also sang. Floor singers from the Club also contributed to the evening.

After the interval came the time we had all present - (many of whom had known The Spinners and one another for decades) - been waiting for. Tony, Mick, Hughie and Cliff took over the floor and the opening bars of - 'The Family of Man' rang out. John McCormick's bass gave powerful support. The years just dropped away; we were all back in those halcyon days of Sampson and Barlow's on London Road and that other great venue, Gregson's Well. We, the audience, all joined 'the boys' in singing with great gusto!

The singing of 'The Spinners' is as good as ever. Ewan McColl's beautiful 'Dirty Old Town' and Cliff Hall's 'Liza' brought a few tears to the eyes on this night. Tony Davis's 'Finnegan's Wake' can still bring laughter from an audience. Hughie and Mick combined, as was their way all those years ago, for a hearty 'Mule Skinner'. Mick sang 'Calico Printer's Clerk' which he dedicated to Cliff's wife, Dorothy. Many more old favourites were sung but none more beautifully than the unaccompanied African Freedom song, 'Asikatali'. It can still bring a lump to the throat.

The end of the evening came all too soon. That pair of hometown favourites were required songs; 'In my Liverpool Home' and 'The Leaving of Liverpool', this latter a song introduced to the English Folk scene by 'The Spinners' in their heyday.

It's true to say we raised the roof on this night! This was a truly

wonderful night, the years disappeared and we were all twenty or so years old again and having a really great time.

Many thanks to the excellent club run by Hughie Jones and his wife Chris, and Shirley Peden for putting on such a memorable night. **Pauline Parry**

**PELICAN BABIES supported by Trouble at Mill at Gregson Lane Folk Club on 15 September 2005.**



Pelican Babies - the name comes from an aboriginal legend - gave a master class in how a modern duo could hold the attention of the audience through two sets of mainly original material. Lea Nixon and Mark Connelly have been writing together for years, but performing for a considerably lesser time. It's a pity, because

on this evenings showing, they could be much better known by now.

Mark plays a Freshman guitar, mainly taking lead, whilst Lea has a Larivee dreadnaught and a formidable picking style. He alternates on harmonica and didgeridoo. As you might expect their set list leans heavily towards their own material. These are well crafted, literate songs, with strong tunes and well thought out harmonies. 'When We Were Young', 'Some Say', 'My Garden' and 'Tender My Regrets' are all quality songs that contrasted with more familiar material. 'Baby Please Don't Go', 'St. James Infirmary' were given the full treatment, whilst the Buddy Holly Standard, 'It Doesn't Matter Anymore' appeared in their own style, rather than the now familiar reworking by Eva Cassidy.

Then there was the didgeridoo - circular breathing and tongue control, if you must ask. It seems an unreasonable instrument, sculptured by ants from a piece of eucalyptus, of uncertain pitch and tone. This one was in 'D' and accompanied the song, 'Pelican Babies' from which the group took their name. Amplified, it tested the speakers, and vibrated the floor. It is at once clear and resonant, yet played to maintain the drone. The social club beneath probably thought that there was interference on their television.

Support came from resident group Trouble at Mill, with a set full of energy, and a tale about a trip in a van to Dudley that ended with the wing of a Ford Cortina and a police interview some months later. Songs included 'Carrickfergus', 'Rose of Allendale', and Pete St. John's, 'Fields of Athenry'. The old Irish images were in contrast with more contemporary songs about Ireland, particularly apposite in view of recent news. Tommy Sands 'There were Roses' and Anthony John Clarke's 'Why Do Irish Eyes Keep Smiling' as well as being good songs in their own right, remind us of the fact that generally those who orchestrate trouble aren't the people who suffer.

It was an excellent show, and one which had the Gregson Lane audience quieter and more attentive than most. One could forgive the Pelican Babies any slight lapse - had there been one. One could forgive Lea Nixon for the confession that he towed a caravan.... well, almost. **Don Moore.**

**PATRICK STREET at Southport Arts Centre on 16 September 2005**

"It's as if they all know each other" came the overheard remark from the sharp-dressed man to his partner as we all 'hello-

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how-you-doing-ed?' into what started out as Southport's sumptuous Cambridge Hall (built 1872-74) to catch the band monickered by the Irish Times as 'a traditional Irish supergroup like no other.' Both statements were true - there was a welter of persons from the Bothy Folksong Club plus plenty of local jazz and rock musos in addition to familiar faces from all over the North-west and yes, it's hyperbolic but true - Patrick Street ARE just that. With roots in seminal outfits such as Planxty, the Bothy Band and De Dannan and a band name that conjures grass roots Ireland, how could it be otherwise?



Arriving in 1986 as an intended one-off, three originals remain in Andy Irvine, Kevin Burke and Jackie Daly. Others have filtered in and out of the line-up over the years but Ged Foley, ex-House and Battlefield bands, has been a fixture now since 1996. With the addition of John Carty primarily on fiddle and banjo

earlier this year, it was a five-piece band that played this, almost final date on a tour that had begun 2 weeks previously at Hammersmith Irish Centre.

A 'supergroup' - hmm, it brings a spinal shiver doesn't it? In poppier worlds, many an infamous crime has been committed against music by these disparate gangs of all-star rockers. Captain Beyond? The Firm? It's all down to motivation and the reasons for collaborating in the first place. A bunch of chums getting together for the sheer pleasure of it, or a collection of egos celebrating its own importance? Thankfully Patrick Street has always fallen into the former category, as was surely displayed tonight. In the recent past, this venue, which is decidedly staking a claim to being the most farsighted and innovative in the North when it comes to its folk programming, has brought us Lunasa and Danu, both excellent young bands playing Irish music with a 'watch-us' attack that is consistent with their members' average ages. Tonight the approach was more considered, more weathered, and akin to slipping on a favourite sweater rather than going clubbing in a skimpy top!

Starting with a set of three jigs, followed hard on heels by a similar number of reels, the band soon found its stride with Irvine's version of Andy Mitchell's 'Indiana', a highspot. The reading we got this evening was an acutely realised and moving anthem to homesickness tempered by a resigned regret. Soul? Andy Irvine has it in spades but is equally at home with the rapid-fire nonsense that makes up 'The Humours Of The King Of Ballyhooley' ("fifteen daughters, all unruly" indeed!)

Shifting up a gear or two after the interval, following a somewhat understated first half, the band proved that its other singer, Ged Foley, can turn in equally haunting vocals as 'Diamantina Drover' from the House Band's 'Pacific' album proved. His driving guitar, doubling as a bass line, was a solid grounding on which the whole of tonight's performance rested. Plaudits for anchors though, must include the impassive Jackie Daly, whose punchy accordion is the very definition of fluid, effortless, bedrock playing that can go into overdrive in the way that Sliabh Luachra style is defined, when occasion demands.

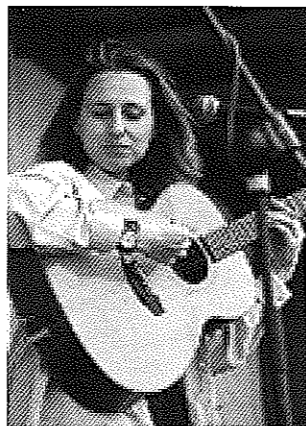
Kevin Burke as front person is the epitome of easy-going charm but a mighty fiddler, in an essentially Sligo fashion. He's found his perfect foil in new man Carty and the sound of pins dropping could be heard as they dueted on the 'Shores Of Loch Gowna' / Contentment Is Wealth' / Have A Drink On Me' jig set. In fact this band's approach to instrumentation and arrangements has always set the parameters by which live performance should be judged. Patrick Street exceeds the sum of its parts,

which, revisiting the supergroup concept again, isn't always the case. Vibrant, satisfying - no envelopes are being pushed - they've done all that already and don't have to re-prove the point. Encoring with the eloquent ache of Andy's 'Braes Of Moneymore', which first appeared on the 'No.2' album and the instrumental on which they've stamped their brand, 'Music For A Found Harmonium', a refreshingly potent evening reached its conclusion.

Yes, it was as though we knew one another - and a convivial, talkative, and downright buzzing crowded house spilled out onto Lord Street, heading for last orders. Patrick Street? - theirs is an interstate well worth hitching a ride along.

Clive Pownceby

**JULIE ELLISON supported by Smithereen at Gregson Lane Folk Club on 13 October, 2005**



I was sitting beside some of the guitarists during Julie Ellison's performance. I could hear them gasp. I saw them gaze in admiration as her fingers flew across the frets, and plucked the strings with such speed and accuracy. Most of it was in standard tuning with the merest deviation into drop-D for the opening pieces of the second half. It was a virtuoso performance.

It was deceptively simple, yet just when you couldn't believe what she was doing with the guitar, she did something else you couldn't believe. The speed increased, and the triplets multiplied, as she sat swaying occasionally, with her right foot resting on a yellow guitar case, and the left foot tapping time. The sliding chords, and the stretch over five frets had to be heard.

The guitar was luthier made by Andy Manson of Crediton to Julie's own specification. It had a curvy cutaway body, like a jumbo, but with a 24 fret neck to allow the extra range Julie wanted. John Robinson produced a clear and balanced sound from the club's own system

Most of the songs were originals. They were never difficult to listen to, and had rolling melodies with the words driving ideas in rhyme and tune. It is hard to select songs that stand out in a really good set, but 'Someplace Else', 'Rainy Day Feeling' and 'Clutching At Straws' stay in my mind. Her instrumentals included John D. Loudermilk's 'Windy and Warm' and a stunning version of 'Romanza' that started classically, then burst into ragtime. The encore, Steve Earl's death row song 'Billy Austin' was performed with a strength and passion that left nothing more to say.

Resident group 'Smithereen' hosted the evening played in support. Jenny, Jim and Keith's own songs are equally strong. 'What If', 'Always on Your Own' and the poignant 'Nineteen' a reflection on a friend who died young, set a reflective tone for the start of the evening. Their second set ended with 'Horse On A Hillside', a request from the audience. The main thing about 'Smithereen' is that they always bring an energy to their performance, and an enjoyment that communicates to the audience.

When I arrived at the start of the evening, Denis said Julie Ellison was 'awesome' at the sound check. At the end of the

evening, this opinion had changed to '\*-\*ing awesome.' It's easy to understand why she is rated so highly. She's gracious and seems to delight in talking to the crowd. I shook her hand at the end of the evening. I have to report, the hand was of a normal size, with the usual complement of fingers and one thumb. This is a lady to hear if you have the chance.

Don Moore

## FESTIVAL & EVENTS REVIEWS



**SHIRLEY COLLINS at Fylde Folk Festival September 2005**



To fill two large venues, when you consider what other events were on at the same time, with a presentation that has no live music or song, takes some doing. So it is a tribute to the influence that Shirley Collins held over a whole generation of folkies that she managed it, and how she did!

Her production on Saturday was 'America over the water' (the title of her recently published book). This told of her trip to the Southern States of America where she accompanied the great American song collector Alan Lomax. She took us from their first meeting at Ewan MacColl's house through Mississippi, Georgia and the

islands off the Carolinas. Along the way we were introduced to a Southern Baptist Preacher who thought the recording machine was the work of the Devil, to a Sacred Harp singer who announced, "we don't want any niggers here, one came up last year but the boys saw to him!" Or a black woman convict sentenced for walking past a "Trespassers will be prosecuted" sign - she couldn't read or write! She told of the bigotry, the backwardness, the poverty, and the xenophobia of the people she met along the way, but also of their generosity, and the love of their music that they shared with her. We were treated to recordings of blues, Sacred Harp hymns, Anglo-American ballads and one piece recorded in an isolated hut in Mississippi that seemed to me to be pure African. Her story was illustrated with fascinating display of slides taken on the trip. The audience, enthralled by her consummate story telling gave her an ovation that lasted for almost five minutes, such was the impact she (and her support team) had made on them.

By lunch time on Sunday word had obviously spread and an even larger audience gathered in the North Euston Hotel's ballroom. This time the show was "A bright sunshiny day" which told of the Sussex songs, singers and collectors from the late 19th Century up to the present day. Again this was lavishly illustrated with slides and recordings. The recordings ranged from Ralph Vaughn Williams setting of John Bunyan's hymn to the tune Monksgate (this had well over 100 voices singing) to the Copper family & "Pop" Maynard. The production



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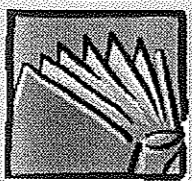




ended with a recording of Shirley, accompanied by her late sister Dolly on flute organ, singing "Ladies go dancing at Whitsune". As this finished the applause lasted even longer than on the Saturday. She was clearly moved by the reception. It is now over twenty years since I've heard Shirley Collins singing yet to me she was, and remains, 'the Voice of England'!

Ron Baxter

## JOHN'S DIARY CHAT



As I write it is almost November. It is raining heavily, the weather is miserable and our caravan is stored at its usual winter location. Sorry to start in a negative mode but, yes - the festival and summer seasons are well and truly over. Boo Hoo!

My first ever visit to Fairport's Cropredy Festival proved to be a disappointment. We tried it mainly because the brilliant American performer 'Beth Neilsen Chapman' was booked as the main guest. 'Chris While', 'Julie Matthews', 'Bob Fox' and 'FC' themselves were the only recognisable UK folk acts, along with the icon 'Richard Thompson' who unfortunately is 'not really my cup of tea', brilliant songwriter though he may be. With 'Bob Fox' doing the compering as well, I got a bit of a sinking feeling when early on in his act he had to announce to the masses - "I

am a folk singer you know". This signalled to us just how 'non-folkie' the event has become, hence our great disappointment. Anyway Bob was exemplary in his performances filling in between acts, as were Chris and Julie with their set and when Beth first appeared on the massive stage the rain stopped and the sun began to shine brightly. It was almost as if she had orchestrated it from above. With a front row 'stand' (as against 'seat') plum in the centre of the watching thousands we still felt as if she was singing to us as individuals - absolutely superb. With overly priced beer, the main site running out of the sponsor's beer, too much rain, long distances to walk from the caravan to the single stage, local pubs that close when they should remain open, it is hard to say much that was positive. Even though the two and a half hour Fairport Convention Road Show was tremendous, we found ourselves back in the caravan as the show drew to a close, listening 'across the fields' to the strains of 'Meet on the Ledge' echoed by the watching throngs. Our staying power had lapsed, I am afraid. This festival is not for us next time, I don't think.

Fylde Festival was our next port of call and this proved to be a different kettle of fish. It appeared not as well patronised as in previous years but I did enjoy at last being able to see 'Elbow Jane' performing there at this prestigious event. I believe though that they are so good that the main stage in the Marine

Hall should be their next gig venue at this festival. It is a long time since Richard Woods won the Fylde Festival Young Performer Award so for Richard it must have been like returning home again. 'James Keelaghan' was excellent as was the 'John Wright Band'. 'Sad Pig' paid their first visit to the festival and went down extremely well at The Steamer as did a trio called 'Vocal Point' who filled in at short notice when one of the scheduled acts failed to turn up on time. 'VP' went down 'a bomb' and I understand that they received instant requests for their CD from Ali O'Brien (Radio GMR) and Malc Gernham (Festival Director at Bedworth Festival), following their short set. My only critical feedback about FFF is - Could we have a more varied and different set of fringe performers? As, each year it seems to be that the same (only average quality) local acts compile the main fringe support? Perhaps it would be a good idea for festival organisers to consult together and promote their local acts at festival locations away from their normal locality - a swap arrangement perhaps. This would give those patrons who do not travel far to festivals an opportunity to see some new fringe faces. What do you think?

The Liverpool Irish Festival is presently in full swing and we paid a visit to the Philharmonic Hall to see for the first ever time the four piece 'Black Family' (Frances, Shay, Michael and Martin), with support being provided by a woodwind expert called 'Emer Mayock' and her two colleagues on bodhran and guitar. This was a one-off concert brought about by 'Terry Coyne' (Festival Director and a member of 'Garva'), which meant that two of the 'Black Family' were in this country on flying visits from the USA i.e. 'Shay' and 'Michael'. With probably not a great lot of time to rehearse I felt that their songs early on were conveyed in a rather unsure manner but, as the two hour set progressed, their confidence increased and overall their show was much improved and greatly received by their fans. It must have been a lovely occasion for the four of them to be back together 'on the boards' once again. And now to what is coming up in the future.

### Club News

Pauline Westall at Open Door FC informs me that the club has moved to a new venue at the Royal Oak, 172 Manchester Road, Werneth. Best of luck in your new 'home'.

Kieron Harley at Crown FC, Stockport tells me that the club is alive and well at Heaton Lane and is thriving. The format is the same except that Kieron is now the sole organiser.

You may have seen a gig lined up for 'Jug O Punch' at Aughton Village Hall in March. This is now cancelled but at the same venue on May 11th the wonderful 'Vin Garbutt' will be the main guest. Tickets can be obtained by ringing Abacus Music on 01695-585400.

Some changes to the Residents List at the Four Fools, Bacup and Hale & Hearty FCs have taken place. See my updated list on another page.

I am receiving plenty of news from Penny and Paul at Rattan and Rush Tearoom some of it not always good. The bad news first. A local fire service visit has culminated in a list of fire prevention requirements to be carried out which may cost a four-figure fee. This before the premises Entertainment Licence is renewed. Hopefully, by the time you read this article all should be well - and safer of course.

Additionally, Penny and Paul's venture into promoting a session evening every second Wednesday of the month has been unsuccessful due in the main because of the two young local musicians failing to be supported by their fellow student colleagues.

The good news is that the usual wine/dine and folk music nights continue to thrive with, for example, the great 'Steve Tilston' (a Liverpool lad by the way) recently providing a brilliant evening on the 8th October with his amazing guitar technique and compelling song-writing skills - 'Slip Jigs and Reels' - and

all.

Pat Batty at Westhoughton FC has had to change the date of the 'Ashley Hutchings and the Rainbow Chasers' evening from January 27th to February 24th. Be aware also that the club has its usual array of ticket only nights. Indeed as I write the 'St Agnes Fountain' night on December 2nd is already sold out. Other ticket only nights are - January 13th - 'Tom Topping Band', February 17th - 'Chris and Kellie While', March 10th - 'The Animals and Friends', March 24th - 'John Tams and Barry Coope', and of course March 31st - 'Vin Garbutt'. Two extra special nights for your diary next summer must be June 2nd - 'James Keelaghan' and June 9th - 'Eric Bogle and John Munro'. These last two gigs will be held at the Douglas Valley Golf Club, Blackrod. You can find out more on the club website at [www.folkclub.org.uk](http://www.folkclub.org.uk) or on 01257-230508.

Due to the licensing law changes in November, Northwich FCs start time has been brought forward to 8-15pm and the entertainment will conclude at 11-00pm.

If you want Singers Nights with a difference why not get along to this club? On December 16th is what they call a 'themed singers night' where the topic is 'Imports and Exports'. The Christmas Party night the following week (23rd) is a Fancy Dress event and on January 27th the theme will be 'the demon drink'. As ever not all gig nights are at the usual venue of the Harlequin Theatre so be aware that on December 16th, February 17th and April 7th the evenings will be located elsewhere, probably the Davenham Theatre but check with John and Ailsa before you travel on 01606-79356.

John also tells me of the sad news that the club has recently lost two of its regular members. They are Ian MacPherson and Barry Rolls. Both had been connected to the club for a good many years. Ian was well known for the depth of his knowledge of music of all types and had a huge collection. He was always keen to share his love of everything from traditional through blues to standards (Ella and Louis being his favourites). Barry was a whistle player who started tentatively some years ago and grew in confidence and ability over many singers' nights. John and Ailsa are proud that Barry felt able to do this at their club. Ian and Barry will be missed greatly.

Folk in the Barn is a Friday night venue usually but please note that 'St Agnes Fountain' appears on Sunday 4th December and on Saturday 20th May the 'Tannahill Weavers' are scheduled to appear with the location being the theatre.

Two new names to me being promoted by South Lakes Music Promotions at Ulverston Sports Club are 'The Midden' on March 2nd. They are described as "three brilliant female folk musicians who fuse traditional Scottish folk sounds with a vibrant modern attitude". The following month on the 6th April 'Lander mason' are the guests who are a duo from Northumberland. Fiona Lander and Paul Mason have a repertoire that "spans the folk, jazz and classical fields and that bring to each a deep intensity of feeling that rivets the attention". Further details can be obtained on 07743-555227 or [www.slmf.btinternet.co.uk](http://www.slmf.btinternet.co.uk)

Eric Cox at Biddulph FC is pleased to inform me that he has managed to persuade a local newspaper - The Sentinel - that has a circulation around South Cheshire and North Staffordshire - to write a Folk Column for the Friday evening edition. The column will headline the main folk attractions for the coming week and list the various sessions and singaround venues. Anyone in the area wishing to send Eric details of their events should do so on email - [mysterycox@ntlworld.com](mailto:mysterycox@ntlworld.com) or give him a ring on 01782-514896. I notice by the way that Eric has something of a coup in store next March when, on the 23rd the guest will be 'Andy M. Stewart'.

Christine Jones at the Everyman FC has sent me a review compiled by one of the club residents Pauline Parry, of a momentous evening that took place at the club on 13th September. Would you believe? It was a 'Spinnners' reunion performance. Yes the full group including 'Clive Hall' now

aged 80 who lives in Australia, and with support from 'John McCormick' on bass as usual. The review should appear elsewhere in this edition. Some of you may know of 'John Kaneen' who will be the special guest on 13th December at the club Christmas Party. John used to host a folk music programme in the Isle of Man and ran a club in Runcorn with Shirley and Jim Peden. Further information can be obtained by ringing Christine on 0151-709-3336.

### Arts Centres/Theatres

If you are into Ceilidhs you will be very interested to know that the Brewery Arts Centre at Kendal will be hosting one, on 4th December when 'Tickled Pink' will provide the music.

On the same night 'Kelly Joe Phelps' appears at the Burnley Mechanics. He is described as - "A performer who offers raw sincerity and accomplished musical acumen in both folk and blues. His voice, smoky and sweetly raspy is never harsh...dignified, soulful and spot on musically. He is a dynamite guitarist" - so says Thom Jurek, All Music Guide. [www.burnleymechanics.co.uk](http://www.burnleymechanics.co.uk)

The 'Saw Doctors' are appearing at The Dome, Morecambe on 5th December - box office 01524-582803.

At Southport Arts Centre, on the same night that 'Tommy Emmanuel' appears in the Theatre (Friday 9th December) is an act called 'Ballou Canta and Luciana' appearing in the Studio. Telephone 0151-934-2837 for further information.

### Festivals and activities coming up

I am delighted to report that Liz Rosenfield, the director of MFAB, the Middlewich Folk and Boat Festival, has enrolled as a member of Folk North West and in particular I draw your attention to the fact that on the first Sunday of every month, at the Kings Lock pub, Middlewich, 8-00pm start, there is an informal music session and singaround where excellent folk and acoustic music is the order of the day. Musicians and



Too good a coincidence to go to waste

Belated congratulations Rob and June

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James Fagan

singers of all standards including the more experienced 'stars' of the folk world are encouraged to just turn up and perform. More info can be obtained by contacting Liz on 01606-834969 or at [lizrosenfield@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:lizrosenfield@tiscali.co.uk) Liz has agreed to take a goodly quantity of FNW magazines so it is great news that this superb tome will be read by 'folkies' in Middlewich and area. Welcome on board Liz and Co. May FNW be of great benefit to you. Cheryl and the gang at Chester Folk Festival wish everyone to know that the festival has a new website. It is now [www.chesterfolk.org.uk](http://www.chesterfolk.org.uk) and a new email address as follows [festival@chesterfolk.org.uk](mailto:festival@chesterfolk.org.uk) plus a new telephone number - 07005-977045.

The postal address is still - 21 Dee Fords Avenue, Chester, CHE 5UP.

The Chester Folk Survivors' February Folk Day fund-raiser (phew, try saying that when you've had your vino collapse) will take place at Hoole Community Centre on Saturday 25th starting at noon with a two-hour singaround. Chester Festival itself will take place on Whit Bank Holiday weekend, Friday 26th to Monday 29th May.

Another organiser who has contacted me to give useful diary date info is Stewart Lever at The Railway who announces that the Lymm Festival dates are June 29th to July 6th.

SAFRA is holding a one day fund-raising event at Playhouse 2, Shaw on Saturday 11th March when, between 8pm and 11-30pm a myriad of very accomplished and local performers will be topped by the hilarious 'Stanley Accrington'. They are - 'The Hometowners and Tony Downes', 'Martin Stimson', 'Ken Powell and Ruth Fuga' (ex Riskies), 'Better Late', 'Jim Schofield', 'Ann English', 'Geoff Millar', 'John Courtman'. Further details can be obtained by contacting 01706-847494 or email [info@playhouse2.com](mailto:info@playhouse2.com)

#### Performer Snip-its

International folk performer 'Fiona Simpson' (ex-Therapy) is well and truly launched back on to the folk scene with a number of recent solo gigs the first of which took place at that wonderfully cosy venue, Wrexham FC home of 'Ian Chesterman' and Offa. We were fortunate enough to be in the area on holiday so paid a surprise visit to the Nags Head to be entertained by Ian and Goff initially and thereafter Fiona who stunned everyone with her superlative renditions of songs old and new. Fiona has a tremendous voice and personality that is truly infectious. She must rank as one of the most entertaining female solo acts on the scene today. You can see Fiona at The Manor, The Prospect and Swinton FCs early next year. Contact no. 07981-639-336

'Vin Garbutt' has been mentioned earlier and it is great news to see him recovered and back on the road again after his recent serious heart operation. Stewart Lever at The Railway has sent me a short review of Vin's gig there on 8th September Dave Cowe says as follows:-

"I could not let such a super night pass without some sort of record - so here are a few words not quite as daft as Vin might tell it!

What can one say about this man? There are no superlatives not previously used and the medics only gave him more stories to add to his wide and varied repertoire. They also had no effect on the unique voice and thoughtful lyrics. He says they did change something though - he has gone back ten years and tells more jokes!

Never thought I would learn so much about the 'operation' of the heart from a folk club - no wonder it goes wrong in so many of us what with that bit flapping about and all!

Stewart sang about passion - Vin graphically demonstrated it in lorry loads (full of fish) and has lost none of it in thirty years of performing around the world. He remains motivated by our enjoyment - and chorus singing.

His strong Irish connection mixed with the Tees gave us all a

night never to be forgotten. Many absorbed listeners commented that the place had never been as full with all tickets sold long before Vin arrived. Stewart even persuaded Vin to play a fine tune on the whistle before we let him go. What a night to remember?"

'Haines and Leighton' are the special guests at Clarence FC on 30th November. Probably new names to you? - 'Mark Haines and Tom Leighton' - hail from that brilliant conveyor belt of folk performers, in Canada. It will be their first ever tour of the UK. They have been described as a 'two man folk festival' combining fiddle, accordion, guitar, bouzouki, bodhran, with the newer technology of synthesizers, tone generators (I thought that was what you used in those sun parlours?) and processors. Mark's voice is 'one of a kind' and with Tom's superb harmonies, word picture stories come vividly to life in their songs.

That extremely under-rated but brilliant performer 'Pete Morton' has a new CD out entitled 'Flying an unknown flag'. Currently on tour in the USA until the turn of the year, Pete is accompanied on his latest disc by the very accomplished 'Roger Wilson', 'Chris Parkinson' and 'Neil Segrott'. Find out more at [www.petemorton.com](http://www.petemorton.com)

'Mike Silver' and 'Johnny Coppin' are going out as a duo now and wish to bring their brilliant partnership to the notice of club and festival organisers in the north of England during 2006. A superb demo disc can be obtained by ringing 07981-639-336. Johnny hosts the folk programme on Radio Gloucester and of course you can hear it retrospectively via the Internet - it is absolutely excellent.

I was extremely saddened to hear that one of my favourite bands 'Risky Business' ceased performing after 19th October where their last gig took place at Jim Schofield's place, The Cross Keys at Uppermill. As the saying goes, 'all good things come to an end' and the last page of their brilliant thirteen years together has been written and the book placed on a shelf to reflect on in years to come. Ken, Ruth and Dave add that from time to time they will get it down again and re-live some of their favourite bits.

Does that mean the odd re-union from time to time I wonder? Keep a look out for them in various guises on the scene and thanks guys for the wonderful entertainment you have given us. You may wish to pass your thoughts on to them via [risky.business@virgin.net](mailto:risky.business@virgin.net)

I was recently passed a newly released CD entitled "The Voyage of the Dunbrody" by an absolutely superb guitarist from Wirral called 'Jim Ronayne'. Although I am ashamed to say I have never had the pleasure of seeing Jim perform he has in fact vast experience of the folk scene in the northwest and has been a part of the acclaimed Wirral International Guitar Festival. In brief the 'Dunbrody' was a ship which plied the Atlantic ferrying Irish immigrants to the USA for a better life and the disc has a strong element of the sea about it throughout. A review of this CD and more information about Jim can be found elsewhere in this edition. Jim has a website at [www.jimronayne.co.uk](http://www.jimronayne.co.uk)

#### Some news outside our region

As well as seeing the 'John Wright Band' in this region, if you stray into Yorkshire and Staffordshire you will be able to see John, Joe and Joe at the Black Swan FC, York (01904-632922) on December 15th and on the following night at the Chase FC, Burntwood (01543-271269).

If you are a budding folk performer and aged between 12 and 21 years then you may be interested in the Wickersley Folk Day when a free to enter competition is open to folk-roots and



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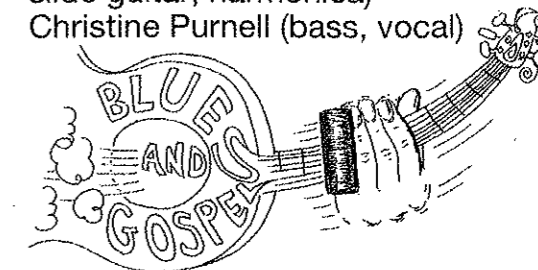
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acoustic musicians. It all happens at the WFD on March 11th. All you have to do is contact Pete Thornton-Smith on 01709-546555 or at pts@barrel.demon.co.uk, obtain an application form and submit to him a demo CD with at least three tracks. Note that the closing date for applications is January 31st. What do you win I hear you say? The winner/s will perform at the WFD evening concert and Cleethorpes Folk Festival. Also they will be offered the chance to record a CD with Chris Thornton-Smith of BPAS and who is responsible for the latest albums from young musicians such as 'Kerfuffle', 'Tegwen Roberts' and 'Charlie Barker'.

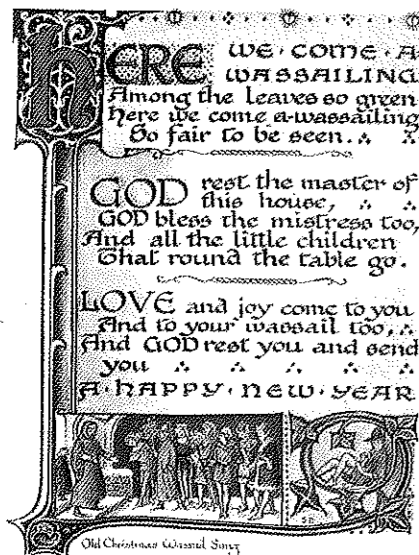
Well that's all for the moment. Keep your interesting information rolling in. I wish you and yours a most enjoyable Christmas and New Year period. I look forward to speaking to you again in March, when low and behold, it will be time to get the caravan out of store again - Hooray.

John Owen

## ARTICLES



### Here we come a-wassailing



Here we come a-wassailing among the leaves so green,  
Here we come a-wandering so fairly to be seen,  
Now is winter time, strangers travel far and near  
And we wish you, we bring you, a happy new year

We hope that all your barley will prosper fine and grow,  
So that you'll have plenty and a bit more to bestow,  
We hope your wethers will grow fat and likewise all your ewes,  
And where they had but one lamb we hope they will have two.

Bud and blossom, bud and blossom, bud and bloom and bear,  
So we may have plenty of cider all next year.  
In haffuls and in capfuls and in bushel bags and all  
And there's cider running out of every gutter hole.

Down there in the muddy lane there sits an old red fox,  
Starving and a-shivering and licking his old chops.  
Bring us out your table and spread it if you please

And give us hungry wassailers a bit of bread and cheese.

I've got a little purse and its made of leather skin,  
With a little silver sixpence you could line it well within.  
Now is winter time, strangers travel far and near  
And we wish you, we bring you, a happy New Year.

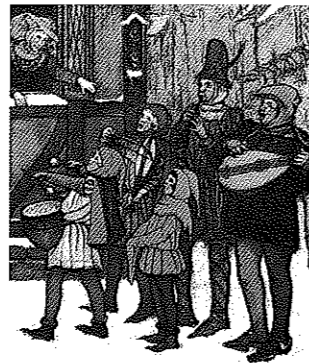
It's that time of year again. The doorbell rings of an early evening  
and we open it to find ourselves regaled with a hurried, tuneless  
chorus of:-

'We wish you a Merry Christmas,  
We wish you a Merry Christmas,  
We wish you a Merry Christmas,  
And a Happy New Year.'

Often nowadays that's all we get before being expected to stump  
up a few pieces of silver coin. Or, if we are very lucky, we might  
get verse two exhorting us to supply 'figgy pudding' (though  
goodness knows what reaction we would get if we really did  
provide 'figgy pudding' rather than silver coins).

Most people, if asked, would regard this exercise as the final  
tatty remnant of the old tradition of door-to-door carol singing.  
In the 'old days' (they would say) we would have had the full  
works: 'Hark The Herald Angels', 'While Shepherds Watched',  
and 'Once in Royal David's City' from a mini chorus of half a  
dozen youngsters. Now it's come down to this last feeble gasp;  
nobody knows the words any more.

There is some truth in this view. In my young days (many decades  
ago) we actually did know most of the words and we wouldn't  
dream of fobbing off our audience with just one quick chorus of  
'We wish you a Merry Christmas'. There is, however, more to this  
than meets the eye (or the ear, if you prefer). Long, long before  
'Hark the Herald Angels' was composed you would have found  
small groups of people going from door to door in rural areas at  
the end of December, singing songs, wishing people a happy  
and prosperous New Year and expecting in return a gift of food  
(figgy pudding?), drink (usually alcoholic) or money. This was  
the ancient tradition of wassailing.



The song printed above, 'Here We Come A-wassailing', is a  
survivor of that earlier tradition. It, or something very like it, would  
have been sung by generation after generation of wassailers  
doing their rounds of the village and anyone who was left out  
would regard it as an ill omen indeed to embark on the New  
Year without this traditional blessing. The word 'wassail'  
derives from the old Anglo Saxon expression 'wes hall' which  
meant 'be healthy' or 'be whole'.

To wassail someone was to drink a toast to their health and  
prosperity.

In ancient times, the people who had the power to confer such  
blessings upon others were probably the very old people who  
the Church would have regarded as witches and warlocks,  
practitioners of the 'Old Religions'. They probably disguised  
themselves with masks or blackened faces in the manner  
of mummers (hence the reference in the song to 'strangers'  
travelling far and near). In this way they adopted the persona  
of their 'priesthood' rather than being known by their everyday  
trades. They may also have carried evergreens such as holly  
and ivy if we are to make sense of the phrase 'among the

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leaves so green' (don't forget that this ceremony was taking place at the end of December, long after the Autumn leaf fall. So only evergreens would fit the bill). In some areas wassailers are, in fact, known to have carried a 'wassail bough', a branch decorated with ribbons. The essence of wassailing then was that these visitors were not all the people you worked next to in the fields every day but people endowed with other-worldly powers and authority to bring health and prosperity upon your household.

A central part of the wassail ceremony was the wassail cup or bowl which was carried by the wassailers from house to house. This was a large bowl, traditionally made of wood and kept all year round in the safe keeping of the 'King' of the wassailers. A Somerset wassail song describes the bowl as being made of the 'good Ashen tree'. Ash was believed to have magical healing properties, so what better material to make the bowl from? It was decorated with ribbons and filled with a potent brew known as lambswool. Lambswool was a mix of mulled ale, herbs, spices and honey; or as another wassail song puts it:-

'Our wassail is made of the good ale and true,  
Some nutmeg and ginger, it's the best we could brew.'

The same wassail song goes on to say:-

'Our wassail is made with an elderberry bough,  
And so my good neighbour we'll drink unto thou.'

This, to me at least, suggests that the brew was stirred with an elderberry branch or twig which is interesting because elder was regarded as a witches' tree, to be avoided after dark lest one came under a witches spell. Stirring with an elder bough would have increased the magical potency of the brew in the minds of those taking part.

The bowl was passed around the members of the household and each took a drink, starting with the master of the house. Thus the members of the household received the wassailers' blessing. To indicate their gratitude they would then offer the wassailers food and drink in return. Only later would the thank-you gift have become money. This gift giving was an essential part of the proceedings if the magic was to work.

It is patently obvious that wassailing was a thorough pagan practice and as such could not possibly have been regarded benevolently by the Church. This is attested to by the fact that, in some churches at least; the use of wooden vessels was frowned upon, it being reminiscent of pagan practice. Wassailing and its associated beliefs had a deep hold on people who, every winter, stared want and even possible starvation in the face. Who would be so reckless as to scorn a blessing which promised that your barley would 'prosper fine and grow' and that your ewes would have not one lamb but two? Who would turn their back on a centuries old tradition and risk bringing bad luck down on his household?

So, for some considerable time, the Church celebration of Christmas ran in parallel with wassailing and however much the Church frowned, it could not completely eradicate its rival. What was probably more effective in bringing about the demise of wassailing was the process of industrialisation and the accompanying urbanisation which gathered pace from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. People increasingly lived their lives divorced from the land, the cycle of the seasons and the reliance on the health and fertility of their crops and animals. Wassailing lost its meaning for the mill worker and the coal miner and so it died out in such communities.

This process of decay would have been helped along by the great religious 'Awakening' of the eighteenth century led by men like John Wesley and George Whitfield. Prior to this,

Christianity had been more or less imposed on the people from above (the King says 'we're all Christians now') but many of them were Christian in name only, attending church only when they had to or, by this time, not at all. The 'Awakening' brought about many thousands of conversions and without doubt the converts would have promptly turned their backs on all things pagan. Wassailing and other practices came to be regarded as the preserve of ignorant country bumpkins who knew no better. All over the country wassailing died a long slow death and anyone who wanted to sing from door to door sang, instead, about the birth of Jesus.

So that lone youngster warbling 'We wish you a Merry Christmas' at your front door is the survivor of a tradition which stretches back into the mists of time. Give him some figgy pudding and who knows, your wife may have triplets before Christmas comes round again.

Brian Bull

### SOUNDING OFF ABOUT NOISE IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

Evelyn Glennie, international solo percussionist and composer opened the second day of a two-day conference at Earls Court last week (11-12 October), bringing together key professionals from the music industry.

'Sound Off - Noise Reduction at Work' offered advice to employers on how to control noise in the workplace ahead of the revised UK regulations that come into effect early next year. The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 lower acceptable noise levels in the workplace by 5 decibels, to 85 decibels, the equivalent of a petrol lawnmower. Employers will be required to limit staff exposure to noise above this level as well as providing adequate protection from hearing damage.

One of the challenges set by the new rules is that many sectors previously not covered, such as the music industry, now have to tackle noise exposure. Lord Hunt announced the piloting of a draft guidance for the music industry: "Let me make it clear that we are not killjoys. We don't want to stop people enjoying themselves, but we do want to protect workers' health. That's why we are working with the music industry to find practical solutions." Draft guidance will be piloted early next year in a symphony orchestra, large pop event, a pub and a club. This represents a good cross section of society affected and will allow the guidance to be tested before wider consultation."

Lawrence Waterman, President of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) said: "Over two million workers in the UK are exposed to levels of noise which are likely to damage their hearing - damage their hearing permanently and in a way which socially disables them. That's why through new regulations and guidance, employers are being encouraged to tackle noise issues in a much more effective way." Mike Shepherd, Head of the HSE's Noise and Vibration Programme Unit, added: "Recent research estimates that 170,000 people in the UK suffer deafness, tinnitus or other ear conditions as a result of exposure to excessive noise at work. The revised regulations are an important step towards reducing this figure."

Sound Off was organised by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), the Health & Safety Executive (HSE), and CMP Information, in partnership with the RNID, the charity for deaf and hard of hearing people. It is part of the 2005 Euro Week campaign run by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. The conference featured special sessions for the music and entertainment industry, as well as for local government, construction and manufacturing. Speakers

included Lord Hunt, minister responsible for health and safety, Lawrence Waterman, President of IOSH and Evelyn Glennie OBE, renowned percussionist and BAFTA nominee. For more details about Sound Off, visit [www.sound-off.co.uk](http://www.sound-off.co.uk) or contact Claire Price at Chelgate on 020 7939 7923 / Jonathan Mason on 020 7717 6902.

### THE RAMBLINGS OF AN OLD CODGER - VOLUME 60 - SEPTEMBER 2005

Issue number 60! (Abridged for FN West) That's five whole years without missing a copy! When will it all end? Does some poor misguided soul out there have all 60 copies stored on a computer somewhere?

I get asked; When do I do it? How do I do it? Why do I do it? I guess "Why do I do it?" is the question most asked.

So to recap quickly, for those who are new, I started writing a news letter 5 years ago to let my 29 fans world wide know what I was up to and 'The Ramblings of an old Codger' sort of grew from there. Over 1,000 people now receive it. Of course 1,000 people don't actually read it and I guess only a handful read it from top to bottom. A lot of you turn immediately to the jokes at the end. Not a bad move, although at this point those who do will be missing this compliment. Some of the jokes are actually quite funny, many provocative. I've now got so many jokey tales kind people have sent me stored away awaiting to be issued that they take up 21 A4 pages.

I realized quite quickly after Issue number 1 that there was a larger percentage of people who enjoyed reading the Ramblings because they actually liked the political and amusing content than those who were really interested in learning where I was performing. People started writing letters, some agreeing with me, others vehemently disagreeing. At first I found reading the letters of disagreement disturbing. For a while I was embarrassed that I had upset someone, intruded perhaps on their privacy. But later I began to welcome criticism. I was called 'A Sun reader' by one and by the time Bernard Wrigley said I was the 'Victor Meldrew of folk music' I was in my element, indeed I couldn't believe it! I can't think of a better description. Thank you for that Bernard I truly love it. A dithering old idiot who desperately tries to put the world to rights, but always ends up with egg on his face. That's summed me up pretty well - smart bloke Bernard.

So, shortly after Issue number 1, I started going through folk magazines gleaning the email addresses of anybody listed. If they were interested in folk music I would contact them or simply put them into my address book, which would mean they were on the list. I hate telephoning club organizers advising them of my availability. By sending a news letter they could read it at their leisure and turn me down without the slightest hint of embarrassment, or the veiled suggestion that I telephone back in 9 months which is highly unsatisfactory as it neither tells you if they really are interested or if they simply want you to disappear over the horizon. And it doesn't matter what time of day you telephone somebody you are never quite sure if you are disturbing a meal or some other bodily function we humans so much enjoy. So the newsletter seemed the ideal alternative. As far as I was concerned it's free and if the receiver does not want to read it, then it can easily be deleted at source.

A simple sensible idea I thought. But this brought about a mixed response and those who asked to be deleted, and some still do today, were deleted with the appropriate apology. Of course it doesn't always pay to hang your dirty washing on the line. The folk club organizers who were/are Tories (and there

are an awful lot of them, and I suppose even blind Blairites now fit this equation) immediately put me onto the very backest of back burners when they realized my political views were diametrically opposed to their own. But I guess that has its advantage too. If club organizers don't want to hear songs of freedom and peace from one of England's oldest and worst banjo playing eccentrics, even if American's call him a 'living legend' and 'Britain's Pete Seeger', then why should they? It is after all their club! And I certainly wouldn't want to turn up somewhere I was not wanted.

Joe Stead

### BELARUS AID

I've given this edition's Webmaster column over to what I consider is a worthy cause with a folk music angle.



On April 25th -26th, 1986 the World's worst nuclear power accident occurred at Chernobyl in the former USSR (now Ukraine). The Chernobyl nuclear power plant explosion

caused a cloud of radioactive dust to blow northwest across Belarus. As a result of the high radiation levels 135,000 people had to be evacuated from the immediate area, which is still uninhabitable and entirely deserted 20 years later. The radiation contaminated the land and air of Belarus and will remain there for thousands of years. Since it is a country whose main industry is farming, this was an enormous social and economic disaster. Contaminated food cannot be exported so people lost jobs, radiation related health problems (e.g. cancer, leukaemia, thyroid illness, birth defects) soared, the country became poor and the economy collapsed.

April 2006 will see the 20th anniversary of this now largely forgotten disaster. Many people think that the country has overcome the problems. Unfortunately, this is not the case. More than 2 million people, including hundreds of thousands of children are still living in the contaminated areas of the country. Due to the poor economic situation, poverty is now rife, with people living hand to mouth on what they can grow themselves, most of which is still contaminated with radiation. Hospitals often have an intermittent hot water supply (often as little as two hours a day) and medicines are scarce and expensive. Cleaning materials are largely unavailable and there is no money to repair buildings, so hospitals are often damp as well as cold. In Mir the local ambulance service consists of a horse and cart and an American Second World War army van.

'Belarus Aid' is the 14th group under 'Medicine and Chernobyl'. It is based in West Lancashire and concentrates on helping the disadvantaged of Belarus. Each year since 1994 humanitarian aid has been transported by road in convoys of lorries to Belarus for orphanages and hospitals and in the last few years we have completed three successful Projects. These were the renovation of a residential school / orphanage for disabled children, a children's hospital and the main hospital in the town of Mir. Each project has cost approximately £30,000, which is raised entirely through charitable donation and the efforts of a small group of people.

We are currently planning our fourth renovation project - the refurbishment of a Day Care Centre for the elderly in the grounds of Mir hospital. This building is currently in a condition which in Britain would be considered uninhabitable - peeling paint, damp walls, intermittent hot water and electricity, dangerous



wiring, unsanitary toilets, hard, upright chairs and no recreational facilities at all. To improve conditions for these people to a standard we would consider a basic necessity in Britain, will cost approximately £30,000.

One of this year's fund raising events is a Lancashire Night on Saturday 18th February 2006 at the Stanley Institute, Burscough, with entertainment from Sid Calderbank, Mark Dowding, John McAlister and others. A Hot Pot supper will be provided and tickets will cost £7.50 each, available from Mark Dowding (01695 576215), Maggi Huyton (01257 464215) or Sue Halton (01257 463703).

More information about 'Belarus Aid' and the various projects can be found on [www.belarusaid.co.uk](http://www.belarusaid.co.uk) and more information about the event can be found on [www.markdowding.co.uk](http://www.markdowding.co.uk).

Hopefully I'll see some of you at this concert, which should be a good do! (I hope they've got red cabbage for the hotpot.) I'll let you know how the concert went in the next edition.

Until then, Happy Surfing.  
Mark Dowding Email [webmaster@folknorthwest.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@folknorthwest.co.uk)  
[www.folknorthwest.co.uk](http://www.folknorthwest.co.uk)

## LETTERS



Dear Ken

We wanted to let you know how things went on with our Music in the Kerry mountains events - in short, Great! Five continuous nights of great music at: - Bernard Harrington's Glengarriff, Loo Bridge, Top of Coom. Finishing with the music marathon in Kilgarvan on the Sunday, during which we were entertained by many local youngsters playing accordions, tin whistles and dazzling us with displays of traditional Irish Dancing.

The music varied from Trad Irish, to Ballads, to Original Works, to Parisian Cafe Music! There was also some very enjoyable unaccompanied singing. All in all an eclectic and very enjoyable mix! And what a variety of instruments! Boxes, Fiddles, Guitars, Mandolins, Banjos, Bouzoukis, Hurdy Gurdys, Megalin, Northumbrian Pipes, a washboard (?), Flutes, Whistles, and a full size Harp, (and also an amplified lap Harp.) There was so much going on I have probably missed some out, but it gives you a good general idea.

At the Top of Coom Session on the Thursday night, there where over thirty singers and musicians in the bar, and the atmosphere was brilliant, you would have to be there to appreciate it.

Apart from all the fun and frivolity, the Collection for Our Lady's Hospital for sick Children in Crumlin taken on all the nights raised Nearly 2000 euro, in much needed donations. Thanks to all who helped, either by rattling collection boxes or helping to provide the entertainment.

If you where here, you know how much fun we had, if you couldn't make it and would like to come along next year let us know asap. Bookings are already coming in thick and fast!

Thanks again to all who helped publicise the event, and helped to make it such a success.  
All the best

John & Marie Corteen  
FREE SPIRIT [freespirit9@eircom.net](mailto:freespirit9@eircom.net)

Dear Ken

Your readers might be interested in my new web site at [www.chapelrymusic.com](http://www.chapelrymusic.com), which has details of my new CD 'Tomorrow the Fox will Come' together with some downloadable MP3s sample tracks.

All the best,  
Pete Kirby

Dear Ken

Glad you received your review copy of Sibelius 4 and we look forward to seeing your review in due course. The price of Sibelius 4 is £595 inc. VAT and can be purchased online [www.sibelius.com](http://www.sibelius.com) or by calling our freephone 0800 458 3111. Educational discounts are available - customers should contact us for details. A free information pack and demo CD is also available, if customers wish to try the program before they buy it.

Best wishes  
Jo McCulloch, Marketing Coordinator  
Sibelius Software Ltd, Tel: 020 7561 7999

Dear Ken,

We thought we'd let you know that the first 'Sing For Someone Else's Supper' concert, took place at the Ashton Institute in Preston on Friday July 8th. As you probably know, the driving force behind this initiative is Graham Dixon and we were pleased to set the ball rolling by organising the first concert, which proved a great success, raising a magnificent total of £310.00.

Of the money raised, £250.00 was given to Christian Aid to help with their work in relieving hunger and poverty in Africa and £60.00 to 'Quaker Peace and Justice' to help with a food project in Bogota.

We'd like to thank all the people who came to the concert and gave so generously and the musicians who gave freely of their time to help us provide the music: Caroline Lovett, Dave Almonder, Trouble at t' Mill, Chris Lomax, Michael Shanahagh and Brian Young and Paul. Not only did they play but also Trouble at t' Mill auctioned two gliding lessons given them for playing at the gliding club, raising £100.00 on its own!

Many thanks too to the Institute for allowing us free use of the concert room and donating several raffle prizes. The secretary, Terry, was invaluable in promoting the concert locally and Donna, Neill and the bar staff strove manfully to keep us all supplied with liquid refreshment.

Last but not least, thanks to Jane, Jennie and Natalie for manning the door, collecting donations and selling raffle tickets.

By the time this letter appears in Folk Northwest, three more concerts will have been held locally. Lets hope they are even more successful than this one.

Cheers,

Smithereen - Keith Hassall, Jim & Jennifer Smethurst  
(At the time of going to press over £1500 has been raised by the charity. For updates go to their website [www.singforsomeoneelseessupper.ukart.com](http://www.singforsomeoneelseessupper.ukart.com))

Dear Ken

I thought I would drop you a line to let you and the readers of FN West have some information on a new service that is being launched in November 2005. In connection with Mark Coyle, I am launching a folk music (in its broadest sense) music download site.

The site aims to make available deleted albums or previously unreleased music by artists that could be either new to the scene or well established. Such titles will be available to download via a secure server in high quality mp3 format. This is similar to the service offered by Itunes or Napster, but is different in a number of key respects. Our service is only applicable for music to which you own the rights (i.e., not still owned by a record company)

1. The artist receives a 50% royalty (compared to the industry standard of 20%)
2. The artist pays NO fees or commission for this service
3. The artist receives a monthly royalty statement with payment in full
4. We can work with the artist to make this an effective free to use promotional tool and include, biog, photos, press cuttings, etc along with a link to the artists own web site
5. ALL accounting processes will be available to the artist, so that they can be sure they receive EVERY penny of earned income.
6. We are a site dedicated to folk music. There will be no rap, hip-hop, heavy metal or rock music

I'm sure you will have a number of questions, but hope you might take a minute to look at the beta version of the site which is now on line at <http://www.wovenwheatwhispers.co.uk> On the site you will find full operational information for both artists and customers. However, if you have any further questions don't hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes  
Ian Southworth

Dear All,

I am reasonably new to all this (organising folk festivals) although by the skin of my teeth and much hardwork on the part of committee and friends and others, I did put a festival together for 2005, which, by all accounts, was a success!!

For 2006 I am looking to extend much more of a welcome to our friends in folk clubs far and wide and absolutely welcome discussions formal and informal with regard ideas you may have that involve including you all!

A bit cryptic but this is my initial contact! Please feel free to contact me directly or any other committee members with thoughts and ideas for 2006 with regards our newish idea, 'folk club stage' at the festival...(well new for me!)

I welcome any new and old friends and visitors to our Winter Warmer Weekend, for the artists' night or the session, do look out for committee members and make yourselves known!!

Look forward to hearing from you!  
Liz Rosenfield 01606 834969 [www.middlewichfestival.org](http://www.middlewichfestival.org)  
Director the Middlewich Folk and Boat festival

P.S. I do work full time and not near a computer or 'phone, I am a busy working mum as well as doing the festival, but I will get back to you!

## PRESS RELEASES



### BEOGA



Beoga, a four-piece trad band from Counties Antrim and Derry are fast becoming one of the most established acts to emerge from the north of Ireland. Formed after a ferocious session at the All-Ireland Fleadh in Listowel in August 2002, their unique sound features the twin

duelling accordions of Seán Óg Graham and Damian McKee, along with four times All-Ireland bodhrán champion Eamon Murray and pianist Liam Bradley. Beoga were nominated by Irish Music Magazine for the 2005 best traditional newcomers award.

In September 2004 the band released their debut album 'a lovely madness', to critical acclaim. Describing their music as 'genius', Irish music magazine predicted Beoga would make a big mark on the scene in 2005. The album received nine/ten in Ireland's Hot Press magazine and was included in the magazine's Top Trad/Folk Albums of 2004 listing.

Beoga have been touring European, following a successful year which saw them headline various festivals, including the Ennis traditional festival and the 2005 All-Ireland Fleadh. The group are joined on tour by one of Ireland's most talented young singers, Niamh Dunne from Limerick. Niamh is also an accomplished fiddler who has played on the world stage with the successful show "Ragús".

Visit their website at: [www.beogamusic.com](http://www.beogamusic.com) or email: [info@beogamusic.com](mailto:info@beogamusic.com) for booking information.

### CHURCHFITTERS



Based in Brittany since 1993 and originally from East Anglia, the Churchfitters is one of the most inspired groups on the folk scene today. Their energetic and festive show unites the rhythms of rock and pop with the universal appeal of traditional music.

Three explosive voices and the use of a dozen or so acoustic instruments (fiddle, guitar, double bass, flute, banjo, dulcimer, mandolin, saxophone...) allow them a rich musical language with which to express their varied programme of songs and melodies from Ireland, Scotland, Québec, England, USA and their own compositions. With their flamboyant personalities, Rosie and Chris Short from London, Topher Loudon from Belfast and Boris Leuret from Brittany present their unique show with good humour and a sense of fun delighting audiences at festivals, concert halls and theatres throughout France and Europe whenever they play.

Recent sorties back to the UK have seen one sell-out gig after another, whether at art centres, clubs, village halls or festivals

and bookings are now being taken for a UK tour in January 2006, as well as for festivals. If you would like a live demo CD of this incredible band, please contact Nigel on 01359 252044 or e-mail: nigelchaine@tiscali.co.uk

If you would like further information on the band, then please visit their website: [www.churchfitters.com](http://www.churchfitters.com)

## EDWINA HAYES OUT ON HER OWN



'Out On My Own' is the stunning debut album from Edwina Hayes. The CD is a beautiful collection of intimate memoirs and observations that speak straight from the heart. Recorded and mixed at Chapel Studios, Lincolnshire 'Out On My Own' was produced by legendary producer John Wood (Nick Drake, Fairport Convention, Squeeze) and co-produced by Clive Gregson (Any

Trouble, Nanci Griffith). The first single to be taken from the album 'I Want Your Love' is a bitter sweet tale of love longed for and was released on Valentine's Day this.

The country-influenced sound- delicate melodies and Edwina's aching, sad voice - is a recurring theme throughout the album. With a string of comparisons to the late, great Eva Cassidy, Edwina has produced an album so thick with wisdom and experience it belies the tender years of Edwina herself! Agony aunt, best friend, big sister, Edwina Hayes combines all of these characters into one album.

Having already supported Jools Holland, Lulu and many more live, Edwina is already establishing herself as a formidable live talent with 2005 shaping up to be a massive year for the young singer songwriter.

Having enjoyed a period out of the limelight, 'Out On my Own' is a welcome reunion for the Wood / Gregson partnership. Renowned for his year's producing and engineering for Island Records, John Wood is credited on all the Nick Drake albums including this year's highly successful reissue. Other major credits for John include Squeeze, Fairport Convention, John Martyn and Sandy Denny. Clive Gregson is known predominantly for his time with folk/rock duo Any Trouble (Gregson & Collister) and has a successful solo career. His latest album 'Long Story Short' is the last in a line of eight while many artists, including Nanci Griffith, Kim Carnes and Mary Chapin Carpenter, have recorded his songs.

For more information on Edwina Hayes or to see Edwina live, please contact: Dan Walsh @ LD Communications Tel: +44 (0) 20 7439 7222; Mob: +44 (0) 7775 770379; Email: [dan.walsh@bluelight.co.uk](mailto:dan.walsh@bluelight.co.uk)

## Hobgoblin Records launches at WOMEX



Hobgoblin Music, the UK's leading retailer of acoustic and folk musical instruments will today be launching Hobgoblin Records, a full service record label covering acoustic roots, ethnic and traditional folk, music jazz and Latin.

The label has already signed up a number of acts, including: Blackthorn Band, ThingumaJig!, Lee Westwood, Rohan Kriwaczek, Candela, All Jigged Out, Philippe Barnes & Tom

Phelan and Rocas.

Distribution for Hobgoblin Records will be initially through Mrs Casey Music, who will distribute CDs to a wide range of independent retail music stores, and folk festivals throughout the UK. However, Hobgoblin Records will be approaching other distribution companies.

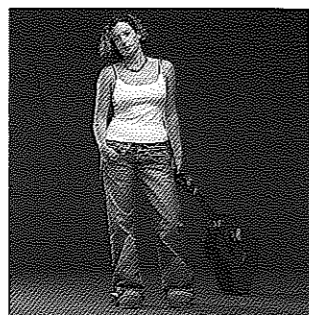
Hobgoblin Records CDs will also be available at Hobgoblin retail stores throughout England and on its website at [www.hobgoblin.com](http://www.hobgoblin.com).

Hobgoblin Records will be managed by Hobgoblin Music co-owner Pete McClelland and Philippe Barnes, an acclaimed flautist whose recording credits include BBC Radio 4, Discovery Channel, and ITV and who has just recently completed the sold-out UK tour of 'Faust'.

Pete McClelland said, "Hobgoblin Records will provide a great opportunity for established and 'up and coming' artists to follow their dreams, and take their music playing to the next stage."

## SUNSHINE, SONGS, STORIES AND SWORDS AT TOWERSEY

Over the August Bank Holiday weekend the little village of Towersey, Nr Thame, Oxon came alive with music, dance, song and sword fighting at the nationally famous Towersey Village Festival. A record number of Season ticket holders and more day visitors than ever before enjoyed a full programme of concerts, dances, workshops, children's events and more.



Festival highlights included Rolf Harris who performed to a full house on the brand new Arena Stage on Thursday night. Kate Rusby took Rolf's place in front of another full house on Sunday evening. The audience enjoyed a balmy summer's evening as Kate's enchanting voice washed over them. Other highlights included Show of Hands and winner of three BBC Radio 2 Folk

Awards 2005 Karine Polwart on the Concert Stage, BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards 2005 'Best Dance Band' Whapweasel set the Ceilidh Tent alight with their infectious mix of folk, roots and ska. The Chipolatas joined forces with their friends to create the Chipolata Sound System and raised the roof in the Arts Centre before wowing the audience with their legendary street theatre show in the Arena. The smaller venues gave audiences the chance to get up close and personal to Festival artists including Johnny Dickinson, Bayou Seco and Tre Martelli plus a special show 'Tales Across the World' with popular American storyteller Dan Keding and Yaw Asiyama from Ghana.

Younger visitors played, danced, sang and made things to their heart's content in the Children's Festival and 12-25 year olds immersed themselves at Shooting Roots workshops in band, rapper sword dancing, theatre and more ready for performances in the Showground.

Visitors to the Showground enjoyed street entertainment, dance displays and processions plus the opportunity to shop till they dropped in the extensive trade market, craft and music fairs. A wide range of catering outlets kept everyone fed and watered. Towersey Arena highlights included The Volkovtzi Cossacks breathtaking dancing complete with sword fighting, Festival favourites Broken Ankles Appalachian dancers and Great Western Morris' Dr Who Arena Special complete with

cybermen, daleks and a tardis!

Next year's Towersey Village Festival is 24-28 August 2006. Contact the Box Office to get on the mailing list. More details will be available in February 2006. For more information contact the Festival Office, PO Box 296, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3XU, Box Office: 01629 827016 [info@towerseyfestival.com](mailto:info@towerseyfestival.com) [www.towerseyfestival.com](http://www.towerseyfestival.com)

## ICONS - A PORTRAIT OF ENGLAND

Towards the end of 2005, Jerry Doyle, Managing Director of Icons Online, is to launch his project. It gives readers an opportunity to nominate their own icons of England! They are expecting a healthy rivalry between different parts of the country to see who can nominate icons from their area (on their preview site these already range from the F.A. Cup, Angel of the North and Stonehenge to the Notting Hill Carnival, a portrait of Henry VIII and a knotted handkerchief!)

A rich tapestry of our cultural treasures is being woven together in a unique online collection entitled: Icons A Portrait of England at [www.icons.org.uk](http://www.icons.org.uk). Working with some of the country's finest cultural institutions, including the National Portrait Gallery, English Heritage and the National Trust, the Icons project is commissioned by Culture Online, part of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Over time Icons promises to become a national treasure in its own right, building in encyclopaedic fashion into a fascinating picture of life in England in the 21st century. Icons wants to encourage the public to visit [www.icons.org.uk](http://www.icons.org.uk) to contribute anecdotes and comments, as well as to nominate and vote.

## MVINE

MVINE is the first fully operational record label to sign artists on the basis of audience response at a virtual venue. Renowned musician Calum MacColl, son of Ewan, and e-commerce pioneer Frank Joshi have launched MVine, an exciting new hybrid of traditional label and Internet music venture.

MVine is a genre-free record label with a new business model, which brings together technological innovation and a passionate belief in new and original music. MVine's combination of label, venue, community and technology moves away from the traditional ways of running a record company and puts music lovers firmly in the driving seat. MVine is a growing community with the power to shape the future of music.

The Music MVine's free service to unsigned or own-label artists enables them to showcase three full songs on the MVine website for community members to hear, comment on and buy as downloads. Audience comments are fed back directly to the artist. MVine provides a central platform on which artists can display biographies, tour dates and live links to their sites; they can use their own website to direct fans to MVine to listen and buy full tracks; and they have full control of their content on MVine at all times. MVine provides these free, non-exclusive services to any original artist or band.

The Artists MVine signed their first two acts this summer. Christie Hennessy's album 'Stories for Sale' was released in September, Boo Hewardine's album 'Harmonograph' will be out in January.

The Listener At [www.mvine.com](http://www.mvine.com) audience members can listen free of charge to high sound quality full tracks from either an artist of their choice, or to a random selection of new music.

Through rating & commenting, the audience is encouraged to connect with an artist and can buy individual songs as downloads for 79p each. Of this, half the profit goes to the artist, unlike the 80/20 splits offered by most major labels and many Internet sites.

The Website MVine has already attracted over 100 artists to the website's virtual venue. As at any live venue, the participatory element is key: the audience interacts initially by using the sexy voting slider (imagine a very clever 'clapometer'), there are places for people to talk, to compare notes, to get more information on favourite bands, discover new acts and buy new music. A loyalty scheme (MPoints) rewards members for their involvement.

The Technology Uniquely, MVine delivers music in Ogg Vorbis, which streams higher quality files at lower bandwidth than MP3. Essentially this means that users can still listen and download songs even if they don't have broadband. All downloads are free of DRM (digital rights management), enabling buyers to listen to the music on any player they want. MVine uses a combination of commodity hardware and Free and Open Source software. Operating in Linux mode means that MVine is platform-free, the website operates with all major browsers, and it is powered by Info Now, a dedicated system that provides flexible and detailed reporting.

For further information, please contact Kerry Harvey-Piper, Marketing Director: (m) 07976 272139; (e) [kerry@mvine.com](mailto:kerry@mvine.com) Website address: [www.mvine.com](http://www.mvine.com)

## GLASGOW FESTIVAL RETURNS TO THE OLD FRUITMARKET

Celtic Connections now in its thirteenth year continues to not only support the roots of Traditional Scottish Music but also brings some of the best and most prominent world musicians to Glasgow. Artists appearing at this year's festival include The Waterboys, Roddy Frame, Richard Thompson, Capercaillie, Donnie Munro, Johnny Kalsi, Lunasa, Afro Celt DJ Set, Karine Polwart, Eddi Reader and Eric Bogle.

The festival tickets went on sale on 5th November. Celtic Connections will be the first of Glasgow's many festivals to feature in The Gait with performances taking place in both The Old Fruitmarket and City Halls. The last ever concert in The Old Fruitmarket before closure for refurbishment was at the end of the 2002 festival with "Blazin Fiddles" performing on 2nd Feb 2002. The first concert in the newly opened Old Fruitmarket is on Friday 13th January 2006 with Irish band Lunasa performing.

Celtic Connections takes over several venues in the city. The focal point of the festival is The Glasgow Royal Concert Hall where performances take place in every space - from workshops in the foyers, to performances by world-class artists in the Main Auditorium. More traditional music will be performed at The Piping Centre with other venues including The Tron, The Arches and Glasgow's Garage. A brand new venue for the festival in 2006 is The Universal in Sauchiehall Lane, which will become the Universal Folk Club. This small informal space will host five nights of Gaelic and Scots song.

Celtic Connections remains committed to encouraging new music and talent in 2006. The Young Tradition, Master and Apprentice, BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician Final and Danny Kyle's Open Stage all continue to showcase up and coming artists. Moreover, New Voices gives established artists the opportunity to compose new pieces of work.



At the core of the festival is the Education Programme, which last year, saw over 18,000 school children attend free concerts at The Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. This year the focus of Celtic Connections is to continue to play a vital role encouraging and fostering new and young talent.

For the last three years Celtic Connections has topped attendances of 100,000 bringing in visitors from across the world and affirming Glasgow's place on the cultural map. The festival exceeds its original aim of filling a gap in the Concert Hall's calendar in January and is now an integral part of Glasgow's cultural calendar. Ticket Information: Tickets for Celtic Connections: 0141 353 8000  
www.celticconnections.com

### SIBELIUS COMES TO THE AID OF SGT PEPPER

Thanks to the world's leading music notation software, Sibelius, the world's greatest ever record producer, Sir George Martin has revealed how he saved the day for Sir Paul McCartney at the recent Live 8 concert in Hyde Park, London.

Sir Paul McCartney was preparing for his opening performance of Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, when with only hours to go, he realised that there were no French Horn parts, as the song had never been performed live by any of the Beatles. In a panic, he put in a call to Sir George Martin, (who was in New York at the time), who had written the parts in the first place. Fortunately, Sir George had his laptop with Sibelius loaded with him and, realising the parts' whereabouts was "a mystery in the sea of time", he immediately set about re-writing them completely from memory in Sibelius. The Sibelius file was then emailed across the Atlantic and the Live 8 concert began in spectacular style with Sir Paul accompanied by four French Horn players in full Sgt Pepper costume all playing their parts to perfection.

A long term admirer and advocate of Sibelius software, Sir George telephoned the company's Chief Executive Alison Kerr to relate the story and offer the thanks of both himself and Sir Paul.

For further information about this product visit:  
www.sibelius.com

## SPOTLIGHT ON JULIE ELLISON



### INTERVIEWED BY JOHN HEPWORTH



Ralph McTell describes her as: "A terrific guitarist who also writes great songs. She shared the stage with me at the South Shields guitar festival and the discerning audience loved her. She stormed it!" Her gig list includes performances across the UK at venues from small village pubs to arts centres: a demanding gig schedule that ignores musical barriers as much as it ignores the hard toil of motorway miles. Over the last year, her live radio broadcasts have become so frequent that BBC Radio York described her as "something of a fixture on local radio", while BBC Radio

Lincolnshire recently dedicated one hour of prime airtime in their "drive time" programme to her.

She was born in Canterbury, brought up in Gillingham, moved to Gosport then Portsmouth and currently resides in South Yorkshire.

Here John Hepworth chats with Julie Ellison about where she has been hiding herself until now.

JH: Hello Julie - yours is a relatively new name on the folk/acoustic music scene, but it's clear from the standard of your performance that you're no beginner, so - where have you been hiding?

JE: Well, my solo career only got going seriously fairly recently. In fact I've only been earning my living from gigging as a solo artist from Christmas 2004.

Having said that I've had several periods in my life where I have lived by music, including playing bass in a country band and a few years working as a music teacher. But I've been in all kinds of line-ups as a semi-pro for most of my life, despite giving up music totally for seven years - in part because I had a publishing company. I guess you could say that I've been distracted by earning a living!

JH: You gave up music. Completely?

JE: Yes. Once for four years and once for three years, because I felt I was going nowhere with my music. The second time I found myself driving up the A1 after a day selling books and realised that the finger nails on my left hand were as long as the ones on my right. I drove home biting off the nails of my left hand and got the guitar out as soon as I was home. It felt very strange picking it up after so long not playing.

JH: How long had it been since you had played?

JE: About four years.

JH: And was it just a case of not looking back from that point?

JE: When you've had a long time away from an instrument you remember your playing as it was, but you've lost the ability to play like that. Very frustrating.

JH: A long hard slog, to get back to the same level of ability.

JE: Hard slog, yes, but although it felt like forever, it probably didn't take that long. Everything was dusty and rusty but still there.

JH: Still there, from a background that's included a wide range of musical activity. You mentioned playing bass in a country band. Would that have been your main professional experience as a gigging musician?

JE: Yes. We toured around the UK, working the country music club circuit. Hard work, but fun. I am so pleased to go back to that sort of life, now my solo work has just started reaching the stage where I can hit the road in the van and string a few gigs together.

As I said, I've played in lots of different line-ups as a semi-pro. Probably the oddest line-up combined me on acoustic rhythm guitar with a mandolin player and a rock electric guitar player, playing jazz standards. I've always loved acoustic music in general but with a deep rooted passion for acoustic guitars.

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Lymm, Cheshire



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- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| 01 DEC | CLIVE GREGSON (£7)                        |
| 08 DEC | ALLAN TAYLOR (£7)                         |
| 15 DEC | SINGERS NIGHT (£1)                        |
| 22 DEC | XMAS WITH GARVA (£6.50)                   |
| 29 DEC | SINGERS XMAS PARTY                        |
| 05 JAN | SINGERS AUDIENCE WITH JOAN GALLIMORE (£1) |
| 12 JAN | THRELFALL & EDWARDS (£6)                  |
| 19 JAN | STEWART'S BIRTHDAY SINGER'S NIGHT (£1)    |
| 26 JAN | FLOSSIE MALAVIALLE (£5)                   |
| 02 FEB | SINGER'S NIGHT (£1)                       |
| 09 FEB | ARTHUR MARSHALL (£4)                      |
| 16 FEB | MICK HARE'S BIG SPOT (£1)                 |
| 23 FEB | ANTHONY JOHN CLARKE (£5)                  |
| 02 MAR | SINGERS NIGHT (£1)                        |
| 09 MAR | STEVE TILSTON (£6)                        |

ADVANCE DATES: SINGERS NIGHT 16 MAR, HARVEY ANDREWS 23 MAR, CHARLIE READE'S BIG SPOT, DAVE PUGH 06 APR, SINGERS NIGHT 13 APR, PHIL HARE 20 APR.

Contact/Tickets: Stewart Lever 07919 270916  
e-mail [stewart\\_lever@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stewart_lever@yahoo.co.uk)

## CLUB RESIDENTS (as on 20th October, 2005)

**BACUP** – Brian Eastwood, Boo Long, Joe Caswell, Mark Almond, Barry Mairs, Steve Brooks, John Dean, Will Scribble, Tom Winstanley, Keith Winfield, Bernadette O'Connor, Lynn and Barry, Martin Willingham, Pete Benbow

**BIDDULPH** - Liz Holland, Jeff Parton, His Worship and the Pig

**BOTHY** - Clive Pownceby, Steve Freedman, Pete Rimmer, Bill Hackney, Alison Younger, Ray Rooney, Nev Grundy, Bev Sanders, Kevin Littlewood

**BURNLEY** - Korrigan, Wench All, Barbara, Mike and Steve

**CLARENCE** - Liz Moore & Sue Bousfield, Andrew Green, Rebecca Green, Ross Campbell

**CROWN** – Kieron Hartley, Jeff Monks, John Keithley, Dave Wild

**EVERYMAN** - Chris & Hughie Jones, Shirley Peden

**FALCON** - John Bond, Clansfolk

**FLEETWOOD** - Spitting on a Roast

**FOLK AT THE MANOR** - Gill & George Peckham, Roger Parker, Marje Ferrier, Phil McGinity

**FOLK AT THE PROSPECT** - Chris Hanslip, Carol & John Coxon, Dave & Cheryl

**FOLK IN THE BARN** - The Occasional Three

**FOUR FOOLS** – Pat Ryan & Ken Howard, Mal Gibbons, Geoff & Lindsey Smith, Gill Coyne, Tom & Ann, Angie Bladen

**GREGSON LANE** - Trouble at' Mill, Celtic Fringe, Smithereen, Caroline Lovett

**HALE & HEARTY** - Frank & Sheila Lewis, Steve Black, Bob Hellon, Dave Summers, Ken Lawson, Roy Wilcock & Bridget Guest, John Hodgson, Roy Adams

**HOWCROFT INN** - Micron (Mick Unsworth & Ron Callow)

**LONGRIDGE** - Ron Flanagan, Brian Preston

**MAGHULL** - Tony Gibbons, Loctuptogether, Back in Business, Joe Ryan, Clover, Jane Day, Bob Tyrer, Paul Robinson, Kate Bradbury, Jill Fielding, F.B.I. Blues

**NORTHWICH** - Jamie Anderson, Brenda Yates, John & Ailsa Booth, Iain Bowley & Tom Francis  
Bill Pook

**PARKGATE** - Eddie Morris, Brass Tacks

**PORKIES** - Sad Pig (Dave Hughes & Judy Hancock)

**PRESTON** - Rob Malaney, Hugh O'Donnell, Tom Walsh, Dave Peters, Len Deevey, Nick Caffrey

**RAILWAY** (Lymm) - Stewart Lever, Nick & Lin Tysoe, Bernard Cromarty, Nelson Peach  
Don & Heather Davies

**RED BULL** - Peter Hood & Linda Edwardes, Peter Fox & Anne Yates, Ged Derby  
Pete Farrow, Pete Roberts, Helen Kennedy, John Ashurst (poet)

**RHYL** – Rum Bum & Concertina

**ST ANNE'S ACOUSTIC ROOTS** – Sue Arrow

**URMSTON ACOUSTICS** - Keith Northover, Them Lot, Martin & Mandy Kavanagh

**WALSHAW** - Capstycam

**WALTON** – Ray Ellis, Arthur Best, Joe Wilcoxson, Lil French, Tommy Everett, Andrew & Steve Hesford,  
Sacked Paddy

**WESTHOUGHTON** - Auld Triangle

**WOODEN HORSE** - Quartz, Loctuptogether, Back in Business, Rob Peacock, Mark Dowding

**WREXHAM** – Offa

(Please send alterations or additions to John Owen by email on [johnowenbtacks@aol.com](mailto:johnowenbtacks@aol.com))

SUNDAY		NORTH WEST FEDERATION OF FOLK CLUBS			
Accrington Town Hall	7:30 PM	Blackburn Road, Accrington		Box Office	01254-380293
Bothy	8:00 PM	Shelbourne Hotel, 1 Lord Street West, Southport		Clive Pownceby	0151-924-5078
Folk at the Manor	8:30 PM	The Old Manor Club, Withens Lane, Wallasey		Roger Parker	0151-678-1962
Kings Lock (new member)	8:00 PM	The Kings Lock, Webbs Lane, Middlewich		Liz Rosenfield	01606-834969
Mr Kite Benefits	8:00 PM	Worden Arts Centre, Worden Park, Leyland (and other venues)		Steve Henderson	01772-621411
Open Door	8:45 PM	The Royal Oak, 172 Manchester Road, Werneth, OL9 6BN		Pauline Westall	0161-681-3618
Walshaw	9:00 PM	Walshaw Sports Club, Sycamore Road, Tottington, Bury		Frank Brough	01204-413909
Walton (and Fridays)	8:30 PM	County Ward Labour Club, 39 Hale Road, Walton, Liverpool		Lilian French	0151-474-0979
Wooden Horse	8:30 PM	The Junction, News Lane, Rainford		Jim Coan	01772-452782
MONDAY					
Bacup	8:30 PM	Bacup Conservative Club, Irwell Terrace, Bacup, OL13 9AW		Paul Edwards	01706-872810
Conwy	8:30 PM	The Malt Loaf, Rosehill Street, Conwy		Denis Bennett	01492-877324
Folk at the Prospect	8:30 PM	The Prospect Inn, Weston Road, Weston Village, Runcorn		Roger Hanslip	01928-731567
Four Fools	8:15 PM	Spinners Arms, A6 road, Adlington, Lancashire		Ken & Angie Bladen	01257-263678
Red Bull	8:30 PM	The Red Bull, Hillgate, Stockport		Peter Hood	0161-432-4142
Room at the Top	8:45 PM	The Red Lion, Ashbrow, Newburgh, nr Parbold		Trevor Banfield	0151-430-0166
Swinton	8:30 PM	The White Lion, 242 Manchester Road, Swinton		Ged Todd	01942-811527
TUESDAY					
Brindley Arts Centre	8:00 PM	High Street, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 1BG		Box Office	0151-907-8360
Crown	8:30 PM	The Crown, Heaton Lane, Stockport		Kieron Hartley	0161-291-8243
Everyman	8:30 PM	The Everyman Bistro, Hope Street, Liverpool		Christine Jones	0151-709-3336
Folk at the Forum	7:30 PM	Forum 28, Duke Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA14 1HH		Box Office	01229-820000
Howcroft Inn	8:30 PM	The Howcroft Inn, 36 Pool Street, Vernon St, Bolton, BL12JU		Ron Callow	01606-863283
Longridge	8:30 PM	British Legion, Townley Road, Longridge, Nr. Preston PR3 3EA		Ron Flanagan	01772-785179
Maghull	8:30 PM	Maghull Community Ass'n, Green Lane, L'pool Rd North, Maghull		Tony Gibbons	01744-607566
St Anne's Acoustic Roots	8:30 PM	St Anne's Conservative Club, Clifton Drive North, St Annes		John Gibney	01253-721503
Urmston Acoustics	8:30 PM	The Fox & Hounds, Woodsend Road, Flixton		Martin Kavanagh	0161-748-5497
Wigan (Fox & Goose)	9:00 PM	Fox & Goose, Wigan Lane, Wigan		Joan Blackburn	01942-321223
WEDNESDAY					
Alison Arms	9:00 PM	The Alison Arms, Preston Road, Coppull Moor, Chorley		Derek Docherty	01257-791262
Burnley	8:30 PM	Burnley Miners Social Club, 27a Plumbe Street, Burnley		Phyl Watson	01282-774077
Clarence	8:30 PM	The Clarence, Preston New Road, Blackpool		Ann Green	01772-683027
Cross Keys	9:00 PM	Running Hill Gate, Uppermill, Near Oldham		Jim Schofield	01457-833897
Falcon	9:00 PM	The Falcon Hotel, Hardhorn Way, Poulton-le-Fylde		Pete Skinner	01253-301483
Red Bull	8:30 PM	The Red Bull, Hillgate, Stockport		Peter Hood	0161-432-4142
Walton	8:30 PM	County Ward Labour Club, 39 Hale Road, Walton, Liverpool		Lilian French	0151-474-0979
THURSDAY					
Biddulph	8:30 PM	Biddulph Arms, Congleton Road, Biddulph		Eric Cox	01782-514896
Earby	7:30 PM	Station Hotel, Colne Road, Earby, BB18		Sharon Hobson	01282-841727
Fleetwood	8:30 PM	Steamer Hotel, Queens Terrace, Fleetwood, FY7 6BT		Mike France	01253-776607
Gregson Lane	8:30 PM	Gregson Lane Sports & Social Club, Gregson Lane, Hoghton		Graham Dixon	01254-853929
Parkgate	8:15 PM	Boathouse Pub/Restaurant, 1 The Parade, Parkgate, Wirral		Eddie Morris	0151-677-1840
Railway	8:30 PM	Railway Hotel, Mill Lane, Heatley, Lymm, Cheshire, WA13 9SQ		Stewart Lever	07919-270-916
South Lakes Music Promotion	8:30 PM	Ulverston Sports & Social Club, Priory Road, Ulverston, Cumbria		Nick McDermott	07743-555227
Wigan (7 Stars)	9:00 PM	Seven Stars Hotel, Seven Stars Bridge, Walgate, Wigan		Joan Blackburn	01942-321223
Wrexham	8:30 PM	Nags Head Inn, Mount Street, Wrexham		Ian Chesterman	01978-357307
FRIDAY					
Bollington	8:30 PM	Dog & Partridge, Palmerston Street, Bollington		Arthur Wakefield	01625-573596
Carlisle Folk & Blues	8:00 PM	The Sunset Suite, Carlisle Football Ground, Warwick Road		Myrna Rae	01697-72305
Folk in the Barn	8:15 PM	Rosehill Barn, Rosehill Theatre, Whitehaven, Cumbria		Terry Haworth	01900-604765
Hale & Hearty	8:30 PM	The Kings Arms, Hale, Milnethorpe, Cumbria		Frank Lewis	01524-734440
Leigh	8:00 PM	Conservative Club, Railway Road, Leigh		Pauline Dowsett	01942-604603
Northwich	8:15 PM	Harlequin Theatre, Queen St, Northwich		John Booth	01606-79356
Pacific Arts & Exhibition Centre	8:00 PM	Pacific Arts & Exhibition Centre, Pacific Road, Birkenhead, Wirral		Box Office	0151-647-0752
Playhouse 2	8:30 PM	Newtown Street, Shaw, Oldham OL2 8NX		Barrie Cottam	01706-663117
Porkies	8:30 PM	Royal British Legion, Georges Road West, Poynton, Cheshire		Dave Hughes	01625-430149
Preston	8:30 PM	Moorbrook Inn, North Road, Preston		Rob Malaney	01257-231463
Rhyl	9:00 PM	Costigan's Pub, Bodfor Street, Rhyl		Jeff Blythin	01745-588072
Southport Arts Centre	8:00 PM	Lord Street, Southport, PR8 1DB		John Sprackland	01704-540011
Westhoughton	8:15 PM	Westhoughton Golf Club, Long Island, Westhoughton		Pat Batty	01257-230508
SATURDAY					
Barnoldswick	8:00 PM	Fosters Arms, Gisburn Road, Barnoldswick, BB18		Sharon Hobson	01282-841727
Buffet Bar	9:00 PM	Platform 1, Stalybridge Rail Station, Stalybridge		Jim Schofield	01457-833897
Brewery Arts Centre	8:00 PM	122A Highgate, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 4HE		Box Office	01539-725133
Burnley Mechanics	8:00 PM	Manchester Road, Burnley, Lancashire, BB11 1JA		Box Office	01282-664400
Citadel Arts Centre	8:00 PM	Waterloo Street, St Helens, WA10 1PX		Aby Jeffers	01744-762305
Lighthouse	7:00 PM	Lighthouse Restaurant, Lakeland Glass Centre, Ulverston, Cumbria		Jenny Thistlethwaite	01229-581121
Philharmonic Hall	7:30 PM	Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, Hope Street, Liverpool		Box Office	0151-210-2895
Platform	8:00 PM	Station Buildings, Central Promenade, Morecambe		Glynis Johnson	01524-586823
Rattan & Rush Acoustic	7:45 PM	Rattan & Rush Tearoom, Market Street, Kirby Stephen, Cumbria		Penny & Paul	01768-372123
Standish	8:15 PM	St Ann's Parish Hall, Church Lane, Shevington, Standish, Wigan		David Jones	01254-54877



	NOVEMBER into DECEMBER			
	22TH NOVEMBER	4TH DECEMBER	11TH DECEMBER	25TH DECEMBER
Bothy	Singers Night	BRIAN PETERS	WENCH ALL	Christmas Office Party
Burnley Mechanics	Singers Night	KELLY JOE PHELPS	Singers Night	ANTHONY JOHN CLARKE
Folk at the Manor	Singers Night	ST AGNES FOUNTAIN	Singers & musicians	Christmas Party
* Folk in the Barn	Singers Night	singers & musicians	Singaround	Christmas Party
Kings Lock (new member)	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Christmas Party
Open Door	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Christmas Party
Playhouse 2	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Christmas Party
Walshaw	THE SKERRIES	Singers Night	Christmas Singaround	Singers Night
Walton	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Wooden Horse	Singers Night	Singers Night	DAVE WEBBER/ANNIE FENTIMAN	Christmas Party
MONDAY	28TH NOVEMBER	5TH DECEMBER	12TH DECEMBER	19TH DECEMBER
Bacup	REDMAYNE	Singaround	PEDIGREE CHUMS	Christmas Party
* & ** Biddulph (Town Hall)	Singers Night	ST AGNES FOUNTAIN	Singers Night	Singers Night
Conwy	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Folk at the Prospect	Singers Night	Singers Night	FIDDLESTONE	Singers Night
Four Fools	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians
Red Bull	Singers Night	Singers Night	PETE COE	Christmas Party Singers Night
Room at the Top	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Swinton	Singers Night	EDDIE MCGURK	Singer Night	Christmas Party Singers Night
TUESDAY	29TH NOVEMBER	6TH DECEMBER	13TH DECEMBER	20TH DECEMBER
Brindley Arts Centre	WATERSON/CARTHY/SEEGER	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround
Crown	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singaround	Singaround - tbc
Everyman	Singers Night	Singers Night	Xmas Party & JOHN KANEEN	closed
Folk at the Forum	CHRISTMAS CEILIDH	CHRISTMAS CEILIDH	Xmas 'Do' with STAFF FOLK	Christmas Party Singers Night
Howcroft Inn	Singers Night	GARVA	Singers Night	Christmas Party Singers Night
Longridge	Singers Night	Singers Night	RUM, BUM & CONCERTINA	Christmas Party Singers Night
Maghull	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
St Annes Acoustic Roots	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night - tbc
Urmston Acoustics	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night - tbc
Wigan (Fox & Goose)	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night - tbc
WEDNESDAY	30TH NOVEMBER	7TH DECEMBER	14TH DECEMBER	21ST DECEMBER
Alison Arms	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night - tbc
Brindley Arts Centre	IRA and RILEY (USA)	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians - tbc
Burnley	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians	closed
Clarence	HAINES and LEIGHTON	PINT and DALE	MRS ACKROYD BAND	JIM SCARLETT BAND
Cross Keys	MIKE SILVER	TARPEY and WOOLLEY	Singers Night	STANLEY ACCRINGTON
Falcon	Singers Night	Open Mic - PA provided	Singers Night	Singers Night
** Folk in the Barn (Theatre)	St Andrews Concert - CANTERACH	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night - tbc

	30TH NOVEMBER	7TH DECEMBER	14TH DECEMBER	21ST DECEMBER	28TH DECEMBER
Red Bull	Singers Night	Singers Night	Music Session - English	Singers Night	Singers Night - tbc
Walton	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night - tbc
THURSDAY	1ST DECEMBER	8TH DECEMBER	15TH DECEMBER	22ND DECEMBER	29TH DECEMBER
Biddulph	JEZ LOWE and the BAD PENNIES	Singaround	QUEENSBERRY RULES	Singaround	Singaround
Earby	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround
Fleetwood	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Gregson Lane	Singers Night	ALAN BELL BAND	Singers Night Christmas Special	Singers Night Christmas Party	Singers Night
Parkgate	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Railway	CLIVE GREGSON	ALLAN TAYLOR	MRS ACKROYD BAND	CHRISTMAS with GARVA	Singers Christmas Party
South Lakes Music Prom.	LES BARKER	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround
Wigan (Seven Stars)	Singaround	Singaround	YARDARM/OFFA	Singaround	Singaround
Wrexham	MUDDYHEAD	Singaround	Christmas Charity Night	Singaround	Singaround
FRIDAY	2ND DECEMBER	9TH DECEMBER	16TH DECEMBER	23RD DECEMBER	30TH DECEMBER
Bollington	IAN BRUCE	Singers Night	BANDERSNATCH	Singers Night	Singers Night
Carlisle Folk & Blues	Christmas Party with HIGH SOCIETY	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Hale & Hearty	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround
Leigh	Closed until February	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Northwich	Reg Holmes Birthday Party	TOM MCCONVILLE	** Themed Singers Night (Imports & Exports)	Christmas Party - (Fancy Dress)	Singers Night
Philharmonic Hall	Singers & Musicians	DICK GAUGHAN	Christmas Party with SAD PIG	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians
Playhouse 2	JOHN WRIGHT BAND	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians
Porkies	MIKE SILVER	Singers Night	No further programme available->	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians
Preston	Singers & Musicians	IAN BRUCE	WATERSON/CARTHY	Singers Night	Singers Night
Rhyl	Singers Night	TOMMY EMMANUEL	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Southport Arts Centre	Singers Night	Singers Night	closed until 6/01/06	Singers Night	Singers Night
Walton	Singers Night	ST AGNES FOUNTAIN (nb. Sold out)	closed until 6/01/06	Singers Night	Singers Night
Westthoughton	Singers Night	ST AGNES FOUNTAIN (nb. Sold out)	closed until 6/01/06	Singers Night	Singers Night
SATURDAY	3RD DECEMBER	10TH DECEMBER	17TH DECEMBER	24TH DECEMBER	31ST DECEMBER
Barnoldswick	Singaround	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Brewery Arts Centre	THE DYLAN PROJECT	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Buffet Bar	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night

SATURDAY cont'd	3RD DECEMBER	10TH DECEMBER	17TH DECEMBER	24TH DECEMBER	31ST DECEMBER
Burnley Mechanics		TOMMY EMMANUEL			
Mr Kite Benefits -- (at the Worden Arts Centre)	ST AGNES FOUNTAIN				
Platform	PEGGY SEEGER with WATERSON & CARTHY				
Rattan and Rush	Christmas Party with HIGH SOCIETY				
Standish					

	JANUARY into FEBRUARY				
SUNDAY	1ST JANUARY	8TH JANUARY	15TH JANUARY	22ND JANUARY	29TH JANUARY
Bothy	closed	GRACE NOTES Singers Night	Singers Night	ED RENNIE Singers Night	Singers Night
Folk at the Manor	closed		RECKLESS ELBOW		ROGER PARKER
Kings Lock - Middlewich	tbc				
Open Door	closed			JOAN BLACKBURN	Singaround
Walshaw				BANDERSNATCH	
Walton	tbc				Singers Night
Wooden Horse	closed		DEREK GIFFORD		Singers Night
MONDAY	2ND JANUARY	9TH JANUARY	16TH JANUARY	23RD JANUARY	30TH JANUARY
Bacup	Singaround	HANKY PARK	Singaround	ED RENNIE	Singaround
Conwy	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Folk at the Prospect	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	GEOFF HIGGINBOTTOM	Singers Night
Four Fools	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians
Red Bull	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	TREBUCKET
Room at the Top	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Swinton	Singers Night	Singers Night	FEET IN MOUTHS	Singers Night	Singers Night
TUESDAY	3RD JANUARY	10TH JANUARY	17TH JANUARY	24TH JANUARY	31ST JANUARY
Crown	Singaround				Singaround
Everyman	Re-opens - Singers Night				Singers Night
Folk at the Forum	No further programme available-->				
Howcroft Inn					
Longridge	Singers Night		HARD TIMES	PELICAN BABIES	
Maghull	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	ALLAN TAYLOR	Singers Night
St Annes Acoustic Roots	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Urmston Acoustics	Singers Night				
Wigan (Fox & Goose)	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night		Singers Night
WEDNESDAY	4TH JANUARY	11TH JANUARY	18TH JANUARY	25TH JANUARY	1ST FEBRUARY
Allison Arms	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Burnley	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians

WEDNESDAY cont'd	4TH JANUARY	11TH JANUARY	18TH JANUARY	25TH JANUARY	1ST FEBRUARY
Clarence	JON BRINDLEY	KEN NICOL	HELEN WATSON	WENCH ALL	ALLAN TAYLOR
Cross Keys	Singers Night	ROUGH TOWN ACOUSTIC	CHRIS TURNER & PAUL ROBERTS	JOE ZEPH ROBERTS	Singers Night
Falcon	Open Mic - PA provided	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Open Mic - PA provided
Pacific Arts Centre		MARTYN JOSEPH			THE WATERBOYS
Philharmonic Hall		Music Session - English			
Red Bull		Singers Night			Singers Night
Walton		Singers Night			Singers Night
THURSDAY	5TH JANUARY	12TH JANUARY	19TH JANUARY	26TH JANUARY	2ND FEBRUARY
Biddulph	HIS WORSHIP & the PIG		VIN GARBUIT		HARVEY ANDREWS
Earby	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround
Fleetwood	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Gregson Lane	Singers Night				BAND FROM THE WOOD
Parrogate					
Railway	Singers Night Audience with JOAN GALLIMORE	THRELFALL & EDWARDS	Stewart's Birthday Singers Night	ANTHONY JOHN CLARKE	Singers Night
South Lakes Music Prom.				FLOSSIE MALAVALLE	
Wigan (Seven Stars)		Singaround			BERNARD WRIGLEY
Wrexham	tba				Singaround
FRIDAY	6TH JANUARY	13TH JANUARY	20TH JANUARY	27TH JANUARY	3RD FEBRUARY
Bollington	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Carlisle Folk & Blues	Singers Night		BOO HEWERDINE		KAREN TWEED & ROGER WILSON
Folk in the Barn		JEZ LOWE		ROSIE DOONAN & BEN MURRAY	
Hale & Hearty					
Leigh	Closed until February				
Northwich	Singers Night	TOM DOUGHTY	Singers Night	Themed Singers Night (Demon Drink?)	KEN NICOL
Porkies		BERNARD WRIGLEY			HARVEY ANDREWS & GRAHAM COOPER
Preston	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians
Rhyl	No further programme available-->				
Southport Arts Centre			CHRIS WOOD		
Walton	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night		Singers Night
Westhoughton	JEZ LOWE	TOM TOPPING BAND	CATHIE RYAN BAND	SEAN KEANE	ROY BAILEY
SATURDAY	7TH JANUARY	14TH JANUARY	21ST JANUARY	28TH JANUARY	4TH FEBRUARY
Barnoldswick	Singaround				Singaround



SATURDAY	7TH JANUARY	14TH JANUARY	21ST JANUARY	28TH JANUARY	4TH FEBRUARY
Buffet Bar	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Mr Kite Benefits (@ The Met, Bury)				THE WAILIN JENNYS	
Rattan and Rush				KEN NICOL	
<b>FEBRUARY into MARCH</b>					
SUNDAY	5TH FEBRUARY	12TH FEBRUARY	19TH FEBRUARY	26TH FEBRUARY	5TH MARCH
Bothy	MARTYN WYNDHAM-READ Singers Night	Singers Night	BLUE C	Singers Night	LYNNE HERAULD & PAT TURNER Singers Night
Folk at the Manor	Singers & Musicians	Singers Night	JOHN O'CONNELL	Singers Night	Singers & Musicians
Kings Lock - Middlewich	Singaround	Singaround	DEREK GIFFORD	Singaround	Singaround
Open Door	Walshaw	Singaround		closed	
Walton	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Wooden Horse	Singers Night	Singers Night	TH ANTIQUES ROADSHOW	Singers Night	Singers Night
MONDAY	6TH FEBRUARY	13TH FEBRUARY	20TH FEBRUARY	27TH FEBRUARY	6TH MARCH
Baeup	PELICAN BABIES	Singaround	LYTE FLYTE	Singaround	JIM GANSLER & TOM O'GORMAN
Conwy	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Folk at the Prospect	Singers Night	Singers Night	NONE OF THE ABOVE	Singers Night	Singers Night
Four Fools	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians
Red Bull	No further programme available>>	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Room at the Top	Singers Night	Singers Night	tba	Singers Night	CLIVE LEXLAND
Swinton	DAI THOMAS	Singers Night	21ST FEBRUARY	Singers Night	7TH MARCH
TUESDAY	7TH FEBRUARY	14TH FEBRUARY	21ST FEBRUARY	28TH FEBRUARY	7TH MARCH
Burnley Mechanics	Singaround	FAIRPORT CONVENTION			
Crown	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Everyman	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Howeroft	tba	tba			
Longridge	Singers Night	Singers Night	JON HARVISON	Singers Night	Singers Night
Maghull	Singers Night	Singers Night	ALAN BURKE	Singers Night	Singers Night
St Annes Acoustic Roots	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Urmston Acoustics	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Wigan (Fox & Goose)	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
WEDNESDAY	8TH FEBRUARY	15TH FEBRUARY	22ND FEBRUARY	1ST MARCH	8TH MARCH
Allison Arms	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Burnley	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians
Clarence	DAVE WALMSLEY	KIRSTY MCGEE & MAT MARTIN	MARTYN WYNDHAM-READ	TOM MCCONVILLE & PAULINE CATO	JOHN WRIGHT BAND
Cross Keys	GEOFF HIGGINBOTTOM	ALAN SELLARS	FIVE LIVE	ANN ENGLISH	BRIAN PETERS
Faloon	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Open Mic - PA provided	Singers Night
Red Bull	Music Session - English				Music Session - English
Southport Arts Centre		FAIRPORT CONVENTION			
Walton	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night

THURSDAY	9TH FEBRUARY	16TH FEBRUARY	23RD FEBRUARY	2ND MARCH	9TH MARCH
Biddulph		CHRIS & KELLIE WHILE		PETE COE	
Earby	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround
Fleetwood	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Gregson Lane				ANTHONY JOHN CLARKE	
Parkgate			BACK OF THE MOON		
Railway	ARTHUR MARSHALL	Big Spot - MICK HARE	ANTHONY JOHN CLARKE	Singers Night	STEVE TILSTON
South Lakes Music Prom.				THE MIDDEN	
Wigan (Seven Stars)	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround
Wrexham	tba	tba	tba	tba	
FRIDAY	10TH FEBRUARY	17TH FEBRUARY	24TH FEBRUARY	3RD MARCH	10TH MARCH
Bollington	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Carlisle Folk & Blues		KIERAN HALPIN		MALINKY	
Folk in the Barn	ANNA MASSIE BAND		MARIE LITTLE		tba
* Gregson Lane	DARREN POYSER & Friends			Singaround	
Hale & Hearty			VIN GARBUTT		SCOLDS BRIDLE
Leigh	RACHEL UNTHANK and the WINTERSET	** Singers Night	Singers Night	MARTIN SIMPSON	Singers Night
Northwich		Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians	TOM TOPPING BAND	Singers and Musicians
Porkies					
Preston	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians	Singers and Musicians
Rhyl	No further programme available>>				
Southport Arts Centre	THE WAILIN JENNYS				
Walton	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Westhoughton	REAL TIME	CHRIS and KELLIE WHILE	ASHLEY HUTCHINGS & the RAINBOW CHASERS	MICK HANLY	THE ANIMALS & Friends
SATURDAY	11TH FEBRUARY	18TH FEBRUARY	25TH FEBRUARY	4TH MARCH	11TH MARCH
Barnoldswick					
Buffet Bar	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
* & ** Carlisle Folk & Blues at William Howard School Playhouse 2	THE WAILIN JENNYS				
Rattan and Rush	ABBIE LATHE	ASHLEY HUTCHINGS & the RAINBOW CHASERS	ANTHONY JOHN CLARKE		SAFRA Fundraiser see John's Chat
Standish					THE AMAZING MR SMITH
Acorington Town Hall, The Citadel, The Lighthouse	- No programme available				
NB: * = Not usual night ** = Not usual venue					
NB: THIS CALENDAR IN THE NEXT EDITION WILL COVER THE DATES - SUNDAY 26TH FEBRUARY to SATURDAY 10TH JUNE, 2006.					
TO BE INCLUDED IN THE CALENDAR INFORMATION MUST BE RECEIVED BY JOHN OWEN BY NO LATER THAN SUNDAY 15TH JANUARY, 2006.					

## ADVANCE DATES FROM MARCH 2006

### BACUP

March 6 Jim Gansler & Tom O'Gorman

### BIDDULPH

March 2 Pete Coe  
 March 16 Bob Fox  
 Mar 23 Andy M. Stewart  
 April 27 Last Night's Fun

### BOTHY

March 5 Lynne Herauld & Pat Turner  
 March 12 Singers Night  
 March 19 Mike Silver  
 March 26 Singers Night  
 April 2 Judy Cook (USA)  
 April 9 Singers Night  
 April 16 Easter Eggstravaganza  
 April 23 John Pearson  
 April 30 Singers Night  
 May 7 Singers Night  
 May 14 Hughie Jones  
 May 21 Sara Grey & Kieron Means  
 May 28 Singers Night  
 June 4 Bandersnatch  
 June 11 Singers Night  
 June 18 Smith & Hewson  
 June 25 Singers Night  
 July 2 Ken Nicol  
 July 9 Singers Night  
 July 16 tba  
 Sept 10 Hoover the Dog  
 Sept 17 Singers Night  
 Sept 24 Jazz Hall  
 Oct 1 Singers Night  
 Oct 8 Steve Gillette & Cindy Mangsen (USA)  
 Oct 15 Singers Night  
 Oct 22 Tom Lewis  
 Oct 29 Singers Night  
 Nov 5 Dana & Susan Robinson (USA)  
 Nov 12 Singers Night  
 Nov 19 Dave Arthur Band - Rattle on the Stovepipe  
 Nov 26 Singers Night  
 Dec 3 tba  
 Dec 10 Three Sheets to the Wind  
 Dec 17 Hot Pot Supper  
 Dec 24 closed

### CARLISLE FOLK AND BLUES

March 17 Bob Fox  
 March 31 Emily Smith (tbc)  
 April 21 tba  
 May 5 tba  
 May 19 Vin Garbutt  
 June 2 Arrogant Worms  
 June 16 Joe Wright & Joe Topping (tbc)  
 June 30 tba  
 July 14 tba  
 Sept 1 tba  
 Sept 15 Helen Watson & David Hughes  
 Sept 29 tba  
 Oct 13 Michael Marra  
 Oct 27 tba  
 Nov 10 Dana and Susan Robinson  
 Nov 24 Dick Gaughan

### CLARENCE

March 1 Tom McConville & Pauline Cato  
 March 8 John Wright Band  
 March 15 Robin Laing  
 March 22 Janet Russell  
 March 29 Singers Night  
 April 5 Judy Cook  
 April 12 Brian Bedford Band  
 April 19 Briege Murphy  
 April 26 Singers Night  
 May 3 tba  
 May 10 Andy Irvine  
 May 17 Anthony John Clarke  
 May 24 Sarah Grey & Kieron Means  
 June 7 Les Barker  
 June 14 tba  
 June 21 tba  
 June 28 John Connolly

### CROSS KEYS

March 1 Ann English  
 March 8 Brian Peters  
 March 15 Dave Gibb  
 March 22 Lynn and Barry Hardman  
 March 29 Fred Loader  
 April 5 Tom Brown & Ian Goodier  
 April 12 Bernie Parry  
 April 19 Phil Hare  
 April 26 Tom and Barbara Brown  
 May 3 John Connolly

### FOLK AT THE MANOR

March 19 Pete Coe  
 April 16 Colin Henderson  
 April 30 Phil McGinity  
 May 21 Fiona Simpson  
 (Other dates - Singers nights)

### FOLK AT THE PROSPECT

April 27 Fiona Simpson  
 May 8 John McCormick  
 (Other dates - Singers nights)

### FOLK IN THE BARN

March 10 Singers & Musicians  
 March 17 St Patrick's Concertwith Craobh Rua (Theatre)  
 March 24 Brian Bedford Band  
 April 7 Bram Taylor  
 April 28 tba  
 May 12 James Keelaghan Trio  
 May 20 Tannahill Weavers (Theatre)  
 May 26 tba  
 June 9 Cloudstreet  
 June 23 Stef White and Kersten de Ligny  
 July 7 tba  
 July 28 Chris While & Julie Matthews  
 August 11 tba  
 August 25 tba  
 Sept 8 tba  
 Sept 22 Allan Taylor  
 Oct 6 Colum Sands

### GREGSON LANE

March 2 Anthony John Clarke  
 March 16 Keith Mitchell  
 March 30 Singers Night  
 April 13 Captain Cooper's Motley Crew  
 April 27 Singers Night  
 May 11 Jill Fielding Band  
 May 25 Singers Night  
 June 8 Pete Abbott  
 June 22 Singers Night  
 July 6 Andrew Green

July 20 Singers Night  
 August 3 Singers Night  
 August 17 Singers Night  
 August 31 Singers Night  
 Sept 14 Tom Bliss  
 Sept 28 Singers Night  
 Oct 12 Penny Black  
 Oct 26 Singers Night  
 Nov 9 Angie Palmer  
 Nov 23 Singers Night (Lancs)  
 Dec 7 Jon Harvison

### HOWCROFT

March 14 Dai Thomas  
 May 9 Geoff Higginbottom

### LEIGH

March 25 "Joe's Night" Fund-raising Night with  
 Bram Taylor, Anthony John Clarke, Pennygate  
 and Calico  
 April 28 Captain Cooper's Motley Crew  
 May 19 Harvey Andrews  
 June 16 Vangel  
 July 29 Eric Bogle

### LONGRIDGE

March 7 Singers Night  
 March 21 Pete Coe  
 April 4 Singers Night  
 April 18 Trio Threlfall  
 May 2 Singers Night  
 May 16 His Worship and the Pig

### MAGHULL

May 9 Johnny Silvo  
 June 13 Brass Tacks  
 (Other dates - Singers nights)

### MR KITE BENEFITS

March 18 Coope, Boyes and Simpson @ Worden  
 Arts Centre, Leyland

### NORTHWICH

March 3 Martin Simpson  
 March 17 Uiscedwr  
 April 21 4-2-2  
 (Other dates - Singers nights)

### PARKGATE

\*\* extra nights  
 March 16 Mike Silver \*\*  
 Ticket only nights:-  
 March 30 Harvey Andrews  
 May 11 James Keelaghan \*\*  
 June 8 Eric Bogle/John Munro \*\*  
 Sept 28 Tanglefoot  
 Nov 9 The McCalmans \*\*

### PHILHARMONIC HALL

March 16 Davey Arthur and the Fureys  
 May 26 Ladysmith Black Mambazo

### PLATFORM

March 24 Cara Dillon  
 March 31 Houghton Weavers  
 April 15 Bellowhead  
 April 26 Tom and Barbara Brown (free lunchtime  
 concert)

### PLAYHOUSE 2

March 11 Homegrown (Fund-raiser for Saddleworth FF)  
 featuring Risky Business  
 March 18 Swing Commanders  
 March 25 Born to Run  
 April 8 Dana Gillespie with Dino Baptiste

### PORKIES

March 3 Tom Topping Band  
 April 7 Vin Garbutt  
 May 5 Catherine Craig & Brian Willoughby  
 June 2 Julie Felix  
 July 7 tba  
 August 4 tba  
 Sept 9 Tanglefoot  
 Oct 6 Kieran Halpin  
 Nov 3 Chris While & Julie Matthews

### RATTAN AND RUSH

March 11 The Amazing Mr Smith  
 March 25 Pete Abbott  
 April 8 Christine Collister  
 April 29 Harvey Andrews  
 May 13 Clive Gregson

### RAILWAY

March 2 Singers Night  
 March 9 Steve Tilston  
 March 16 Singers Night  
 March 23 Harvey Andrews  
 March 30 Charlie Reade's - Big Spot  
 April 6 Dave Pugh  
 April 13 Singers Night  
 April 20 Phil Hare  
 April 27 tba  
 May 4 Singers Night  
 May 11 Ann English's - Big Spot  
 May 18 Sara Grey and Kieron Means

### RED BULL

March 27 Sara Grey

### SOUTH LAKES MUSIC PROMOTION

March 2 The Midden  
 April 6 Lander Mason  
 May 4 Jez Lowe and the Bad Pennies

### SOUTHPORT ARTS CENTRE

March 24 Karine Polwart  
 April 14 Bellowhead  
 May 5 Ralph McTell  
 May 19 Altan (tbc)

### SWINTON

March 6 Clive Leyland  
 March 20 Derek Gifford  
 April 3 Dick Miles  
 April 17 Phil Hare  
 May 1 tba  
 May 15 Johnny Silvo  
 June 5 Anthony John Clarke  
 June 19 Pat Ryan & Ken Howard  
 July 3 tba  
 July 17 Geoff Higginbottom  
 (Other dates - Singers Nights)

### WESTHOUGHTON

March 3 Mick Hanly  
 March 10 Animals and Friends (ticket only)  
 March 17 Cathryn Craig and Brian Willoughby  
 March 24 John Tams and Barry Coope (ticket only)  
 March 31 Vin Garbutt (ticket only)  
 June 2 James Keelaghan @ Douglas Valley  
 Golf Club (ticket only)  
 June 9 Eric Bogle @ Douglas Valley Golf Club  
 (ticket only)

### WOODEN HORSE

March 12 His Worship and the Pig



JH: Was the emphasis on acoustic guitar at all connected with visits to folk clubs, I wonder. I understand they started quite early?

JE: Yes, my first visit to a folk club would have been in Rochester on my 14th birthday, which I seem to remember being very well attended. When I was around 15 years old I was a resident at my local folk club. I think it was called the Medway, just down the road from my school, Upbury Manor. I would have been Julie Smith then.

When I was about 16 I got a regular gig at a wine bar in Rainham, at least a couple of times a week and used the money to buy my first really good guitar, a wonderful Guild D25M, which I still have today and actually features quite a lot on my CD "At Last". I also met Andy Manson, at a folk club in Hayward's Heath and he said "One day I want to make you a guitar". He's actually made two for me, the latest one being my main gigging guitar now. He's a great guy and a wonderful luthier.

From Gosport - when I was Julie Richards - I used to travel a bit when I could afford the petrol, to clubs in Titchfield, Portsmouth, Chichester and Gosport "Folk Afloat". I remember a crowd from Titchfield FC taking me to what would have been my first folk festival: I think it was Bracknell Folk Festival, and that inspired me to go to lots of folk festivals thereafter, mostly in the West Country. Trowbridge sticks in my mind in particular.

Since then I've had a go at most things, the jazz band, a rock band, the country band, an indie trio with a drummer and another female singer/songwriter/guitarist/bass.

JH: All leading to an urge to re-start your solo career?

JE: I started seriously about three years ago, and the main breakthrough for me was nothing to do with the music itself, it was overcoming my fear of the telephone. Just being able to make those cold calls asking for bookings without spending two hours staring at the phone, panicking, first. I was shamed into that by a friend, Paul Pearson, who decided he would take matters into his own hands and get some gigs for me. He made it seem so easy: all he did was pick up the phone. Now I actually rather enjoy it! I wouldn't have believed that a couple of years ago.

JH: So you started back in folk clubs again, or pubs?

JE: Mainly pubs. I did get myself a booking at Holmfirth Folk Festival in the spring of 2002 and though it didn't seem like it at the time, this turned out to be my first "big break". There were two people in the audience, both called John, who have had a major impact on my career, and my life.

One was John Taylor, from North Wales. He was kind enough to persuade his local folk clubs, at Conwy and Rhyll, to book me, then deciding he would love to see me support Ralph McTell. He is a huge Ralph fan, and he pestered the life out of Ralph and his management until they agreed to have me play support at the Customs House International Guitar Festival. He then pestered the life out of the festival organisers until it was all confirmed. I have to say that I am fortunate to have several fans like that. The support and encouragement they give me is just astonishing.

The second "Holmfirth John" was John Robinson, who is now my sound engineer, recording engineer, tour manager, publicity agent and goodness knows what. He is now also my life partner, or as he likes to call himself "partner in life and record label"!

JH: The Ralph McTell support at the 2004 Customs House Guitar Festival must have been another pivotal moment?

JE: Absolutely. The number of folk club bookings started to increase as a direct result of that booking. Ralph is everything you've heard about him: A really, really nice man who seems to have a team of people around him who have similar attitudes to life. They were great to work with.

This year I was invited back to the festival to headline my own show. I was billed alongside the likes of Midge Ure, Martin Simpson, Martin Taylor and Dominic Miller, who is Sting's guitarist. Awe inspiring to say the least and I hope that'll help keep the momentum up!

JH: Yet, while I've noticed from your gig list that the number of folk club and what you like to call "In Concert" gigs is on the increase, you still continue to play a lot of pubs. What's the attraction of that?

JE: Why not? Some people look down on "singers who do pubs" as mere "pub singers". In fact, some pubs are really great. Some have such a vibrant music atmosphere with such committed audiences that they shouldn't be ignored. On the other hand, some are really difficult but when you are trying to build up a following in a particular town or area, it's a case of play anywhere you can.

JH: A case of play anywhere once?

JE: Definitely. You can't tell what a venue is going to be like until you actually do a gig there. Places can change completely in the space of half an hour, as the people come and go.

JH: I won't ask if it's ever gone wrong, but even now, are you often surprised at a venue?

JE: Frequently. You can walk into a place in the afternoon to set up and it just feels completely wrong, but by the time you start the gig it is completely transformed. The least likely-looking venue from the outside or from first impressions can turn out to be a fantastic environment for acoustic music.

JH: Doesn't your gig list also show a certain level of bravery? You've shared a stage with Ralph McTell, yet you've also supported John Otway, played at indie music festivals and even shared a stage with a Nirvana tribute band.

JE: Well I have a diverse taste in music and I'm not the only one. Actually I was billed with the Nirvana tribute band at a festival, which was "multi-genre" so that's not as odd as it first seems.

JH: And you seem to take the same approach with radio as well, doing many mainstream programmes and not just the folk specialist shows?

JE: Yes. The producers of these shows are very keen to get live music into their output and have been really welcoming. It helps that I've now got a track record so they know I can arrive, say hello and launch into a live performance. That's not to say that I am not churned up with nerves on the inside of course, but don't tell anyone!

JH: You seem to have done it all through your own enterprise with your own record label and, while John does the sound and publicity work, you do your own booking. I would guess that this is a harder option than signing up with established agents or labels?

JE: When you're not a "name", getting signed-up to either a booking agent or a record label is as hard, if not harder, than getting the gigs and making the CD yourself. I've got used to getting my own gigs now and the only reason I can see for wanting someone else to do it for me is lack of time. Breaking a new name is really hard. As for the record label, as we'd put in so much effort to produce absolutely the best CD we could at the time, it just made sense to go the whole hog.

JH: The own-label route is obviously one chosen by a large number of performers nowadays. Why are people finding this such an attractive option?



JE: I've been through all the reasons everyone talks about for wanting to be signed to a big label and, to be honest, most of them actually sound to me like reasons to avoid getting signed. For example, I've been told that you get your recording time paid for. Well, truth is, you get loaned the money, by the record company, to pay for the recording. Advances are also just unsecured loans that you owe to the record company, paid out of the royalties that are only a small proportion of the retail price.

I've also been told that I need distribution. Well OK, that might get the CDs into shops, but in reality very few people are going to buy if they haven't heard of you, with or without a label. I think I would always be cautious that enough effort was being put into promoting me. If a distributor or booking agent has a large roster they will naturally concentrate on the bigger names - the easier sales if you like. At least doing this ourselves we know that the effort is being focused on what we consider important.

JH: What's the biggest risk you've taken?

JE: Giving up the day job! I resigned from gainful employment to become a self-employed musician with the intention of initially earning money from both teaching and gigging. In fact, I found that while teaching provided a reasonable if erratic income, it was getting in the way of getting the gigs. I found it drained creative energy and I stopped writing songs.

My accountant thinks I'm mad, looking at the hole in my bank account where the teaching income used to be. The thing is, I have to give myself the chance to try this properly. I don't want to go to my grave with an aching "What If?" in my soul!

JH: Looking back on the story so far, are there any particular highlights which come to mind?

Before I did anything professionally Chatham Central Hall when I was about 15 years old was my first time on a big stage. The folk club where I was a resident was putting on a big extravaganza with, I think, "Fiddler's Dram" as headline. That was my first experience of working with proper stage lights, where you can't see the audience even though you can hear them breathing. It's terrifying, especially when you know your Mum and Dad are out there.

More recently, supporting Ralph McTell at the Customs House was fantastic, not least because so many people travelled so far to support me. Actually, I don't think anyone knew how much

I needed support that night. My Dad was seriously ill in hospital at the time and died two days later. The day after Dad died I did a live interview on "Folkwaves", the BBC radio folk programme in the East Midlands presented by Mick Peat and Lester Simpson. We got emails sent to the programme thanking me for the performance at the Ralph McTell concert and the support of everyone who came to see me with Ralph really carried me through that broadcast too.

JH: Those are some career highlights. Anything you'd describe as a musical turning point?

JE: Probably seeing Woody Mann for the first time. He's not that well known in the UK but I certainly think he is the best guitarist I've ever seen. I was asked to do a support slot shortly after walking in the door and I had no idea who he was at that time, but I borrowed a guitar, did the support slot, then spent the rest of the evening grazing my chin on the floor. He inspired me to go home and go back to the style of playing that I had always loved best but hadn't worked on for a long time, and is the way I play now.

JH: Can you say more about how it affected you?

In a Woody Mann guitar workshop someone asked if any of the old blues men had set ways of playing their tunes. His response was something like "The more boring ones did". Well I never, ever want to be described as "boring", so I abandoned all that classical-influenced striving for perfection and started trying to play what I could imagine, and trying not to play a piece the same way twice. My playing completely fell to bits while I was learning how to do this, but I stuck with it and the playing has been completely transformed now. The freedom and imagination that this one comment has brought to my playing has been astonishing.

JH: I get the impression you're not short of future plans. What are the main intentions at present?

To keep gigging, that's got to be number one priority since it is the foundation for everything I do. I also want to do more song writing, finish the guitar tutor book that I seem to have been working on for ages, and get the next CD out. I've also got a couple of collaborative projects on the go that I'm quite excited about.

JH: Can you offer us a few details?

Well there a couple of projects which are still under development, but the partnership that's got furthest is a duo line up with Eddie Baird from "Amazing Blondel". We've done one gig together and have another scheduled in South Yorkshire in November.

JH: Could this be something we'll see recorded anytime soon?

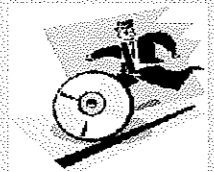
That depends on our other commitments really, but yes we'd like to get at least a few tracks recorded. I'm interested in putting a "collaborations" CD together with tracks from the various musical collaborations I'm involved in. I think that could be an interesting diversion from my solo CDs and DVDs.

JH: So, watch this space ... ?

And the website! I also have email and postal mailing lists that people can join, via the website or by emailing me at Julie@JulieEllison.co.uk or phoning me on 01709 881339.

(Ed:- We are hoping to try and interview local artistes on a regular basis. Suggestions and volunteers to do the interviewing greatly appreciated)

# CD REVIEWS



## ALTAN Local Ground (Vertical Records VERTCD069)



Anyone who knows me knows that I have everything (at least the general releases) by Altan and I suppose in a way that nothing they do now surprises me. What I can say about the musicianship is that it is excellent as ever and Mairead Ni Mhaonaigh's evocative tones prove exquisite even though I still admit (after all these years) that I can't get to grips with the Gaelic language. Still, I'm totally sold on the English songs including 'Adieu, My Lovely Nancy' with its beautiful accompaniment provided by Ciaran Curren, Mark Kelly, Daithi Sproule and Dermot Byrne.

The addition of unobtrusive bass and percussion by guest musicians Stephen Cooney and Jim Higgins holds the listeners attention well and the breathy backing vocals lend the whole track an ethereal quality that would sit nicely alongside anything produced by Enya. The duelling fiddles of Ni Mhaonaigh and Ciaran Tourish when played in unison always prove a highlight of any Altan set to me and this is ably demonstrated on 'Tommy Peoples/The Road To Cashel/The Repeal Of The Union/Richie's Reel'. Another guest, Carlos Nunez brings the charm of his Gaita to the melody 'Is The Big Man Within' before everything kicks in with the fiddle led 'Tilly Finn's Reel' driving along at a fair old pace.

This is the kind of album that doesn't so much slap you in the face as gently caress your senses with a soothing, knowing quality and any self-respecting folk music lover should add it to their collection. Details from Vertical Records at [www.verticalrecords.co.uk](http://www.verticalrecords.co.uk)

Pete Fyfe

## BLAZIN' FIDDLES Magnificent Seven (Own Label BRCD004)



So, it's been a magnificent seven years on the road. The title might also apply to the magnificent seven members of Blazin' Fiddles. I thought I'd better get that in before some other way did. This is a band that obviously enjoys itself as evidenced on the opening couple of tracks 'Skylark' and 'Miss Johnstone' where the frenetic, driving rhythms and melody lines of the fiddles are augmented by Marc Clement's guitar and Andy Thorburn's piano.

Catriona MacDonald contributes one of the finest tracks to the album in my opinion the beautiful 'April's Child' performed as a slow air instead of its usual setting as an up-tempo waltz. Although the tune has a touch of the melancholy about it, it isn't dour and indeed has a stature that taken at this tempo brings out the very best from its composers Annbjorg Lien and Bjorn Ole Rasch. I'm sure they'll be well chuffed by the performance.

Each of the group has their chance to shine with various paired down combinations allowing the listener to appreciate the difference in tonal quality. Therefore we have Aiden O'Rourke and Iain MacFarlane giving it large on the 'Donegal Set', Bruce MacGregor's hornpipes 'The Acrobat/The Star' (which to me sounds like a close brother to the glorious 'Banks Hornpipe') and Allan Henderson on the rather tricky self composed 'Trip to Errigal'.

To finish the recording there's the very apt 'Lily Dale' a Texas Swing Band tune complete with Thorburn's distinctive honky-tonk saloon bar piano. As the title of this album would infer, this is a group that gives it to you all guns blazin'. Further info from [www.blazin-fiddles.com](http://www.blazin-fiddles.com)

Pete Fyfe

## AILSA & JOHN BOOTH Hommadocks & Thingummyjigs (Acorn Records 0AK010)



It never ceases to amaze me the amount of talent that comes to light on the CD's that arrive through my door for review. Being down the chain you understand I never usually receive those star-studded albums made by the likes of Waterson:Carthy, Fairport Convention or Tom Paxton. That

said it does make life extremely interesting and all the more rewarding when you unearth those little musical nuggets now and then. Such an experience came upon hearing this CD with, I presume, a brother and sister duo totally new to me. It was also fun to do some detective work whilst listening, the one criticism being the lack of sleeve notes about the songs. My guess is that the duo is Mersey based, although I could be wrong.

Alison has a pleasant voice taking lead vocal on most tracks whilst John chips in with harmonies. However, John's forte is definitely his songwriting abilities with 7 tracks and 2 tunes coming from his prolific pen. He is also an extremely competent guitarist and this comes across very well on the album. The CD opens with the American song by N.Griffiths/R. West, "Trouble in the Fields" before John's first offering "An English Tune" bemoaning the passing of the quiet pub amongst other things - down with the juke box say I.

The last time I heard "Shule Agra" (the traditional lullaby) was by Peter, Paul and Mary years ago. It is still a very good song and sung very well here too. The very strong Pete Morton song, "One Truth" follows before John's "Bright Star" asks the age-old question - "Is there anyone out there?". A nicely thought out song. As a family history buff I felt an empathy with John's song, "A Man Who Lived By The River". A good story and a sad one dating back to before the war about, I suspect, a close family member on Merseyside.

As Billie Holiday fans the duo do her proud with John's, "No One Ever Sang Like Billie", a great tribute to the legendary blues singer, followed by one of her greatest songs, "God Bless the Child". Again there is also some great guitar work on these tracks with steel guitar and harmonica adding to the whole blues feel.

"When're You Going To Sing That Song For Me" brings to the close this value for money 13-track CD. The setting is a back street club with someone on stage singing but nobody listening - I know the feeling! Terry Jones who, along with Tom Doughty, plays backing instrumentation has nicely produced this album. All I can say is please send me the next one. Contact them on

## "HOME GROWN"

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...excellent stage and great guitar work from three seasoned musicians ... DAVE PRICE (Radio 5 Live)

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-Tara McSweeney, Irish World

"Bags of energy, with a style that is somewhat reminiscent of early Pogues... A great live act, as I can testify"  
-Dave Brookes, Folk Monthly

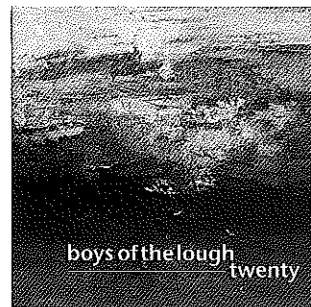
"This is a tiger of altogether different stripes. Jugopunch show signs of growing and 'Cold' itself even dips a toe into rock music, with some beefy rhythms - more please!"  
-Simon Jones, The Chronicle



their e-mail address at john&ailsa@tinyworld.co.uk or visit their web site www.johnandailsa.co.uk

Ian Chesterman

#### BOYS OF THE LOUGH Twenty (Lough Records 009CD)



Is it seriously twenty albums down the road for the eternally prolific Boys Of The Lough? I remember buying the Good Friends... Good Music recording of the band at the Free Reed record shop in London (yes, it was that long ago and getting them to sign it for me) and eagerly learning all of the tunes -ah, such memories. That's possibly the reason I respect

them so much, for in all that time they have never put a foot wrong.

Only two members now remain from the original line-up; Dave Richardson (concertina, accordion & mandolin) and Cathal McConnell (flute & whistles) have been the mainstay throughout an illustrious career and are now joined by Brendan Begley (accordion), Malcolm Stitt (guitar & bouzouki) and Kevin Henderson on fiddle. Reflecting on their output, as the saying goes, "...if it ain't broke..." and this for me sums up everything about the boys approach to their music. There's good, hearty singing from Cathal and Brendan which accounts for an even split of songs and instrumentals and although this isn't rip roaring stuff in the true sense of what is the preconceived idea of Celtic music by the layman there is of course the occasional jolly-up as demonstrated on the very danceable 'Bridgie Con Mat' polkas.

As ever, you can't fault the delivery and presentation by each member and although perhaps not ground breaking as it once was there is enough new material to keep a good session going for a while yet. By the way, check out Dave's sleeve notes. They're informative without being too studious and show that a little knowledge can improve your mindset as to how to interpret the tunes and songs for performance purposes. More details are available from the band's website at www.boysofthelough.com

Pete Fyfe

#### ALISON BROWN Stolen Moments (Compass Records)



For us Brits, Alison Brown is in many ways the Davy Spillane of the 5-string banjo or perhaps the equal of Gerry O'Connor on tenor banjo. Well, there you are - it goes without saying that we're now moving into territory that although perhaps not ground breaking (think Bela Fleck) is downright listenable without leaving anyone feeling excluded like interlopers at a private party.

The opening track 'The Sound Of Summer Running' comes across as a standard banjo workout until Brown is joined by John R Burr's smooth jazz piano and the country fiddling of Stuart Duncan. Linking diverse cultures could prove rather chaotic but in the hands of musicians like these they are ingenious without being pretentious. The use of piano is quite fundamental in the makeup of the overall sound as it stirs memories of say the theme music to the TV series Taxi on

'The Pirate Queen' or plays a major part on the "Going To Glasgow" set where there's a Duelling Banjos of sorts. And boy, what a work-out that proves with plenty of frailing and triplets to make a lesser mortal swoon at the thought of it all. For the more traditional at heart there's the inclusion of Beth Neilson Chapman's vocals on "One Morning In May" attributed to Jim Rooney/Bill Keith although I think that well known collector of royalties Trad: Arr may have something to say about that and if, for no other reason than for the general public's consumption there's Paul Simon's "Homeward Bound" performed by Amy Ray and Emily Saliers.

This is an album that plays it pretty safe following in the wake of her astonishing 2001 release Fair Weather but there's still plenty to be had all be it in a more relaxed mood. Further information from www.compassrecords.com

Pete Fyfe

#### KIM CARNES Chasin' Wild Trains (Corazong 255082)



Nashville based singer songwriter - and, incidentally, former New Christy Minstrel - Kim Carnes is a long established artist and songwriter. Although she signed her first solo record deal as far back as 1972, Carnes really shot to international prominence in 1981 when that great album 'Mistaken Identity' was released. The disc (or vinyl LP as it was in those days) spawned the massively popular single 'Bette Davis Eyes' and

was followed by five commercially successful albums in seven years. Carnes changed her musical direction more firmly towards country music in the 1990s, cementing this transition in 1994 when she decided to move to Nashville. The move has paid off for her as she's rattled off a steady series of hits for country artists like Kenny Rogers, Reba McEntyre and Vince Gill, as well as developing writing collaborations with the likes of Kim Richey and Matraca Berg. In the intervening years, Carnes has released the odd vocal collaboration but this is her first original release since 1991.

The CD opens with the powerful ballad, 'One beat at a time', (co-written with Marc Jordan), scheduled for a November UK single release. Such is the strength of album that it's one of several songs that could have fitted the singles bill. Although my favourite track is undoubtedly 'Lucid Dreams' (those dreams so vivid that you wish they could continue when you wake up), including a line that imagines her "riding bare backed across the sands/playing lead guitar in Bob Dylan's Band" but presumably not at the same! Another track, 'If I was an angel', is reminiscent in style and delivery of John Prine's wonderful 'Angel from Montgomery' but none the worse for the comparison.

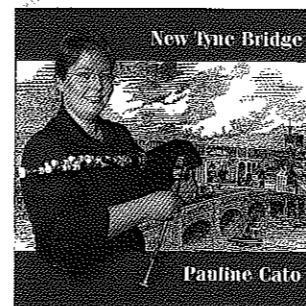
Most have instantly catchy recognisable choruses and riffs, although there really should be a credit to Lennon and McCartney on the second track on the CD - 'Just to see you smile' - for the 'Penny Lane' inspired (dare I say copied?) guitar riff that normally accompanies "there beneath the blue suburban skies etc." There are other songs - 'Still warmed by the thrill' (a lyrical and vocal collaboration with Greg Barnhill) and 'Goodnight Angel' - that tend to creep up on you more slowly and grap you pleasantly by surprise after several plays.

Chasin' Wild Trains has very few weak tracks and moves from

strength to strength with each play. On this performance Carnes clearly belongs in the more thoughtful popular Americana camp of songwriting than the country and western mainstream, normally associated with old fashioned parts of Nashville's music industry. What Carnes hasn't lost is that rare ability to write quality songs and deliver them in her trademark raspy husky voice that makes her stand out from Nashville's (and for that matter America's) run of the mill women singers.

Lewis Jones

#### PAULINE CATO New Tyne Bridge (Tomcat Music TCCD05)

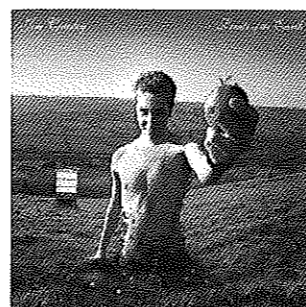


There's a smile that comes to me whenever I hear the sound of Northumbrian Smallpipes. In some respects it reminds me of a controlled snappy Yorkshire terrier - full of bite but not without charm. The actual charm in this case of course comes from the protagonist Pauline Cato. You can almost imagine Cato sitting by a roaring fire surrounded by her friends including Ciaran

Boyle (bodhran), Christine Hanson (cello), Dave Wood (guitar) and Phil Cunningham's jaunty piano having a good old session. At times you feel like some kind of eavesdropper interloping on a conversation between a couple of old boys discussing the day's Greyhound racing (or is that my imagination running away with me again). Still flights of fantasy are what makes a reviewers job interesting and while it entertains me I'll make the most of it. The selection of tunes, all of which have been painstakingly researched include standard settings of familiar favourites such as 'Follow Her Over The Border' (surely a cousin of 'Peacock Followed The Hen?') and Scott Skinner's 'Robert The Bruce/The Cameron Highlanders' given an organic twist by none other than the great Billy Pigg. Obviously Pauline is someone who cares about her instrument and representing it in the 'right' light. This she does with a flourish and congratulations to her and the other musicians for keeping it simple. There are many good tunes here well worth adding to any self respecting folk musicians repertoire and certainly the gorgeous 'Gateshead Waltz' is well worth more than a passing glance. Further information can be gleaned from www.tomcatmusic.com

Pete Fyfe

#### JIM CAUSLEY Fruits of the Earth (WildGoose WGS326CD)



I must say the cover put me off at first - young man with bare, hairless (huh!) chest half-way 'out' of a pasture holding out an apple - hardly inspirational and a bit pretentious. Frankly, I'd have preferred uninterrupted views of the East Devon countryside where the singer originates. However, it isn't the cover, it's the content I'm to review.

Opening track - very appealing, strong voice hits you first with an unusual version of John Barleycorn; delivery a little over deliberate - but promising. Next is Arscott of Tetcott (the hunting of) - his parenthesis not mine; I'd have written the complete title as one, but never mind - an interesting hunting song from Devon. It's sensitively accompanied and introduces some subtle harmonies from James Dumbelton. Then comes Phoebe Smith's version of Tan Yard Side (down by the) - note the parenthesis yet again! - which is rather laboured too but is

an authentic rendition.

Judy Collins' version of The Pricklie Bush, which Jim learned from 'one of Mum's LPs', follows. Harvest Song has an accordion drone style accompaniment, which rather slows down the verses a tad; perhaps a guitar, fiddle or mandolin would have made it more lively. In spite of that it's a good chorus song that will no doubt be picked up by many a singaround singer. Old Riverside (down by the) (more brackets!) is sung in a very similar style to the source singer, Sophie Legg, from whom he got it. He knows his sources does this lad so good for him in that respect.

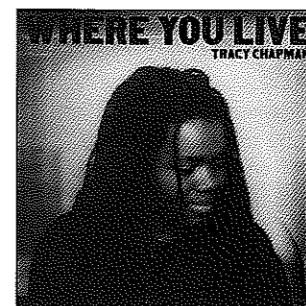
Rewind is a Causley own composition. It's a good song with an imaginative accordion backing but still a bit plodding. As a result the phrase 'life is here and life is gay' doesn't sound convincing. After May Bradley's version of The Carnal and the Crane, a strange song I think, although this version makes slightly more sense than the version collected by Ralph Vaughan Williams that I have, I was beginning to lose the will to live! - and then he comes up with The Lusty Young Smith, which is, of course, rude and fun! On Sing Ivy, which he learnt from the wonderful Sandra Kerr (she wrote it), he reminds me of a young Carthy but none the worse for that.

By now I'm finding this album a bit of a strain (no doubt you're feeling the same, reading this!) but I can't put my finger on the reason. Jim sings very well; he has a super voice, with excellent diction and well up front in the mix but it's all a bit monotonous and mostly slow in tempo and he doesn't really perform the songs. I know it's difficult in an audio format, but voice expression, emphasis and intonation should be more evident and, frankly (my dears), isn't. Also, his programming isn't very well thought out. For example, he could have placed the Lusty Smith further up the playing order to break things up a little. Similarly, we have to wait until track 11 before we get the jolly up-tempo Whimpe Wassail with full accompaniment of accordion and fiddle and chorus followed on by a lively tune. Then it's back to mournful with Yonders Hill, which is mercifully short!

The album finishes with Unwind, another of Jims' own compositions, which is a jaunty waltz with a catchy tune and gives us insights into Mr. Causley's complex personality. This is a complex album, which I found difficulty in appraising (which is why I've mentioned all the 13 tracks!) - something that I don't normally do of course, but I felt, dear reader, that I should in order to give you a comprehensive review.

Derek Gifford

#### TRACY CHAPMAN Where You Live (Elektra Records 7567-83803-2)



It was a bit of a blast from the past when this one dropped through the letterbox. Tracy Chapman... you'll probably remember her from a debut record more years ago than I care to remember. It blasted her to fame and she found herself touring the world for Amnesty International with Sting, Bruce Springsteen et al. However, at the end of the day, Tracy is a good

singer songwriter and, so, I wondered how far she's moved on since those days. The answer is not a lot... though that's not a bad thing.

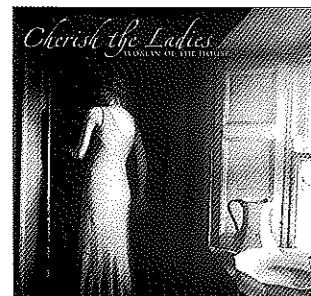
The production is in the hands of Tchad Blake, and, Mitchell

Froom pops up on a number of songs which might indicate that there are all sorts of synthesised sound appearing left, right and centre. Not true. Thankfully, the songs have been kept at the basics with Tracy's warm voice running like treacle down simple musical backdrops of acoustic guitar and keyboard. Of course, there is some added 'atmosphere' but we do basically get stripped down songs.

She shows off her penchant for catchy hooks and, for example, the opener, 'Change', could have appeared on that popular debut record. It's theme simply encourages you to think about how much it takes you to change but it expands into a wide ranging philosophy - or, it's just a darn good tune if you want to take it at that level. That is part of Tracey's charm, the songs offer a familiar musical theme but the lyrics stand repeated listening. So, yes, '3000 Miles', 'Never Yours' and others all sound like tunes that might have appeared on earlier records. Even the more up-tempo 'America' has a familiar feel. However, as her fans will surely agree, there's nothing wrong with that. Furthermore, if you'd like to get reacquainted, 'Where You Live' won't let you down.

Steve Henderson

**CHERISH THE LADIES Woman Of The House (Rounder Records 11661-7063-2)**



The importance of placing the right tune within a set was never a problem with Cherish the Ladies. As they've proven throughout their years as a professional ensemble this quintet hailing from the USA has a delicate ear for a good melody and ably demonstrates the point by leading with 'The Jolly Seven/The Rascal on the Haystack/Bonkers in Yonkers'.

The minor and major key changes of the first tune are pleasing in a 'Farewell to Ireland' kind of way and the final tune written by CTL leader Joannie Madden is a real winner. In fact Madden leaves her trademark flute and whistle stamped throughout the recording by adding sensuous tones to the gorgeous introduction to Ewan MacColl's 'Sweet Thames Flow Softly' for instance where just a few notes speaks a thousand words. Talking of songs, the Ladies have been blessed with tremendous singers throughout their twenty years and continuing the tradition, Irish born (but now stateside based) Heidi Talbot is a more than welcome addition to the 'family' where her renditions of popular standards such as 'Bogie's Bonnie Belle' and 'Betsy Belle and Mary Gray' do more than justice to a tried and tested formula. In the instrumental stakes Mary Coogan (guitar & banjo etc), Roisin Dillon (fiddle) and Mirella Murray (Accordion) provide an energetic drive and passion that is so often lacking in bands of a similar ilk. I'm sure that many of you reading this review have heard most of what the 'folk' world has to offer and fondly



remember the days when the likes of Silly Wizard were kings. Well, the skills of producer Phil Cunningham are so obvious throughout the recording you'd swear it was a Silly Wizard arrangement if it weren't for the striking vocals of Heidi and guest singers Kate Rusby, Karen Matheson and Eddi Reader.

On this recording CTL have exceeded my expectations by combining a contemporary edge (not so evident on previous outings) to their performance without losing sight of the traditional sources from which they draw a majority of their repertoire. This is a class act that should be acknowledged by a far wider audience than the 'folk' music world can offer and, unlike many other recordings I've listened to recently, deserve a resounding ten out of ten! Further information from [www.cherishtheladies.com](http://www.cherishtheladies.com)

Pete Fyfe

**THE CHURCHFITTERS New Tunes For Old (Churchfitters Records CH24754)**

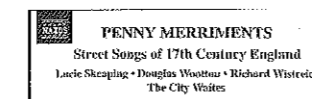


Why the Churchfitters have never made it 'big' on the British folk scene (probably because they're based in France) escapes me. But if they should remain a secret, for those of us that do know them we'll jealously guard the band like a rare piece of fine jewellery. Take for instance the classic Dave Swarbrick and Richard Lovelace 'To Althea

From Prison' - it's one of those songs that is a marriage made in heaven. Great lyrics, great melody and the Fitter's carry it off with aplomb by utilising Rosie Short's distinctive vocals sounding not dissimilar to Annie Lennox in full flow accompanied by her brother Chris's faux classical fiddle. These are musicians who know how to wring every last drop of passion from a song and with a turn of phrase such as "Stone walls do not a prison make or iron bars a cage..." who can blame them? On the other side of the coin there's 'Mickey The Mouse' which is one of those quirky Belfast style street songs (a bit like 'Sunlight Soap') and the way it's presented here it takes on a brooding, almost sinister quality that would give little children the heebeegeebees. New members Boris Le Bret and Topher Loudon now fill the position of founder member Anthony McCartan who sadly passed away and I'm sure if he's watching from up there he'd be more than happy with the way they have integrated within the unit. Topher in particular would I'm sure give Ant a wry smile with his almost naive style of writing. Just reading the story of 'Lowestoft Scoff' is entertaining and will certainly be held close to any member of a touring band who has yearned for a portion of fish and chips only to find that the shop is three miles away instead of "...just up the road" having been led astray by some slimeball 'local'. This is an album that will challenge the listener and although not every track ticks the box it will prove a refreshing conversation piece for those who can't agree on whether it's folk or not. By the way, if there are any festival organisers out there and you're looking for something a little different why not give the band a shot - they are great live! For more information check out the band's website at [www.churchfitters.com](http://www.churchfitters.com)

Pete Fyfe

**CITY WAITES Penny Merriments (Naxos Records 8.557672)**



I remember seeing the City Waites years ago - I hesitate to say how long - at a folk club in Crawley and subsequently caught up with them several times after that. Unfortunately I hadn't realised that they were still going, that was until I saw mention of this recording. So, trying to reacquaint myself with their rich and fruity repertoire I'm

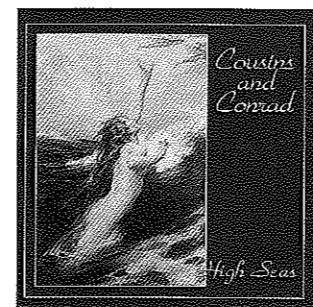
pleased to report things haven't changed that much in the ways of the broadside ballad or Lucie Skeaping, Douglas Wooton, Richard Wistreich and Roderick Skeaping helming a slightly larger form of Waites with the inclusion of multi-instrumentalists Robin Jeffrey and Michael Brain and the bagpipes of Nicholas Perry.

Lucie has taken the trouble to document the salient points of what broadside ballads were about in her succinct and clearly knowledgeable notes in the accompanying booklet so let's just say that many of these songs were the tabloid banners of what would amount to yesterday's equivalent of our modern newspapers. The humour of the double-entendre is evident throughout the songs ("...I'll tell thee Dick where I have been...") and the rounded vowels of Skeaping, Wooton and Wistreich bring to life the full character with which the lyrics would have been conveyed to the flushed cheeks of ladies fanning themselves. Splendidly coarse, vulgar and at times downright rude but thoroughly enjoyable none the less this is entertainment at its bawdy best! The music accompanying the singing is often played with a stately, theatrical and, often whimsical, nod towards the court musicians and travelling troubadours of the time and you can well imagine the Waites wearing costumes that wouldn't seem out of place in a movie such as Shakespeare In Love.

The care and attention to detail enhance even further this production and personally I applaud the research and thought that has obviously gone into this recording. If, like me you require source material from the general repertoire loosely based within the confines of what we term 'folk' music then do yourselves a favour and purchase this recording. By the way, on a personal note, please can we have another recording that includes some of the old City Waites greatest hits such as 'Lilly Burlero' and 'The Devil and the Farmer's Wife'? Further info from [www.citywaites.co.uk](http://www.citywaites.co.uk)

Pete Fyfe

**COUSINS & CONRAD High Seas (Witchwood Records WMCD 2025)**



Pomp-rock it has to be said is alive and well and now residing in Kent. And who but Dave Cousins, the high king of vocal dramatics would you wish to helm it? Setting aside his Strawbs activities for a while he is joined by Germany's Conny Conrad for a coupling that hits its target in much the same way that the Hero & Heroine line-up did many years before.

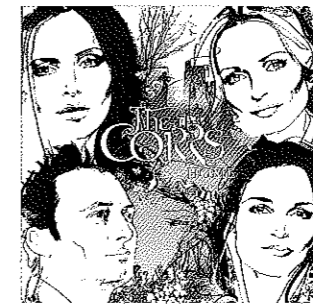
On the opening track, 'The Call To Action', there's the slow build up of acoustic guitar swelled by the caressing keyboard strings before the pounding drums and the theatrical timbre of those soaring vocals. So tortured is the delivery that you could almost imagine Dave standing on a mountain top preaching the Ten Commandments. As if echoing the sentiments, Conrad proves no slouch on guitar wringing every last drop like some angst ridden Heavy Metal god. I just hope he doesn't wear the leather trousers. To add to the tonal palate we have accompaniment from the dulcimer and banjo that was so much a part of Dave's distinctive sound in his earlier recording days - a nice touch that will I'm sure be appreciated by his legion of fans. Now, I must admit that from a personal point of view I find Conrad's lyrics a little disjointed in that clash of cultures kind of way but having said that they're not bad just somehow lacking the bite that comes from our very own quintessential pen

pusher.

If you're looking for the obligatory hit I'd stick my (rather sizeable) neck out and opt for the gloriously rich sounds of 'Deep In The Darkest Night' where special guest Rick Wakeman lends his customary flair with a flourishing piece of piano (check out the last 40 seconds of the track to see what I mean) that positively thrives on the excellent riff and key change. Leave your hat and coat at the door, draw up a comfy armchair, puff on your pipe and wallow in the nostalgia of it all. Somebody pass me my slippers please.

Pete Fyfe

**THE CORRS Home (Atlantic Records 5051011 0293 2 5)**



I've been an avid fan of The Corrs since I first heard their music playing in a café in Hastings where the proprietor had the good taste to play 'folk' music that might be new to his customers. Since then I've acquired practically everything they've recorded and I still like their music. Mind you, this album took some getting into because of my preference for that 'folk-ish'

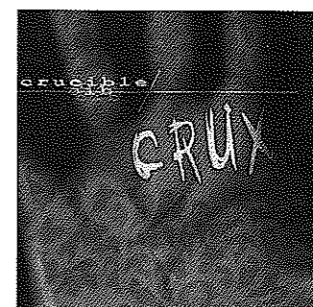
tag and my initial thoughts on how they might approach the traditional songs. And there are plenty of them here including 'My Lagan Love', 'Spencil Hill' and 'Peggy Gordon'.

This album won't appeal to the faint hearted folk brigade as the mid-Atlantic style vocal from Andrea will alienate those too precious to look past the commercial value of the recording. That said, Sharon on fiddle, Caroline (bodhran) and Jim (guitar/keyboards) joined by regular colleagues Anthony Drennan (guitar/mandolin) and Keith Duffy (bass guitar) take a good stab at the material they have to work with. According to the press release it's true that the band's roots lie in the music of their homeland but (possibly) as fellow countryman Brian Kennedy has learnt it isn't easy selling something that doesn't come across naturally. Some of my friends would be totally dismissive of the Corrs' efforts aghast that the family had murdered a good ballad but to the millions of fans the group have gained throughout the world it could be seen as a positive step in taking the 'old' songs to a whole new audience.

In general Mitchell Froom's production and the use of the BBC Concert Orchestra buoy the arrangements although I must admit that even I have to question the unforgivable treatment of the usually indestructible 'Black Is the Colour'. If you're looking for something more substantial then due to the sparseness of the backing Andrea's take on 'Heart Like A Wheel' and for the same reason Richard Thompson's 'Dimming Of The Day' will perhaps sit more comfortably. Ok, so maybe not the recording for the purist but if your tastes are more liberal this could be for you. Further info from [www.thecorrswebsite.com](http://www.thecorrswebsite.com)

Pete Fyfe

**CRUCIBLE Crux (WildGoose WGS327CD)**



When reviewing Crucible's debut CD some time ago in Folk NW I said that 'they're pretty damn good!' and this latest album does nothing to dispel that opinion. In fact now they are even better, showing a maturity and confidence that comes with



regular performances.

They start with the punchy George's Son, written by John Kirkpatrick, followed by Jake's Progress written by band member Helena Reynolds. Great musicianship, singing and a hint of what's to come.

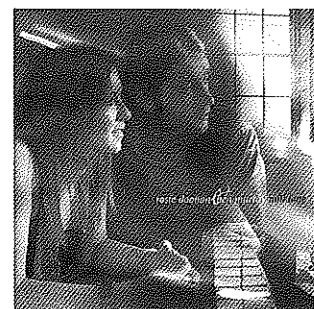
This album is full of jaunty, rhythmic and foot-tapping music and song. Of the latter I particularly liked the tight four part harmonies in Ron Angel's Chemical Workers Song and in Jim Eldon's version of Old Horse. In the former category their rendition of Swaggering Boney is one of the best I've heard in long while.

Even when they slow things down such as in their 're-written' version of the 91st psalm, which they call Within the Shadowed Secrecy and, in Whipping Cheer, the delivery is forceful to say the least. I liked Gavin's Thieves' Song too. In the sleeve notes they sound a little apologetic that this is a political song, a theme which they normally avoid. They needn't be, much of the revival was based on politics and protest so why not have a go if it's something that upsets you! Every folk singer should have a protest song!!! (Sorry, got a bit carried away there ed.)

I'm not really qualified to comment on the tunes except to say that with the instrumental mix of melodeons, guitar, cittern, fiddles, viola and bagpipes (sounds like a Music Room stock list!) and their approach to the musical arrangements it makes for cracking listening. Rest assured, they are going to be around for a long time. A pleasure through and through and well done Doug at Wild Goose for capturing their sound so well.

**Derek Gifford**

#### **ROSIE DOONAN & BEN MURRAY Mill Lane (Silvertop Records SRC001)**



I'm reminded, on listening to this recording, of the first time I encountered Lindisfarne and their Fog on the Tyne album and, in particular, the track 'Uncle Sam' by Simon Cowe. Ironic I suppose then that here on this understated disk that there's a track by none other than Mr Cowe. Not so surprising is the Tyneside connection as Ben Murray (keyboards, vocals) is

the son of Jack The Lad bass player Phil whilst Rosie (guitar, vocals) is a member of the much respected Doonan clan. Also, why should I feel so comfortable in the knowledge that the tradition of good songwriting married to excellent interpretations of traditional material could be so enlightening? It's because (for those of us that have been immersed in the culture of Northern songwriters and singers) we have an instinct for this kind of thing.

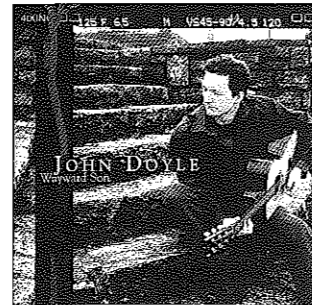
Both protagonists have a truly professional approach to their craft and the appealing aspect is that there is more than a hint of jazz in the arrangements making this a cool album that should adorn the shelf of any up-to-date self respecting folk enthusiast.

There are some well structured arrangements such as 'The Lusty Smith' (which I first heard performed by Bob Fox & Stu Luckley) although I must admit the opening few bars took me a little by surprise. This is the sort of recording that will take a little getting used to but if you're willing to embrace something a bit more challenging than the usual run of the mill (oops, sorry about the unintentional pun) you'll be well rewarded.

Further info from [www.rosieandben.com](http://www.rosieandben.com)

**Pete Fyfe**

#### **JOHN DOYLE Wayward Son (Compass Records COM 4408)**



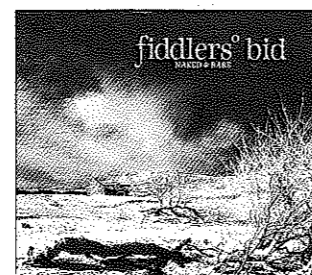
The other day I found myself travelling to Wales for a gig and decided to whack this latest release from fine guitarist and vocalist John Doyle on the CD player. And what a pleasure it was too. Mind you, what else would you expect from a musician who rubs shoulders with Eileen Ivers and Solas etc?

This is music for those who like their acoustic settings with a bit of funk and groove both of which Doyle is more than capable of turning out in equal measure. He's no mean chanter either whether in solo capacity or joined in harmony by Tim O'Brien as on the opening track 'The Gallant Poacher' or Robbie O'Connell's re-working of The Wild Rover 'Jack Dolan'. Then of course there's his stunning cleanly picked tune playing on 'The Glad Eye/The Journeyman/The Wayward Son' which puts the album Coppers & Brass somewhat in the shade. With a choice of musicians that would set a festival alight including Danny Thompson on double bass, John McCusker (fiddle), John Williams (accordion), Alison Brown (banjo) and the ubiquitous Michael McGoldrick on whistles you just can't go wrong. On certain tracks like 'Bitter The Parting' I'm reminded of past glories such as the Bothy Band in full flow with Kate Rusby ably filling the position usually taken by Triona Ni Dhomhnaill whilst John takes over the part usually adopted by Michael O'Domhnaill - blissful. If, on the other hand you're looking for an adrenalin rush then listen to the sparring fiddle and guitar workout with Liz Carroll called 'The Old Bush/Expect The Unexpected'.

All of those involved on the team at Compass should feel justifiably proud to have John on their books and if they continue the trend their currently setting they could well be the next best thing to the much missed Mulligan record label. This really is a thinking man's album and whether you're just getting into the trad thing or just looking for something to get the juices flowing then I'd seriously suggest you buy a copy as soon as possible. Further info from [www.compassrecords.com](http://www.compassrecords.com) and [www.johndoylemusic.com](http://www.johndoylemusic.com)

**Pete Fyfe**

#### **FIDDLERS BID Naked & Bare (Greentrax Recordings CDTRAX277)**



Opening their fourth album with the title track 'Naked & Bare' Fiddlers Bid prove just why they are one of Scotland's leading ambassadors when it comes to promoting the string driven thing. Although rather sombre in its presentation the tune attributed to John Stickle is evocative and, if it is indeed a bride's march as regaled in the informative sleeve

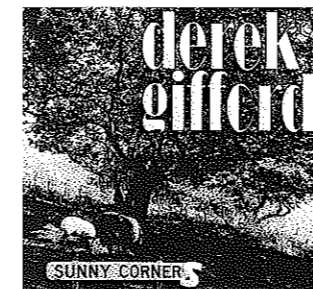
notes what a beautiful melody to mark the happy occasion. It borders on the stately before leading gently into Chris Stout's 'Da White Wife' where the buoyant uplifting piano accompaniment drives the orchestra along at a nicely lilting pace. For me, it captures images of a rustic Nordic scene. I don't know what makes me think of that (?) possibly the Vortex trip at the Epcot Centre in Florida. By the time the tune settles down it has gained a sweeping panoramic dynamic of its own and invokes images of a babbling brook. And that's where the beauty of this album lies. It takes the listener to where 'they'

want to be.

The slightly discordant piano courtesy of Catriona McKay that backs the next track 'Troila Knowe/Ahint Da Daeks O'Voe/Da Fustra/Salton' is full of enthusiastic energy and although initially disconcerting settles into a driving reel that could be a scene-stealer at the hub of a good session. Likewise 'Da Fustra' has that impish chutzpah associated with the not dissimilar Villa Fjord. Somehow you get the feeling that Dave Swarbrick would be a very happy chappie grinning from ear to ear leading the melody. There's enough colour in this album to keep your interest (even if you're not a fiddler) and the wonderfully wild and barren beauty of the cover photograph conveys the message in its stark presentation. A success on all counts. For further details contact [www.fiddlersbid.com](http://www.fiddlersbid.com) or the record company at [www.greentrax.com](http://www.greentrax.com)

**Pete Fyfe**

#### **DEREK GIFFORD Sunny Corners (CRM 138)**



Much to my shame I must admit that, despite the obvious longevity and success of his musical career, I had not heard any of Derek's albums and therefore I was very pleased to be given this, his latest CD, to review. Derek immediately strikes you as a man of purpose, a good honest singer who does not rely on frills and fripperies

that less talented singers sometimes use to mask and embellish. If a song is good enough and the performer good enough why hide the fact.

It is this straight forward approach that makes this album so listenable with all its 14 tracks carefully chosen from the obvious opener, 'Sing With Me Now', written by Hazel Bolton from Redcar to another big chorus song as the closing track, 'Song For The Road'. In between we are treated to a mixture of contemporary and traditional material drawn from as far away as the Antipodes ('Colours of Australia' and the title track, 'Sunny Corner Mine') and as near as Lancashire ('Old Pendle'). The traditional 'Rigs of London' and 'Bold Grenadier' brought back memories of my own time visiting and performing in the folk clubs of the 1960s and 1970s although, for some reason, they are not heard that much these days.

With half the songs being acapella it is a chance for Derek to show what a good singer he is. However, we must not forget the contributions made to the album by that fine fiddle player Tom McConville, percussionist Clive Pownceby and whistle player Phil Brown and the rousing chorus harmonies provided by Alison Younger, Janet Hale, Mark Dowdy and Geoff Miller.

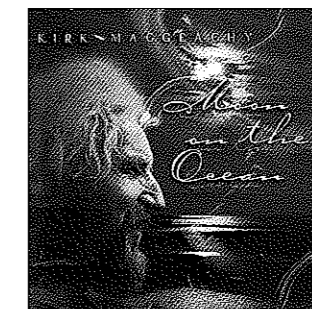
Altogether a very pleasant listen and nice to see us "old 'uns" still going - keep up the good work Derek. One final word of congratulation to Chris Harvey (of Strawhead) who has again done a super production job at his Cock Robin Studios. Add the album to your collection by phoning Derek on 01695 625097 or e mail him at [d.gifford1@ntlworld.com](mailto:d.gifford1@ntlworld.com)

**Ian Chesterman**

#### **KIRK MacGEACHY Moon On The Ocean (Own Label)**

I'm listening to the first track of Kirk MacGeachy's CD 'Here Or There' and find myself totally mesmerised. In fact it reminds me of the last time I had a soothing massage. The arrangement has that kind of New Age feel that wraps the listener in a form of aural cotton wool and, if you're in the mood

for it you can let it gently wash over you with its lustrous tones. There's a nice touch of doubled-up vocals on the hypnotically propelled lyrics and the Eastern feel created by the gentle percussion, subtle electric guitar and David Gossage's whistle are well placed. And that just about sets the scene really. I for one can do with a bit of audio pleasure and if you let this album seduce you the way it does me then it will have done the job successfully.



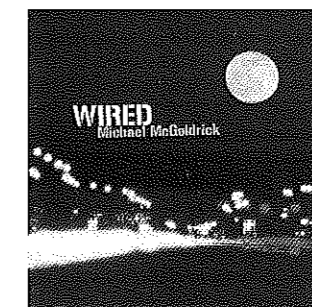
The concept of keeping the balance throughout the recording at a leisurely pace is far removed from the frantic energies of most Celtic albums I've reviewed lately and is, in many ways far more rewarding. Lullabies may seem a little out of place in this cynical old world of ours but at least there's someone out there who cares enough to write them. As I pen

this review (at 3 o'clock in the morning!) I find myself casting my eyes about soaking up the images of the lights emanating from the high rise flats and office buildings of a burgeoning London suburb whilst the sensuous sounds of Frank Lozano's sax make me long for the peace and tranquillity of the Highlands. But hold on, in case you think I'm getting into the realms of mawkish sentimentality I'm not, it's just that every now and then we all need a bit of chilling out and if like me, you require that occasionally it's nice to float your boat. In addition to his songwriting talents, MacGeachy is no mean tunesmith providing the beautiful 'Ella Kirk Of Ramornie Mill' (very Phil Cunningham) dedicated to his mum and should prove a favourite at many a session.

Kirk is a founding member of the Canadian group Orealis whose debut album I reviewed some years ago and I'd suggest that if you haven't heard of them or the man himself you check out this seriously lovely album. For further information go to the Orealis website at [www.orealis.ca](http://www.orealis.ca)

**Pete Fyfe**

#### **MICHAEL MCGOLDRICK Wired (Vertical Records VERTCD0074)**



Master tunesmith and all round good guy Michael McGoldrick returns with his latest solo recording albeit aided and abetted by several of Scotland and Ireland's finest musicians. Year's ago Donal Lunny used to be the driving force behind cutting edge Celtic melodies. Since then the baton appears to have been handed to Capercaille's Donald Shaw and let's make no mistake this is in many ways a two-man project.

McGoldrick's performance on flute, whistles and uilleann pipes is never in question but by enhancing the melodies with an arsenal of exotic textures such as Neil Yates flugelhorn and trumpet or the tablas and marimba of Parvinder Bharat and Signy Jacobsdottir the whole thing becomes more consumer friendly. I've recently become a convert to Smooth Jazz which trust me is treated with the same amount of derision in certain jazz circles that 'folk music' is perceived by the general public but is that really so bad when the standard of music is this good and will appeal to a far wider audience - I think not! No, life's too short to be bitter. Instead why not let the music succeed

on its own merits and chill out.

Not so long ago these musicians would have been burned at the stake for 'selling out' but hopefully we've come a long way since then in conquering these prejudices. I hope so because this is a work of pure art and whilst I'd like to congratulate everybody individually on their contribution I won't because there's nineteen plus the Scottish Ensemble and that's without the backroom boys. Let's just say buy this album and enjoy the music. Further info from [www.verticalrecords.co.uk](http://www.verticalrecords.co.uk)

Pete Fyfe

**MEGSON On The Side (EDJ Records EDJ011)**



megson

With the likes of Seth Lakeman on the Mercury Music Prize trail, there's a good case to say that Folk music is 'the new rock and roll'. OK, maybe some of this veers towards pop singer songwriter territory. Yet, there's no doubt that a number of these acts, Seth included, have a significant grounding in the Folk tradition. Megson are typical of this musical movement.

Twelve tracks make up their debut, 'On The Side', of which seven are traditional songs. Megson being a young duo with Debbie Palmer supplying whistle, Stu Hanna adding guitar and mandolin and both of them contributing vocals. For my ears, the songs that fare best are where they harmonise on such as 'More Than Me' and those featuring Stu's vocals on the likes of 'Sandy Dawe'. Debbie's lead vocal is sweet but rather characterless if you want to stand out in the world of pop/folk. Mind you, there'll be no complaints from those who like their vocals clear as crystal. And, hey, I shouldn't get too picky as we ought to be happy to offer encouragement when younger artists are keeping old songs alive. It's also nice to hear some song writing in a contemporary folk style and, here, the vibrant 'Rose On The Stem' stands out from the crowd. 'Freefall' shows equally good composition talents though in gentler mode. So, good to see more promising young artists reworking folk on a debut album that shows much, if not yet fully formed, talent.

Steve Henderson

**BILLY MITCHELL The Devil's Ground (Mawson-Wareham Records MWMCDSP70)**



I don't know what it is about Geordie's and native Americans but there certainly seems to be an empathic link between the cultures and this is more than ably demonstrated in Billy Mitchell's title track 'The Devil's Ground'. I first heard how obvious it was a while back when Jimmy Nail employed a similar cross-over with the music in Auf

Wiedersehen Pet. A bit odd you may think but it works really well considering the hardship both races (that's Northerners and Native Americans to us Southern pansies) have suffered throughout their working lives.

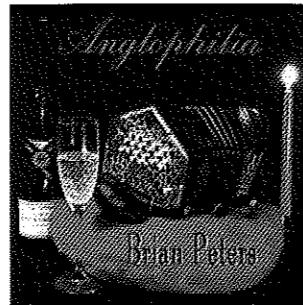
The gritty realism of the pits have spawned many fine writers including most notably Tommy Armstrong and more recently Jez Lowe and whilst Mitchell may not have been down there himself we couldn't have found a more eloquent spokesman in these modern times. Lest we forget that many men lost

their lives working deep underground for the betterment of our society it is with the fertile imagination in summing up the futility and loss of life in a few brief verses that hopefully will make us just that bit more aware of the sacrifices others had to endure to keep this Nation great - although I hate to say it myself at what cost? But, enough of this negativity and let's concentrate on the positive because there's plenty to be found on this recording. Firstly there's the vocal dramatics of what to me has to be one of the finest singer's on the planet and I say that unreservedly (along with loads of other fans that would doubtless back me up). The voice is equally matched with Billy's instrumental prowess on guitars, mandolin and harmonicas and being joined by the collaborative talents of Tony Davis, Stewart Hardy, Neil Harland, Jim Hornsby, Ray Laidlaw and Jane Wade this is indeed a winning combination.

With a splash of music hall magic 'The Pitman And The Blackin' and the rousing 'Newcastle Lad' which were both penned by Tyneside bard Bobby Nunn this brand of rallying cry lends itself ideally to the anthemic quality that was so uplifting in say Alan Price's 'Jarrow Song' years earlier. In much the same way that the Irish have found a way of creating humorous situations from death the Geordie's resilient attitude by expressing their passion for life against every adversity has to be admired - in much the same way as this album in fact. Cracking stuff! Further info from [www.billymitchell.co.uk](http://www.billymitchell.co.uk)

Pete Fyfe

**BRIAN PETERS Anglophilia (Pugwash PUGCD006)**



What a treat to find in my post-box one extremely wet evening, a copy of Brian Peters latest CD. And what's more, as described by Brian "A cornucopia of music played on Anglo-concertina".

Just to know it was Brian's latest CD was enough to get it on the CD player sharpish, being a long-time 'Peters addict', but any CD dedicated to that wondrous

instrument the Concertina (I've forgiven him a long time ago for choosing the wrong type), I was really looking forward to listening to.

I played it through, feet up, glass of wine in hand, blissful. Then, just to make sure it really was that good and stood the test, I played it again, and again. Yep third time through, it just kept getting better and better.

I have long admired Brian's versatility with the Anglo Concertina. His playing over the years just keeps on developing, and he seems to explore more and more what that little box can do. For anyone who thinks the Anglo-Concertina is an instrument with limitations, I beg you to go get this CD. It contains a wide variety of tunes and a few songs.

There are seventeen tracks in all, a mixture of English dance music; slow airs; ragtime; Brian's original compositions; interspersed with songs ranging from traditional to Beatles and Music Hall. As for favourites, the first track takes some beating and are three of Brian's own. They are "The Kissing Stones" which I find a really haunting tune, I just love that bare single reed sound, followed by "The Spud-Spattered Piper" and "Go Away Miss Ashton" which are equally good. There are stunning tunes from the Lancashire Winder manuscripts here, Turks March and Tom Fowler's Hornpipe to name but two, and a first for me, "The Entertainer" played on an Anglo. There's the plaintive tune, "The Northern Lass" We have a

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**Julie Ellison**

"Julie is a terrific guitar player and she also writes great songs. She shared the stage with me at the South Shields Guitar Festival and the discerning audience loved her. She stormed it!"  
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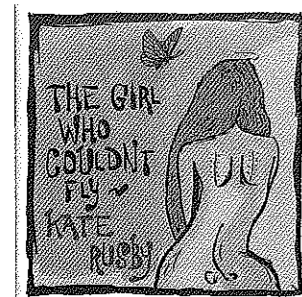
Lancashire Music Hall song "Chips and Fish", we have beautiful Minuets, again from the Winder Manuscripts, and so very much more, I'm not going to give it all away, but believe me it truly is a Cornucopia of wonderful songs and tunes played or accompanied on Anglo Concertina. What accompaniment there is on this CD which is not very much, is very subtle and just weaves in and out of the tunes. Paul Walker of the Rising Sun Band does a great job of adding treble and baritone English Concertina on two of the tunes.

All in all, it's yet another superb CD from Mr Peters. Here is a gifted guy that has a great love of his music and it shows. It would make the ideal Christmas present for any Concertina player, or for anyone who enjoys listening to great music and song.

There's still time to order your copy for Christmas. Just send a cheque to "B Peters" for £12 (which includes postage and packing) to 72 Sheffield Road, Glossop, Derbyshire, SK13 8QP

Angie Bladen

**KATE RUSBY The Girl Who Couldn't Fly (Pure Records PRCD017)**



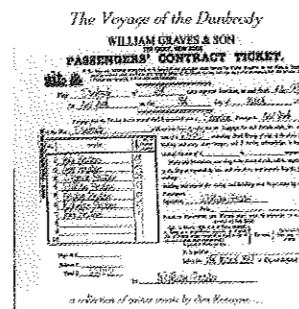
It's a title that refers to Ms. Rusby's fear of flying though, as usual, her angelic voice flies all over this record. If you're a fan of Folk music, it's likely that Kate Rusby has been on your radar for some time and you've got used to the high quality of her records. She treads a path that is predictable in its direction though always progressing in sophistication and it's just the same here.

With 'The Girl Who Couldn't Fly', Kate's song writing - something she feared just a few years ago - has progressed in leaps and bounds. As well as taking on the whole task on great tracks like 'Moon Shadow' and 'Wandering Soul', she's now confident enough to take some traditional lyrics like those on 'Mary Blaize' and add her own music. Of course, it must be tremendously reassuring to have hubbie, John McCusker, at the production controls and she's surrounded with an A-Team of folk musicians. This includes the familiar Cutting, McGoldrick, etc as well as Grimethorpe Colliery Brass and Coldstream Guards Brass. And, now, on this release, Roddy Woomble of Idlewild pops up on not one but three tracks. His duet on 'No Names' and harmonies on the other tracks helps to add a welcome variation to the record. Some of you may feel that the appearance of such a 'rock' musician is rather incongruous but the truth is that many young folkies have a wide range of musical influences and, better still, this works to perfection. You'd know no different if you listened to the songs alone without knowledge of the vocalist's background. They're just great performances.

So, again, Kate comes up with a record that will keep her fans happy though I have to say that I have one reservation about this star-studded affair - oh, did I say that Graham Coxon of Blur designed the sleeve? My concern is that the record as a whole is taken at pretty much the one pace - give or take the odd track. The fans will still drool but I'm not sure that there's enough dynamic to grow her audience. Mind you as she waves the flag for Folk music in all sorts of musical outposts already, I guess it's not much of a reason for concern.

Steve Henderson

**JIM RONAYNE The Voyage of the Dunbrody**



Jim Ronayne was born on Wirral fifty years ago and started playing acoustic guitar as a teenager with such influences as John Renbourn, David Quakley and John James.

He began playing solo acoustic finger style guitar semi-professionally on the north west folk circuit in the 1970s and spent many years as the guitar half of the very successful duo known

as 'Jasmin'. During this period he played support to such folk luminaries as Ewan McColl and Peggy Seeger and duetted with guitar icon John Renbourn. He has also performed on the prestigious Wirral International Guitar Festival. He now runs his own recording studio and spends his time composing and arranging music.

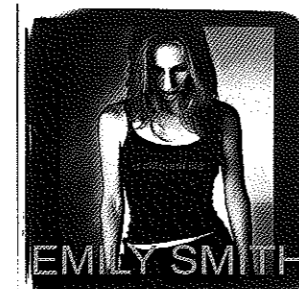
Listening to this, Jim's latest guitar CD, one is transported back to the Ireland of the 1840s when the good ship 'Dunbrody' propelled Irish immigrants across the raging sea to a new life in the USA.

This CD takes you on a musical journey bringing to life the muted landscapes and haunting beauty that was Ireland in the 19th century. Jim's music evokes dramatically haunting Celtic themes and melodies coupled with an ample mix of contemporary guitar pieces through ragtime to sophisticated blues.

Jim draws on his considerable guitar techniques to fashion an album, which is hauntingly romantic and exhilarating, and above all a 'must have' in any guitar lovers music portfolio. Jim Ronayne is the consummate guitarist's guitarist. "Voyage of the Dunbrody" can be purchased from [www.jimronayne.co.uk](http://www.jimronayne.co.uk) price £10, £2 of which will be donated to the Claire House (Children's Hospice) Charity Appeal.

Neil Hamilton

**EMILY SMITH A Different Life (White Fall Records WFRCD01)**



Well, I have to say this recording came as something of a surprise. Maybe it's because I generally flinch at reading the legend "...Young Scottish Traditional Musician of the year..." OK, so it's all very nice to achieve these awards but the stigma attached I personally feel (and loads of my friends as well) possibly colours ones preconceived judgement. I far

prefer to judge a book by its cover and whilst I appreciate that you have to utilise these accolades to further your career it's whether or not you can turn out the goods at the end of the day.

When I was first introduced to folk music it was a case of you were good or you were bad - pure and simple. Well, I'm pleased to report that here is a lady who knows her good stuff - pure and simple. Listening to Emily I'm reminded of the first time I heard Karan Casey sing with her emotive crystal clear diction. It's unaffected yet assured and the backing provided by Steve Byrne (guitar), Jamie McClennan (fiddle) and Brian Finnegan (flute) amongst others provides a solid base. Her performance of traditional songs including established titles such as "It Fell About The Martinmas" and "The Lowlands Of Holland" are

given an edge by daring to change the melodies and although perhaps not hitting the mark every time it's good to see she doesn't mind a bit of experimentation. In fact, her own song writing reveals a talent that could well see her following the path of the likes of Kate Rusby etc and on her own composition "Always A Smile", where the source material provided by her Grandmother's travels from Poland to Scotland shows that she has a gentle storytelling narrative that would put any of the similarly aged Top Of The Pops fame seekers to shame. I'm sure that she found this (as many musicians often do) difficult second album a hurdle but having cleared it with such aplomb I look forward to seeing what the future holds. For further information contact [www.emilysmith.org](http://www.emilysmith.org) where there's an excellent website.

Pete Fyfe

**SPIERS & BODEN Songs (Fellside Recordings FECD194)**

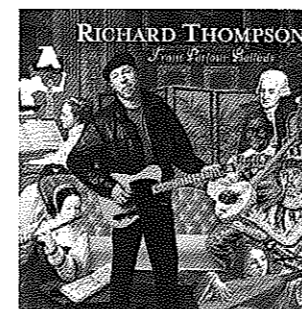


"Fill yer boots!" according to the sleeve notes at least. And well we might in the company of John Spiers and Jon Boden with this being the follow-up to their highly acclaimed album Tunes. As the title implies it is a collection of songs that will prove a must buy for their legions of fans and any self respecting folk archivist.

Even if you're not and you profess not to have the slightest interest in 'folk' music as a lay person you should at least appreciate the dynamics in which both musicians (and singers) imbibe the lyrics of a bygone age. Take, for instance the lads spicing up the hoary shanty chestnut 'Old Maui' with a genuinely gothic introduction of rippling fiddle and melodeon. I don't know why but as I'm writing this review I can almost taste the salt in the sea breeze whilst looking out of one of those panoramic window scenes from an old Moby Dick movie. Not bad for a bloke who lives six floors up overlooking a railway line. Glorious and oh, so theatrical but that sums it up for me where John & Jon are concerned - they're a pair of magicians who weave wonderful spells with great character in much the same way that Ron Moody portrayed Fagin in "Oliver".

Both Spiers & Boden have that certain chutzpah that draws you in as the story unfolds. Death, doom and destruction and let's face it when wasn't a traditional British ballad full of those attributes? The duo's attention to detail with searing chords and their obvious relish at getting to grips with the nitty gritty of their source material we couldn't have better ambassadors for the scene. On another subject, my preference for a good sleeve usually leads to the photographic artistry the likes of Bryan Ledgard. Having said that, the staged shot by new kids on the block David & David should help to garner them an award or two (they also composed the shots of Jim Moray's sleeve as well) so hearty slaps on the back all round. Further details from [www.spiersandboden.com](http://www.spiersandboden.com)

Pete Fyfe



**RICHARD THOMPSON Front Parlour Ballads (Cooking Vinyl COOKCD325)**

If you want to hear a record that shows how one man and his guitar can bring variety to music, this is it. It's been a number of years since Richard Thompson produced an acoustic record like this. Instead, preferring to adopt an electric band format to show

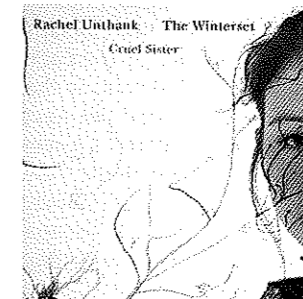
off his wares. Here, we find 'Front Parlour Ballads' is not only mainly acoustic but has been put together in Richard's garage studio. In interview, he's joked that he had few collaborators because there was insufficient physical space for them. But the predictability of the record ends with its basic, striped down sound.

With 'Let It Blow', Richard lets loose with one of his comic digs. He prods the philanderer who can't hold a marriage down and takes his wives to the same spot for their honeymoon. It's a side of his music that he often keeps for his live shows and rarely commits to record. However, the wit and observation are set at full power here and this is a song that amuses well after the first few plays. 'For Whose Sake' has a melody that reminds you of those centuries old tunes that he tackled on '1000 Years Of Popular Music'. Whilst a track like 'Miss Patsy' could have been plucked from the firmly traditional period of his career when he recorded with Linda - despite its lyrics that hint at some sort of career in cross-dressing. 'Old Thames Side' recalls his observations on London similar to those we heard on the 'Mock Tudor' record.

But, in case you're thinking that this record merely rehashes earlier triumphs, you'll find characters such as the man in 'A Solitary Life' who leaves a life of lonely obsession as well as the louse who wrecks lives while his wife stays at home on 'Should I Betray?' Indeed, it's an album packed full of character and characters that may sometimes wander on the dark side but reflect the variety that abounds in life. Thompson once again has produced a set of literate songs that observe the human soul in all its glory.

Steve Henderson

**RACHEL UNTHANK AND THE WINTERSET Cruel Sister (Rabble Rouser RR005)**



There is a lot of pleasure in finding a 'new' artist that excites you. There are none of the 'not sure it was as good as last time' sort of feelings to be found. So, it is with Rachel Unthank's 'Cruel Sister'. If you want some reference points, imagine a voice with the depth of June Tabor but the unashamed use of a northern accent that you'd hear from Kate Rusby.

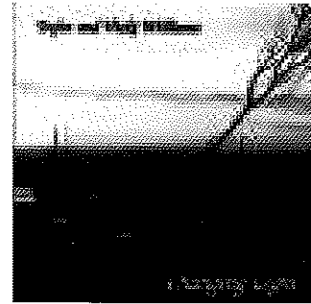
Her choice of music ranges from one of Cyril Tawney's finest with 'On A Monday Morning' to 'January Man', a song popularised by Christy Moore and others, taking in Nick Drake's 'Riverman' en route. You'll also find her dipping into traditional tunes like 'Bonny At Morn' and 'The Fair Flower Of Northumberland'. As you might guess from this widely read young lady, she's from a musical family. Indeed, one of the bonuses here is the appearance of sister, Becky. As often happens, the closeness of personal relationships adds to the quality of the vocal - don't ask me what it is, just that something extra that makes the voices entwined to perfection.

Rachel gets her own chance of a lead vocal on an acapella version of the traditional 'Rap Her To The Bank'. While she may not have the vocal clarity of her sister, it is something special when they get together. Musically, they keep it simple with a sparse piano and/or acoustic guitar backing on the majority of the record. There are some occasional added strings or melodeon but it's an uncluttered sound and all the better for it. As a record pretty well rooted in tradition, I'm not sure that we'll see it tearing up the music charts but there's

sufficient here to warrant your investigation - definitely, one to watch.

Steve Henderson

TREFOR & VICKI WILLIAMS Changing Light  
(101 REC CD 17)



As always it is a pleasure to review a CD by Welsh Artists and this one is all the better for those artists living in North Wales, my own patch. Trefor and Vicki have become more accomplished, both instrumentally and vocally, over the years and this album confirms that fact. Produced once again at 101 Recording Studio in Heswall by Mike Johnson, his superb engineering and production skills shine through.

When you take some nice songs, strong vocals and solid playing and enhance them with the quality of backing musicians such as Phil Hare on guitar, Mike O'Connor on fiddle, Dave Manley on flute, recorders & pipes and Mike Johnson on mandocello (not to mention Vicki's daughter, Faye Richards on backing vocals), you are on to a winner and that is exactly what we have here. The overall feel of the album is laid back and comfortable with no visible strain either vocally or instrumentally to detract from the listeners pleasure even though some tracks obviously stand out more than others.

The album opens with that well-known stock in trade traditional song so popular in the clubs of the 1960's & 1970's, "The Oak & The Ash". However, it receives far more sensitive treatment here than it ever did back then. Another well known traditional song follows, "Mad Tom/Boys of Bedlam". T & V spring another surprise here with a completely acapella version that rejoices in some great tight harmony singing whilst keeping up the pace and "bite" of this song about those poor demented souls in the Bedlam Mental Infirmary. I had forgotten how good the next song was having only heard it the once on Miv Cameron & Kevin Hughes debut CD, "The Empty Seat" but "Writing Home" has great lyrics set to a very melodic tune and performed equally well here with some nice instrumentation. The first of 5 songs penned by Vicki, "Strange Bird" follows and as usual is thoughtful and atmospheric.

Very aptly, Vicki's short song about Joseph Parry, "Walking Apart" is succeeded by the great man's most famous work, the wonderful "Myfanwy". This is another acapella rendition and a fine version with great harmonies from the duo. Vicki's song, "The Happy Ghost" inspired by a walk through my birthplace, Chester, reminded me of a not so happy apparition that really spooked a friend of mine a couple of years ago as he was working in an old shop under The Rows one night. I don't think I have seen anyone so scared in a long time. Not that I believe in such things you understand but it does make you wonder what tricks the mind can play.

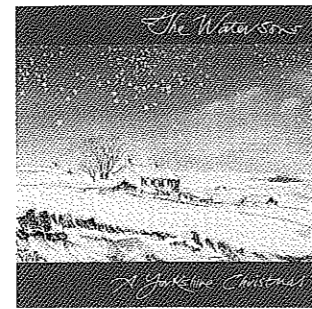
The title track, "Changing Light" is another tour de force by Vicki with some nice guitar work accompanying Vicki's thoughtful lyrics beautifully sung. The duo return to their tradition with the Elizabethan, "Then to the Maypole", performed in their impeccable acapella harmony style, before finishing with Vicki's, "The Travelling Song", written in 2002 on the way to Tenterden Folk Festival, Kent.

This is a fitting and polished ending to another highly enjoyable CD from Vicki & Trefor. One other word of praise for the well-

written and informative sleeve notes that always makes a reviewer's job so much easier and definitely adds to the listener's pleasure. The CD is available from Trefor & Vicki on 01745 852 658 or e-mail them at vicki.williams@talk21.com

Ian Chesterman

THE WATERSONS A Yorkshire Christmas  
(Witchwood WMCD 2029)



Well that's sorted out the music for the Christmas season (sorry Bing or is it just bling nowadays) as I've just received 'A Yorkshire Christmas' and being exiled in Lancashire it has already made me feel better. This is a collection of previously unreleased recordings from the Watsonson family. It features Christmas carols from The Watsonsons and stories told in local dialects

which reminisce about childhood experiences of Yuletide in Yorkshire.

The songs for 'A Yorkshire Christmas' are the last recordings made by the original line-up of the group - Norma, Lal & Mike Watsonson and Martin Carthy in 1980 at Crathorne Hall in North Yorkshire (originally recorded for a Radio Tees Christmas programme produced by David Cousins).

First the stories; they are utterly charming, engaging and bear repetition. Kit Calvert regales us with 'The Yorkshire nativity story', 'The blunderbus gun' and three others in a clear confident voice redolent of Christmas in days gone by. He is ably supported by Mabel Rose who tells us of carol singing, opening presents and waiting for Father Christmas. Norman Benson, from Whitby, graphically describes the Christmas shops and the atmosphere of Christmas eve.

Eleven festive songs, well known and much-loved Watsonson favourites, are distributed around the stories and include 'Here we come a-wassailing' which features in the article from Brian Bull elsewhere in this magazine. The 'Wassail Song' and 'Pace-egging song' complete the wassailing. The layout of the CD has been given careful thought to provide a run up to Christmas and on to New Year. It is a nostalgic journey, complete with crackling log fire and songs that relate back to the origins of the Christian church that transformed pagan elements of the winter solstice into the season of the Nativity of the new God.

It feels as though it would be good to play it a bit like an advent calendar, a track at a time on the appointed day. However, like a wildy curious and excited child, it is impossible to resist opening all the tracks, despite their familiar titles as each one is a ghost of Christmas past and an ideal Christmas present. Go on don't be a Scrooge buy it immediately for yourself and a copy for a friend and spread Christmas cheer and goodwill. I might complain a lot less about how early Christmas comes to the shops as it will entitle me to play this CD from October until January, a definite bonus.

This CD should have included scratch and smell patches to give us the aroma of Christmas past as everything else is there, the unique sound of The Watsonsons and down to earth tales of nostalgic times.

A magical 'Yorkshire Christmas' is available from www.witchwoodrecords.co.uk or contact Pinnacle Entertainment (01689 873 144) for stockists. Ken Bladen

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QUARTZ  
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JIM MAGEEAN  
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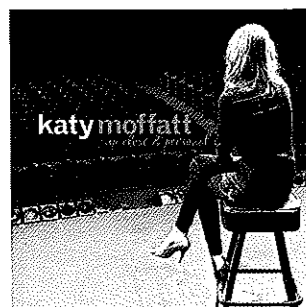
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## CD RE-ISSUES & COLLECTIONS



### KATY MOFFAT *Up Close & Personal* (FUEL 302 061 508 2)



For over 30 years, Katy Moffat has been performing songs that loosely fit into to what is now categorised as Americana music. The selection of songs *Up Close & Personal*, a live acoustic album, reflects not only her broad recording career but her breadth and depth of musical influences.

Moffatt has been a regular visitor to the UK in recent years and her audiences will be familiar with many of the tracks on this album. The CD opens with two ostensibly railroad influenced songs - 'This heart stops for railways crosses' and 'Amelia's railroad flat'. Moffat has the knack of varying the tempo of her music and demonstrates her range of social and musical influences no better than on the punchy 'Ruin this romance' (co written with Rosie Flores and Wendy Waldman) and 'Sojourner Truth (Ain't I am woman) - a Tom Russell collaboration - which revolves around the woman in the song title. Sojourner Truth was born in 1797 and freed from slavery at the age of 32. She went on to assertively champion the cause of women's suffrage and black people and, in 1851, she spoke at a women's convention in Akron, Ohio from which emerged the legendary phrase, "Ain't I a Woman?"

During her distinguished career, Moffatt has shared a close and profitable artistic relationship with Tom Russell, reflected on this album by several joint compositions as well as one that is solely penned by him. Musically they were meant for one another and this is demonstrated in no better fashion than on 'Walking on the moon' - an audience favourite if ever there was one.

One of the finest songs on the CD, however, is the Pebe Sebert, Pat Hubbard & John Fitzgerald ballad, 'Borderline' - a real treat that hits all the right spots. The strongly blues influenced Chris Smither song, 'Love me like a man' (recorded in the early 1970s by Bonnie Raitt); and, 'Never be alone again' (about a woman obsessed with her new companion, a six shooter handgun, demonstrates not only Moffatt's versatility but also, in the case of the latter composition, a little dark humour.

Written by Cindy Walker and Eddy Arnold received recognition in 1962 for writing 'You don't know me', a song that has since earned the right to be known as a mainstream standard. It's theme of unrequited love is familiar but Moffat gives it anything but the standard treatment. Rarely could any of the many artists, who have covered this song, have bettered her heartfelt sensitive rendition.

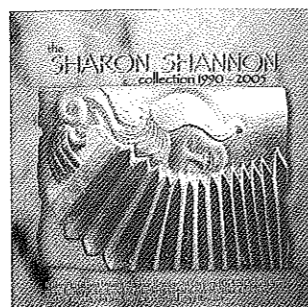
The virtual gig draws to a conclusion with one of two songs on the CD written by elder brother Hugh's, 'I know the difference now', and another railroad song, Jimmie Rodgers', 'Waiting for a train' (yodels and all), takes us to the final destination.

Moffat never fails to seduce and enchant in equal measure with a vocal style that retains the influence of her roots and

upbringing yet remains completely distinctive. On *Up Close & Personal*, her expressive vocals exude the swooning intimacy of her live performances with the aid of her only safety net - a battered Martin acoustic guitar. Whether you're familiar or not with Katy Moffatt's live performances, this one is a must to add to your collection

Lewis Jones

### SHARON SHANNON *Collection 1990-2005* (The Daisy Label DLCD012)



Here I am writing this review wondering why I've got a broad grin on my face. Well, to be honest I haven't heard some of these tracks in a while but the memories come flooding back of just how good Sharon and more importantly the arrangements (particularly on her early albums) were.

The muted set up of the opening track 'Cavan Potholes' is a prime example. Penned by Donal Lunny this tune is inspirational in so many ways. As a fusion of folk and jazz everything becomes clear with the introduction of Richie Buckley's sax taking over the lead halfway through. The tune itself has a laid back snappy syncopation that is so captivating that if you were to play it at a meal with your friends they'd all wind up saying "Who's that?" This isn't a chronological run-through of the accordionist's greatest hits but more a trip down memory lane for Shannon who, on reading the sleeve-notes has basically delved into her repertoire of fifteen years recording and compiled a personal favourites selection.

Whereas the first disk highlights her prowess as a tunes player, disk two showcases her role in accompanying artists such as Jackson Browne, Steve Earle and Sinéad O'Connor and, perhaps more surprisingly, I can't get into it. The only track here that stands out is the gorgeous sleazy French café feel to 'Libertango' backing the sadly missed Kirsty MacColl. As an introduction to the lady's musical talents it will prove a good calling card but all in all it's a bit of a mixed bag that didn't grab my attention quite as much as it might once have. Further info from [www.daisydiscs.com](http://www.daisydiscs.com)

Pete Fyfe

### VARIOUS ARTISTS *Hurry Home Early: the Songs of Warren Zevon* (Wampus WM-D45)



*Hurry home early* is the second 'tribute' CD produced by music artists to Warren Zevon, the great singer songwriter who died in 2003 following a long battle against inoperable lung cancer. Zevon's career spanned five decades, achieving early prominence in the first part of the 1970s in conjunction with close friend Jackson Browne. However, despite this initial success, Zevon

never achieved the same commercial success or the same plaudits as Browne, primarily because his songs very often explored and reflected the uncomfortable darker side of human relations. His songs often resembled a number of the plots and characters often seen in the emerging off beat American film genres. However, running through the dark exterior of his songs was an often wry disconcerting humour

The first tribute CD, *Enjoy Every Sandwich*, which included

household names, like Dylan, Springsteen, Earle, Raitt and Browne, is in stark contrast to this collection, *Hurry Home Early*, where the artists are probably better known in their own households than elsewhere. This, however, does not diminish the quality of performances from a range of mainly USA based indie groups and artists, (Rachel Stamp and Robb Johnson represent the UK contingent).

Missing from this collection are some of Zevon's classic songs - 'Werewolves of London' and 'Excitable Boy' spring immediately to mind. Not to worry, Zevon's portfolio of great songs was extensive and this selection covers the spectrum of his career from Last Train's Here performance of 'Desperado under the eaves' and The Matthew Show's 'Mohammed's Radio' to Phil Cody's truly splendid version of 'Splendid Isolation' and Alpha Cat's worthy cover of the excellent 'Reconsider me'.

In my view Robb Johnson can do justice to any song and his interpretation of 'Suzie Lightning' is so good you'd think he'd written it himself. There's also an honourable mention for 'Warm rain' a collaboration between Simone Stevens and Warren's son, Jordan.

Don't be put off by the lack of well known artists on *Hurry Home Early* - these artists do Zevon's songs complete justice. I suspect he would have been prouder of this unpretentious homage, on which the artists handle his songs with loving care and affection, than its more illustrious predecessor. What's certain is that Warren Zevon's departure has left a big hole in many lives and worthy tributes of this nature maintain not only his memory but also remind us of his rare greatness and generous spirit.

Lewis Jones

### VARIOUS ARTISTS *Missing Persians File (Songs and Poems of Les Barker)* - *Guide Cats for the Blind Vol. 2* (Osmosys Records OSMO CD 032)



Les Barker's masterstroke of handing over the vocals to others on the songs and poems on the first volume of 'Guide Cats For The Blind' was clearly a roaring success ..... because here comes Volume Two. Its appeal is suitably demonstrated by the opening track where John Humphrys recites 'The Stealth Comma'. I'm sure many of you will listen in the morning to

Humphreys on Radio Four laying into various politicians who steadfastly refuse to give a straight answer. So, it's a perfect juxtaposition when you hear him reciting a poem that lets Les have a go at 'smart' bombs while poking fun at the use of the comma - a Humphrys' hobby horse.

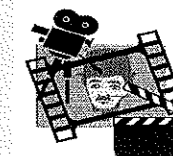
Les pops up later with a live rendition of his popular favourite 'Cosmo the Fairly Accurate Knife Thrower'. However, it's the guests that steal the show. They queue up by the dozen. Steve Tilston providing 'Dipsticks And Seals' - yes, listen carefully, it's classic Tilston but with a lyrical tongue firmly in cheek. Tom Paxton is willing to poke fun at an American standard with 'Will The Turtle Be Unbroken' - there's no ego here; clearly Tom does not see this as compromising his art. And why should he? It's all a bit of good fun. Or, at least, most of it is. You know that Les will slip in the odd social comment here and there. Yes, there's a message between those belly laughs.

So, how do you rate the tracks on a record like this? With difficulty is the answer. I can only suggest my favourite chuckling moments. As a 'Vicar Of Dibley' fan, I enjoyed Emma Chambers

'I Don't Like My Boomerang' and Roger Lloyd Pack's 'Non Sequiturs'. Jeremy Vine's 'Circular Retreat From Reading' has that authoritative feel that his TV persona puts across but the effect just adds to the absurdity. Nonny James appeals to the fun side with her rendition of 'Lorna The Library Book Burglar'. Indeed, it's the mix of fun and social comment that we got on the first volume though in this case it's a single CD rather than a double CD. Though there are signs that the idea has run its course, I'm sure you'll find many moments of amusement. And, after all, it's all in a good cause with proceeds going to The British Computer Association For The Blind.

Steve Henderson

## NEWSREEL



### BELL'S DELIGHT AT CONCERTINA HOMECOMING

The Saga of my concertina has come to a happy conclusion. Just two weeks after it was stolen, the thief tried to sell the instrument to Mark McCabe, manager of the Hobgoblin shop in Birmingham, who recognised it instantly. Mark alerted the police who apprehended the thief (German tourist!) and my concertina. Following negotiations with the Police, Mark was able to pass on the concertina to their Manchester Shop, from where Ken, the manager, was able to pass it on to a Festival goer on her way to Fylde. My concertina and I were re-united in time for my concert appearance.

I write to thank Mark McCabe and Ken and all at Hobgoblin for their very ready kindness and co-operation. I thank all those music shop owners who contacted me and also the dozens of people who emailed me with messages of support and sympathy - and the notes of joy when the news of the recovery spread. I am deeply grateful to all.

Alan Bell,  
Email: [alanbell@fylde-folk-fest.demon.co.uk](mailto:alanbell@fylde-folk-fest.demon.co.uk)

### ALBERT APPRECIATION

Musicians from the world of folk & jazz have banded together to pledge hundreds of signed CDs and songbooks towards an internet fundraising site.

For 20 years The Albert Inn, Bristol was home to The Albert Hole Folk Club. It was firstly home to Ian Storrer & Lorraine Carpenter, the tenants of the pub. Lorraine organised the folk club - it was second to none - while Ian, for nearer 25 years, ran one of the best jazz venues on the circuit. They committed themselves totally, and selflessly, to promoting music, and accommodating the musicians who played there.

The last few years have been an excruciating series of negotiations and legal challenges, in an effort to stay where they were, and to try and stave off the brewery's desire to hand the pub over for "development". Sadly, they lost their battle. On 1st September they left their home and livelihoods, with no compensation, and carrying a legal bill.

We have all lost a much-loved music venue run by two people whose dedication to specialist music is unsurpassed.

In an effort to show appreciation to Lorraine & Ian for all they

have done, and to give some support during these first few difficult months of starting to rebuild their lives, scores of musicians have come together to form the "Albert Appreciation" project. They have pledged over 200 signed CDs, plus books and T-shirts, for sale via [www.albertappreciation.co.uk](http://www.albertappreciation.co.uk) - and the list is growing. The site shop opens in November, so please get along there, stock up for Christmas with your favourite artists' CDs, and join in our message of thanks to this couple who have given so much of themselves to music.

#### HELP CHIDLINER HIT THE RIGHT NOTES!

ChildLine is calling on all those with a song in their heart to get In Tune with the 24-hour helpline for children and young people. In Tune offers music makers the chance to turn their musical notes into bank notes by raising vital funds for ChildLine.

Whether you're a school music teacher, choir singer, band member or music enthusiast, there are so many ways you can help at any time of the year - simply by doing something you enjoy! From a sponsored sing to staging a full orchestral concert in aid of ChildLine, the options are limitless.

Katia Major, regional fundraiser for ChildLine, says: "Every day calls from around 2,300 children are answered by ChildLine. However, the enormous demand for ChildLine's service means that hundreds more children each day are unable to get through and hear a message asking them to call again later. Every penny raised from our In Tune with ChildLine campaign will help ChildLine answer more calls, so we can comfort, protect and advise children who feel they have nowhere else to turn. With Christmas coming up, you may already have a concert or musical event planned - why not take the opportunity to raise valuable funds for ChildLine?"

For more information and to receive a participation pack filled with tips and ideas on how to run your In Tune event or activity, please contact Katia Major on 0207 650 3404 or email [kmajor@childline.org.uk](mailto:kmajor@childline.org.uk)

#### CLADDAGH RECORDS OCTOBER UPDATE

CLAN RANALD - Ciaran Tourish and Luke Ward - CR001. This is a fine lively album of tunes from two excellent young musicians. It features Martin on piano accordion and Luke on bouzouki. Guests including Steve Cooney and a famous relative Ciaran Tourish of Altan join them.

CAFÉ DIVA - Jeannette Byrne - MNCD003. Byrne, Chanteuse extraordinaire, is back with a new album of classic French songs, Café Diva. Byrne, the original chanteuse with Jack L and The Black Romantics, concentrates on keeping things distinctively French with the follow up to her hugely successful 1998 debut album. She carries the torch for Piaf-style songs because they allow her to express the love and sorrow of life.

HEARTLAND - Declan Masterson - FRCD05. This is Declan's latest release and it's a special one. The amount of work, effort and time that he has put into this must be astounding, which is hard to imagine as he works full time with Riverdance touring the world. He is joined by David Hayes on keyboard, Anthony Drennan on guitar and Keith Donald on sax amongst others, all seasoned musicians and they do a superb job in cradling the sound of Declan's instrument

AN ÁIT A BHFUIL DO CHROÍ - Niamh De Burca - CEFCD186. Niamh is an excellent traditional singer from Dublin who is well known among the traditional community. She has never made a record before, but she has gone the right way about doing it. With an excellent selection of songs in English and

Irish, she has assembled a cast of first class musicians and produced a recording that is a pleasure to listen to.

HEY DREAMER - John Spillane - CDHEYX1. John Spillane is a gifted songwriter, a talented guitarist, and an excellent live performer. He's no daw when it comes to studio work either - his albums are each and every one musically and artistically worthwhile. This one includes 'The Dunne's Stores Girl', which has become a bit of a hit in Ireland. And along with it comes a complimentary DVD recorded at the Spiegeitent in Cork last June.

WAYWARD SON - John Doyle - 744082. A founding member, of Solas, John's second album trades on two things - his very percussive rhythm playing, evident on many of the tracks, and his voice. The thing that only surfaces here and there is his remarkable fleet-fingered ability as a picker. That's a shame, since he's a very talented guitar player with strong innovation as he demonstrates from time to time. He's got some first-rate backing on this, with the almost-legendary Danny Thompson more than pulling his weight on bass, Kate Rusby, John McCusker, Liz Carroll and several others.

RUBICON - Duggan Brothers - MDMCD005. Members of Clannad, they have gathered together friends made over the years for a remarkable collaboration of talents. The wealth of heritage and tradition that enveloped their youth has stayed with the brothers and continues to inspire them. The Rubicon album is truly a reflection of the Duggan's' talents, both as songwriters and as performers. One could say that this album is a biography of sorts for the brothers, detailing a lifetime of experience and adventure!

#### LATEST WWW.FOLKING.COM NEWS

All the links to the topics below can be found on the front page of [www.folking.com](http://www.folking.com).

ALBUM & DVD REVIEWS - The album review section now boasts 590 independent reviews. New reviews include: \* Billy Mitchell - The Devil's Ground \* Boys Of The Lough - Boys Of The Lough \* Emily Smith - A Different Life \* Maddy Prior - Collections \* Rachel Unthank and the Winterset - Cruel Sister \* Richard Thompson - Front Parlour Ballads \* Rosie Doonan & Ben Murray - Mill Lane \* Steeleye Span - 35th Anniversary World Tour DVD.

GIG & FESTIVAL REVIEWS - The gig review section now boasts 99 live UK reviews. New reviews include: Walton Folk festival 2005.

OUR NEW CROPREDY 2005 FEATURE - Well done chaps. Gareth and the team should give themselves a pat on the back. Another great Cropredy and hopefully the start of many more to come

MP3 ARTICLE SECTION - I believe that this selection gives an excellent representation of the scene and features both new and established artists. You will now find the MP3 actually embedded into the album review. NEW SECTION Featuring: \* "A Cut in Pay" from Brave Faces by Rory McLeod \* "Kilfenora" from When All Is Said And Done by Danu \* "Hollow" from Eveningland by Hem \* "Be Lucky" from As You Were by Show Of Hands \* "Song 3" from Songs From The Blue House - Too \* "When First I Came To Caledonia" from Kind Letters by Martin Simpson \* "God Speed (The Snow Goose)" from The Kelping by Tom Napper & Tom Bliss \* "Sweeter" from Living Room by Naama Hillman.

MOVIE CLIPS SECTION - The live video clip section has now

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## The Watsonsons



## A Yorkshire Christmas

## The Most Heart-Warming Album of the Year

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been updated. Our latest additions include: Emma Reid... Fiddlers 4... Jez Lowe & the Band Pennies... Jim Malcolm. Country Joe McDonald... RALPH MCTELL MINI MPEG MEDLEY... Sharon Shannon... Nick Burbridge...and a classic for our archive from John Tams.... You will need to be running Windows XP or Media Player 9 or above to view these files.

**BRAND NEW MESSAGE FORUM** - If you're are a band or a promoter, Folking.com offers: a free bulletin board for you to post gig details, album releases and PR events. If you're a fan it's a great place to share you're views with other like minded people. There is also lots of interesting folk related articles for you to enjoy like latest tour information and last minute news

**THE EVENTS DIARY** - Artists and promoters can automatically add their "gig" dates to this free service. All you need to do is to go to the events diary at [www.folking.com/events](http://www.folking.com/events) and type in the details of your event. Once you have done this your gig will automatically be added to the calendar. Don't forget to register first for this free service before you add the gig or festival details. If you're a fan you can customise your own gig diary by adding all the gigs you plan to go to into your own personalised diary.

**THE DATABASE** - This is a unique section of the site that allows artists and fans alike to add information into any of the following categories: Albums, Artists-Groups, Ceilidh, Dance, Festivals, Folk Clubs, Magazines, Movies, MP3 Downloads, Music Resources, Music Shops, Organisations, Promoters, Radio Shows, Recording Studios and Venues.

**AUCTIONS & CLASSIFIED ADS** - This section of the site is under used. It has the potential to be the eBay of the folk world. It's free and very easy use, so if you're looking to sell something within the folk genre then why not check it out.

Best Wishes... Darren and the rest of the Folking team [folkmaster@folking.com](mailto:folkmaster@folking.com)

### THE FOLK MAG

Bob Taberner tells us that The Folk Mag ([www.btinternet.com/~radical/thefolkmag](http://www.btinternet.com/~radical/thefolkmag)) has just been updated. Look out for the following features accessible from the Articles page:

**The Wroth Silver Ceremony** One of the ceremonies that Doc Rowe is a regular attendee at is Warwickshire's Wroth Silver and they now have a web site Thanks to William Waddilove, co-author of Wroth Silver Today, the book of the ceremony, for tipping me off.

**A Brief History of Cajun, Creole and Zydeco Music** The effects of Hurricane Katrina threaten the future of traditional music forms like New Orleans jazz and Cajun and Zydeco music. Many Cajun and Zydeco musicians made their homes in New Orleans. Hopefully, all the music scenes will survive.

Plus news, reviews, song and dance diaries, etc,

### BAND OF TWO

Band Of Two aka Pete Fyfe & Garry Blakeley (who incidentally celebrate 15 years together as professional musicians in 2006) play good-time Celtic/Irish music on fiddle, guitars, tenor banjo and vocals.

Both musicians careers have seen them working with highly respected bands including; The Fyfe Brothers, The Kitchen Band, Eavesdropper, Collaboration, Schooners Rig, Better Days and more recently The Tabs - a particular favourite at Cropredy! In addition Garry often performs alongside a host of

fiddle luminaries including Peter Knight (Steeleye Span), Chris Leslie (Fairport Convention), Brian McNeil and Ian Cutler etc as part of the 'Feast Of Fiddles' tour.

But it is as Band Of Two that they have established themselves as favourites with 'family' audiences. Featuring a brand of goodtime Celtic music with a conviction rarely heard these days the duo's dynamic instrumental dexterity and highly entertaining banter have seen recent folk club appearances greeted with quotes from organisers such as "The most entertaining act we've ever had!" and "...are they retro-folk anarchists!"

Individually and collectively they have performed for an evening for Dawn French and Lenny Henry to numerous festivals including Trowbridge, Fairport's Cropredy Festival, Cambridge Folk Festival, the Great British Beer Festival and the International Festival Of The Sea. 2005 also saw Band Of Two performing at the Cheltenham Gold Cup.

Recently, Band Of Two have been providing a festival-within-a-festival package where they set up their own PA which caters for acoustic duos/trios (usually in a Beer Tent situation) and are on call in the afternoon from 1pm to 5pm performing their own sets and joining other guesting musicians and singers.

If you would like a complimentary CD or to book BAND OF TWO please contact Pete on

020 8680 4302

Website: [www.bandoftwo.com](http://www.bandoftwo.com) E Mail: [petefyfe@aol.com](mailto:petefyfe@aol.com)

### FOOTSTOMPIN OCTOBER NEWS

**WORTH THE WAIT!** Laeback - Chris Stout & Catriona McKay: We've been waiting for this CD for ages and at last it has arrived! Featuring Chris on fiddle & viola and Catriona on Scottish harp, this is a lovely CD blending traditional Shetland tunes and modern compositions. Both are members of the thrilling seven-piece Shetland band Fiddlers' Bid and a top-class duo of some ten years standing. Check out a track on our radio programme! £11.25 (£12.50 for first time customers)

**THE FINEST PIPERS!** The Northern Meeting (double album): This is a double CD featuring selected highlights from the period 1995-2004 recorded at the Northern Meeting, arguably the world's most prestigious piping competition. There is over 140 minutes of light music from the Silver Star competition and piobaireachd from the Gold Clasp competition and features the playing of the greats including Alasdair Gillies, Murray Henderson, Angus MacColl, Willie McCallum, Gordon Walker, Greg Wilson, James Murray, Bruce Gandy, Mike Cusack and Dr Angus MacDonald. The music was originally recorded by BBC Radio Scotland and is now released commercially for the first time. A wonderful piping album! £12.59 (£13.99 for first time customers)

**THE BORDERS AND BEYOND!** Momentum - CrossCurrent: The band members originate from the Scottish Borders, England and Ireland but, it is the innovative crossing of their traditions that makes CrossCurrent such a musically diverse band. This is a nicely put together album with a full sound and some great playing. A mix of traditional and self penned material plus some songs. The Toun Piper on the first track is a good tune written by Borders fiddler Shona Mooney and The Potato & Egg Shop by Lillias Kinsman-Blake is another stand-out composition. I particularly liked the Burning of the Piper's Hut set with the two fab strathspeys including Nathaniel Gow's Mr Baillie of Mellerstoun. I do love a cello in traditional music! £11.25 (£12.50 for first time customers)

**FULL OF PLUCK!** Something Else - Celine Donoghue. We have just acquired this debut CD featuring champion tenor banjo player Celine Donoghue. She's also a fine fiddler and on this 13 track CD the variety and depth of the works is impressive. She has surrounded herself with a formidable array of guest musicians including Brian McNeill and a Balinka - a 4 man Russian folk ensemble. £11.25 (£12.50 for first time customers)

**LONG AWAITED RE-RELEASE!** Bothy Culture - Martyn Bennett: Martyn recorded this ground-breaking and now famous CD in 1997. It is a totally amazing fusion of classical styles with contemporary rhythms and technologies, which remains true to his Celtic roots. All of the music was composed, performed, recorded and mixed at home by Martyn. We are very happy to say that after going out of print, Bothy Culture was re-issued by in September 2005 due to popular demand. CD £11.25 (£12.50 for first time customers)

**BEFORE ITS TIME!** Boneshaker - Cantrip: The band made this album for their recent visit to the USA. It's not yet released in the UK however we have some advance copies for our customers. There's more fine piping from Dan Houghton with dual fiddling from Gavin Marwick & John Bews and superb rhythm courtesy of Cammy Robson on guitar. £11.25 (£12.50 for first time customers)

**A Scottish Institution:** Chic Murray

Chic Murray, one of Scotland's greatest comedians, was born Charles Thomas McKinnon Murray in Greenock, in 1919. He began an apprenticeship in engineering at Kincaid's shipyard in 1934 whilst employing his musical talents in amateur groups such as The Whinhillbillies and Chic and His Chicks. He formed a double-act with his wife, 4 feet 11 inches high Maidie Dickson (?a clever wee lass, as a feed, a singer and accordionist?). Billed as "The Tall Droll with the Small Doll" their combination of jokes and songs made them a popular attraction on television and in theatres throughout the country. The peak of their success was in 1956 when they appeared in the Royal Variety Show at the London Palladium. Later, working as a solo act, with a forbidding expression and omnipresent "bunnet", Chic offered a comic vision of the world that was absurd, surreal and absolutely unique. Much mimicked and much loved by his fellow professionals, he acted in films such as Casino Royale (1967), appeared as the headmaster in Gregory's Girl (1980) and played Liverpool Football Club manager Bill Shankly in the musical play You'll Never Walk Alone (1984).

He was brought up in the land of sugar, ships and showers and got a lot of his tales from the Tail of the Bank where joiners, platers, plumbers in the yard, were his main source of supply. Chic was a very funny man and originality in style was the keynote - his fun was plucked from life. He perhaps combined the humour of two of his mates and the character that emerged was a riot. The two workmen, who were the subject of his impersonation, probably didn't twig it but they certainly enjoyed the result.

A typical Chic Murray joke: I met this chap at the Olympics. I said to him, "Excuse me but are you a pole vaulter?" he replied, "No, I'm German, but how did you know my name was Walter?"

Chic Murray died in Edinburgh in 1985 at the age of sixty-five.

**The Chic Murray Show - Live in Concert:** This CD is irresistible! For so many people, Chic Murray was Scotland's funniest comedian. With an introduction by Archie McCulloch, this recording brings you the best of the humour for which Chic Murray was so famous. We hope that in capturing Chic Murray's unique comic talent on CD, the listener can enjoy Chic's own

wonderful brand of jokes, story-telling and singing for all time. £11.25 (£12.50 for first time customers)

**Foot Stompin' Internet Radio**

The latest programme features tracks from Catriona McKay and Chris Stout, Father Sydney MacEwan, CrossCurrent, Pipe Sergeant Gordon J. Walker, MacAlias and Keep it Up. You can tune in here: <http://www.footstompin.com/radio>

**New Books (10% discount on all sales after first purchase.)**

**The College of Piping Highland Bagpipe Tutor - Part 1 (with CD Rom):** The College of Piping's famous green tutor written by Seumas MacNeill and Thomas Pearston. The only way to start a piping career! Join the thousands of other pipers worldwide who have learned the College way. New tutors come and go but for fifty years the College Tutor One has stood the test of time. With a click of the mouse you can not only hear how your first piping movements should sound but actually see them being played. £11.25 (£12.50 for first time customers.)

**Bagpipe Music For Dancing:** Compiled by Captain John A MacLellan, MBE. A book of great tunes! Every piper worthy of the name should be able to play properly for dancing and these instructions will help the piper to gain confidence and for those just learning the instrument they will provide a set of rules and information much of which can only be gained by experience. £11.69 (£12.99 for first time customers.)

**Foot Stompin' Celtic Music.** Read the news and reviews. Discuss the articles and CDs. Hear the Scottish music from Scotland's bright stars. [www.footstompin.com](http://www.footstompin.com)

### CHORD CONVERTER

Graham Dixon tells us that he had a Chord Converter on his website - two circles of card with the twelve notes going round on both cards, original key on outside card and new key on the inside card. He first came across this method of converting Chords/Keys at school in about 1970. He's received a phone call followed by a written communication from Marc Oglesby, who is the inventor of the chord converter and has the registered patent, to say that he has sole copyright on this item and was threatening legal action if Graham did not remove the said converter within 48 hours of his message. Graham has therefore removed the converter.

### PADDY MALONEY - GOLD BADGE RECIPIENT 2005

Paddy Maloney, founder of Irish folk group the Chieftains, inherited his love for traditional music from his parents. His first instrument was a plastic tin whistle bought by his mother when he was six. By the age of eight Paddy was learning to play the uilleann pipes.

The Chieftains were created by Paddy in 1962. His leadership of the traditional group over the past 40 years has led to world-wide recognition of Irish music and universal acclaim. In addition to his work with the Chieftains Paddy has worked as a successful soloist, appearing on compilations with Mick Jagger and Sting. In 1982 he appeared with Jackson Browne at the Hammersmith Odeon in London and played tin whistle on 'Rain Clouds' - the flip side of the Stevie Wonder/ Paul McCartney hit single 'Ebony and Ivory'.

Paddy has composed the scores for films such as 'Tristan and Isolde', 'The Year of The French', 'The Ballad of the Irish Horse' and 'Treasure Island'. The 1990s saw his film work continue with 'Two if by Sea', 'Agnes Brown' and 'Circle of Friends'.



Paddy Maloney was awarded an honorary doctorate degree of music from Trinity College, Dublin in 1998 for his work with the Chieftains. On the 26 October 2005, Paddy Maloney was presented with a prestigious Gold Badge Award, on behalf of the British Academy of Composers & Songwriters and its sponsor, MCPS.

Held annually since 1974, the Gold Badge Awards honour those whose work behind the scenes of the music industry is vital to the success of the professional composer and songwriter.

#### MIRIAM BACKHOUSE

We've missed you. Where have you been? When can you do a gig for us? Questions Miriam was asked during her 2004/5 tour. The answers are... "Raising a family and performing in South Africa." and "As soon as possible."

Now the children have flown the nest, her family say that she must revive her UK Folk Singing career. After the overwhelming success of her headline performances at Folk Clubs, Arts Centres and Festivals around the UK, Miriam is now preparing another tour in 2006.

She has an agent for Festivals - Iconic Music, info@iconicmusic.com and Mother Earth records www.motherearthmusic.co.uk will re-release "Gypsy without a road" and launch a new album. Her repertoire includes the old favourites, plus some of the songs she has written about South Africa and newly recorded English Traditional songs. If you would like more details, or to make a booking, please contact her by emailing: mim1@telkomsa.net

#### Young Folk Finalists gear up for December showdown

The six British folk acts who will compete for the coveted 2006 BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Award at The Sage, Gateshead, on Friday 9 December, have been announced.

This year's talented line-up includes the Scottish six piece ensemble Fiddle Dee Fiddle Dum; a Newcastle-based collective called Southwind; a Cumbrian melodeon player; a 16-year old girl from Aberdeenshire with a fondness for Doric language songs; an 18-year old guitarist from Lincolnshire and a fiddler inspired by AC/DC.

The competition, now in its seventh year, is a nationwide search for the most gifted youngsters playing folk and traditional music. The six short listed musicians will compete to record a session for The Mike Harding Show, which broadcasts every Wednesday on Radio 2 at 8.00pm, and a high profile slot at the Cambridge Folk Festival.

The semi-finals were hosted by Mike Harding at The Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal, on Wednesday 26 October. Mike says of the competition: "We are extremely proud of this event and to be bringing youngsters, playing the traditional music of these Islands, to the forefront. The standard of the musicianship was the highest yet - it just gets better and better every year. If you close your eyes it would be difficult to believe these performers were aged only between 15 and 20."

Highlights of the BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Awards Final will broadcast on The Mike Harding Show on Wednesday 14 December.

The full prize is a specially recorded session for The Mike Harding Show, slots at both the Cambridge Folk and Towsley Village Festivals and a year's free membership of the

Musicians' Union.

The six finalists are Joe O'Connor, Shona Donaldson, Southwind, James Chadwick, Matthew Watson, and Fiddle Dee Dum. Further details below:

Joe O'Connor is 16 and has been playing the melodeon for five years. He started playing through a Folkworks scheme at school, being taught by fellow Cumbrian Mike Willoughby. He has since gone on to perform in his school Ceilidh band and was part of the 'Road to the North' tour with Folkestra earlier this year, playing alongside the Kathryn Tickell Band, Alistair Anderson and Louis Killen, as well as the Old Rope String Band. His musical influences include Julian Sutton, Andy Cutting, Sharon Shannon, 422 and the Old Rope String Band, along with the Unusual Suspects and Jools Holland.

16 year old Shona Donaldson hails from Aberdeenshire, and has been singing for about six years. Coming from a musical background, Shona has competed in local Fiddle competitions and Doric poetry competitions for many years, and was inspired to start singing when she saw others enjoying it at the competitions. She is an enthusiast of Bothy Ballads, is particularly interested in Doric language and songs, and her major influences are Jock Duncan, Geordie Murison and Joe Aitken. She has twice been a finalist in the BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year and studies at The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (home to the current holder of this award - Lauren MacColl).

Southwind have only been playing together for a year in the current line up but they have known each other for numerous years and the band has existed in some form or another since 1998. When they started, all of the members were beginners on their instruments and aged only nine and 10. At one point a much larger group, many of the older players have since gone away to University and the current line up of only six players has evolved. They have recently recorded their debut CD and have supported Blazin' Fiddles as well as playing at the Royal Festival Hall in London and the Tall Ships Race in Newcastle. Their main influences include Stewart Hardy, Ian Stephenson and Kathryn Tickell, as well as a number of students from the Folk and Traditional Music degree in Newcastle.

18 year old James Chadwick has been playing acoustic guitar for 10 years. His main inspiration when he was younger came from his father, who used to play guitar and sing to him. His parents also used to play tapes of Steve Knightley playing live when they were on long car journeys, which also inspired him. The highlight of his career so far has been playing at Strawberry Fair and since leaving school this year he is trying to make it as a full time musician.

Matthew Watson hails from Ross-shire, and at 15 years old is one of the youngest participants in this year's semi-final. He started playing fiddle about five years ago with the Kiltlearn fiddlers and started playing whistles about two and half years ago. He won a coveted Danny Kyle award at Celtic Connections with the band Tassle Bandits and has participated in Donald Shaw's Harvest. His main influences include Brian Finnegan, Gordon Gunn, Bruce Molsky, and AC/DC

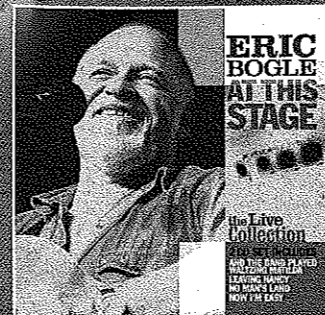
The final act is a six piece ensemble from all over Scotland called Fiddle Dee Fiddle Dum. They band met at the National Centre of Excellence in **Traditional Music, Plockton, in 2004 and formed earlier** this year, when the opportunity for a national tour came up. They come from a wide background of musical experiences, as well as a wide geographical spread, and their influences range from Julie Fowlis to Session A9, and from Martyn Bennet to Blazin' Fiddles.

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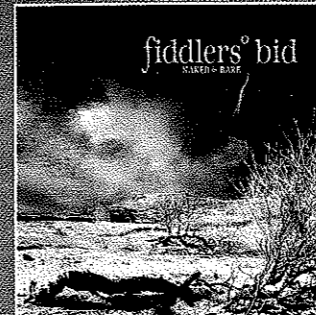
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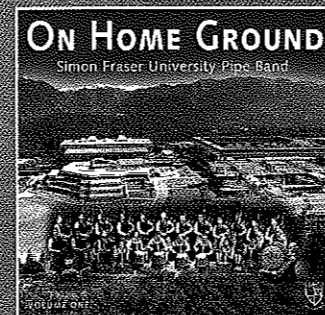
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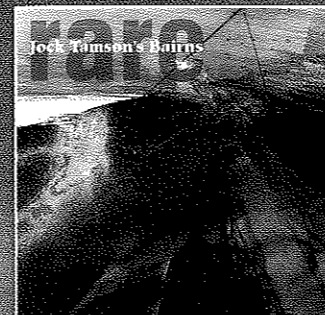
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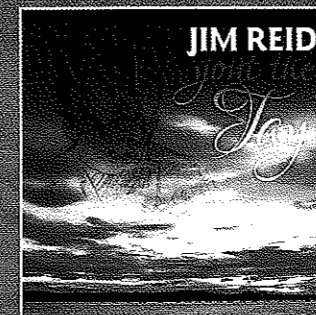
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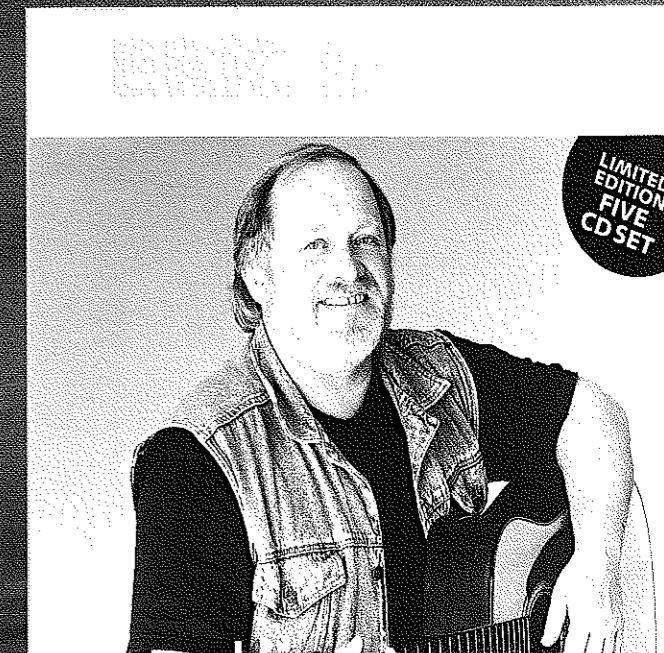
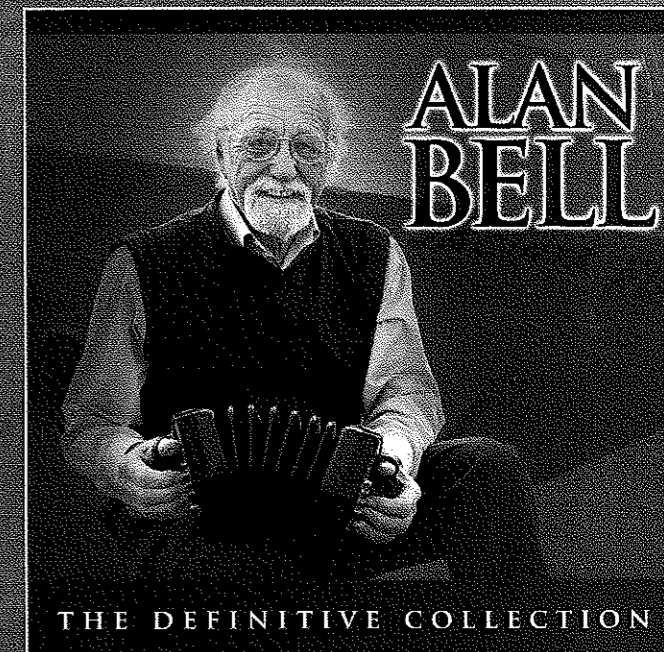
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