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EDDI READER

WINTER EDITION 2008

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Folk North West Contact Information



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Please note that the copy date for the next issue is January 10th 2009.



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EDITORIAL

On Saturday 8th November I enjoyed a great day out, tinged with sadness, at the final Maghull Day of Music. As usual I stewarded the downstairs room for the concert involving the local primary and secondary schools. Once again I was really impressed by the quality of the performances, particularly from the primary schools, who excelled themselves this year. So sad that they will not have the opportunity to do it again next year as they clearly thoroughly enjoyed it and were well supported by a roomfull of people.

The highlight of the day for me were the performances of Johnny Silvo, he was just fantastic. A wide variety of songs, incredible rapport with the audience (young aspiring folk performers take note) and what a voice. I had forgotten just how good he was and he is even better than that! He even got the usually reticent Maghull Day of Music audience to sing along with gusto.

A close second was Rory McLeod who is amazing. I am not a fan of his repertoire of music but somehow that doesn't matter as his skill and complexity of delivery completely take over and time flies. It was also good to see Vin Garbutt back to match fitness and in fine form.

Isambarde were in better form in the evening than in the afternoon but overall I was impressed by their talent, respect for the music and endeavour.

Finally we must all say a big thank you to the Maghull Day of Music committee for 16 wonderful years.

Ken Bladen
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CHAIRMAN'S JOTTINGS

So many people have asked me about the concert held to celebrate the life of John Wright... "Long Hello's... Short Goodbyes", at the Journal Tyne Theatre, Newcastle upon Tyne in September.

It turned out to be a truly memorable evening and a fitting tribute to a man whose singing touched so many.

It would be wrong of me to pick out individuals, suffice it to say, every single person who gave their time and talent delivered the performance of their lives and can be justifiably proud of their contribution.

Almost 500 people were present and gave the artists a standing ovation at the finale.

On behalf of Barbara, John's widow, I would like to thank everyone who took part and to the audience who travelled great distances to be there. I know by what people have said to me that it was an evening they would never forget.

A DVD will be available early in the new year of the evenings proceedings, so keep an eye on the John Wright Music website as to how you can purchase a copy.

Cheers for now

David Jones



What Folk programmes are on the radio TODAY?

compiled by Rob Dunford

SUNDAY

1.00 - 3.00pm BBC Radio Scotland - THE REEL BLEND presented by ROBBIE SHEPHERD
7.00 - 8.00pm (Rpt) BBC Radio Scotland - PIPELINE presented by GARY WEST
8.00 - 10.00pm BBC Radio Shropshire - SUNDAY FOLK presented by GENEVIEVE TUDOR also on BBC Radio Stoke
10.00 - 11.00pm RTE - THE LATE SESSION presented by AINE HENSEY
8.00 - 11.00pm Downtown Radio - COUNTRY CEILIDH presented by TOMMY SANDS

MONDAY

7.00 - 8.00pm Oldham Community Radio - SOUNDS OF FOLK presented by ALI O'BRIEN
7.00 - 9.00pm (via) BBC Radio Derby - FOLKWAVES presented by MICK PEAT and LESTER SIMPSON

TUESDAY

8.00 - 10.00pm Chorley FM - CHORLEY FOLK presented by JAMES BLATCHLEY
8.00 - 10.00pm BBC Radio Scotland - GLOBAL GATHERING presented by MARY ANN KENNEDY
9.00 - 10.00pm (Rpt) BBC Radio Merseyside - FOLKSCENE presented by STAN AMBROSE/GEOFF SPEED
9.00 - 10.00pm MANX RADIO - THE FOLK SHOW presented by JOHN KANEEN

WEDNESDAY

7.00 - 8.00pm BBC Radio 2 - FOLK ROOTS & ACOUSTIC MUSIC presented by MIKE HARDING
9.00 - 9.50pm RTE - THE ROLLING WAVE presented by PETER BROWNE

THURSDAY

8.00 - 10.00pm BBC Radio Scotland - TRAVELLING FOLK presented by ARCHIE FISHER
9.00 - 10.00pm BBC Radio Merseyside - FOLKSCENE presented by STAN AMBROSE/GEOFF SPEED

FRIDAY

7.00 - 8.00pm (Rpt) Oldham Community Radio - SOUNDS OF FOLK presented by Ali O'Brien
8.00 - 9.00pm BBC Radio Lancashire - THE DRIFT presented by PHIL BROWN

SATURDAY

3.00 - 4.00am (Rpt) BBC Radio 2 - FOLK, ROOTS & ACOUSTIC MUSIC presented by MIKE HARDING
7.00 - 8.30pm BBC Radio Scotland - TAKE THE FLOOR presented by ROBBIE SHEPHERD
7.00 - 10.00pm BBC Radio Wales - CELTIC HEARTBEAT presented by FRANK HENNESSY
8.00 - 9.00pm RTE - THE SOUTH WIND BLOWS presented by PHILIP KING
8.00 - 10.00pm BBC Radio Ulster - FOLK CLUB presented by COLUM SANDS/SIOBHAN SKATES
9.00 - 10.00pm BBC Radio Scotland - PIPELINE presented by GARY WEST
9.00 - 10.00pm RTE - CEILIDH HOUSE presented by KIERAN HANRAHAN
10.00 - 12.00pm (Rpt) BBC Radio Scotland - TRAVELLING FOLK presented by ARCHIE FISHER

RADIO FREQUENCIES

FM 92.4-94.7/MW 810
FM 92.4-94.7/MW 810
FM 96.0
FM 94.6
MW 567/LW 252
MW 1026

FM 99.7
see below

FM 102.8
FM 92.4-94.7/MW 810
FM 95.8/MW 1485
MW 1368

FM 88 - 90.2
MW 567/LW 252

FM 92.4-94.7/MW 810
FM 95.8/MW 1485

FM 99.7
FM 95.5

FM 88 - 90.2
FM 92.4-94.7/MW 810
MW 882
MW 567/LW 252
MW 1341
FM 92.4-94.7/MW 810
MW 567
FM 92.4-94.7/MW 810

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

BBC Radio Derby	FM 95.3, 104.5, 96.0 (Buxton)	MW 1116	Tel:- 01332 361111
BBC Radio Lancashire	FM 95.5, 103.9, 104.5,	MW 855, 1557	Tel:- 01254 262411
BBC Radio Merseyside	FM 95.8	MW 1485	Tel:- 0151 7085500
BBC Radio Scotland	FM 92.4 - 94.7	MW 810	Tel:- 0141 4226000
BBC Radio Shropshire	FM 96.0		Tel:- 01743 248484
BBC Radio Stoke	FM 94.6, 104.1	MW 1503	Tel:- 01782 208080
BBC Radio Ulster	FM 92.4 - 95.4	MW 873, 1341	Tel:- 02890 338000
BBC Radio 2	FM 88.0 - 90.2		Tel:- 08700 100222
BBC Radio Wales	FM 93.9 - 95.9, 103.7 - 103.9	MW 882	Tel:- 029203 22000
Chorley FM	FM 102.8		Tel:- 01257 262661
Downtown Radio	MW 1026		Tel:- 02891 815555
Manx Radio	FM 89.0, 97.2, 103.7	MW 1368	Tel:- 01624 682600
Oldham Community Radio	FM 99.7		Tel:- 0161 6244004
RTE (Radio Teilifis Eirann)	via ASTRA Satellite, LW 252	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**, Tuesday to Thursday, usually 11.15pm - 01.00am, presenters Fiona Talkington and Verity Sharp, and the **World and Roots** programme, also Radio 3, now on Monday 11.15pm - 01.00am. 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 10.00pm -12.00pm and Monday to Friday 10.30pm - 12.30am with Iain Anderson. 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, Radio Shropshire/Stoke and Radio Lancashire 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.

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".

The North West remains a good region in which to hear folk music on the radio, even more so with Community Radio development. Hearing comments from folkies in other areas and looking at the situation elsewhere, we've certainly got what many other regions have not (and envy) - It is all well worth nurturing, not least for regional flavour.

Rob Dunford

LIVE REVIEWS



JOHN FINNAN FRANK WELCOME & ANDY CHRIMES at the Hungry Horse Acoustic Folk Club, The Boat Museum Theatre, Ellesmere Port on 17 July 2008

Finnonstoned at MTGG, a modest gathering of silver haired folkies part filled the small room to check whether this really was the John Finnan of yesteryear and were delighted to see him perform standing rather than use the stool thoughtfully provided by the organisers...we learned later that John finds the haemorrhoids more painful than the gout! Aply supported by the inimitable Frankie "fingers" Welcomme and Andy "thumbs" Chrimes, John limped to the stage and the evening dragged to a start.

The first half was largely taken up by Andy's telling of the old folk tale "sniff the snuff". We slipped out for a pint and a bar meal and returned just in time for the punch line such as it was. This wisely left just enough time for the band to make a brave attempt at one fairly close harmony song before the interval. Frankie (ex Finnfolk) was largely hidden by his double bass which worked well... in fact more bass and banjo might have lessened the effect of the singing but the group are obviously still learning their trade.

Following the welcome interval the instruments sounded more in tune and the audience began to take a little more interest. John impressed me with the old music hall ploy of running onto the stage (this tells him how quickly he can get off if the crowd become restless). The Rose of Allendale is one of my favourite songs and I am so pleased that John did not attempt it. Perhaps it was the alcohol kicking in or perhaps sympathy but the audience began to slowly mellow... in fact, towards the end of the set, one or two were calling out " Frankie Andy Johnnie, Frankie Andy Johnnie ". John apologised that he didn't know that one and limped from the room red faced. The band are booked at Hughie Jones Club at the end of September and I can confidently recommend you try to attend...as it will be over by the time you read this. John told us his part in Paul Simon writing " Homeward Bound " on Widnes Station.... it must have a long platform. I was the only folkie not there as I was helping Paul and John write Hey Jude.

Put the phone down John only kidding. In fact this was a thoroughly enjoyable evening at the Hungry Horse in the company of very old friends. The set was well chosen and well sung. The deceptively simple balance of banjo and bass worked well, as a foundation for the three voices and John's many friends kept the roof raised throughout in the best Folk Club tradition. Can't wait for the promised first L.P.

Roy Davies

COLIN HENDERSON & ANDREW JONES Live at the Parkgate Folk Club on Thursday 25/09/08.



Colin Henderson and Andrew Jones, both members of the Tom Topping Band played one of their rare nights at Parkgate, starting off the evening with the self penned, "Don't Wait for the Turn of the Wheel", superbly played on guitar and bazouki, that led into,

"If I had a Boat" written by Lyle Lovatt, a strange story about a pony on a boat, then came a John Prine classic, "Speed of the Sound of Loneliness", this is one of my favourite John Prine songs and Andrew and Colin performed it expertly.

Next came three of Colin's songs, the first, "The Singer", a song he wrote about Allan Taylor, followed by, "Es Tiempo mi Querida", this is about the everlasting endurance of love, then came the wonderful, "Jesus, Jack Daniels and Me", this is such a cleverly written song about a man contemplating his life and what he sees whilst downing a bottle of JD.

All of these songs were interspersed with "did you know's", from Colin and Andrew, such as did you know it is illegal to look at a moose from an aeroplane in Alaska? No, me neither, though why you would want to I'm not too sure. After some daft tales they then sang Jim Crawford's, "When the Rains Came", to end the first half.

The second half started with a song written by Colin called "One More for the Road", no prizes for guessing what this is about. Next came one of Colin's favourites, Bob Dylan's, "Make You Feel my Love". Dylan is the inspiration for Colin and his writing. Next came, "Down to the River" and "High and Dry", both penned by Colin and played on guitar and mandolin.

Andrew is a very talented musician who plays many instruments, showing off his dexterity on guitar, mandolin and bazouki, he flits from instrument to instrument without a flicker. After Bob Dylan's, "A Hard Rain's a-gonna Fall", came another Colin Henderson song, "Let it Rain", followed by an excellent rendition of Allan Taylor's, "Banjo Man", both played on guitars. Another instrument change followed for Andrew as he took up the mandolin for, "Pay Me My Money Down", this was the final song of the evening but of course after such a fabulous set, they weren't allowed to leave and came back to perform the much loved, "Wild Mountain Thyme".

This is only the second time I have seen Colin and Andrew play together and would highly recommend them to you for a thoroughly enjoyable evening of music and humour.

Anne Jones

BOB FOX & STU LUCKLEY at Chanticleer Folk Club, Dorking, Surrey on 15 October 2008



Well it might be thirty years on (which also happens to be the title of the duo's latest CD release) but who would have known it. I admit at having gone to see the duo as a sense of nostalgia along with my mate Les Elvin whilst in the process bearing witness to one of the best concerts we have both enjoyed in ages.

I don't know what it is but musicians and singers such as these only come along once in a lifetime and I'm glad to say I was there when it all started. I won't go into their history - you can always buy the CD for the sleeve notes - but needless to say they're both cast from that mould of North East music Mafiosi that sprang up at the same time as the likes of Lindisfarne.

Both Stu and Bob have that Geordie sense of humour that proves so popular with us Southerners and the audience were treated to a right royal banquet of stunning musicianship and formidable vocals in bucket-loads and the only words I can find to describe the performance was sheer 'Entertainment!' of the highest calibre. Let's face it, when was the last time you heard that word in a folk club?

To balance the levity of the introductions Bob's rendition of "Bruton Town" was so inspiring that it meant you lingered on every chilling word and you actually felt the passion pouring out. No mean feat (take note Rachel Unthank etc) for someone half his age. But that's where the maturity in the craft of delivery and how to tell a story are paramount to the overall effect.

In a near two hour show lithely changing instruments including guitars, bouzouki, bass, and dulcimer, Fox & Luckley provided a selection of their greatest hits such as; "Sally Wheatley", "Doodle Let Me Go" and "The Two Magicians" and plenty of chorus songs which were enthusiastically embraced by a more than eager audience. Now, if you think this review is too gushing then don't take my word for it just catch them while you still can and perhaps, like me and Les you'll find yourselves talking for ages after the show about how good a gig can be. www.bobfoxmusic.com

Pete Fyfe

EDDI READER - Live at the Oakengates Theatre, Telford Monday 20/10/08 & Pacific Road Arts Centre, Birkenhead Tuesday 04/11/08.



Some singers are born and others manufactured, definitely in the former category is Eddi Reader. From the tips of her fingers to the ends of her toes she was born to sing and to watch her bestride the concert stage is something that should not be missed. She just oozes talent and class and makes her art seem effortless. She gathers around her a number of outstanding musicians and quite simply enjoys herself on stage whilst enthusing the audience who respond in like manner.

I was lucky to enough to see her twice during her current tour and on both occasions she performed two, two hour sets that were spellbinding, with the audience helping to chose the evenings set list. "Follow My Tears", a new offering from Boo Hewerdine kicked off proceedings, a trail, but does it lead to true love? From her "Peacetime", album came the traditional, "Mary and the Soldier", she sees, she persues, she wins her man.

Again, a profound song from the pen of Boo Hewerdine, "Patience of Angels", as a single mum living in London, Eddi credits this song as the one that sorted her life out. Eddi picked up her guitar for, "Humming Bird", before regaling us with, "Kite Flyers Hill", a park in North London is the location and memories of a Spanish holiday with an ex-boyfriend.

The opening track of her new CD is the up tempo, "Dragonflies", it tells of living now in the moment, how many of us really experience this? French style accordion enhances the superb tune. "Dandelion", also off the new CD didn't connect straight away with Eddi, but once it clicked, thanks to a vision of Bing Crosby, her love for the song grew. "New York City", the title says it all, but you need to explore it with that special someone.

The 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns is celebrated on January 25th 2009 and there is no better interpreter of his songs than Eddi as she again displays with, "My Love is Like a Red Red Rose". The audience sing along with gusto on, "Charlie is My Darlin", a song dedicated tolust.

No concert would be complete without Eddi's most recognisable song, "Perfect" and she performs it to the same high standard as all those years ago. As she explains her late father put all his money in jukeboxes all over Scotland playing it.

My favourite track off the new recording is, "Silent Bells", we are nothing without love in our lives. Another rocker from the locker of those Fairground Attraction days followed, "The Moon is Mine".

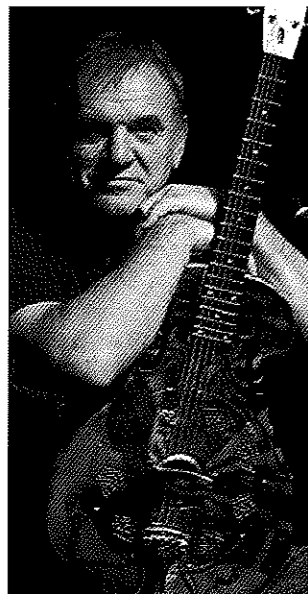
Eddi has that unique capacity to take a song this time by Willie Nelson and stamp her class all over it, "I Guess My Heart Just Settled Back to Earth", demonstrated this perfectly. Robert Burns grew up in Mauchline and Eddi played there during the summer of 2008, Burns wrote, "I Waulkin' Au", whilst walking, looking for his love. Another Burns classic, "Leezie Lindsay", gave way to the classic, "Bell, Book and Candle", Boo Hewerdine's song was used when death was near in both "Emmerdale" and "Charmed" on television. "Wild Mountainside", Steve Earle's, "My Old Friend the Blues", "Hallelujah", "Ae Fond Kiss" and "My Shining Star" also featured during the concerts.

On both evenings, the encore was the rousing, "Willie Stewart", which sent the audience out into the night, walking on air after an exhilarating evening.

Boo Hewerdine, Alan Kelly, Jack Maher, John Douglas, Kevin Maguire and Roy Dodds provided outstanding music and vocal harmonies, but it's Eddi who continues to blaze a trail with a voice and disarming nature that so endears her to her ever growing band of admirers.

David Jones

RALPH McTELL - Fairfield Halls, Croydon (29.10.08)



I don't know quite what I was expecting apart from the fact that I, like Ralph am a proud Croydon boy (whatever Kate Moss says) and he was returning, not to the smaller Ashcroft Theatre but the main Fairfield auditorium. The reason for this was that he had a new(ish) book to promote and even though only half full (and bearing in mind that I'd seen him when it was full several times before) was treated by his fans as a bit of a home coming. Having settled myself down for an evening with my childhood hero and a packet of M&Ms I was delighted when he started with the "Maginot Waltz" one of the first songs my brother Chris and I heard him perform at the Prince

Consort Theatre behind the Albert Hall many years ago.

For those not familiar with his guitar picking McTell showed great dexterity and not a little humour when he hummed along to the merry-go-round waltz tune incorporated within the song.

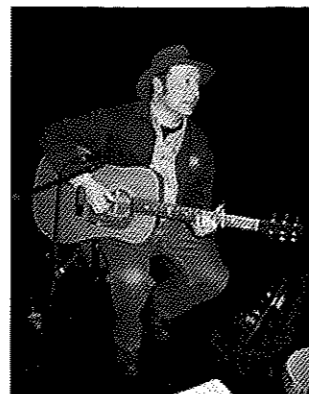
His stories interspersed with the occasional gasp from the audience when he mentioned the stuffed Alsatian dog at East Croydon station preceding "Pretty Brighton Belle" and his recollection of his neighbour "Mr Connaughton" brought back many nostalgic memories for those of us old enough to remember similar scenarios. Mentions of Factory Lane, Duppas Hill and Shirley and the terrible injustice brought vividly to life in the song "Bentley & Craig" painted a colourful life and that was only the first half of the concert.

The second set was geared more to recent material although he did manage to squeeze in "First And Last Man" and the perennial favourite "Streets Of London" which, let's face it was

the reason most of the audience had come to hear. So all in all a good show all round and the long-line of those waiting to have their merchandise signed (including yours truly) proved you just can't keep a good man down. www.ralphmctell.co.uk

Pete Fyfe

Will Kaufman - WOODY GUTHRIE: HARD TIMES & HARD TRAVELLIN' University of Central Lancashire 29th October.



The first really cold night of the year and city centre of Preston wasn't so much Guthrie's 'dustbowl' but more of a cold-damp 'ice bucket' and probably because the tickets had been issued free and I didn't know what to expect at the university's Darwin Lecture Theatre, I had to fight the temptation to stay home and get close to the fire. However the warmth soon penetrated the frozen brain cells and thankfully I came to my senses.

"Woody Guthrie - Hard Times and Hard Travellin'" - a presentation by Will Kaufman" was the message on the email that whet my appetite to find out more about this event. I didn't know whether to expect a concert, a slide show or a film so I emailed the contact at the 'Uni' and, explaining that I was the secretary of Gregson Lane Folk Club, asked for a dozen tickets which promptly arrived next day complete with accompanying leaflet and map showing me how to find the venue.

Arriving at the 400 seat venue, 15 minutes or so before the start, it was obvious from the numbers that had turned out on this cold night that I was not the only one intrigued by the invite. We were shown into the country's largest 3D theatre and took our seats which were central but close to the back - it was difficult to judge numbers but I would guess at least 240 people (probably more) were there.

Sat at the front (behind two microphones) intently tuning a Martin guitar, with fiddle and banjo at the ready, was the Fedora-hatted figure of Will Kaufman - I really didn't know anything about this guy but that first impression had me and everyone else in the audience hooked and there was no doubt, in my mind, that 'reeling us in' for the rest of what was to come would not be a problem to this charismatic American lecturer.

A short intro, from an official at the university, and we were on the road - Huge Monochrome images, projected onto the enormous screen, not only depicted the depression (the subject that inspired many of Guthrie's songs) they seemed to take you there as Will picked out 'Blind Willie Johnson's 'Dark Was the Night, Cold Was the Ground' on his guitar. The tune ended and the picture froze on an image of Guthrie playing his guitar with the inscription "This Machine Kills Fascists" emblazoned across the body. This image stayed there for the remainder of the 90 minute experience. I say experience because labelling this a 'Lecture, Concert, Presentation, Documentary or show' would not do it justice. It was all of these things and more.

We were taken on a journey from Oklahoma - through the Dust-Bowl to California. Wills narrative was not only 'thought provoking' it was informative and very entertaining - the politics were there but by no means rammed down anyone's throat. Punctuated by songs (mainly Guthrie + one by Joe Hill and one by Yip Harburg) played live and exceptionally well by Will, we experienced the many lows and the not so many highs of life in Hooverville. On a personal note I became aware of the meanings

behind some of the familiar songs that I have previously 'Taken for granted.'

Throughout the hour and a half (which passed in no time at all) the audience were spell-bound. I never heard anyone utter a word or do anything other than listen intently to the music, the songs and the talk.

I'd like to think that I'd get the chance to see this again - looking at Wills My space page <http://www.myspace.com/willkaufman> he has another nine lined up (some of them in Europe) over the coming months. I'd thoroughly recommend "Woody Guthrie - Hard Times and Hard Travellin'" - to anyone looking for a crowd pleaser that is quite unique, at their festival and I would hope that Will may consider bringing 'Woody' to smaller platforms- such as Folk Clubs - in the not too distant future.

WILL KAUFMAN is a Professor of American Literature and Culture at the University of Central Lancashire, England. He comes from a musical family - his brother, Steve Kaufman, is one of America's most celebrated bluegrass guitarists. In 2008, Will was awarded the Woody Guthrie Research Fellowship from the BMI Foundation and the Woody Guthrie Foundation.

Graham Dixon

FESTIVAL REVIEWS



FYLDE FOLK FESTIVAL - 29TH, 30TH, 31ST August 2008

One of the best and busiest folk festivals has to be Fylde. With almost 3000 people coming together to celebrate folk music at it's very best. Friday evening in the Marine Hall saw the hugely talented young band 4 Square open the concert which was headlined by the multi award winning John Tams and Barry Coope.

You really are spoilt for choice as the town is awash with venues as music drifts on the air. Following Friday's concert, it's off to the cabaret club at the New Boston Hotel where you will see many of the acts you weren't able to take in during the day. The club goes on into the wee small hours with a long list of artists who have agreed to play, but they never exceed more than three songs so you are able to enjoy a variety of different sounds.

After little sleep we're off again on Saturday morning to various workshops so those budding artists amongst us can have a go. There are also chances to meet the artists and ask those questions you've always wanted the answers to.

From mid-day the concerts start again, right through to the early hours with such luminaries as Jez Lowe, Tom Topping Band, Tim Van Eyken, Bruce Mathiske, Nancy Kerr and James Fagan, Stanley Accrington and Daimh et al.

The workshops continue on Sunday and a not to be missed morning concert with the festival director, Alan Bell's Band along with Scolds Bridle. This for me is the best start to the day, a day full of music for all ages.

Again, spoilt for choice, there is always something you want to

go to but can't because you want to be at something else. This is truly the festival with something for everybody.

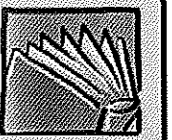
The big finish this year on the Sunday evening at the Marine Hall was Show of Hands, featuring Miranda Sykes. What a wonderful end they provided to a fabulous weekend of music. The Marine Hall was full to capacity with the audience having a thoroughly good time and not wanting the weekend to end. Sadly though, it has to, but leaves you eagerly anticipating the next one.

I apologise for all the names I've missed but there are just too many to list them all here.

See you at Fylde on 4th 5th and 6th September 2009.

Anne Jones

JOHN'S DIARY CHAT



Hello again and welcome to my 'Chat', or as one reader once described it my - 'Ramble'.

Festival Travels

As I write it is the end of October and the festival season is almost complete for another year. How sad, Sob! Sob! Angela and I visited some new places this year wanting to explore new festival pastures. We gave Shrewsbury and Fylde a miss and had a holiday in South Wales that allowed us the opportunity to visit a brand new festival at the lovely town of Tenby. The festival was run at two venues, Tenby Rugby Club (in the main street) and in the same street - the local 400-seat theatre. The stars of the show for us were Mabon, (who were our main reason for going), and some artistes who we had never seen before - Martyn Joseph, Breabach, the Kilbride Brothers and Celtish.

A wonderful South Wales guitarist - Adrian Hughes - was amazing and excelled on guitar and stringed instruments. A pity he was only allowed one thirty-minute slot over the whole weekend. He outshone many of the better-known acts. Pop icon Cerys Matthews and her band played on two consecutive days but the lead up to her spots were spoiled greatly by many of her followers talking loudly during the performances of the support acts. Ruth Notman impressed us as well and we also 'found' a super CD by the band 'Firebrand' which has Miranda Sykes taking lead on vocals. Wonderful!!

On our way back up north we caravanned at Bridgnorth and reminisced about the brilliant times we had had there in the past at Alan and Sandra Surtees' festivals. We then visited Baggeridge Park Festival (near Wolverhampton) on the Friday night with the specific purpose of seeing a band called 'Splatt'. They had impressed us about 7 years before at the same festival. But - what a disappointment now? A change of some band members and musical style did nothing to enhance our liking of them. We quit whilst we were ahead and walked out of the concert I am afraid.

We spent a fabulous weekend of music on Anglesey thanks to the good overtures of Liz Rosenfield, (Kings Lock FC and MFAB organiser) and Jo the hotelier at the Bull Bay Hotel, Amlwch.

Two unexpected (free) days of music came our way thanks to the Black Lion pub at Babel, North Wales and at the Shady Oak at Beeston, Cheshire. There was a meeting of bluegrass and folk music at the Babel Day of Music with the excellent Fiddlestone as the top act.

The Shady Oak pub/restaurant is located in a beautiful part of Cheshire within a stone's throw of Beeston and Peckforton Castles and alongside the Shropshire Union canal. Our intended Friday evening visit to the Shady Oak became a full weekend when to our surprise we learned that the following day would be a full day of music in the beer garden followed by a session until the early hours. What a stroke of luck that we had our caravan with us.

In September we paid our annual pilgrimage to Bromyard Festival where the mud was everywhere. Not a Glastonbury scenario, it was rather unique though as, on arrival, we had to be towed 'on' to the campsite. Thanks God for the farmers and their tractors as we had to be towed off as well. Show of Hands were as ever brilliant and I was particularly taken by Sarah McQuaid a young Irish girl who gave a super DADGAD guitar workshop. I see that she is booked to appear at The Bothy FC on 13th December next year. It's in my diary already.

Club News

Bad news first. Kieron Hartley at the Saturday night folk club - The Armoury FC- tells me that the club has had to close due to financial losses. Another Saturday club has closed - Barnoldswick FC. Pete and Sharon tell me that the pub - the Foster's Arms - has closed for business until further notice. Watch this space though as the club may eventually be 'raised from the ashes'.

Good news now. We welcome a new club - Shamrock Promotions to the fold. This club is held (coincidentally) on a Saturday at Mellor Brook Community Centre, 7 Whalley Road, Blackburn, BB2 7PR. Janet Aspin and Seamus Heffernan are the organisers and the venue has a website at www.mellorbrook.org.uk Names to look out for are Baker's Fabulous Boys, with Chris and Siobhan Nelson on 24th January and Roy Bailey on 28th March.

Also in the New Year a new club entitled Bromley Cross FC will begin meeting once a month on a Friday. Chris Nash informs me that the club will hopefully be in a 60 seat upstairs room at the Railway Hotel, Bromley Cross. There is excellent access via train as the pub is just across the road from the rail line to Blackburn, Bolton and Manchester. The format will be singers and musicians for the first hour followed by top quality professional folk performers thereafter. There are no artistes booked yet so if you wish more info then email Chris at CNash38913@aol.com

A change of organiser has occurred at Clwb Gwerin Conwy FC. The new name is Andrew Knight. See the club website for more info. www.conwyfolkclub.org.uk

Wigan FC may soon have a new venue on Thursday nights so please check before travelling.

A club that has changed venues recently is Acoustic Collective FC. It is now at the Astley Arms, 1 Chapel Hill, Dukinfield, Cheshire, SK16 4BT. Start time is still 9pm with a good mix of Singers and Guest nights to savour.

This edition always highlights the special efforts club and venue organisers make for the Christmas holiday period. For example, The Platform at Morecambe has 'Music for a Medieval Christmas - Tapestry of Music' scheduled for the afternoon of Sunday 14th December. Admission includes mulled wine and mince pies.

The Wooden Horse FC has a special evening lined up for Sunday 14th December when 'One Accord' are the guests. The night is described as a 'Christmas Sing Festival with One Accord'.

Nights programmed throughout the region for the pre Christmas period.

I spotted that Graham Dixon at Gregson Lane FC has booked a couple of acts from my locale namely our old mates Full House from Chester who are Nick Mitchell, Chris Lee, Dave Russell, Mark Woolley, & Ian Jones, who appear on 26th February. Richard Woods & Elbow Jane are booked for 18th June. Its good to see Cheshire/Merseyside groups appearing in Lancashire.

Our own club at the Hungry Horse FC, Little Stanney, has resumed where we left off before the two and a half month total refurbishment of the The Rake pub/restaurant. Full house audiences enjoyed the reopening night with the Anthony John Clarke Band on 4th September, a couple of weeks later, The Churchfitters, and in October, Fiddlestone. Our Singers and Musicians nights still continue to draw around three dozen very talented attendees with a dedicated audience as well. Our forthcoming guest line up reads like a Who's Who of many of the top acts on the national and international folk scene. How about? - Jez Lowe, Craig & Willoughby, Houghton Weavers, Kieran Halpin, Clive Gregson, Vin Garbutt, Harvey Andrews, Elbow Jane, Eric Bogle & John Munroe.

Joan Blackburn at Wigan FC gives early notice of their "Folk'n'Verse" event that will take place on 13th April 2009, which is Easter Monday.

Artists

Biddulph up in Arms FC has a very high quality line up listed this time that includes Jez Lowe and his Bad Pennies, Steve Knightley, Harvey Andrews & Graham Cooper, Spiers & Boden, Tams & Coope, Eric Bogle & John Munroe and Vin Garbutt. The club organiser Eric Cox has not been too well lately so I am sure he would welcome your support and perhaps a call?

Colin Henderson and Andrew Jones of the Tom Topping Band are going out as a duo now and I see that they are due to appear at Roger Parker's Folk at the Manor FC in Wallasey on Sunday 15th February and at Porkies FC on Friday 3rd April.

Stephen Quigg of the McCalmans does a solo night at Roger Hanslip's Folk at the Prospect FC on Monday 2nd February and four weeks later the superb Graham Bellinger with his new band The Deportees entertain at the same venue.

Dave Hughes at Porkies FC (Poynton, Cheshire) has been busy and has all his acts booked right through until October 2009. With the likes of Tanglefoot, Mike Silver, Allan Taylor, The Churchfitters, Ken Nicol & Phil Cool among those booked it sounds as though the club is doing extremely well.

I met Grace Woods the new organiser at Frodsham FC recently and I stated an intention to visit the club for the first time perhaps to see the likes of - Alternative Therapy, Mark Dowding, Colum Sands, Grant Baynham and Bella Hardy & Chris Sherburn.

I see and interesting pairing at Playhouse 2 on 7th March when the wonderful Steve Tilston teams up with none other than Dave Bowie. Ziggy Stardust perhaps? No I don't think so, do you?

It's always good to hear about the success of young performers and we were delighted when I heard from Anthony John Clarke about the progress his son Conor has made on the rock music scene. Conor is part of a quartet named MajorMajor who were winners of a large rock music competition called Rock Star 2008. MajorMajor will be supporting Madness and Franz Ferdinand in the future and will be recording with Peter Gabriel. Not bad hey?

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Arts Centres

Southport will again be alive with top quality folk music on Saturday 14th February when "Folkport" takes place, principally at the Southport Arts Centre when there will be a day of music featuring Show of Hands, Kathryn Tickell Band, the Anna Massie Band, Ruth Notman and Scolds Bridle who are some of the guest artistes. Visit www.seftonarts.co.uk You could also take in a visit to nearby Bothy FC the following evening when Lynne Heraud and Pat Turner appear.

Also, later in the quarter, on Saturday 18th April Ashley Hutchings's Lark Rise Band appears at this venue. The band is - Ashley Hutchings - vocals and bass, Simon Care - melodeons, vocals and dancing, Ruth Angell - fiddle and vocals, Judy Dunlop - vocals, Mark Hutchinson - guitar and vocals, Guy Fletcher - fiddle, guitar, drums and vocals. Judy has the most wonderful voice and was once a part of the duo The Walking Ones. Ruth is also a member of The Rainbow Chasers with Ashley.

At The Lowry, Salford Quays, Steve Henderson (Mr Kite Benefits) has scheduled John McCusker's "Under One Sky" show which is a celebration of the present day British folk scene with interwoven diverse styles, genres and traditions. It will feature Gaelic Singer Julie Fowlis, Idlewild front man Roddy Woomble, percussionist James Mackintosh, bassist Ewen Vernal, Multi-instrumentalist Iain MacDonald, ex-Blur guitarist Graham Coxon, Radio 2's Folk Musician of the Year Andy Cutting, guitarist Ian Carr, Anglo-Swedish fiddler Emma Reid and vocals from Jim Causley and John Tams. Impressive or what? It takes place on 2nd December and is in aid of The Extended Family via Plan International. At the same venue at a matinee performance on 8th March Tony Benn and Roy Bailey present their "Writing on the Wall" show of words and music. It is excellent.

I was very sad to hear from Maghull FC that due to the passage of time the excellent annual Maghull Day of Music will this year (by the time you have read this magazine) have had its last staging. This is due to dwindling committee members and the ageing process. This event has provided wonderful entertainment over the years and was conceived by Jane Day's husband Dave who was a stalwart of the local folk scene for many many years. Many thanks for all your efforts guys and all the best for the future at Maghull FC.

Finally, I would like to express to you my sincere best wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous 2009. Thanks for reading my column. I will speak to you again in March.

John Owen

ARTICLES



BENBOW - AN ENGLISH HERO

Oh we sailed to Virginia and then to Fayal,
Where we watered our shipping and then we weighed all,
Seven sails on the sea boys then we did espy.
We manned our capstan and weighed speedily.

Oh the first we came up with was a brigantine sloop,
And we asked if the others was as big as they looked.
Then it's turning to windward as near as we could lie,
We found there were ten men o' war cruising by.

We drew up our squadron in a very nice line,
And so boldly we fought them for full four hours time,
'Til the day being spent my boys and the night coming on,
We left them alone 'til the very next morn'.

The very next morning the engagement proved hot,
And brave Admiral Benbow received chain shot,
And when he was wounded to his merry men he did say,
Take me up in your arms boys and carry me away.

Oh the guns they did rattle and the bullets did fly,
But brave Admiral Benbow for help would not cry,
Take me down to the cockpit, there is ease for my smarts,
If my merry men see me it would sure break their hearts.

'Twas then Captain Kirkby proved a coward at last,
For Kirkby played Bow-Peep behind the main mast,
Yes Kirkby and Wade did both shiver and shake,
For fear that those French dogs their dear lives would take

Oh the very next morning by the break of the day,
We hoisted our topsails and so bore away.
We bore to Port Royal where the people flocked much,
To see Admiral Benbow carried to Kingston Church.

Now come all you bold fellows wherever you've been,
Here's a health to our King and likewise to our Queen,
And another good health my boys to the girls that we know
And a third in remembrance of brave Admiral Benbow.



Every generation needs heroes to inspire it. Despite our Imperial past, surprisingly few Generals and Admirals have achieved heroic status in the eyes of the masses. Hardly any have received the accolade of having an entire folk song composed in their honour (in Benbow's case, two songs actually). The heroes of folk songs are, more often than not, of the same stock as the people who made and sang the songs; private soldiers and jolly Jack Tars; ploughboys and

poachers; milkmaids and miners. If the upper classes put in an appearance at all it is often as the villain of the piece or as a dupe to be bested by some lower class rogue or some plucky maiden. In this ballad we have a notable exception. Admiral Benbow seems to have been truly admired and respected by the people in a way that his contemporaries were not. Why? Let's look at his story and find out.

Benbow's origins are a bit hazy, including his date of birth. His tombstone says he died in 1702 at the age of 52, which would mean that he was born in 1650, but this is contradicted by the astrologer John Partridge, who gives a very precise time and date for Benbow's arrival in this world; noon on 10th March 1653...but who can trust anything an astrologer says? Anyway, there is no documentary evidence for either date so take your pick. As to his early life, that too is a little vague but the most widely accepted version states that he was born in the parish of St. Mary, Coton Hill, Shrewsbury. His father owned a tannery but rather than going into the family business, the young John Benbow was apprenticed to a waterman on the River Severn which runs through Shrewsbury. An alternative story has him apprenticed to a butcher. However you look at it, a man of fairly humble beginnings.

Details become a lot firmer from 30th April 1678 onwards as

this was the date that John Benbow joined the Royal Navy. He soon found himself on active service on board the 64 gun HMS Rupert fighting the pirates who infested the Barbary Coast. He impressed the captain of the Rupert and subsequent captains he served under. He blotted his copybook however, when he was court-martialled for repeating criticisms of Captain Booth of HMS Adventure following an action against pirates when Benbow's ship, the Nonsuch, came to his aid. Benbow was found guilty of disrespect and ordered to make a public apology. He left the Royal Navy shortly afterwards and joined the Merchant Marine.

His life in the merchant service was not entirely uneventful. In 1687 he was captain of the Malaga Merchant when she was attacked by pirates. They picked on the wrong man that day. Benbow and his crew fought back and gave them a drubbing. Apparently he then took the severed heads of thirteen pirates killed in the action to Cadiz to claim a reward from the magistrates. This brought him to the attention of the Spanish king who wrote to King James II of England commending the bravery of the English seaman. Benbow was getting noticed and accumulating friends in high places.

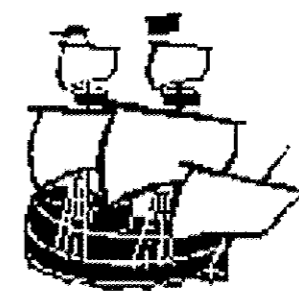
By 1689 John Benbow was back in the Royal Navy and it wasn't long before he had his first command, HMS York. There followed a series of commands, both on ship and ashore and a series of promotions. From 1693 onwards he was involved in a number of actions against the French in which he acquitted himself with typical aggression. When our squabbles with the French came to a temporary end in 1697 Benbow was sent to command our ships in the West Indies. There he confronted the problem of piracy, including that most notorious of buccaneers, Captain William Kidd. Kidd eluded capture by heading north to the safety of American waters. Then, in 1701, after a brief return to England, Benbow found himself once more in the West Indies on a secret mission, which would lead to his early death and the birth of his legend.

Tensions with France were rising once again in 1701 and the government were worried that the old enemy might steal a march on us by intercepting Spanish treasure ships laden with silver from the New World, commandeering their wealth to swell the French war chest. Sounds like piracy to me but in those days they must have thought it fair game. The British government's plan was good old 'gunboat diplomacy'; get in there first and head off the French ploy. Benbow was tasked with this covert operation. A posting to the inhospitable Caribbean climate was not one that many would volunteer for and King William, realising this, decided his best option was 'Honest Benbow' as he described him.

And so it was that in the summer of 1702 Admiral John Benbow was commanding a fleet of thirteen British warships in the Caribbean on the lookout for the French under Admiral Jean du Casse. The stage was set for one of the most shameful episodes in Royal Navy history. Benbow believed that du Casse might call at Port St. Louis in Hispaniola to replenish his ships before heading for Cartagena and so he despatched Captain Whetstone with six warships to intercept him while he himself took the remaining flotilla to Cartagena. By this strategy he was sure he would bring the French to battle one way or the other.

By the time Whetstone reached Hispaniola du Casse had already departed for Cartagena and so it fell to Benbow, aboard his flagship HMS Breda, to make first contact with the enemy. On 19th August 1702, Benbow's lookouts spotted sails on the horizon cruising off Cape Santa Marta. As they closed with them they soon realised they had found their quarry. Benbow ordered his ships to form a line of battle but almost immediately a problem arose. The winds were light and his ships widely scattered so

making it difficult to group for an attack.



It was four in the afternoon before the ships came within range. Benbow's plan was for his second in command, Captain Kirkby aboard HMS Defiance, to head the line of battle while Benbow himself would be in the middle of the line where he could control his squadron by signalling. As soon as the ships were within range and firing began, Kirkby's ship, the Defiance, followed by

the Windsor, pulled away to one side and disengaged while Benbow's rearmost ships hung back and failed to join the action at all. Only Benbow's Breda and the Ruby continued to engage the enemy, though now outnumbered. With night coming on the Breda and the Ruby maintained contact with the enemy, determined not to lose them in the darkness. At daybreak, to Benbow's dismay, only the Ruby was still close by. The other ships in his force were trailing miles astern.

There was sporadic firing between the British and French as the French did what they could to pile on sail and escape while the going was good. The winds were almost non-existent however, and they made little headway. Still the rest of the British ships failed to come up and the Breda and Ruby maintained the chase without them into a second night. In the following day's action, that of 22nd August, the Ruby took considerable damage and Benbow was forced to hang back and protect her. The following day he ordered the Ruby to make for Port Royal as he judged she could not fight on any longer.

On the morning of the 24th August, the fifth consecutive day of a frustrating engagement, Benbow attacked again. He attacked the enemy's flagship, the Heureux that appeared badly damaged. The French admiral, du Casse, was on board. Once again, Benbow's own ships failed to join him. Seeing the reluctance of the other British ships to engage, the French turned on Benbow in force and drove him back from his quarry.

At three in the afternoon disaster struck. Benbow's right leg was shattered by chain shot. Chain shot was a nasty mix of pieces of metal and bits of chain that could slice through a mainmast, imagine the effect on human flesh and bone. The admiral was rushed below for the attentions of the ship's surgeon but before long he ordered his men to carry him back on the quarter-deck where he continued to direct the battle from his wooden cradle.

With his squadron still failing to support him Benbow now stood off from the French fleet and called a captains' council aboard the Breda to discuss the situation. His captains, led by Kirkby, were against continuing the action, maintaining that the French were too strong. Benbow was furious but had no choice but to order a return to Port Royal.

Upon returning to port, Benbow had four of his captains arrested and charged with cowardice, disobedience and neglect of duty. The ringleaders, captains Kirkby and Wade, were shot by firing squad aboard HMS Bristol at Spithead. Meanwhile Benbow, his leg amputated, fell victim to infection and died on 4th November 1702. He was buried at St. Andrew's church, Kingston, Jamaica.

There has been much debate as to the reasons for the captain's disobedience. Mostly it seems to come down to their resentment of the fact that Benbow had not purchased his commission in the usual way but had risen through the ranks on merit. In other words, he was of a lower class and therefore inferior and unfit to command them. Such prejudice was not shared by the monarch or by the Admiralty, who regarded him highly while

the rank and file seamen called him 'our Brother Tar', a title that speaks volumes of their respect for him. He also had the respect and sympathy of his enemy, du Casse, who wrote to him after the battle saying 'I had little hope on Monday last but to have supped in your cabin, but it pleased God to order it otherwise. I am thankful for it. As for those cowardly captains who deserted you, hang them up, for by God, they deserve it'.

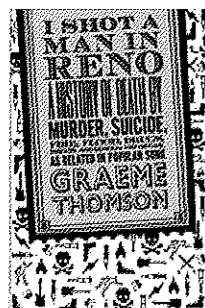
So there you have it, Admiral Benbow, a man with enough true grit to put even John Wayne in the shade. The common peoples' adoption of Benbow as an English hero is surely justified. Pubs were named after him, so were battleships. And by coincidence the other Benbow folksong alluded to at the beginning of this article shares the same tune with a song about his old adversary, the pirate Captain Kidd. Ironic or what?

Brian Bull

BOOK REVIEWS



KEEP YOUR CHIN UP!



Continuum has recently published *I SHOT A MAN IN RENO*: the definitive guide to 'death music'. Music journalist Graeme Thomson charts its origins from the blues through to pop, rock, rap and emo: a line connecting artists as diverse as Billie Holiday, The Beatles, Nick Cave, 50 Cent and My Chemical Romance.

Drawing upon original and unique interviews with artists such as Mick Jagger, Paul McCartney, Richard Thompson, Ice-T, Neil Finn, Ron Sexsmith, Mike Scott and Will Oldham, the book explores how popular music deals with death, and how it documents the changing reality of what death means as both artists and audiences grow older. It's as transfixing as a train wreck, and you won't be able to put it down. As an epilogue, *I Shot a Man in Reno* presents the reader with the 40 greatest death songs of all time complete with a brief rationale for each. The perfect starting point for the morbidly curious listener.

Graeme Thomson is a regular contributor to *The Word*, the *Observer*, *Time Out*, the *Herald* and the *Guardian*. He is the author of *Complicated Shadows: The Life and Music of Elvis Costello* and *Willie Nelson: The Outlaw*, and lives in Edinburgh.

"I Shot a Man in Reno: A History of Death by Murder, Suicide, Fire, Flood, Drugs, Disease and General Misadventure, as Related in Popular Song" available in paperback at www.amazon.co.uk RRP £9.99.

DYLAN'S FOREVER YOUNG

Since his self-titled debut in 1962, Bob Dylan has been one of the most celebrated artists of our time. Perhaps nowhere is he more affecting than in his 1974 hit, *Forever Young*. It's an anthem to youth, to doing the right thing, to cherishing the spirit of being young. Re-imagined by award-winning illustrator, Paul Rogers, the lyrics tell the story of a young boy who travels through his life, living in the footsteps of the man who gave the world the greatest gift he had: music. Published October 2008, priced £12.99 hardback.

MYTHICAL CREATURES BIBLE

"The Mythical Creatures Bible" provides a complete guide to mythical beasts and beings from a variety of cultures around the world, including Mesopotamian, ancient Greek, ancient Egyptian and Chinese, Japanese, Nordic, Celtic and Native American. From frightening vampires to the fantastic phoenix, you will be captivated by the history, folklore and myth surrounding over 250 extraordinary creatures. Including dragons, giants, zombies, house spirits, shape-shifters and gods that take on animal forms, this is an indispensable reference that is guaranteed to stir your imagination.

The writer of the book, Brenda Rosen, is a full-time author and editor, is a student of mythic traditions and ancient cultures. She is the author of a number of titles on mythological and spiritual themes, including *Mermaid Wisdom* and *The Atlas of Lost Cities* for Godsfield Press and *Crystal Basics* for Hamlyn. £12.99

LETTERS



Dear Ken

Many of you know that Sandra Swannell's partner Dave has been battling leukaemia since last winter. Dave is at the stage where he is in urgent need of a bone marrow transplant, and to date, no match has been found.

We know that many of you responded to our previous appeal. Lots of you have already joined the registry and are now potential bone marrow donors. If you haven't yet considered it, we urge you to check it out. The more people in the registry, the greater the chance of success, and if you aren't a match for Dave you might be a match for someone else.

I joined the registry in 1989, but I'll only be eligible for two more years. Please consider joining. Any one of us might be the difference between life and death for somebody.

UK - www.blood.co.uk/pages/marrow_info.html

Thanks for considering this, and think good thoughts!

Steve Ritchie
Tanglefoot

OBITUARIES

TED ROBshaw

The world is a poorer place today. It's always a poorer place when it loses someone like Ted Robshaw, who died at home, aged 67, on Friday, September 19th. On a Friday evening Ted would normally be singing at his local Folk Club in Rhyl, the club, which he helped to start over forty years ago. On this occasion, however, he was recovering at home after a stint in hospital and so the stage was not graced with his presence that night. Ted has battled a number of illnesses over the years, yet always seemed able to shrug them off and perform again. Sadly, not this time.

JUBILEE CONCERTINAS

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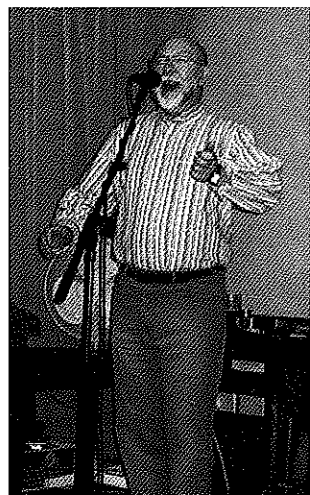
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Ted's day job was teaching but we knew him as a consummate entertainer. Flamboyant and extrovert, he sometimes seemed to me like a folk version of George Melly as he strutted the stage, eyes rolling, the audience crying with laughter. But he could sing a serious song too, if he wanted to. In spite of his larger than life persona, he always worked as part of a group rather than solo. In the seventies he sang with 'Mint Julep', an acapella trio, which enjoyed much success in the clubs of the North West



and recorded an excellent LP (remember LP's?) entitled 'Three Chains of Gold' which I still play from time to time.

In the late seventies, Ted spent some time in Oz with his new wife Jill (they went out in 1977 and returned in 1979). There he indulged his talent for acting, earning a crust doing TV adverts and starring in the film 'Stir'. Returning with Jill to his beloved North Wales (Ted was always a proud Welshman) he took up where he left off at Rhyl Folk Club, singing in the resident group 'The Bees Knees'. Eventually the group shrank to a trio and

became 'Rum, Bum and Concertina'. Ted was 'Rum' (after his favourite tippie) and his long-suffering sidekicks were Jeff Blythin ('Bum') and Alun Rhys Jones ('Concertina'). Their trade mark mix of anarchic humour and good chorus songs kept audiences entertained through good times and bad.

Ted's funeral was a fitting farewell, packed to the doors, standing room only. And even at his funeral we couldn't help but laugh as old friends got up one after another to reminisce about some hilarious episode from Ted's life. After the funeral we repaired to the RAFA Club, current home of Rhyl Folk Club, to enjoy beer and sandwiches, to chat and console one another and, of course, to sing. Ted would have been proud of us, I think.

Ted leaves behind his wife Jill, four children and six grandchildren. He also leaves them and us, his friends, with many happy memories. No one can fill the empty space he leaves. Somehow, we'll just have to do it differently from now on.

Goodnight Ted.

Brian Bull

FESTIVAL NEWS AND MUSIC EVENTS



CELTIC CONNECTIONS ALL-STAR LINE UP

Celtic Connections 2009 takes place in Glasgow from 15th January until 1st February. The 16th festival features approximately 1500 artists performing in over 300 events taking place over 18 days across 14 venues in Glasgow. Celtic Connections launches the Homecoming Scotland 2009 celebrations with a salute to Robert Burns on the 250th anniversary of his birth. The theme of homecoming has inspired the programming of events that trace the evolution of cultures and musical traditions back to their roots, including Throw Down

Your Heart featuring Béla Fleck. The programme contains a distinct African flavour as Celtic Connections explores the links between Celtic and world music. Luminary of the world music scene Youssou N'Dour will perform at the festival - a major coup for Celtic Connections.

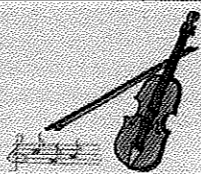
Celebrated folk, roots, traditional, indie, jazz and classical music artists performing at the festival include Richard Thompson, Sly and Robbie, Kate Rusby, Judy Collins, Mariza, Michael Nyman, Dr. John and Allen Toussaint, Nanci Griffith, Eddi Reader, Dervish, Edwyn Collins, Cerys Matthews, Michael Marra, Branford Marsalis and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, James Grant, Jerry Douglas, The Sharon Shannon Big Band, Catriona McKay, Julie Fowlis, Kathy Mattea, La Bottine Souriante, Little Feat and Salsa Celtica.

A twelve hour Burns song marathon, a Jamaican Burns Night, a suite of brand new commissions, a high profile concert celebrating the spirit of Burns and an all star ceilidh in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall - Celtic Connections throws the ultimate party in honour of the 250th anniversary of Robert Burns' birth.

This year's Classic Albums strand will see three great records - Richard Thompson's 1000 Years of Popular Music, Battlefield Band's Home is Where the Van Is and Catriona McKay's Starfish - performed in their entirety. The Celtic Connections Education Programme enters into its 11th year in 2009. Over 15,000 children will enjoy 8 free schools concerts in January, with a further 2000 children benefiting from free in-school workshops.

The most international Celtic Connections festival to date will see artists from Africa, India, Russia, Jamaica, Canada, Spain, Portugal, Norway, France, the USA, as well as the cream of home-grown talent, perform in Glasgow in January. Visit www.celticconnections.com for full information

ARTIST CORNER



ANGIE PALMER - NEW ALBUM & TOURING EARLY 2009



Manchester based singer songwriter, Angie Palmer has been described as the queen of British Americana but her songs have strong European influenced narratives (philosophy, literature, cinema). From Mojo to Maverick her albums received 4/5 star reviews and her potent mix of country, blues, and folk served up with equal measures of aggression and tenderness has led to comparisons with Lucinda Williams.

Her CDs 'Road' and 'Tales of Light and Darkness' both made the long-cut for the Mercury Music Prize, and her new album 'Meanwhile... as night falls' was due for release in November. Angie will be touring during February and March next year. You can visit her website at www.angiepalmer.com as well as her MySpace pages, where you can hear several of her excellent songs and keep up to date with her latest gigs.

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LANCASHIRE HOTPOTS



After a summer of UK wide festivals, and following the release of their new album in November, the Lancashire Hotpots continue their Northern part of the UK tour as support for Paddy McGuinness. In December they do their 'Christmas with the Hotpots' theme.

5th - Club Academy, Manchester, 19:30; 13th - Carling Academy 1, Liverpool, 20:00; 19th - Monaco Ballroom Wigan, 20:00; and 20th - 53 Degrees Preston, 19:30. Then on March 7th next year they play The Citadel, St Helens 19:30. Visit www.myspace.com/thelancashirehotpots for full list of dates and music samples. If you've ever visited a certain Swedish furniture store you will empathise with 'I fear IKEA'.

BLACKHEART IN BLACKBURN



Blackheart are Chrissy Mostyn and Richard Pilkington. Just a year or so into their career, Blackheart are widely predicted to be "One of the finds of the year" with a unique musical style that combines folk, country, rock and even classical influences.

In their first year they performed over 150 concerts with some of the most prestigious names in British and American music, have received huge music industry applause for their debut album Indigo, and have already had

one of their songs used as the soundtrack to one of the biggest TV commercials of the year. Blackheart's highly personal songwriting is a diary of their lives. Their stripped back acoustic live shows are famous for being as entertaining as they are heart searching with audiences exposed to the true emotional stories behind the songs which offer everything from the deepest sadness to the most uplifting ultra-catchy music. On 17 December they perform at the BBC Radio Lancashire Radio Theatre in Blackburn. Visit <http://blackheartmusic.co.uk/> for more information.

BLEEDING HEARTS CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Hi Folkys, or Rockys, or Punkys one and all.

This is the last mail-out of the year as we only have a few gigs left (tonite is the Haygate in Wellington, Telford). The year has been interesting as we made a few new friends along the way, especially in Germany where we went back to the east for the first time in yonks!

We are in the planning stage for 2009 and have some dates confirmed but we probably won't post them up until the new year or late 2008.

We are still having trouble with the live album release, not money related this time, but the guy who is helping us master it is in the USA on tour with the Kooks at present as their sound guy and he has been held up over there. It is basically mixed but needs a couple of tweaks and until he is back and brings the files with him, we are a bit stuck. If he's back in time we hope to release

end of November, if not.....well December. We have been in negotiations about having it downloadable to pay for, and that will work out including artwork so you don't have to have the CD, but one will be available.

We hope some of you can get to our remaining gigs, bring a friend etc. the last gig is The Wheatsheaf in Leighton Buzzard, always a fave of ours, so let's have a great 2008 send off.

If we do not see you again this year.....we hope all your wishes come true and I am reminded of this strange email from last year that was sent to me.....

Best wishes for an environmentally conscious, socially responsible, low stress, non-addictive, gender-neutral, winter solstice holiday, practised within the most joyous traditions of the religious persuasion of your choice, but with respect for the religious persuasion of others who choose to practice their own religion as well as those who choose not to practice a religion at all; plus, a fiscally successful, personally fulfilling and medically uncomplicated recognition of the generally accepted calendar year 2009, but not without due respect for the calendars of choice of the other cultures whose contributions have helped make our society great, without regards to the race, creed, colour, religious, or sexual preferences of the wishes.

Disclaimer: This greeting is subject to clarification or withdrawal. It implies no promise by the wisher to actually implement any of the wishes for him/herself or others and no responsibility for any unintended emotional stress these greetings may bring to those not caught up in the holiday spirit.

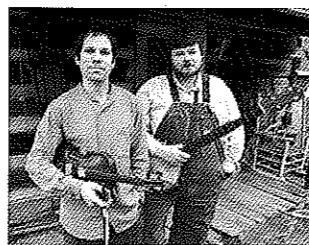
Peace, love, hugs and trains (that last one is from heartbroken Gel); Yours, The Bleeding Gang of Four Foxie, Gel, Nick, Gaz.

Forthcoming Gigs:

15 Nov 2008 - Adam & Eve, Digbeth, Birmingham. <http://www.theadam.co.uk/>

26 Nov 2008 - The Roadhouse, New Grey Whistle Test - filming for the TV Show; Lifford Lane, Birmingham, plus support.. <http://www.roadhousevenue.co.uk/>

FIDDLES & FEET, BANJOS & BALLADS FROM THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS AND BEYOND



Appalachian Roots is a 2-man show featuring traditional dance, song and instrumental music from the Southern Appalachian region of the USA with a few international twists thrown in. Riley Baugus appears on the soundtrack of 2003 Academy Award winning film Cold Mountain. The record itself won the Bafta for Best Film Music. Ira Bernstein is the leading "flatfoot" step and rap dancer in the USA today. He also happens to play a very fine fiddle. Percussive flatfooting, buckdancing, French-Canadian step dancing, English clogging, South African boot dancing, hambone, fiddle tunes and fiddle sticks from Ira; Songs and ballads, old-time banjo and fiddle tunes, and mountain preaching from Riley.

STEVE TILSTON'S ZIGGURAT



Steve Tilston's new CD Ziggurat has recently been released. Hear Steve deftly weave his mastery on a dozen new insightful songs of love, loss, war and redemption - plus the reworking of a couple of

gems from the tradition; with guest musicians Dave Bowie, Chris Parkinson, Richard Curran, Fin McArdle and Maggie Boyle.

Many of his songs are considered modern folk-song classics and have been covered by the likes of Fairport Convention, Dolores Keane, John Wright and many others. He's also renowned for the way he takes a favourite traditional "old chestnut" and makes it his own. His career was marked last year by the release of Reaching Back a five-CD boxed-set retrospective, but not one to stand still and with "Madame Muse" at his heels Steve is "reaching forward" with this new recording.

Steve plays a couple of gigs in the North West in March - Playhouse 2 at Oldham on 7th and Parkgate Folk Club on the Wirral on 26th. For further details visit: www.stevetilston.com & www.myspace.com/stevetilston

BLISS-FUL WHISPER



The Whisper is the latest solo release by Tom Bliss. He spent most of August recording in a tent made of duvets and mattresses in the bunk room of his house in Alderney - and he thinks it's worked a treat. This still left time for plenty of swimming, sailing, walking and other adventures. The cover features The Whisper statue of Eleanor Thornton (also model for the Spirit of Ecstasy),

which Tom photographed at Lord Montagu's invitation in his private drawing room last Friday, set against a 'beaming' Burhou sunset.

Guests include the usual suspects - Tom Napper, Tony Taffinder and Chris Parkinson plus Alex Birch (who sang Where Strangers Stare on Island Stories) duetting with Tom on John Riley. Also Matt Nelson of The Pack play sax, Peter Frank Taylor play 18th C drum, and 16-year-old Ned Darlington plays some lovely tapped guitar.

Tom plays the following gigs in the North West over the next few months. The December dates feature Tales of Time and Tide a one man multimedia show specially designed for Village Halls, Arts Centres and Schools. Visit: www.turnstone.tv/tours.html for further details.

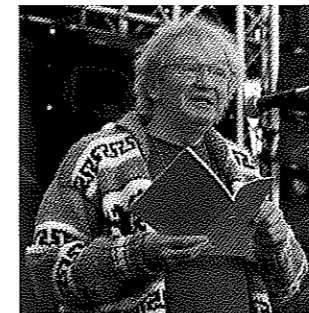
DEC 5 FRI - Wittington Village Hall Kirkby Lonsdale, Lancs ~ - 01254 674777 Tales of Time and Tide

DEC 6 SAT - Whalley Village Hall, Clitheroe, Lancs: Tickets: Eric Ronnan 01254 822555 Tales of Time and Tide

JAN 25 SUN - Wooden Horse Folk Club, The Junction, Rainford, Lancs WA11 7JU - 01772 452 782

MAR 19 THU - Lymm Folk Club, Lymm, Cheshire - 07919 270 916 www.lymmfolkclub.org.uk

LES BARKER



Les Barker latest health update: "Well I've had the operation. They let me out 2 days early (after 5 days); apparently my lungs are 20 per cent bigger than average after all the years of football and running and it's been very helpful. My rib cage has felt like an old dustbin rolling about inside my chest; it's getting better every

day, but it still doesn't feel like part of me. Sitting and walking is easy, but lying down involves all the muscles around the chest and hasn't been at all pleasant.

Cas Smith, ex-nurse of Pontardawe, came to stay for a few days (otherwise they wouldn't have let me out). Then I spent a few days down in Pontardawe before returning here. Cas has now gone home and I'm on the bus for about a month. I'll be away from home for a couple of days every week; if I get a bus out of the village in mid afternoon, I can't get back the same day. If I came back the following day I'd be too late to leave again. So I don't come back until I've been everywhere."

Forthcoming gigs include: DECEMBER 19 Harlequin Theatre, Northwich, 01606 79356; FEBRUARY 26 Boar Hound, Macclesfield, 01625 614791; MAY 16 Festival, Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog, 01691 600310

Les also mentions: "I've just received a copy of Pete Morton's new CD, Casa Abierta, which features 10 songs in 10 different languages. One of the songs is a Welsh version of Another Train, written by the excellent Mrs Jones and myself. For a non-Welsh speaker, Pete does a remarkable job with it." Speaking of whom...

PETE MORTON



Folk singer Pete Morton is a songwriter and performer from Nottingham with a wealth of great songs and stage presence. His show is dynamic and intense as well as approachable and fun loving. Starting out as a busker on the streets of Europe he has entertained all over the globe with his unique and involving style of songwriting and traditional singing.

Pete sings from the heart, delivering songs that tell compelling stories and speak of the human condition from a very unique perspective. With a passionate, strong voice and strident guitar style, traditional songs often rub shoulders with Pete's current writing with remarkable ease. His songs are an unruly mix of humour, politics, love and social comment, wrapping their way around the folk tradition. Pete has recorded five solo albums of original material and a project album of traditional songs entitled 'Trespass'.

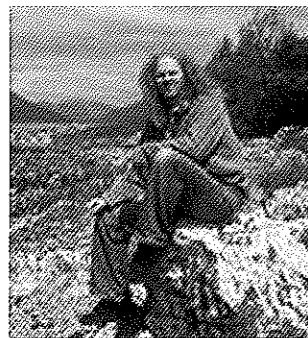
His CD 'Hunting the heart' was a Mojo folk album of the year in 2000. His more recent releases, 'Swarthmoor' and 'Flying an Unknown Flag' have received rave reviews. A new album of original songs is in the making, as well as the charity CD, 'Casa Abierta - ten songs in different tongues' has recently been released. 'Another Train' is without doubt, Pete's most widely covered song. Popular with choirs and folk artists around the world, the song has brought hope and encouragement to countless listeners over the years.

His Christmas tour with Chris Parkinson (and a special guest) takes in a gig at St. Michaels Church, Hightown, Middlewich, Cheshire. CW10 9AN events@middlewich.org.uk on 6 December. Doors open 19.00, to start 19.30, tickets £7 (concessions £5). Contact Dave Thompson on 07909 705 785

PHIL HARDY'S 'REVISITED' RELEASED

Phil Hardy's album "Revisited" was released by Proper Music Distribution in September. This CD is the culmination of Phil's

seven years of making music with whistles. Phil's compositions stem from his exploration of traditional music, with a heavy Celtic influence. You will hear the influence of Michael McGoldrick, Donal Lunny, and John McCusker in Phil's music. The tracks span genres from Afro-Celt to Ancient Kerry but always with the Celtic influence and the well known and ever popular low whistle sound.

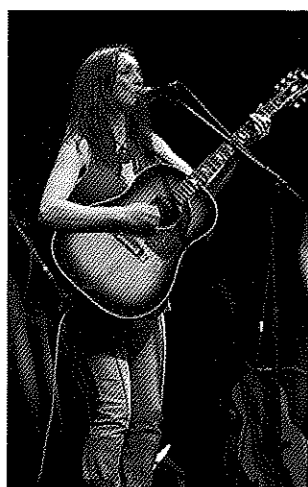


The Low Whistle has been around since the 70s, but its unique sound was more recently brought to the world's attention by its use in Riverdance and the music from the film Titanic. The sound you know from Riverdance, Titanic and countless other productions is the low whistle, made in England by musician Phil Hardy of Kerry Whistles.

Phil Hardy is a very talented all round musician who plays a wide range of instruments, particularly the Low Whistle itself. The low whistle is twice the size of a normal tin whistle, and produces a haunting tone subtly different from flute or whistle. In this album, Phil explores the potential of this beautiful instrument in haunting Celtic melodies and fast foot-stomping tunes with a world music influence.

Visit: www.properdistribution.com

PATSY MATHESON



Patsy Matheson has come a long way since in 1991. As a young singer/songwriter she entered a song writing competition, and came out judged as the winner by Clive Gregson and Maddy Prior. Founder member and one quarter of the award winning female acoustic group, Waking the Witch, Patsy has been writing songs and winning over audiences ever since.

Her first solo album, 'With My Boots On', (Tomorrow Records 1996) featured just her voice and that instantly recognisable guitar and received much critical

acclaim. Along the way, she supported such names as John Martyn, Glenn Tilbrook, Dick Gaughan, Nick Harper, Al Stewart, Roy Harper, The Saw Doctors and Michael Chapman (who subsequently invited her to sing on two of his albums). When she had the pleasure of supporting Christy Moore for a gig at St George's Hall in Bradford, she was so well received that he invited her to complete the rest of his tour at such prestigious venues as Liverpool Philharmonic and Birmingham Symphony Halls. A solo appearance on the acoustic stage at the 1997 Glastonbury Festival followed.

In 2003, having had a break to start a family, she took on the challenge of putting together a vocal harmony group, approaching solo artists Rachel Goodwin and Jools Parker, and Waking the Witch was formed - later joined by Becky Mills. The band rapidly went from strength to strength, releasing three groundbreaking albums and a live DVD. They completed numerous tours of the UK, played at many of the major UK festivals, including Cambridge, Trowbridge and Glastonbury and made countless radio appearances, including live sessions on BBC Radio 2 for

both Janice Long and Bob Harris. The most recent CD, 'Boys from the Abattoir' was one of the albums considered for the 2007 Mercury Music Award.

Following the farewell tour of Waking the Witch in spring 2008, and armed with a bunch of brand new songs, Patsy set about recording a solo album, 'A Little Piece of England'. She teamed up with producer/guitarist Sam Bartholomew with the aim of making a stripped back recording that felt as close to a real, unamplified, acoustic sound as possible. With both Patsy and Sam playing several old, vintage American acoustic guitars, and with the help of Gina Dootson on backing vocals and Harry Hamer (Chumbawamba) on percussion, the end result is an upclose and intimate, natural sound.

The CD was released in October on Witch Records (WITCH 003) and Patsy, accompanied by Sam Bartholomew, will be touring through the winter showcasing the release. The live shows will demonstrate just how she has built up an enviable reputation as a talented singer/songwriter as well as a guitarist and mandolin player with an accomplished and individual style. You can check her out on 10th January at - Halifax, Square Chapel Arts Centre www.squarechapel.co.uk/events/index.htm 01422 349422 and 30th January at South Lakes, Ulverston Sports Club www.simp.btinternet.co.uk 07743 555227. Visit www.patsymatheson.co.uk for more details and you can also hear some her songs on her MySpace pages.

SIMON MAYOR & HILARY JAMES IN CUMBRIA



Across Britain from Shetland to Sark, and across the globe from Vancouver to Singapore, Simon Mayor and Hilary James have brought their special blend of dazzling musicianship.

If they have a speciality, it's an ability to combine a truly diverse array of talents into a hugely entertaining stage show. There

can't be many performers who slide easily from a beautifully evocative Irish ballad into a mandolin and guitar version of Handel's Arrival Of the Queen Of Sheba and then have the audience singing one of their own notorious comic songs, but it's this wry humour and an easy, informal stage manner that holds it all together.

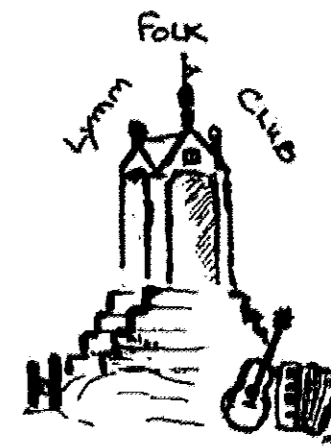
The duo's musical diversity has led to an equally broad range of festival invitations from Henley Classical Music Festival (England) to the Stephen Leacock Humour Festival (Canada), the Vancouver Folk Festival and countless folk and Celtic festivals throughout the world. For further information visit www.mandolin.co.uk or www.folksong.co.uk

In January Simon and Hilary play four dates in Cumbria: 22nd - Station Village Hall, Bootle Fell, LA19 5UY, Tel: 01229 718114 Tickets £6/Child £3.50 Family £15.50 - Start 7.30 p.m. 23rd - Drigg Parish Hall, Nr Seascale, CA19 1XF, Tel: 019467 24321 Tickets £6/ Child £3, Snr. £4 Family £13 - Start 7.00 p.m. ; 24th - Embleton Village Hall, Embleton, Cockermouth, CA13 9YP; Tel: 019467 24321 Tickets £6/Child £3.50 Family £15.50 - From 7.30 p.m.; and 25th - Haile Village Hall, Haile, Nr Egremont, Cumbria, CA22 2PD; Tel: 01946 841415 Tickets £6/Child £3.50 Family £15.50 - Start 7.30 p.m.

PHIL HULSE'S UNPREDICTED STORM

One-third of exciting folk-roots trio 'The Queensberry Rules',

LYMM FOLK & ACOUSTIC CLUB



Spread Eagle Hotel
Lymm, WA13 0AG
Lymm Rugby Club
Crouchley Lane
Lymm, WA13 0AT

www.lymmfolkclub.org.uk

Thursdays 20.30 hrs - on the dot!

(All performances at the Spread unless indicated otherwise)

04 dec fir play £8 (nb:lymm tennis club)

11 dec zoe mullford £5 (lymm rugby club)

18 dec xmas singers £1 ticket only (lymm rugby club)

25 dec & 1 jan closed

08 jan big spot: nick & lin tysoe £1 (lymm rugby club)

15 jan singers £1 (lymm rugby club)

22 jan treo threlfall £7

29 jan singer £1

05 feb grace notes £8 (lymm rugby club)

12 feb big spot: andrew tullo & friends (lymm rugby club)

19 feb tom kitching & gren bartley £7

26 feb big spot: lorraine johns £1

advance dates:

05 mar ember £7 (lymm rugby club); 12 mar singers £1 (lymm rugby club); 19 mar tom bliss £6; 26 mar big spot: john barber £1; 02 apr isambarde £8 (lymm rugby club); 09 apr big spot: mike bartram £1 (lymm rugby club); 16 apr anything goes £5; 3 apr singers £1; 30 apr paula godby £5; 07 may singers £1; 14 may barbara & peter snape £5 (lymm rugby club); 21 may singers £1; 28 may ruth fuga & ken powell £6; 04 jun singers £1; 11 jun graham bellinger & the dog roses £4; 18 jun big spot: geoff bibby, sue & der bradburne £1;

25 june to 3 july lymm festival 2009 (chris while & julie matthews, kerfuffle, bob fox, vicki swan & jonny dyer, full house, the perfectly at home string band, bernard cromarty, etc.)

contact/tickets:

Stewart Lever 07919 270916

stewart_lever@yahoo.co.uk

www.stewartlever.co.uk

CLUB RESIDENTS (as on 17th October 2008)

ACOUSTIC COLLECTIVE – Ann English, John Keighley, Geoff Monks, Paul Roberts, Pete Roberts, Jim Schofield, Jan & Pete Shevlin, Chris Turner, Linda Wild

ACOUSTIC FOLK AT THE NURSERY – Lynn & Barrie Hardman, Dave Jones, Crumbly Fruit Cake, David South

ARMOURY FOLK & ACOUSTIC – Kieron Harley, Glyn Davies, Steve Moran

BACUP -- Brian Eastwood, Helen Slater, Mark Almond, Pete Benbow, John Kearns, Barry Hardman, Rose, Ray

BOTHY -- Clive Pownceby, Steve Freedman, Pete Rimmer, Bill Hackney, Alison Younger, Chris & Siobhan Nelson, Ray Rooney, Nev Grundy, Bev Sanders

BURNLEY – Korrigan (Dave Grimshaw, Alex Nearney, Keith Cocker & Paul Morris), Steve Cook

CROWN FOLK & ACOUSTIC -- Kieron Hartley, Ann Fitton, Mike Musgrave, Steve Moran

EARBY – Station Folk

EVERYMAN -- Chris & Hughie Jones, Shirley Peden

FOLK AT HILLBARK – Tom Topping Band

FOLK AT THE MANOR -- Gill & George Peckham, Roger Parker, Marje Ferrier, Mike Hignett

FOLK AT THE PROSPECT -- Chris Hanslip, Carol & John Coxon, Eric Rafferty & Tony Toy

FOLK ON FRIDAY (Formerly LEIGH) – Pauline Dowsett, Des Cooney, Julie Houlton, Steve Eckersley, Jim & Bernadette Heaton

FOUR FOOLS -- Malc Gibbons, Geoff & Lindsay Smith, Tom & Ann, Angie Bladen

FRODSHAM – Alton & Carol Alexander, Eric Rafferty, Stuart Baxter, Harry Leather, Syd Hayden, Jill Smith, Willie Gilmour, Pete Massey, Gordon Morris, Roger Bond

GARSTANG UNPLUGGED -- Pete Hardman, Caroline Lovett

GREGSON LANE -- Trouble at' Mill, Celtic Fringe, Smithereen, Caroline Lovett, Rob Kentel, Chris Lomax, John Poulton, Ken Kershaw, Jamie & Simon Blatchley, Mark Claydon

HEATON MERSEY – Kieron Hartley, Mark Williams

HUNGRY HORSE ACOUSTIC – Alison Parker & Jim Gallagher, Ian Dawson, Marie Nicholls, John Owen, Angela Owen and Sue Farley.

KINGS LOCK – Liz Rosenfield, Ian Murfitt, Brian Ayling, Stephen Dent, Richard Sherry, Jeff

LONGRIDGE -- Ron Flanagan, Brian Preston

LYMM -- Stewart Lever, Nick & Lin Tysoe, Bernard Cromarty, Nelson Peach,

MAGHULL -- Tony Gibbons, Chris Lock, Joe Ryan, Jane Day, Bob Tyrer, Paul Robinson, Kate Bradbury, Mark Miller, Graham Sagers, Mike Bartram, Tommy Dewhurst, Martin Blackmore

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

PARKGATE -- Eddie Morris, Bob Burrill, Buddy Woods, Mike Woods

PORKIES -- Dave Hughes

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

MIDWAY -- Peter Hood & Linda Edwardes, Anne Yates, Peter Fox, John Ashurst, Ged Derby, John Keithly

ROOM AT THE TOP -- Mark Dowding and others

URMSTON ACOUSTICS -- Keith Northover, Joe & John, Martin & Mandy Kavanagh,

WIGAN – Geoff Newman (Tuesday), Joan Blackburn (Thursday)

WOODEN HORSE -- Quartz, Loctuptogether, Back in Business, Mark Dowding

WREXHAM – Offa

NORTH WEST FEDERATION OF FOLK CLUBS				
ARTS CENTRES and THEATRES				
SUNDAY				
Bothy	8:00 PM	Park Golf Club, Park Road West, Southport, PR9 0JS	Clive Pownceby	0151-924-5078
Folk at the Manor	8:30 PM	The Old Manor Club, Withens Lane, Wallasey, CH45 7NF	Roger Parker	0151-678-1962
Kings Lock	8:30 PM	King's Lock Inn, 1 Booth Lane, Middlewich, CW10 0JJ	Liz Rosenfield	01606-834969
Open Door	8:45 PM	The Royal Oak, 172 Manchester Road, Werneth, OL9 6BN	Pauline Westfall	0161-681-3618
Wooden Horse	8:30 PM	The Junction, News Lane, Rainford, WA11 7JU	Jim Coan	01772-452782
MONDAY				
Bacup	8:30 PM	Bacup Conservative Club, Irwell Terrace, Bacup, OL13 9AW	Helen Slater	07717-613205
Clwb Gwerin Conwy	8:30 PM	Royal British Legion, Rosehill Street, Conwy, LL32 8AF	Andrew Knight	07774-488441
Folk at the Prospect	8:30 PM	Prospect Inn, Weston Road, Weston Village, Runcorn, WA7 4LD	Roger Hanslip	01928-731567
Four Fools	8:15 PM	Crown Hotel, Platt Lane, Worthington, nr Standish, WN1 2XF	Ken & Angie Bladen	01257-263678
Midway	8:30 PM	The Midway, 263 Newbridge Lane, Stockport, SK1 2NX	Peter Hood	0161-432-4142
Room at the Top	8:30 PM	Red Lion Hotel, Ashbrow, Newburgh, WN8 7NF	Mark Dowding	01257-464215
Skipton Folk Unplugged	8:30 PM	The Narrow Boat, 38 Victoria Street, Skipton, BD23 1JE	Sheila A. Kelsall	01535-665889
Swinton	8:30 PM	The White Lion, 242 Manchester Road, Swinton, M27 4TS	Ged Todd	01942-811527
TUESDAY				
Acoustic Collective	9:00 PM	The Astley Arms, 1 Chapel Hill, Dukinfield, Cheshire SK16 4BT	Paul Roberts	07930-340260
Crown Folk & Acoustic	8:30 PM	The Crown, 154 Heaton Lane, Stockport, SK4 1AR	Kieron Hartley	07957-492917
Everyman	8:30 PM	Everyman Bistro, 5-9 Hope Street, Liverpool, L1 9BH	Christine Jones	0151-709-3336
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, 604 Green Lane, Maghull, L31 2JH	Tony Gibbons	01744-607566
Ring O'Bells	8:30 PM	Ring O'Bells, Pit Lane, Farnworth, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 9HW	Jean Finney	0151-424-3672
Urmston Acoustics	8:30 PM	The Nags Head Hotel, 1 Lostock Road, Urmston, M41 0SU	Martin Kavanagh	0161-748-5497
Wigan (& Thursdays)	9:00 PM	The Fox & Goose, 37-39 Wigan Lane, Wigan, WN1 1XR	Joan Blackburn	07833-301336
WEDNESDAY				
Alison Arms	9:00 PM	The Alison Arms, Preston Road, Coppull, Chorley, PR7 5CQ	Derek Docherty	01257-791262
Biddulph up in Arms	8:30 PM	The Biddulph Arms, 171 Congleton Road, Biddulph, ST8 6QJ	Eric Cox	01782-514896
Burnley	9:00 PM	Kettledrum Inn, 302 Red Lees Road, Cliviger, Burnley, BB10 4RG	Alex Nearney	01282-436467
Clarence	8:30 PM	The Clarence, 88 Preston New Road, Blackpool, FY4 4HG	Ann Green	01772-683027
Garstang Unplugged	8:00 PM	The Kenlis Arms, Ray Lane, Barnacre, Garstang, PR3 1GD	Don Moore	01995-602795
Ye Olde Vic	8:30 PM	Ye Olde Vic, 1 Chatham Street, Stockport, Cheshire, SK3 9ED	Peter Hood	0161-432-4142
THURSDAY				
Acoustic Folk at the Nursery	9:00 PM	Nursery Inn, 258 Green Lane, Heaton Norris, Stockport SK4 2NA	Brenda Judge	0161-432-4830
Chorlton	9:00 PM	SW Manchester Cricket Club, Ellesmere Road, Chorlton M21 0SG	Jozeph Roberts	07833-735-729
Dabbers	8:30 PM	The Oddfellows Arms, Welsh Row, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 5ET	Lynne Barnes	01270-628041
Earby	7:30 PM	Station Hotel, 123 Colne Road, Earby, Barnoldswick, BB18 6XL	Sharon Hobson	01282-841727
Gregson Lane	8:30 PM	Sports & Social Club, Gregson Lane, Hoghton, PR5 0FD	Graham Dixon	01254-853929
Heaton Mersey	8:30 PM	Heaton Mersey Sports & Social Club, Halewood Road, SK4 3AW	Kieron Hartley	07957-492917
Hungry Horse Acoustic	8:15 PM	The Rake, Rake Lane, Little Stanney, Ellesmere Port, CH2 4HS	John Owen	0151-678-9902
Lymm	8:30 PM	Spread Eagle Hotel, 47 Eagle Brow, Lymm, Cheshire, WA13 0AG	Stewart Lever	07919-270-916
Parkgate	8:15 PM	Boathouse Pub/Restaurant, 1 The Parade, Parkgate, CH64 6RN	Eddie Morris	0151-677-1840
South Lakes Music Promotion	8:30 PM	Sports & Social Club, Priory Road, Ulverston,	Nick McDermott	07743-555227
Wrexham	8:30 PM	The Nags Head Inn, Mount Street, Wrexham, LL13 8DW	Ian Chesterman	01978-357307
FRIDAY				
Bollington	8:30 PM	The Dog & Partridge, 97 Palmerston Street, Bollington, SK10 5JX	Arthur Wakefield	01625-573596
Carlisle Folk & Blues	8:00 PM	Sunset Suite, Carlisle Football Ground, Warwick Road, CA1 1LL	Myrna Rae	01697-72305
Folk at Hillbark	8:00 PM	Hillbark Hotel, Royden Park, Frankby, Wirral, CH48 1NP	David Jones	0151-639-9350
Frodsham	8:30 PM	Conservative Club, 74 Main Street, Frodsham, WA6 7AU	Grace Woods	01925-740422
Folk on Friday (formerly Leigh)	8:00 PM	Conservative Club, Railway Road, Leigh, WN7 4AX	Pauline Dowsett	01942-604603
Northwich	8:30 PM	Harlequin Theatre, Queen St, Northwich, CW9 5JN	John Booth	01606-79356
Porkies	8:30 PM	Royal British Legion, Georges Road West, Poynton, SK12 1JY	Dave Hughes	01625-430149
Preston	8:30 PM	The Moorbrook Inn, 370 North Road, Preston, PR1 1RU	Rob Malaney	01257-231463
Rhyl	9:00 PM	RAFA Club, 17 Windsor Street, Rhyl, Denbighshire, LL18 1BW	Jeff Blythin	01745-588072
SATURDAY				
Shamrock Promotions (n/m)	8:00 PM	Mellor Brook Comm. Centre, 7 Whalley Road, Blackburn, BB2 7PR	Janet Aspin	01254-812131
ARTS CENTRES & THEATRES				
Accrington Town Hall	7:00 PM	Blackburn Road, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 1LA	Box Office	01254-380293
Brindley Arts Centre	8:00 PM	High Street, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 1BG	Box Office	0151-907-8360
Burnley Mechanics	8:00 PM	Manchester Road, Burnley, Lancashire, BB11 1JA	Box Office	01282-664400
Bury Met	8:00 PM	Market Street, Bury, Lancashire, BL9 0BW	Box Office	0161-761-2216
Friends of Folk	8:00 PM	Various locations	Jim Minall	01772-422416
Mr Kite Benefits	8:00 PM	Various locations	Steve Henderson	01772-621411
Pacific Arts Centre	8:00 PM	Pacific Road, Birkenhead, Wirral, CH41 1LJ	Box Office	0151-647-0752
Philharmonic Hall	7:30 PM	Hope Street, Liverpool, L1 9BP	Box Office	0151-709-3789
Playhouse 2	8:30 PM	Newtown Street, Shaw, Oldham OL2 8NX	Barrie Cottam	01706-663117
Rose Theatre	8:00 PM	Edge Hill University, St Helens Road, Ormskirk, L39 4QP	Box Office	01695-584480
Southport Arts Centre	8:00 PM	Lord Street, Southport, PR8 1DB	Emma Burrows	01704-540011
The Citadel	8:00 PM	Waterloo Street, St Helens, WA10 1PX	Box Office	01744-735436
The Platform	7:30 PM	Station Buildings, Central Promenade, Morecambe, LA4 4DB	Glynis Johnson	01524-582803

23rd NOVEMBER to 27th DECEMBER
(NB: Always check with organisers before travelling)

SUNDAY	23RD NOVEMBER	30TH NOVEMBER	7TH DECEMBER	14TH DECEMBER	21ST DECEMBER
Bothy	BLUE C Party - Raf Callaghan's Birthday	BOB FOX	Singers Night	HAZEL & EMILY ASKEW	The Office Party Night
Bury Met	Singers Night	THE DYLAN PROJECT	Singers Night	Singers Night	ALTERNATIVE THERAPY
Kings Lock			Singers Night	Singers Night	Christmas Party Night
Open Door	THE ASKEW SISTERS	Singaround	STEVE TURNER	Music for a Medieval Christmas	
Platform				TAPESTRY OF MUSIC	
Playhouse 2					ST AGNES FOUNTAIN
Southport Arts Centre					MADDY PRIOR and the CARNIVAL BAND
Wooden Horse	Singers Night		Singers Night	Christmas Sing Festival with ONE ACCORD	Christmas Party Night
MONDAY	24TH NOVEMBER	1ST DECEMBER	8TH DECEMBER	15TH DECEMBER	22ND DECEMBER
Bacup	No information available				
Clwb Gwerin Conwy	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Folk at the Prospect	STEVE TILSTON	Singers Night	REDMAYNE	Singers Night	Singers Night
Four Fools	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Midway	Singers Night	Singers Night	QUICKSILVER (Hilary Spencer & Grant Bayntam)	Singers Night	Christmas Party Night
Room at the Top	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Skipton Folk Unplugged	STEVE TURNER	Singers Night	Christmas Music and Traditions	Christmas Party Night	closed
Swinton	No information available				
TUESDAY	25TH NOVEMBER	2ND DECEMBER	9TH DECEMBER	16TH DECEMBER	23RD DECEMBER
Acoustic Collective	Singers Night	RUTH FUGA & KEN POWELL	Singers Night	JOCK	Christmas Part with GEOFF MONKS
Crown Folk & Acoustic	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround
Everyman	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Christmas Party Night	closed
Longridge	Singers Night	Singers Night	SHEP WOOLLEY	Christmas Party Night	Christmas Party Night
Maghull	Singers Night	Singers Night		Singers Night	
Mr Kite Benefits @ The Lowry, Salford Quays		JOHN MCCUSKER'S "UNDER ONE SKY"	Singers Night		
Ring O'Bells	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Urmston Acoustics	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Christmas Party Singaround
Wigan	26TH NOVEMBER	3RD DECEMBER	10TH DECEMBER	17TH DECEMBER	24TH DECEMBER
Alison Arms	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	closed
Biddulph up in Arms	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	ROSIE DOONAN	Singers & Musicians	closed
Burnley	Singers Night	TRIO THRELFALL	SHEP WOOLLEY	Christmas Party Night	closed
Clarence	RALPH McTELL				
Friends of Folk @ Preston Guild Hall					

WEDNESDAY (cont'd)	26TH NOVEMBER	3RD DECEMBER	10TH DECEMBER	17TH DECEMBER	24TH DECEMBER
Garstang Unplugged	Singers Night				
Ye Olde Vic	Music Session - English		Music Session - English		
THURSDAY	27TH NOVEMBER	4TH DECEMBER	11TH DECEMBER	18TH DECEMBER	25TH DECEMBER
Acoustic Folk at the Nursery		Singers Night		Singers Night - Christmas Party	
Bury Met			FROST & FIRE	Singers Night	
Charlton	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	
Dabbers		Singaround			
Earby	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	closed
Garstang Unplugged			BOO HEWERDINE	Christmas Singers Night	
Gregson Lane		ALTERNATIVE THERAPY	NELSON PEACH	Christmas Party Night with CELTIC NOTES	closed
Heaton Mersey	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	** Christmas Singers Night	closed
Hungry Horse Acoustic		JEZ LOWE			
Lymm	BOO HEWERDINE	** FIR PLAY	** ZOE MULFORD		
Parkgate	HARVEY ANDREWS		* NORMAN PRINCE & PAUL JOHNSTON		
South Lakes Music Promotion		DAVE GIBB			
Wigan	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	closed
Wrexham		BRIAN JONES	Christmas Charity Night with YARDARM (tbc)		
FRIDAY	28TH NOVEMBER	5TH DECEMBER	12TH DECEMBER	19TH DECEMBER	26TH DECEMBER
Bollington	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Christmas Party Night	closed
Bury Met	JOHN SMITH		THE BOGTROTTERS		
Carlisle Folk & Blues	TOM McCONVILLE & DAVID WOODS		LUCY KAPLANSKY (USA)		
Citadel		PAUL JONES & DAVE KELLY			
Frodsham	Singers Night	Singers Night	STANLEY ACCRINGTON	Singers Night	closed
Northwich	Reg's Birthday	DEREK GIFFORD	** ParLOUR Songs Singers Night	LES BARKER	closed
Pacific Arts Centre		THE DYLAN PROJECT			
Philharmonic Hall			THE SAW DOCTORS		
Philharmonic Hall (After 8 - in The Rodewald Suite)			JOHN O'CONNELL TRIO (sold out)		
Playhouse 2			JOHN WRIGHT'S BAND	Christmas Party Night with Dave Hughes & Friends	
Porkies		BERNARD WRIGLEY		Singers & Musicians	
Preston	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	closed
Rhyl	Singers Night	NICK JACKSON MBE (The Inspector)	Singers Night	Christmas / Yuletide Party Night	
SATURDAY	29TH NOVEMBER	6TH DECEMBER	13TH DECEMBER	20TH DECEMBER	27TH DECEMBER
Citadel	FLOOK				
* & ** Leigh	ASHTON-ON-MERSEY SHOWBAND				

SATURDAY(cont'd)	29TH NOVEMBER	6TH DECEMBER	13TH DECEMBER	20TH DECEMBER	27TH DECEMBER
Mr Kite Benefits	SHOW OF HANDS @ The Club Academy Manchester		LUCY KAPLANSKY @ Bury Met		
Shamrock Promotions				SWING COMMANDERS	
NB: * = Not the usual night ** = Not the usual venue					
28th DECEMBER 2008 to 31st JANUARY 2009 (NB: Always check with organisers before travelling)					
SUNDAY	28TH DECEMBER	4TH JANUARY	11TH JANUARY	18TH JANUARY	25TH JANUARY
Bothy	closed	Singers Night	PETE MORTON Singers Night	Singers Night	DAMIEN BARBER & MIKE WILSON Singers Night
Folk at the Manor	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	FIDDLESTONE	Singers Night
Kings Lock	closed	Singers Night			
Open Door	closed	Singaround	STANLEY ACCRINGTON Singers Night	Singaround	Singaround
Wooden Horse	closed	Singers Night		Singers Night	TOM BLISS 26TH JANUARY
MONDAY	29TH DECEMBER	5TH JANUARY	12TH JANUARY	19TH JANUARY	26TH JANUARY
Bacup	No information available				
Ciwb Gwerin Conwy	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Folk at the Prospect	Singers Night	Singers Night	TOM DOUGHTY Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Four Fools	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Midway	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
* Northwich	In - between Singers Night (tbc)				
Room at the Top	closed	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Skipton Folk Unplugged	closed	Singers Night	TRADITIONAL ECHOES	Singers Night	LIME SCURVY
Swinton	No information available				
TUESDAY	30TH DECEMBER	6TH JANUARY	13TH JANUARY	20TH JANUARY	27TH JANUARY
Acoustic Collective	closed	LORELEI LOVERIDGE (Canada)	Singers Night	STANLEY ACCRINGTON	Singers Night
Crown Folk & Acoustic	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround
Everyman	closed	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Longridge	No information available				
Maghull	closed	Singers Night	BANDERSMATCH Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Ring O'Bells	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Urmston Acoustics	closed	Singers Night			
Wigan	closed	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround
WEDNESDAY	31ST DECEMBER	7TH JANUARY	14TH JANUARY	21ST JANUARY	28TH JANUARY
Alison Arms	closed	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Biddulph up in Arms			JEZ LOWE & the BAD PENNIES		

WEDNESDAY(cont'd)	31ST DECEMBER	7TH JANUARY	14TH JANUARY	21ST JANUARY	28TH JANUARY
Burnley	New Year's Eve CELEIDH (sold out)	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians
Clarence	closed	ALAN BELL BAND	DYLAN OWEN	JANET RUSSELL	Singers Night
Garstang Unplugged					Singers Night
Ye Olde Vic			Music Session - English		Music Session - English 29TH JANUARY
THURSDAY	1ST JANUARY 2009	8TH JANUARY	15TH JANUARY	22ND JANUARY	29TH JANUARY
Acoustic Folk at the Nursery	closed	Singers Night		BIG SPOT - Allan Mayall	
Bury Met				BLUE BLOKES 3	
Chorlton		Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Dabbers	Singaround (tbc)				
Earby	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians
Gregson Lane	tbc		Burns Night - Singers Night		CHRIS & SIOBHAN NELSON
Heaton Mersey	closed				
Hungry Horse Acoustic	closed	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians
Lymm	closed	** BIG SPOT - Nick & Lin Tysoe	** Singers Night	TRIO	Singers Night
Parkgate				THRELFALL	
Wigan	closed	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	JOHN TAMS & BARRY COOPE Singaround
Wrexham	closed				
FRIDAY	2ND JANUARY	9TH JANUARY	16TH JANUARY	23RD JANUARY	30TH JANUARY
Bollington	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Carlisle Folk & Blues	Singers Night		JEZ LOWE and the BAD PENNIES		VIN GARBUTT
Folk On Friday (Leigh)					
Frodsham	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	ALTERNATIVE THERAPY	Singers Night
Northwich	Singers Night	RUTH FUGA & KEN POWELL	Singers Night	BELLA HARDY & CHRIS SHERBURN	Singers Night
Playhouse 2					
Porkies					HOMETOWNERS AGM with ANTHONY JOHN CLARKE
Preston	SCOLDS BRIDLE Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians
Rhyl	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
SATURDAY	3RD JANUARY	10TH JANUARY	17TH JANUARY	24TH JANUARY	31ST JANUARY
Citadel				NEARLY DAN BAKER'S FABULOUS BOYS with CHRIS & SIOBHAN NELSON	
Shamrock Promotions (new member)					

NB: * = Not the usual night
** = Not the usual venue

1st FEBRUARY to 7th MARCH

(NB: Always check with organisers before travelling)

SUNDAY	1ST FEBRUARY	8TH FEBRUARY	15TH FEBRUARY	22ND FEBRUARY	1ST MARCH
Bothy	Singers Night	ANTHONY JOHN CLARKE	LYNNE HERAUD & PAT TURNER	Singers Night	ANDY CLARKE
Folk at the Manor	Singers Night		COLIN HENDERSON & ANDREW JONES	Singers Night	Singers Night
Kings Lock	Singers Night				Singers Night
Open Door	Singers Night				Singers Night
Wooden Horse	Singers Night	MARK DOWDING		Singers Night	Singers Night
MONDAY	2ND FEBRUARY	9TH FEBRUARY	16TH FEBRUARY	23RD FEBRUARY	2ND MARCH
Bacup	No information available				
Clwb Gwerin Conwy	Singers Night				
Folk at the Prospect	STEPHEN QUIGG				GRAHAM BELLINGER and Friends
Four Fools	Singers Night				Singers Night
Midway	JEFF DAVIES				Singers Night
Philharmonic Hall		BARBARA DICKSON			
Room at the Top	Singers Night				
Skipton Folk Unplugged	Singers Night	COPPER KETTLE		GORDON TYRALL	Singers Night
Swinton	No information available				
TUESDAY	3RD FEBRUARY	10TH FEBRUARY	17TH FEBRUARY	24TH FEBRUARY	3RD MARCH
Acoustic Collective	JASON JOHNSON		ORPHEUS GHOST SONG		ELBOW JANE
Crown Folk & Acoustic	Singers Night				Singers Night
Everyman	Singers Night				Singers Night
Longridge	No information available				
Maghull	Singers Night	HARVEY ANDREWS			Singers Night
Ring O'Bells	Singers Night				Singers Night
Urmston Acoustics	Singers Night				Singers Night
Wigan	Singers Night				Singers Night
WEDNESDAY	4TH FEBRUARY	11TH FEBRUARY	18TH FEBRUARY	25TH FEBRUARY	4TH MARCH
Alison Arms	Singers Night				Singers Night
Biddulph up in Arms	UISCEDWR	** STEVE KNIGHTLEY		HARVEY ANDREWS & GRAHAM COOPER	Singers Night
Burnley	Singers & Musicians				Singers & Musicians
Clarence	ANTHONY JOHN CLARKE		VICKI SWANN & JONNY DYER		
Garstang Unplugged					
Ye Olde Vic		Music Session - English			
THURSDAY	5TH FEBRUARY	12TH FEBRUARY	19TH FEBRUARY	26TH FEBRUARY	5TH MARCH
Acoustic Folk at the Nursery	Singers Night				Singers Night
Biddulph up in Arms					** MARTYN JOSEPH & STEWART HENDERSON
Burnley Mechanics					CHUMBAWUMBA

THURSDAY (cont'd)	5TH FEBRUARY	12TH FEBRUARY	19TH FEBRUARY	26TH FEBRUARY	5TH MARCH
Bury Met			EMILY SMITH		Singers Night
Choriton	Singers Night				Singers Night
Dabbers	Singers Night				Singers Night
Earby	Singers & Musicians				Singers & Musicians
Gregson Lane	Singers Night				Singers Night
Heaton Mersey	QUICKSILVER (Hilary Spencer & Grant Baynham)				CATHRYN CRAIG & BRIAN WILLOUGHBY
Hungry Horse Acoustic	** GRACE NOTES				** EMBER
Lymm		** BIG SPOT - Andrew, Tullio & friends	TOM KITCHING & GREN BARTLEY	BIG SPOT - Lorraine Johns	
Parkgate				TOM TOPPING BAND	
South Lakes Music Promotion				PHIL BEER	
Wigan	Singers Night				Singers Night
Wrexham	THE TIME BANDITS				Singers Night
FRIDAY	6TH FEBRUARY	13TH FEBRUARY	20TH FEBRUARY	27TH FEBRUARY	6TH MARCH
Bollington	Singers Night				Singers Night
Bury Met	FLOOK				Singers Night
Carlisle Folk & Blues		ANTHONY JOHN CLARKE			MARK ATKINSON TRIO
Folk on Friday (Leigh)					ANTHONY JOHN CLARKE
Frodsham	Singers Night				MARK DOWDING
Northwich	GREN BARTLEY & TOM KITCHING		ZOE MULFORD		Singers Night
Platform					SKYHOOK
Porkies	FLOSSIE				SWARBS LAZARUS
Preston	Singers & Musicians				Singers & Musicians
Rhyl	Singers Night				Singers Night
Rose Theatre					LYRA CELTICA
Southport Arts Centre		* BOO HEWERDINE			Singers & Musicians
SATURDAY	7TH FEBRUARY	14TH FEBRUARY	21ST FEBRUARY	28TH FEBRUARY	7TH MARCH
Burnley Mechanics			FAIRPORT CONVENTION		FAIRPORT CONVENTION
Bury Met			MOISHE'S BAGEL		VIN GARBUTT
Citadel					THE LANCASHIRE HOTPOTS
Platform		LAU			STEVE TILSTON with DAVE BOWIE
Playhouse 2					
Shamrock Promotions - (new member)			JACK McNEILL & CHARLIE HEYS		
Southport Arts Centre		FOLKPORT '09 FESTIVAL with SHOW OF HANDS KATHRYN TICKELL BAND and many other acts			

NB: * = Not the usual night

** = Not the usual venue

The next "Diary Dates Calendar" in the Spring edition of this magazine will cover the period - Sunday 22nd February to Saturday 6th June 2009. Club Organisers/Venue Managers are asked to ensure information for this calendar is forwarded to folksingerjohn@aol.com by 14th January 2009.

ADVANCE DATES FROM MARCH 2009



ACOUSTIC COLLECTIVE

March 3 Elbow Jane
 March 10 Singers Night
 March 17 St Patrick's Night
 March 24 Singers Night
 March 31 Heather McNeill
 April 7 Singers Night
 April 14 Anthony John Clarke
 April 21 Singers Night
 April 28 Dave Pope & Bonz

ACOUSTIC FOLK AT THE NURSERY

March 5 Singers Night
 March 19 Big Spot - Lynn & Barrie Hardman
 March 26 Singers Night
 April 9 Singers Night
 April 23 Singers Night
 May 7 Big Spot - Dave Jones
 May 21 Singers Night
 June 4 Singers Night
 June 18 Singers Night
 June 25 to 28 Droylsden Folk Festival - Anthony John Clarke & various venues

BIDDULPH UP IN ARMS ** = Biddulph Town Hall

March 5 Martyn Joseph & Stewart Henderson **
 March 29 Jon Spiers & John Bowden
 at The Leopard, Burslem
 June 10 John Tams & Barry Coope **
 July 9 Eric Bogle & John Munroe **
 July 22 Vin Garbutt **

BOTHY

March 1 Andy Clarke with Lizzie Nunnery
 March 8 Steve Turner
 March 15 Singers Night
 March 22 William Pint & Felicia Dale
 March 29 Singers Night
 April 5 Pete Wood
 April 12 Singers Night
 April 19 Rubus
 April 26 Singers Night
 May 3 John Pearson
 May 10 Singers Night
 May 17 Dan McKinnon
 May 24 Spring Bank Holiday
 May 31 Tom Doughty
 June 7 Singers Night
 June 14 Annie Dearman, Vic Gammon & Steve Harrison
 June 21 Singers Night
 June 28 Jackie Oates & James Dumbleton
 July 5 Singers Night
 July 12 Tom Bliss
 July 19 Singers Night
 July 26 Robb Johnson
 Summer break - Informal Singarounds
 Sept 6 Allan Taylor
 Sept 13 Singers Night
 Sept 20 Down Trodden String Band
 Sept 27 Singers Night
 Oct 4 Skyhook
 Oct 11 Singers Night
 Oct 18 Quicksilver (Hilary Spencer Grant Baynham)
 Oct 25 Singers Night
 Nov 1 Peg Leg Ferrett
 Dec 13 Sarah McQuaid

BURNLEY MECHANICS

March 5 Chumbawumba Acoustic
 April 18 Show of Hands

BURY MET

April 2 Heidi Talbot & Kris Drever

CARLISLE FOLK & BLUES

March 27 Cathryn Craig & Brian Willoughby

FRIENDS OF FOLK

April 6 Feast of Fiddles @ Preston Charter Theatre

FOLK AT THE MANOR

March 15 Landeremason
 (other dates - Singers Nights)

FOLK AT THE PROSPECT

March 2 Graham Bellinger and Friends
 April 6 Barbara & Peter Snape
 May 4 Nancy Kerr & James Fagan
 June 15 Nathan Rogers
 July 13 Bill Whaley & Dave Fletcher
 Sept 14 Bram Taylor
 (other dates - Singers Nights)

FRODSHAM

March 20 Sue and Catriona
 April 17 Time Bandits
 May 8 Tom Browne
 June 5 Cockersdale
 July 3 James Dewdney
 August 7 Adrian Schofield
 Sept 11 Derek Gifford
 Oct 2 Colum Sands
 Nov 6 Bella Hardy & Chris Sherburn
 Dec 4 Grant Baynham
 (other dates - Singers Nights)

GARSTANG UNPLUGGED

March 5 & 19 tba
 March 25 Singers Night
 April 16 Val Marshall duo
 April 29 Singers Night
 May 14 tba
 May 27 Singers Night
 June 11 tba
 June 20 Kenlis Arms Music and Beer Festival
 June 24 Singers Night
 July 9 & 23 tba
 July 29 Singers Night
 Aug 13 tba
 Aug 26 Singers Night
 Sept 3 & 17 tba
 Sept 30 Singers Night
 Oct 15 Angie Palmer with Richard Curran
 Oct 28 Singers Night
 Nov 15 & 19 tba
 Nov 25 Singers Night
 Dec 3 & 17 tba

GREGSON LANE

March 12 Singers Night
 March 26 Anthony John Clarke
 (English Night) Singers Night
 April 9 Jason Dunkley & that Girl Sue
 April 23 Singers Night
 May 7 Singers Night
 May 21 Pete Rimmer & Friends
 June 4 Singers Night
 June 18 Elbow Jane
 July 2 Singers Night
 July 16 Marie Little
 July 30 Singers Night
 Aug 13 Singers Night

Aug 27 Singers Night
 Sept 10 Alistair Hulett & Phil Snell
 Sept 24 Singers Night
 Oct 8 Brian Preston
 Oct 22 Singers Night
 Nov 5 Desi Friel
 Nov 19 Singers Night
 Dec 3 Derek Gifford
 Dec 17 Singers Night

HUNGRY HORSE ACOUSTIC

March 5 Cathryn Craig & Brian Willoughby
 March 12 Singers & Musicians Night
 March 19 Houghton Weavers
 March 26 Singers & Musicians Night
 April 2 Kieran Halpin
 April 9 Singers & Musicians Night
 April 16 Blackheart
 April 23 Singers & Musicians Night
 April 30 Singers & Musicians Night
 May 7 Clive Gregson
 May 14 Singers & Musicians Night
 May 21 Vin Garbutt (tbc)
 May 28 Singers & Musicians Night
 June 4 Sing in the Festival Night
 @ The OC Club, Bromborough

June 5 to 7 5th WIRRAL FOLK ON THE COAST FESTIVAL

Show of Hands with Miranda Sykes, Gordon Giltrap,
 Mike Silver, Kerfuffle, Anthony John Clarke, Les Barker,
 The Churchfitters, Shona Kipling & Damien O'Kane,
 Elbow Jane, Stanley Accrington, Ruth Fuga & Ken Powell,
 Chris Moreton, The Bogtrotters Fiddlestone, Loctuptogether,
 Shellback Chorus & many more
 June 11 Singers & Musicians Night
 June 18 Singers & Musicians Night
 June 25 Singers & Musicians Night
 July 2 The Deportees
 July 9 Singers & Musicians Night
 July 16 Eric Bogle & John Munroe

LYMM ** = Lymm Rugby Club

March 5 Ember **
 March 12 Singers Night **
 March 19 Tom Bliss
 March 26 Big Spot - John Barber
 April 2 Isambarde **
 April 9 Big Spot - Mike Bartram **
 April 16 Anything Goes
 April 23 Singers Night
 April 30 Big Spot - Paula Godby
 May 7 Singers Night
 May 14 Barbara & Peter Snape **
 May 21 Singers Night
 May 28 Ruth Fuga & Ken Powell
 June 4 Singers Night
 June 11 Graham Bellinger & the Doghouse Roses
 June 18 Big Spot - Geoff Bibby &
 Sue & Derek Bradburne
 June 25 to
 July 3 Lymm Festival -
 Chris While & Julie Matthews, Kerfuffle,
 Bob Fox, Vicki Swan & Jonny Dyer, Full House
 Perfectly at Home String Band,
 Bernard Cromarty etc.

MAGHULL

May 12 Cherrington & Ward
 (other nights - Singers Nights)

MIDWAY

March 9 Martin Carthy, Norma Waterson &
 Chris Parkinson
 May 12 Brian Peters

MR KITE BENEFITS

March 8 "The Writing on the Wall"
 Roy Bailey & Tony Benn
 @ The Lowry, Salford Quays

NORTHWICH

March 6 Skyhook
 March 13 32nd Birthday Singers Night
 March 20 Singers Night
 (other nights - Singers Nights)

PARKGATE

March 26 Steve Tilston
 April 30 Dave Mallett

PLAYHOUSE 2

March 21 Kirsty McGee's Hobopop Collective
 April 25 Blackheart
 May 23 Clive Gregson
 May 30 Jez Lowe & the Bad Pennies

PORKIES

March 6 Lyra Celtica
 April 3 Colin Henderson & Andrew Jones
 May 1 Mike Silver
 June 5 Paul Milnes
 June 19 Tanglefoot
 July 3 Ken Nicol & Phil Cool
 Aug 7 tba
 Sept 4 Allan Taylor
 Oct 2 The Churchfitters

ROSE THEATRE

April 9 Aly Bain & Phil Cunningham

SHAMROCK PROMOTIONS

March 14 Mellorbrook Fiddle Day -
 Jeana Leslie & Siobhan Miller + guests
 March 28 Roy Bailey

SKIPTON FOLK UNPLUGGED

March 2 Singers Night
 March 9 Skipper John & Big Al
 March 16 Singers Night
 March 23 Dave Burland
 March 30 Singers Night

SOUTHPORT ARTS CENTRE

March 6 Fairport Convention
 April 18 Ashley Hutchings' - Lark Rise Band
 May 14 Boo Hewerdine @
 Old Links Golf Club, Moss Lane, Churchtown

THE CITADEL

March 7 The Lancashire Hotpots
 March 21 Martin Simpson

THE PLATFORM

March 13 Craobh Rua
 March 21 Houghton Weavers
 April 24 Aly Bain & Phil Cunningham

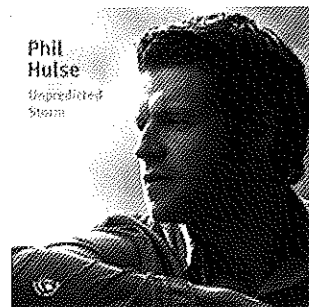
WIGAN

April 13 Wigan Day of Folk'n'Verse
 at 17-19 Wallgate, Wigan, WN1 1LD
 April 23 St Georges Day Celebration
 with Wigan Mummers
 July 2 to 5 Wigan FC Reunion & 45th Birthday
 Celebrations

WOODEN HORSE

March 1 Singers Night
 March 8 Singers Night
 March 15 Singers Night
 March 22 Judy Cook (other dates - Singers Nights)

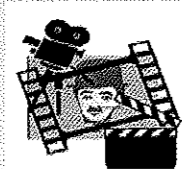
Stole on Trent based artist Phil Hulse has become an effective guitarist and vocalist with over 14 years live experience under his belt. Some commentators have been bemoaning the dearth of singer-songwriters making political or social comment. Enter Phil Hulse. Often rooted in his locality and always written from the perspective of everyday people, Phil tells it like it is and how it impinges on peoples' lives.



As well as contributing half the songs presented by The Queensberry Rules, Phil wanted to try some of his material in his own context and has selected various other musicians to enhance his material including Louise Peacock (best known for her work with Bryan Ferry and Tarras), session man supreme, Stevie Lawrence (formerly with the Scottish Band, Iron Horse) and Bob Hallard and Richard Adams (from the Manchester bands, Section Six and Coma Shock respectively).

Essentially, though, it is Phil centre stage armed with his powerful vocal style and underpinned by tasteful guitar work. He has written a new collection of songs that are already winning praise and have been described as 'poignant, topical and heart-felt'. Coupled with his ear for a good melody and his trademark hook-lines it has resulted in a compelling album. Visit www.fellside.com for further information.

NEWSREEL



CHARITY FOLK CONCERT IN AID OF ROBIN HIGHAM

On Friday 24th October, I helped organise a Charity Folk Concert to raise money to purchase a state of the art wheelchair for Robin Higham. Robin was born in Wigan in 1946 and lived in Coppull, near Chorley for the past 25 years. He was and was the landlord of The Allison Arms in the village for 8 years.

His life long passion has been folk music; he has been a stalwart performer and aficionado for 40 years. In that time he has organized and been resident of a number of folk clubs, run countless concerts and charitable events as well as supporting local live music clubs and festivals in his native North West region and further afield.

He is recognized by his peers, as a fine singer, accompanying himself on guitar or as is his first love acapella style. He carries a traditional or modern song with ease, is a master of the barmy ballad and a great raconteur. Most of all he is a mighty man, generous with his time and knowledge, always willing to help those less fortunate. His advice is honest, sometimes not what you want to hear, a true friend.

He has travelled the world as an engineer - specializing in high specification weld testing - in his spare time, always looking for a folk club on his travels and if he could not find one, he would open one.

It transpires that he had fractured his spine in a freak accident

at work some six years ago - despite tests and scans the damage had been missed - and in November 2007 he had a fall, woke up some twelve hours later on the bathroom floor and had crushed his spinal cord rendering him paralyzed. He had surgery to stabilize the condition and has been in the Spinal Rehabilitation Unit at Sharoe Green Hospital, Preston ever since. Progress has been very slow but with the patience and professional care of the nursing staff and physiotherapists on the spinal unit, the love and attention of his family and friends, not to mention his own grit and determination, Robin is now on the slow road to recovery.

His friends think that now is the time to show Robin how we value his friendship and try to repay in some small way the charity he has shown to others on so many occasions. To this end we held a charity folk concert to buy Robin a wheelchair so he can get outside occasionally and have some quality of life.

Brian Preston
Email: brian@brianpreston.co.uk
Web: www.brianpreston.co.uk

BIG NATIONAL CEILIDH 18th October, 2008

Those of you who attended the The Big National Ceilidh last month will be interested to know that, at the final count, £496 was raised for Water Aid. Thanks to all those who supported this event including dancers, raffle prize donors, volunteer staff, the band and Sandersons bakery who supplied the hot supper. There are more photographs of this event on the village website: [click here](#) to read a review of the event where you will also find a link to the photo's page. There is also a link to the Big National Ceilidh's website where you can see pictures from many other dances which took place throughout the UK on the same night.

THE MAGICAL CHRISTMAS TREE



The Magical Christmas Tree Tour
Saturday 6th Dec . 7pm St. Michael's Church, Hightown, Middlewich

Pete Morton, Roger Wilson and Chris Parkinson have a habit of getting together every December with their 'Magical Christmas Tree' to entertain audiences and

themselves throughout the country. This concert is a wonderful occasion for audience and performers alike who enjoy not knowing what the Dickens is going to happen next!

The real mystery of Christmas? Celebrated with songs and tunes...old and new, jolly and somber, popular and traditional.. they're all on the tree, waiting to be handpicked by the audience. A fun night for all, with lots of audience participation and frivolity!

ROGER WILSON has been singing with his fiddle and guitar since 1986 after leaving his 'disastrous' career as a graphic designer for the fame and fortune of the UK folk scene. He is well known for his renditions of traditional songs and songwriting, as well as for touring with the likes of John Tams, Martin Carthy, Ruth Notham, Karen Tweed and many lucky others.

CHRIS PARKINSON is probably the most sought after accordion player in the country. There are 'Wanted' posters in most Post Offices throughout the land! He has performed and recorded with Billy Connelly, Ralph McTell, Steve Philips of the Notting Hillbillies and Martin Cathy & Norma Waterson as well as many more to add to this impressive list. Roger and Chris were



SOUTHPORT ARTS CENTRE

Maddy Prior & The Carnival Band
Sunday 21 December, 7.30pm
Tickets: £17 (£15 concessions)

Fairport Convention
Friday 6 March, 7.30pm
Tickets: £17.50

Gwyneth Herbert Duo
Friday 27th February 2009,
8pm
Tickets: £10 (£8 concessions)

Ashley Hutching's Lark Rise Band
Saturday 18 April, 8pm
Tickets: £12 (£10 concessions)

Coming Soon

FOLKPOINT

Saturday 14 February 2009 Midday till Midnight

Show Of Hands - The Kathryn Tickell Band
Wheeler Street - Ranarim - Mawkin Causley

The Anna Massie Band - Ruth Notman

Day tickets: £30 (£28 concessions & Bothy Club members)

Tickets On Sale Now!

BOX OFFICE: 01704 540011

ONLINE: www.seftonarts.co.uk

members of the highly acclaimed HOUSE BAND. Well, thats the incredible musicians out the way..aha.. then there's.....

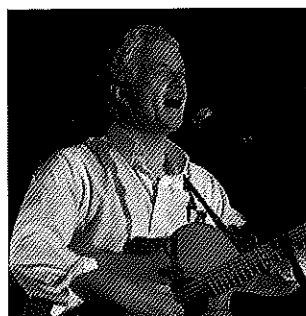
PETE MORTON !!! the singer, entertainer, songwriter/originator of this debacle, who will gather among you with that magical tree. This is night not to be missed-

Tickets are £7 From- Dave Thompson 01606 833434/07909 705 785 Room 1, Victoria Buildings, Lewin St. Middlewich, CW10 9AS events@middlewich.org.uk All funds raised go to the mayors charity St. Luke's Cheshire Hospice

CONCERTINA NOVELTIES

Collectors of concertina novelties, or anyone looking for a christmas stocking filler for a concertina-playing friend, may be interested to know that Lakeland are selling white chocolate snowmen in a box with a picture of a snowman playing a concertina on it. See the Lakeland website for details or in store. http://www.lakeland.co.uk/F/keyword/white+chocolate+snowmen/product/41262_41261

HEADLINE ACTS FOR YOUNG ACOUSTIC ROOTS



Two headlining folk acts have been announced for the finals of the fifth Young Acoustic Roots competition at The Phoenix Theatre in Bawtry near Doncaster on Saturday March 14 2009..

Entertainer Bernard Wrigley seen in such high profile shows as Phoenix Nights, Dinner Ladies, Coronation Street and Emmerdale will be the main guest on the night.

Rising singer songwriter Roger Davies from West Yorkshire will support him. This all adds up to an excellent evenings entertainment of comedy, traditional and contemporary music.

The aim of the competition is to allow young musicians the opportunity to improve their performance skills in front of a live audience. Entrants only need to send in a demo CD of three tracks and any acoustic music style is permitted. For further information and an application form just contact Pete on 01709 739093 or email him on pete@thebpasgroup.co.uk. It's an opportunity not to miss. The closing date is February 7th.

The Music Room sponsors the event and Peter is hopeful of two or three festival appearances as the main prizes. Concert tickets are £12 from 01709 739093 or on-line at www.wegotickets.com. Doors are 7:00pm for a 7:30pm start

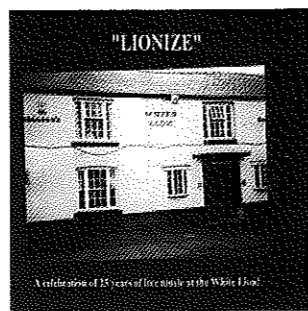
SPOTLIGHT ON SWINTON FOLK CLUB



"Lionize" - A Celebration of 25 years of live music at The White Lion (Palatine Music PAL CD 002)

In September 1983, the Swinton Folk Club moved after a few peripatetic years into its current home, The White Lion Hotel in Manchester Road. Whilst the majority of live music there has subsequently been of the folk genre, other events have offered pure blues, R 'n' B, and what might be termed "Blues and Smooth".

This album is both to celebrate the achievement of longevity and to reflect the music therein. It was brought out also to complement the latest Swinton Folk Festival which began in October 1985.



On a proportion of roughly two numbers per artiste, this 15 track compilation fully acknowledges the excellent music and fine tunes to have emanated from this Swinton heartland and those concerned have every right to feel proud of this achievement. Its range encompasses those in at the start, through to newer faces of more recent years.

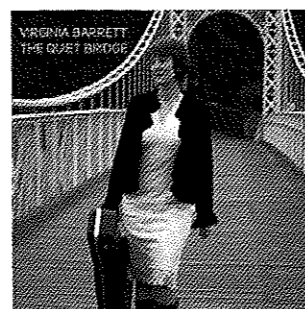
Contributions came from The Hands and Feet Roadshow ("General Taylor", probably their best exemplary number). Pete Ryder (notably "Not Shapiro's Time"), Phil Atkinson (whose "Holy Ground" interpretation is so apt for and from this quintessential Swinton folkie), Steve Chatterley, Persuasion (Carole Dunnington and Dave Keighley), Holding/Slidewell, Feet in Mouths, Bernary Cromarty, JP Slidewell, and Hands In Pockets (superb harmonies on "Factory Girl").

Of course, thanks and recognition must also go to the several "mine hosts" over this period, principally Geoff and iz Riley, through to today Dan and Sonia Heaney, ever so keen to continue to support live music at The White Lion. Furthermore, not forgetting all those other musicians and audiences who over the years have done their bit- without all these, no club, no functions, no events. This CD has had a very limited production run so for all those familiar with the place and its music and who wish to obtain this component piece of the North West's folk music heritage, order quickly. E mail Philip.walton2@ntlworld.com or telephone 0161 7935441 - £3.50 incl p+p makes it a bargain

Rob Dunford



VIRGINIA BARRETT The Quiet Bridge



This is a recording that in many ways is a masterclass in voice control, for Virginia has a haunting quality that isn't manufactured but stays constant from first track to last. Add to this her understated guitar accompaniment and you have all the ingredients for a memorable CD. "Don't Say a Word", actions speak louder than words, don't they? Our spiritual side takes

over as we explore our inner selves, this seems to be the message in, "Human Communion".

A smile conveys a message, but is it all in the interpretation? You decide in, "Beautiful Smile". I especially liked the sentiments in, "Under Your Golden Shade", whilst, "Only Awake When I Sleep", tells how you evaluate life when you reach a certain age while you try to catch a glimpse of the future.

Set in the hills of Allendale, a personal sojourn is the story behind, "Rosanna's Song". We all try to hide our true feelings, but it is nigh on impossible to hide them from those who know us so well, really, "Nobody Knows". Tempest Fugit, "Time Flies", for all of us, it's not only birds who can take flight.

A Victorian city during the hours of darkness viewed from above and the human tactile emotions, the story of, "The Kiss". Do our prophecies come true? Or indeed hold water, only you can decide, "Old Prophecies", is enhanced by piano accompaniment.

I predict Virginia Barrett has a bright future ahead, this CD is of real quality especially curled up in an armchair with a glass of wine and the lights down low.

David Jones

BELLOWHEAD Matachin (Navigator Records NAV17X - available on CD & limited edition red vinyl)



With a band that has everything including the kitchen sink, there's always the danger that there could be too many cooks and a bit of a mess served up. On the other hand, there could be so much care taken to fit everything in its right place that the result is bland and tasteless.

So, if you want to know how it should be done, listen to this, the second full Bellowhead album. Across the thirteen tracks (three of which are short "vignettes"), you have the extremes (a bit bland? Opening track, Fakenham Fair; a bit of a mess? The end of Kafoozalum - though that's quite deliberate). In between there is much that is superbly done.

If you start with Kafoozalum (and don't mind the cacophony of the ending) and play through to the end of Spectre Review, you'll hear the real magic of Bellowhead. The sound is joyous, even on Cholera Camp as it counts up the dead, full of invention and wit. It has been superbly arranged yet feels spontaneous, almost telepathic - as if each knows instinctively what fits where.

Cholera Camp is a Kipling poem set to a Peter Bellamy tune performed in the best Vaudeville style, speeding up, slowing down, John Spiers sounding like he's really in the red coat uniform of a Crimea veteran, hamming it up for the Music Hall, with the company egging him on. (Ham and eggs there! Ha!) Then Whiskey Is The Life Of A Man, a riot of good time big band folk that should be on prescription for those in need of a pick me up. Spectre Review takes all the same ingredients and makes of them a spooky tale, all melodrama and noises in the dark.

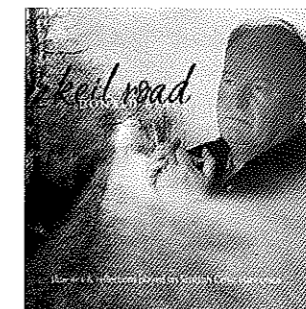
The quality hardly drops for Widow's Curse, and I suspect it's my stamina that's more lacking. Shame that Bruton Town feels a bit of a let down. I think by now I'm wishing someone else could have a crack at lead vocals. There are after all plenty of other singers in the band. Never mind, the (almost) final instrumental medley is great fun and everyone can let off some steam. There is nothing quite like Bellowhead live and close up, but this album, while not an unqualified success, certainly contains enough of their magic to make it contender for album of the year.

John Booth

DONALD BLACK Black Keil Road (SkyeCD, 2007)

I have to confess that before writing this review I had never heard of Donald Black, so whilst listening to the album I decided to do

a little research. Not something I normally do - I usually prefer to listen to the album and make my own mind up, so as not to be influenced by any other comments.



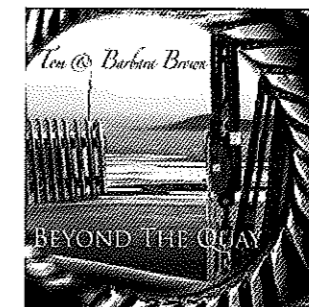
Donald Black comes from Benderloch, Argyll, Scotland, a very beautiful part of the West Highlands which is steeped in Highland bagpipe and Gaelic traditional music. So I wondered how a mouth organ would hold its own against the 'power and majesty' of the pipes. The answer is: surprisingly well!

The album is subtitled 'Slow airs & reflections played on a Scottish Celtic Harmonica' and to be fair that's exactly what you get. Donald has put together a gentle collection of airs and compositions by contemporary writers that hold an affinity for this part of Scotland. The title track 'Keil Road' is written by Donald and sits well with the rest of the material. Donald has been playing the harmonica since early childhood and has established himself as a foremost exponent of Scottish traditional music. He is helped on this album by some fine guest musicians, including Allan Henderson on piano, Alex Dalgligh on acoustic and electric guitars, Ian Mac Donald on flute, Maggie Maciness on Clarsch, and Ally Bain on fiddle, to name but a few.

The music flows in a soft gentle fashion with the harmonica as lead instrument. All but one of the tracks are instrumentals. The one vocal track, 'Gleann Bhaile Chaoil', is sung in Gaelic.

Peter Massey

TOM & BARBARA BROWN Beyond the Quay (Wild Goose WGS358CD)



It's always a pleasure to receive a CD from Wild Goose by these two good friends and this album is no exception. It's down to the sea and all things nautical (the clue is in the CD title!) on this their 4th album with Wild Goose. As always the performance on all the tracks is carefully arranged and excellently rendered showing both Tom and Barbara's long standing experience with folk song whether contemporary in traditional style or purely traditional works.

Tom accompanies with guitar, melodeon, English concertina and harpeleik (a fretless zither) on many tracks but my old partner in crime, Keith Kendrick, also joins them on some. The Askew Sisters have also been (willingly!) roped in with some lovely instrumental accompaniments as well as chorus singing. They've even got Doug Bailey to help fill in the choruses, Joan Holloway plays the 'nackers' (bones!) on a track or two and Malcolm Woods plays a tenor drum to good effect on the opening track.

The songs are varied and their version of 'The Herring's Head' is almost type cast for these two... bickering in public... whatever next! The idea of putting a few songs together in the track entitled 'Short Song Set' works very well with seamless changes from song to song.

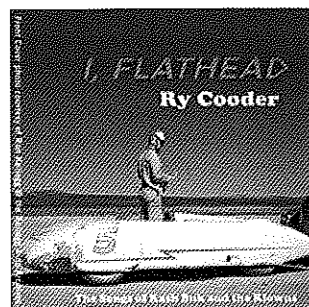
One of my favourite tracks 'The Bold Princess Royal', sung a capella by Tom, is a fine example of this song and superbly performed. Likewise, Barbara's empathic rendition of 'Little Fishes', with a subtle concertina accompaniment from Tom, is

equally as appealing.

The careful programming of the variety of songs from sad to funny and from slow to up tempo and so on means the album never palls and over an hour of listening passes surprisingly quickly. Add to this interesting and informative sleeve notes from Tom and Barbara and an attractive sleeve design by the talented Hilary Bix and you have almost the perfect album!

Derek 'Giff' Gifford

RY COODER I, Flathead (Nonesuch Records 7559799343)



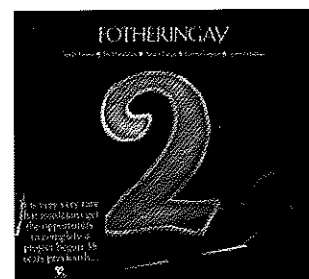
Ry Cooder is probably best known for exposing to the world those slinky Cubans, Buena Vista Social Club. However, readers with more mature ears will know of his early solo records and slide guitar work with the Rolling Stones amongst many others. Over the last few years, he's released a California trilogy that began with 2005's 'Chavez Ravine' and 2007's 'My Name is Buddy'. 'I, Flathead' is the final part of this trilogy and, in its deluxe version, comes complete with a novella telling the tale of the central characters in this themed record.

His early solo records were always wide ranging affairs reflecting his own voracious appetite for all kinds of music from folk and blues traditions to the guitar music of Hawaii that also attracts Richard Thompson as a fan. So, there's no surprise that a trilogy from Ry Cooder will draw from many sources. Indeed, the first two records in this trilogy caused the listener to research the background to both records as neither explored the common Californian themes recognised outside of the region e.g. how of the 60's hippie revolution, Hollywood, etc. His themes are more about California being a meeting point for many cultures whether that is immigrants from the south or those from inside the US seeking their fortunes.

Those of you who enjoyed his earlier solo material will find the music of 'I, Flathead' harks back to those days. Its title (in praise of a car engine) sets the tone in that it looks at the culture of a bygone California of deserts, salt flat racing, seedy dance halls, etc. He takes off Johnny Cash in a song named after the country legend but follows that with 'Can I Smoke In Here?' where Kash Buk, the hero of the tale, lands in the 'Steel Guitar Heaven' of another track. Alongside this, 'Spayed Kooley' tells us off his own 'homeland security' in the form of the dog that guards his patch. Latino styles drop into 'Filipino Dancehall Girl' and Hawaiian guitar kicks off 'My Dwarf Is Getting Tired' ... yes, he's still idiosyncratic but a top talent nonetheless.

Steve Henderson

FOTHERINGAY Fotheringay 2 (Fledgling Records FLED 3066)



Fotheringay formed in the early 70's when Sandy Denny left Fairport Convention to form the band with her partner of the time, Trevor Lucas. At a time when folk music was seen as part of the 'popular music' of the day, Fotheringay's resulting debut album shot to the top of the charts. Sadly, they fell apart before during the recording of the second album. Not that this fact seems to have put off Fledgling

Records or Fotheringay drummer, Jerry Donahue, who have scoured the vaults for the recordings and re-worked them as 'Fotheringay 2'. Indeed, the 'Bold Jack Donahue' track found on 'Fotheringay 2' is surely due for renaming as the patient work of his namesake has pulled together a masterpiece that surpasses the debut release.

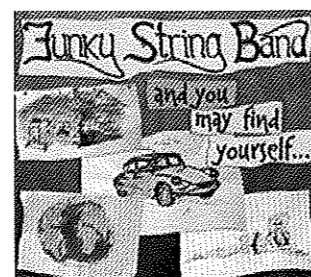
Of course, Denny's vocals sit sublimely on a number of the tracks whether her own compositions like the strident 'John The Gun' or Dave Cousins' gentle 'Two Weeks Last Summer'. Yet, the winner for me is 'Silver Threads and Golden Needles' where she covers a classic country song from the 1950's turning it into a mournful piece of folk music that highlights the overlap between these musical styles.

However, the rest of the band should not be forgotten, as the playing across the whole of the record is top notch. Take, for example, their cover of 'Wild Mountain Thyme', which revitalises even those ears that have tired from one too many versions of this song. On this track some wonderfully subtle playing from Lucas, Donahue, Pat Donaldson and Gerry Conway is topped by Sandy's beautiful vocal in an all too short version.

If the aforementioned 'Silver Threads and Golden Needles' hinted at what might have become of this short-lived outfit, 'Knights Of The Road' composed and sung by Trevor Lucas, suggests further directions with its up-tempo rock feel. All in all, this magnificent release is not just fuel for the fire of what might have happened, it's an inspiration for all those young guns of folk.

Steve Henderson

FUNKY STRING BAND And You May Find Yourself (Shoogles, 2007)



The Funky String Band members are more widely known as members of the Celtic fusion band Shooglenifty. They are Peter Daffy, vocals, guitar, mandolin and ukulele; Luke Plumb, vocals, mandolin, banjo, accordion and bouzouki; Angus R. Grant, fiddles and vocals; Jamie Jauncey, keyboards, guitar and vocals.

However, you can file this album under indie music. Recorded in Scotland during a 2006 tour, the band plays some country and bluegrass standards and some original songs written by Luke and Peter.

Being a fan of Shooglenifty, I wasn't quite sure what to make of this album at first, but every artist or musician is entitled to have another string to his bow, so to speak. The Funky String Band is just that. With musicians of this calibre, it had to be something good.

The album starts with an arrangement of Rory Gallagher's song 'Going To Ma Hometown' then moves on to a cover of the Mitchel Parish/Hoagy Carmichael standard 'Stardust'. A tune next by Luke Plumb called 'Bell Of Benbecula' has a Western saloon feel to it. It features the mandolin and Angus on fiddle, and has a nice swing to it.

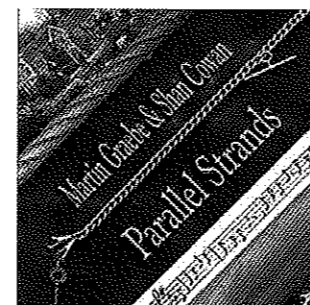
Peter Daffy sings the next song, which he wrote, 'Vinyl Man', my favourite track. Another of Peter Daffy's songs, 'Christmas Cards', follows a Luke Plumb instrumental called 'Candle in the Bushel/Sad Eye', so it is fair to say there is some nice original material backing up the cover versions of 'Wayfaring Stranger' and 'Angel Flying too Close to the Ground', songs that will be no strangers to fans of country-and-western and Americana/folk.

The album takes its title from a line in the final song, David Byrne's 'Once in a Lifetime'. The spoken lines of this song are done as a talking blues set to the chords of 'Up a Lazy River', and it works very well.

The album ends with 'out takes' of the band having fun, mainly with the chorus line going wrong and the giggles setting in; maybe they were taking too much liquid refreshment.

Peter Massey

MARTIN GRAEBE & SHAN COWAN Parallel Strands (WildGoose WGS 323 CD)



I first met Martin Graebe a few years ago at the National Folk Festival where he was lecturing on the travels of folk song collector Sabine Baring-Gould - in Iceland of all places! It was obvious then that Martin had extensively researched the life and times of that esteemed Victorian gentleman.

It is no surprise, therefore, that this is a recording of a number of his collected songs as well as some of Martin's own compositions - and there's the rub - when I last chatted to Doug Bailey of Wild Goose about the two CD reviews I was completing he advised me not to read the sleeve notes of this one until after I'd listened to it. I can see (or hear!) why. There is no indication on the track listing on the tray of the CD of whose songs are which (hence the CD's title, of course) and, unless they know Baring-Gould's collection inside out, I defy anyone to identify which are from the collector and which are Martin's own.

Only the final song Laying My Life on the Line is obviously 'modern' both in terms of lyric and a rather bluesy tune and understated guitar accompaniment. The only one that I knew was Martin's was the excellent Stonecracker John, which I have heard him and others sing before. A mark then of Martin's ability to write 'traditional' songs! Many of the collected songs are being given their first recorded outing so this CD acts as a collector's archive as well as for its own sake.

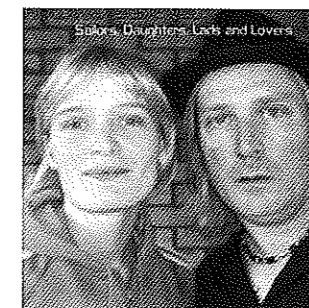
The performances are very well executed and Martin's clear, tonal voice is complemented delightfully on many of the tracks by Shan Cowan's subtle harmonies. The arrangements are also imaginative particularly on Jacky My Son. Martin sings solo on one of the most powerful of his own compositions the evocative From Severn, By the Somme.

Not content with just unaccompanied songs, Martin has enlisted the help of some fine musicians including Wild Goose 'regulars' Paul Sartin and Paul Burgess on oboe and fiddle respectively. Even me old 'mucker' Keith Kendrick gets a look in with his usual panache on both English and Anglo concertinas while Jeff Gillett adds tasteful guitar and mandola accompaniments on a few tracks. Barry Lister adds occasional 'interesting bits' with tuba and trombone as does Paul Wilson on accordion and percussion the latter of which includes granite and slate! Finally additional vocals from Barry, Doug and duo Lynne Heraud and Pat Tuner are provided on the Cornish carol, Rouse, Rouse.

So why not rouse yourself from reading yet another of Gifford's reviews in this edition of Folk NW and find time to order a copy of this superb CD from WildGoose through their distributor Proper Music at www.properuk.com or phone Musikfolk on 01326 318085.

Derek 'Giff' Gifford

HOLDING/SLIDEWELL Sailors, Daughters, Lads and Lovers (Palatine Music PAL CD03)



As individual performers, Michelle Holding and JP Slidewell are not unknown by any means on the folk circuit. Although to put it appropriately, JP has been carrying the folk flame the longer of the two. The coming together of these two talents earlier this year added extra impetus to the potential both undoubtedly possess and this CD - Michelle on vocals, JP on guitar and vocals is testimony to that. All tracks, bar 3 of the 11 are traditional.

The title of the album is taken from four of the tracks on the CD with the general - but not exclusive - theme of love, loss and the causes thereof, yet it is far from an introspective piece of work. It opens with the well-known song "Dark Eyed Sailor", as gentle an introduction to an album one could wish for. Not that "laid back" is the intention of the production, one would assume, but this track is just so. Michelle's vocals conjure up a gently winsome message, rolling around like a beguiling stretch of sea.

We're back on land for the following track, "The Reed Cutter's Daughter" and a first full introduction to JP's style. A tale of infatuation with a certain girl in an isolated rural setting. The music overall is possibly imprinted as "too bouncy" for a song of lost love and lamentation. Track 3 takes us overseas again in "Sing For James", Michelle's own composition and an extremely poignant tale of enforced separation and longevity for a loved one's return - sadly not guaranteed when the subject of the song has enlisted. The rhythmic guitar flows as an undercurrent, underscoring as a heartbeat of relentless longevity. This is one of those songs and compositions that one automatically thinks must herald from long ago - in fact, a traditional song "written today".

Track 4 again alludes to watery separation, not by sea but by river, as Michelle gives her interpretation of "Annan Water", a song written from a man's perspective. Occasionally one hears of some folk followers having a wee habitual difficulty with this concept but not this reviewer, familiar with other versions and surely it should be now well accepted in folk song tradition. Michelle's distinctive style in the unaccompanied delivery enables one, it is felt, to see the subject from both sides. The fifth track, the perennially popular "Little Musgrove" is one of JP's most requested performance favourites. The poignancy in the guitar work, the melancholy notes in the pivotal passages duly hit their mark.

Next comes "The Female Drummer" and again JP's guitar ripples away whilst Michelle takes control of a number which, whilst one of JP's own stalwarts, now means so much more via her voice. The tale of cross-dressing and recruitment in the services is of course the theme. The ending, musically, does not complement the song, however, with unnecessary extra guitar chords adding - if that was the intention - no useful emphasis.

By track 7, "The Mower", we are firmly in an agricultural setting, although only the naively innocent would conclude this is wholly about a day in the life of a jobbing farm labourer. JP's unaccompanied rendition offers retrospective and reflective comparison to Michelle on "Annan Water", suggesting that on this album, both voices individually do complement themselves in track to track terms. The subsequent number moves to the military, with "Lancashire Lads". However, I'm not sure that JP's verbal "One, two, three" introduction to what I will loosely

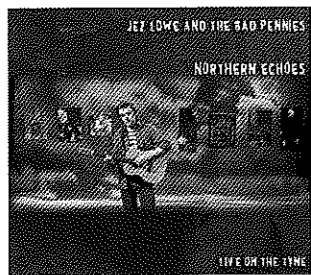
term "rockabilly" arrangement is quite fitting, despite its novelty. Once into the song, the number, appropriately, marches along but the guitar style seems somehow too much on the upbeat, almost frivolously not quite in keeping with the song's sentiments. However, to the track's credit, some listeners by now may say the album could do with upping things a bit and we certainly get this here.

Also shifting along with musical insistency is track 9, "The Drowned Lovers", requiring the listener's attention to get the full message from Michelle's vocals on this ballad. Track 10, "Trafford Road Ballad" is one of Ewan McColl's lesser known works, but of connection and relevance to the Mancunian heartland of these two artistes. It's ever so relevant to contemporary times and maybe the outcome of the USA presidential election will hasten the end of the necessity for such outpouring of personal life vis-à-vis foreign affairs (but don't hold your breath). JP's unaccompanied delivery fully does it justice.

Finally we are offered the bonus track "Band of Gold"; not Freda Payne's soul number but one by Seth Lakeman whose sentiment is searching for the consistency of love. It is a denouement in this album's terms, where we get to hear both voices on the same track. Hopefully their next CD will have more of this promising arrangement. It finalise the album with a more optimistic view of relationships and on a noticeable musical "high"; the chorus imprints itself and lingers.

For this promising duo, who can still be safely described as new to the folk world as a unit, this is all in all a fine debut album and the choice of material leaves little open to question. From start to finish, an admirable musical anthology into which one can journey, relax or both. The best judgement is of course for yourselves to complement the album by seeing live gigs. Assess these via www.HoldingSlidewell.co.uk For the album, order via Paypal on the CD section of the website or telephone 0161 7935441. £6.50 incl p+p secures a most pleasant introduction to the music of Holding/Slidewell. **Rob Dunford**

JEZ LOWE & THE BAD PENNIES Northern Echoes - Live on the Tyne (TTRCD 110).



Song writing is a real gift bestowed on few and when exercised to its full potential a song can say eloquently, something the mere spoken word fails to convey. I found this to be true on so many occasions, whilst reviewing the new live CD and DVD from Jez Lowe and the Bad Pennies.

I have always found Jez to be a most unassuming yet driven artist who goes about his business in a way that endears him to audiences across the world, but it's those qualities as a songwriter that mark him out as outstanding in his generation. The CD, recorded live at the Caedmon Hall in Gateshead on Tyne, showcases the quality of his early material from the eighties and nineties, as he chronicles the adversity and triumphs of his native countrymen from the North East. It runs the full gamut of emotions from the, "Boys of Belly Row" to "Bait Up" from "Cursed be the Caller" to "A Hard Life" and the more light hearted offerings of, "Mary Martindale" and "Davis and Golightly". The upbeat, "Chick Henderson's March" and eminently singable, "I'll Never Get Home/The Old Durham Waltz", contribute to making this recording a must have for your collection. For me, "Fun Without Fools/Swiss Reel", should make every politician in the country hang their heads in shame.

38 Song for Geordie, the DVD, is part concert, part documentary with

projected archive images that show how the North East evolved from its core businesses of coal, steel and shipbuilding. Benny Graham on vocals and melodian and Shona Mooney on fiddle are the special guests.

The DVD delves back like the CD to Jez's earlier albums whilst also paying tribute to a number of Geordie songwriters past and present. "Byker Hill", starts off this well thought out tribute to the North East with images of life down the pits and then gives way to the lighter, "Sedgefield Fair".

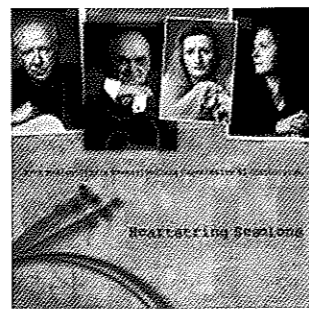
Benny and Jez chat about the legendary Tommy Armstrong before they sing, "Armstrong's Army". Miners believed the deeper they dug they just might meet the devil coming the other way and when the lights went out and it was pitch black they simply followed the pit ponies back to the surface.

Kate leads on the beautiful, "Waters of Tyne", which gives way to, "Takin' on Men", a song of shipbuilding which Jez wrote for the award winning Radio Ballads in 2006. Benny sings, "Dance to Thee Daddy" and neatly leads into, "Bobby Shafto". A real battle of nostalgia, but were the good old days really good? The pits and shipyards were after all a way of life.

Folk music is the music of the people, but most people don't know what it is. This DVD tells it as it is and again is a tangible tribute to the North East and its natives.

Jez Lowe has a penchant for putting his finger on the pulse of life both past and present and painting pictures that we can all relate to. A songwriter of great perception who as far as I'm concerned hasn't received the accolades his work so richly deserves. **David Jones**

ARTY McGLYNN, CHRIS NEWMAN, NOLLAIG CASEY & MAIRE NI CHATHASAIGH Heartstring Sessions (Old Bridge Music OBMCD18)



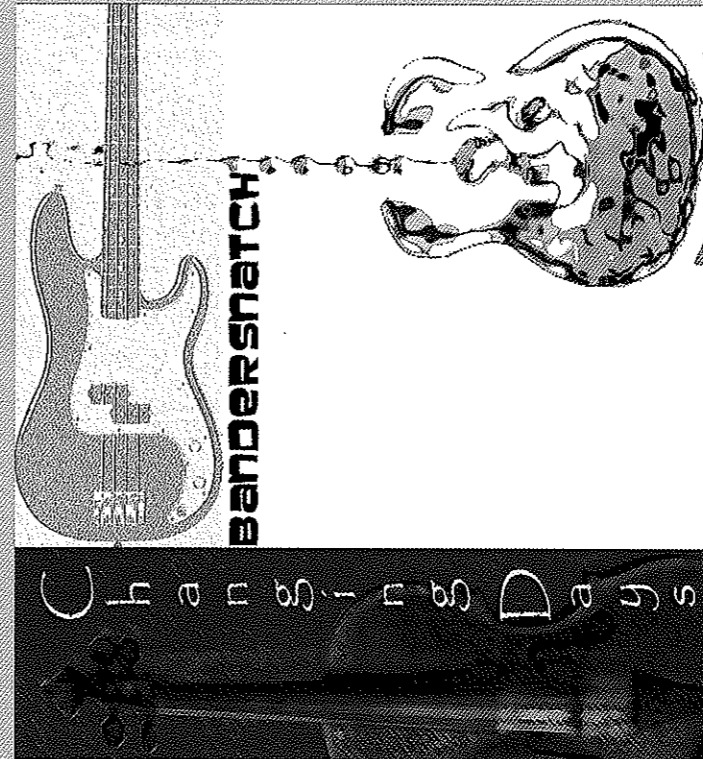
This album is a real family affair featuring two of the folk scene's favourite duos co-joined as a quartet in a real showcase in the art of performance. There's nothing clinical in the approach to the music that comes across as entertaining and technically faultless in equal measures - a hard feat to achieve particularly in these cynical times.

The musicianship of Arty, Chris, Nollaig and Maire is exquisite and I defy anyone not to be inspired by the group's enthusiasm that will also leave you incredulous at the dexterity of each of the members flailing digits... if proof were required check out the astonishing "El Vals Argentino". On more subtle numbers such as "Song Of The Harp" you can imagine the melody utilised as part of a film score to accompany panoramic landscapes and the wonderfully understated ballad "Among The Heather" sung by Nollaig Casey, will put you in mind of sitting outside a French café sipping coffee whilst idly letting the world pass by.

Soaking up the gently pulsating rhythm and bluesy guitar lead lines, joined by the interplay between fiddle and harp trust me when I say this is a seriously 'sexy' track and you'll just have to buy the CD to see what I mean. Unlike so many (predominantly) instrumental albums I receive, where certain tracks don't sit comfortably within the whole package, this is as near faultless as they come and, of course, is highly recommended. www.oldbridgemusic.com

Pete Fyfe

NEW CD DUE FOR RELEASE DECEMBER 2008



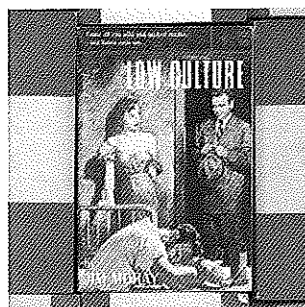
Bandersnatch

- 'Thank you for a wonderful evening at the Topic...A great performance by a supremely talented band.'*
(Topic Folk Club, Bradford)
- 'This band continues to surprise me, each time I see them I like them more. Rich and varied, not out of place on any folk club or festival stage. I look forward to seeing them back at Middlewich.'*
(Festival Director, Middlewich)
- 'If you are a lover of music then catch one of their gigs. If you are a club organiser, then book 'em.'*
(The Howcroft, Bolton)
- 'Bandersnatch encapsulated quite simply the very best of all the ingredients that promote this kind of music.'*
(Review, Folk North West Magazine)



Alan Roscoe
Ed McGurk
Ian Kell
Becky Raw
Norman Raw
Dennis Dodds

Contact: Ed McGurk on 01204 852618, or 07789 598725
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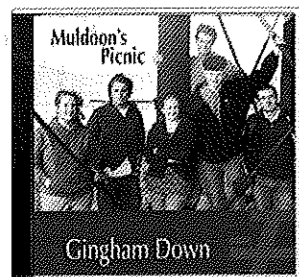
The first thing that strikes you about this album is when you've finished playing it from beginning to end is that each track is 'treated' differently. Starting with the gentle use of Kora and Thumb-Piano "Leaving Australia" the song acts as the prelude for many fascinating excursions as how to combine contemporary techniques with traditional culture.

From the string indulgence of Bella Hardy's "Three Black Feathers" to Andy Partridge's "All You Pretty Girls" with its Melodeon/Horn section and seriously sing-a-long chorus each number proves a gem. But wait just a minute though, my thoughts have strayed to the track I'm listening to at the moment for surely that's none other than Steeleye (circa Storm Force Ten) on "I'll Go List For A Sailor". Funny that, how the mind plays tricks on you when you're least expecting it. Well dammit, more power to Moray's overused elbow utilising as he does; guitars, mandolin, double bass, drums, concertina and verse violin (whatever that is - although I've got a good idea) and that's only the half of what proves a real musical journey.

If you're a self-confessed 'folkie' (much like oneself) then indulge your senses and let rip with a bit of punk it'll wash over you like that advert for shower gel on TV... OK, minus the scantily clothed woman but what the hell (?) it's my dream. The unusual use of David Owens old style book covers to illustrate each song is a master-stroke and don't forget to check the final track (a hidden one at the end of "Valentine" timed at approximately 6:00mins) about Adam Ant... it's a wonderfully understated song that should really get a better hearing. www.jimmoray.co.uk

Pete Fyfe

MULDOON'S PICNIC Gingham Down (Own label - MPCD1)



This group of acapella singers will be well known to many of the Folk North West readership having appeared at Fylde and Chorley Festivals over recent years. Their six fine voices blend and harmonise with ease and the arrangements, mostly worked out by Katy Cooper (soprano) and Harry Campbell (tenor), are innovative and exciting. By now

you will have guessed that I'm something of a fan of theirs!

But it isn't just the musicality of their performances because this lot will attempt virtually anything in terms of their choice of material. Therefore on this CD you get Sacred Harp, traditional folk song, Italian and French-Canadian songs and even a Georgian toasting song called 'Benia's Mravalzhamier' which defies pronunciation let alone singing out!

Of the more familiar traditional songs their arrangement of 'Thousands or More' (Bright Phoebus), which they nonchalantly call a warm up song, is very enjoyable and Phil Tanner's version of 'Off to Sea Once More' is likewise delivered in good style. One of the most unusual and effective arrangements however is of 'Because My Love Loves Me' which although a well known song sounds very different here. One of my favourite tracks is the lilting 'The Gowans Are Gay' (Gowans are daises by the way) which flows so easily.

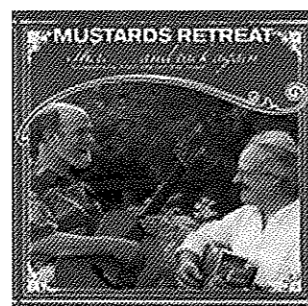
There are some folk who might find their delivery of the songs a little 'classical' in style but as I personally don't like classical singing but I DO like this lot I don't think anyone should have problems with their performances.

Anyone who has seen their live stage act will know that their presentation is lively and fun loving as well as highly professional and this atmosphere comes across well on this recording. Basically, it's obvious they just like singing.

This highly recommended album is available from the group at their many gigs or visit their website at www.muldoonspicnic.org.uk Great stuff!

Derek 'Giff' Gifford

MUSTARDS RETREAT There...and back again (Yellow Room Recordings.2007)



Mustards Retreat is a duo of Tamulevich & Hough, but I expect most of you will already know that! A new album from Mustards Retreat is always sure to catch my attention, none more so than this one. The album is sub-titled 'Snapshots from life on the road'. Mustards Retreat fall into what I call 'real folk singers', - in other words they are a working band that thrives on live performances

- on the road. All the recordings on this album appear to have been made at various concerts & gigs. Now this might be a desired taste for some, but for me this is how a folk song should sound. Often these days, a singer may use up to a dozen or more 'professional guest musicians' to provide the backing. The odds of the singer ever performing live on tour with the musicians are a bit slim. On the plus side, it does produce an album that makes good listening, and up to the standard we have become accustomed to hearing.

However, a live performance reflects the real talent a singer or band has. No use spending months in a studio producing a 'perfect' album if their 'live' performance doesn't cut the mustard.

So, he says getting off his soap box, is the album any good? In my view yes, but maybe not as good as previous albums if you were to compare it to the studio produced album. Remember, when recording a 'live' performance, the band only has a one in one chance of getting it right! In my view this is a good album and one that Mustards Retreat can be proud of. The album doesn't have any particular theme as such, but is made up of some memorable performances of their favourite songs. Most of which do not appear on previous albums. Of the 13 tracks at least 5 of them are original songs written by Tamulevich & Hough.

The rest are a mixture of covers of other artists songs. As if diversity is the watch word, the album has plenty to entertain you here. The songs vary from love songs, to traditional to comedy such as Pat Cooksey's song, originally called 'The Sick Note' comes up on this album as 'The Bricklayer'. Most people will know it as 'Paddy and the Bricks'. Also here is 'The Scotsman' a cheeky poem by Mike Cross put to music.

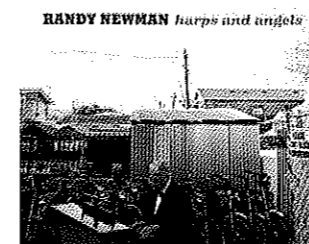
If I had to pick out just one song on the album as my favourite, the honour would have to go to 'Festival Night' a kind of love song that many will identify with.

To sum up, I liked the album and I am sure you will too. It may well have been recorded live but the quality of the recordings is excellent, so don't be put off.

You can buy it and learn more about Mustards Retreat here: http://www.mustardsretreat.com/music.html

Peter Massey

RANDY NEWMAN Harps and Angels (Nonesuch Records 7559799893)



Oh, deep joy. It's been eight years since Randy Newman released a solo album though his contributions to films such as 'Toy Story', 'Meet The Parents' and 'Monsters Inc' mean that his music has hardly been off our screens. For an older generation familiar with such classics as 'Short People', even the limited

thirty six minutes of his new CD, 'Harps and Angels', will be a total delight.

You may have picked up on his song, 'A Few Words in Defense of Our Country', which was released as a download in 2007. It's included here and is classic Newman where his tongue is so far in his cheek that he tastes fresh air. He tells of how various other national leaders like Hitler, Stalin and even King Leopold of Belgium had surely done far worse than poor old George Bush. Though, of course, he doesn't mention the latter by name but talks about the collapse of an empire in a manner that will disturb any American listener. Elsewhere, he refers to the greed in the world with 'A Piece of the Pie' and its immoral line teasing fellow caring musician ... 'no one gives a **** except Jackson Browne'.

The title track takes on board thoughts of a near death experience that is escaped because of a 'clerical error' and ends giving out advice on how to live. Typically, this song packs in humour, erudite lyrics, solid moral message and paradoxical juxtaposition with the track that follows, 'Losing You' being a tender ballad carrying a message to a lost love. Don't worry, if you think that this is sounding too depressing all round, Randy has the sense to slip in 'Laugh and Be Happy' to lift the atmosphere for you. In fact, over his many years of song writing, he's developed skills that allow him to slip between every emotion and every musical style.

Though there is always Randy at his piano, the music on 'Harps and Angels' takes on slices of New Orleans jazz, pedal steel driven country and lush strings drawing on the approaches used across his earlier solos records. An absolutely wonderful record from one of a rare breed - now, if only some of those 'wannabe stars' on TV took Randy Newman as their role model that would be good.

Steve Henderson

MARTIN NOLAN Bright Silver Dark Wood (Own release, 2002)



Unless you are really into Irish music and you are a musician, chances are you may never have heard of Martin Nolan. I sometimes think this is a great pity, as backing musicians don't always get the credit they deserve. Often standing behind a singer or in a band, they are the unsung hero's that make up the complete sound. However,

Martin Nolan is one musician that stands out. Born in Dublin, he plays the Uilleann Pipes, and low whistles, with a flair that

has taken him all over the world.

This is a 15track album with many of Martins own compositions mixed with some traditional tunes. There is only one song on the album that he co-wrote with Richard Abbott and AnnMarie O'Grady. I have to confess I am not a great authority on the origins of Irish tunes, but I know what I like when I hear it, and this album to me makes good listening! All in all the play list is well thought out and entertaining. It is Martins own compositions that make the album all the more interesting.

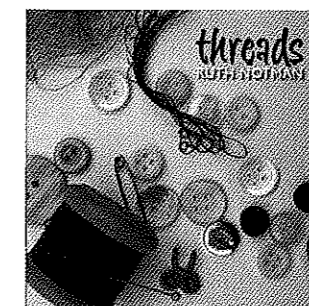
It opens with a set of slip jigs and then goes on with a varied collection of airs, waltzes, marches, polkas climaxing with some more reels and jigs. Martin plays the Uilleann Pipes and low whistles. He has some fine musicians accompany him. They are: Bouzouki/Mandolin - John Ryan Fiddle - Kevin O'Connor Guitar - Tony Byrne Guitar - Brendan Kelly Percussion - Robbie Harris Bones/Kanjira - Niall Mansfield Piano/Harpsichord - Andrew Synnott Pixie piano/Snare drum - Peter Eades & Vocals - Deirdre Ni Chinneide.

In my view Scottish songs always sound better when sung by a Scotsman, so it follows that Irish Uilleann Pipes always sound better when played by the Irish, - it's in the blood and an art only learnt in his/her native land.

So if you have panache for fine Irish music, get you hands on this album. I can recommend it. You can buy the album on line. Contact Martin here: mail@martinnolan.com at his website www.martinnolan.com

Peter Massey.

RUTH NOTMAN Threads (MCRCD7003)



There have been times when I've listened to albums and thought who is that backing singer. I remember thinking the first time that I played 'The Gypsy Life' (what turned out to be the late John Wright's last CD), who is that woman singing backing vocals. I discovered it was Ruth Notman. John was great judge of emerging young talent and in Ruth Notman's case his

judgement was spot on. Ruth started performing on the live circuit at just 13 years old, mainly folk clubs and venues in and around Nottingham and Derby. After reaching the BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Award finals, with her exceptional interpretation of traditional and contemporary material, she has been capturing the hearts and minds of folk audiences up and down the land.

Threads, her debut album, features a selection of innovative traditional arrangements, three tracks written by the cream of contemporary and modern traditional folk - Nic Jones, Dougie MacLean and Richard Thompson - as well as three self penned songs. What binds them seamlessly together is a voice that interprets them in her own inimitable style. MacLean's 'Caledonia' has been one of his most recorded song but hardly bettered until this recording.

Unlike some singers, much older and more experienced than her, Ruth seems to inject feeling and empathy into what she's singing - 'Dark Eyed Sailor' and 'Farewell Farewell' exemplify this. She shows her versatility as she sings in a variety of styles and tempo. She brings a refreshing charm to each song, none moreso than the traditional 'Heather Down the Moor' and 'Limbo'. Credit must also go to co producers Ich Mowat and Joe Heap who are part of an excellent gathering of musicians that

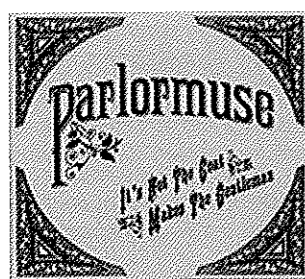
feature Notman herself on guitar, piano and harp, Saul Rose on melodeon, and Roger Wilson on fiddle

What sets Ruth Notman apart from other aspiring artists is her potential to become not only one of the great female folk singers, but her so far under utilised songwriting capabilities. 'Over The Hill', 'Lonely Day Lies' and 'Roaming' show considerable promise; in quality terms they fit snugly with the rest of the album. There will be inevitable comparisons with Kate Rusby. However, her distinctive vocal intonation and multi talented musical abilities Ruth Notman give her the potential to become a future folk icon, on a par with female legends like Sandy Denny. Very rarely can so young a person have produced such a mature debut album.

Visit: www.ruth-notman.com for further information.

Lewis Jones

PARLORMUSE It's Not The Coat Makes The Gentleman (Home Circle Media, 2007)



The CD comes nicely packaged in a Victorian looking cardboard cover. Parlormuse is the work of Gavin Goszka, probably best known for his work in the Halloween horror soundtrack outfit Midnight Syndicate. For this album, Gavin has researched and found a collection of old Victorian parlour / music hall songs that

have not been heard for over 100 years, hence the Victorian cover.

All the songs are arranged, performed, and mixed by Gavin. The premise was to produce something different, rather than taking a 'purist' stance on the recordings, and attempting to recreate the way the songs would have sounded originally, with period instrumentation. Realising this would probably leave many of today's listeners cold, he decided to blend the old with the new and approach the songs from the perspective of a folk-rock ensemble. In my opinion, the jury is still out! As to whether this was a good idea or not, I will have to leave it up to you. I found the same voice and backings a bit monotonous. One or two of the tunes are recognisable as they turn up in 'folk songs' that have become today's classics. For instance, in track 6 'The Time For Love' is set to the Irish tune 'Rosin The Bow'.

If you attend folk clubs and sing-rounds in the UK, you often find the occasional 'music hall' song being performed. Indeed, the folk clubs in the 50's and 60's have often been described as being just an extension of the old music halls.

The difference between Gavin Goska's arrangements and the original 'traditional' feel is that Gavin has used what sounds like a Yamaha keyboard complete with synthesized drummer for backings.

Although Gavin sings very well, and I felt the idea was good, I have to say the songs could have sounded better with a little more 'flair' to the arrangements and the use of 'live' guest musicians.

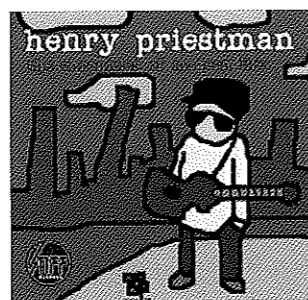
Peter Massey

HENRY PRIESTMAN - The Chronicles Of Modern Life (CDSEEZ 074)

It's almost unbelievable that such a talented singer/songwriter as Henry Priestman has waited almost a musical lifetime to record his debut solo album. Well, now he has done just that having served a mere 30 years in the business, starting off in Hull, migrating to Liverpool in 1975, then onwards later to the

North Wales outpost of Ynys Mon (Anglesey) where this album was recorded.

What took him so long? Well, in part, a more than successful prolonged interlude with The Christians (that's the band who sold 3 million albums worldwide rather than the organised religion of the same name!). In fact, he wrote all the songs on their 1987 triple-platinum debut. Henry was also a member of The Yachts (nothing to do with Peter Mandelson, George Osborne and a certain Russian aluminium Oligarch) and collaborated with a number of other artists - more recently (and most notably) he has worked with



South Wales based artist and radio broadcaster, Amy Wadge, with whom he has co written a number of songs.

On the powerful opening track, he uses the allegory of job redundancy (R-E-D-U-N-D-A-N-T is spelled out reminding us of the theme of D-I-V-O-R-C-E pioneered by Tammy Wynette and Billy Connolly) to illustrate the scrapheap of a failed long-term relationship. "Don't you love me more" has a sing along quality that belies the undercurrent of pain following an emotional split. The coming to terms with getting older - but not wanting to surrender to it - is something with which we all have to deal. It's the theme of 'Old'. "I'm the same age as my father when I first thought he was old" sums up the perceptions of young people about their parents getting old - a perception that changes when they too approach the same lifecycle milestones!

The self-deprecatory 'What you doin' with me?' reflects the lack of self belief and disbelief in sheer good fortune that many of us have felt in relationships, while the excellent 'Grey's the new blonde' shows that we can be comfortable and reassured when experiencing the (often greying) ageing process into which our relationships develop. Many people get better with time - perhaps with the exception of the grumpy ones!

On a more political theme, 'It's called a heart' illustrates the cynicism and greed of the marketing and corporate vested interests who control many facets of the global economy (very apposite considering the greedy bankers and their city friends we've been forced to bail out). On a similar theme, 'The Idiot' is about those often-same people that wantonly plunder the resources of our planet for monetary gain. Many people wear clothes or buy goods with the latest corporate 'logos'. 'No To The Logo' is a reaction to the multi national firms that persuade consumers to pay through the nose for marketed brand names so that we can offer them free advertising by displaying their logos; garments and goods that are often produced by exploited slave labour.

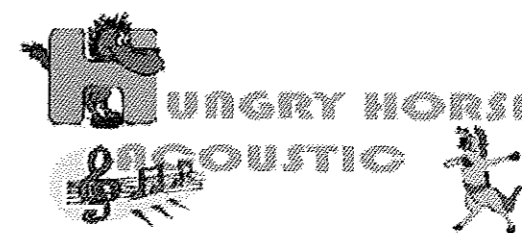
'The Sacred Scrolls of Pop' is essentially tongue in cheek with overtones of Dylan and Cohen (especially the use of harmonica) but it conveys an optimism that good music will out despite the commercial excesses of the music business (and perhaps because of the ability of artists to exert more control over what they produce now). The knack of the music industry to turn new musical movements into money for the record companies and leave the artists with little to show for their efforts is exemplified by the enigmatically entitled 'Did I Fight In The Punk Wars For This?' This 13-track album closes with a 'hidden' track, the brilliant 'Suffice To Say I Love You', a reworking of an old Yachts song.

Priestman injects pathos, humour, irony and occasional bitterness into his finely crafted catchy songs, which draw on a

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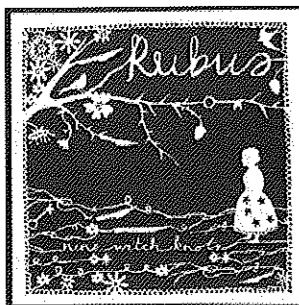
DECEMBER		
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number of autobiographical events, influences and contemporary themes, inevitable during such a long and distinguished career inside and on the (dissident) fringes of mainstream music. 'The Chronicles Of Modern Life' is splendidly produced. Outstanding from start to finish, it provides a vibrant vehicle for Priestman's distinctive voice underpinned by great songs, great musicians, and great arrangements. Highly recommended.

You can find more information at www.henrypriestman.com and hear some of the tracks at his MySpace pages and on YouTube.

Lewis Jones

RUBUS Nine Witch Knots (Wild Goose WGS356CD)



This is a debut album from this band that consists of lead singer and concertina player Emily Portman, guitarist David Newey, singer, fiddle and viola player Christi Andropolis and drummer Will Schrimshaw. The influences are apparent, particularly from the first track, with a distinct Steeleye Span feel to some of the innovative arrangements.

The excellent musicianship of the group is also very obvious throughout. Emily's voice lies somewhere between Shirley Collins and Kate Rusby; no bad thing in itself.

The songs are all traditional with one exception and all are about love and lovers. However, don't expect mushy sentimental stuff because treachery, murder, blood, death and tragedy all find a place. This is folk song after all! My favourite tracks are 'Golden Ball' a version of the similar 'Prickly Bush' and other songs with the same theme and 'Willie's Lady', which is a very good arrangement of an interesting song. Emily's voice shines on 'She's Like A Swallow', which she learnt from Chris Coe.

I had problems with 'Sheep Crook and Black Dog', sorry team, but Maddy Prior and Steeleye's version will always be the definitive for me. Also I found 'My Son David' a little slow in its performance. I also had a problem with the cover design, which makes it awkward to read the track lists. However, the contents are, as to be expected with a Wild Goose production, comprehensive in giving information on the songs showing a depth of knowledge and research on the material.

Overall, this is a fine first effort by this up and coming band. I hope we see a lot more of them on the folk scene. www.rubusband.com

Derek Gifford

MARIANNE SEGAL featuring Circulus The Gathering (Snow Beach Records, 2007)



Devotees of Pentangle might like this album. It falls into the same kind of folk rock (if you can call it that) - more a fusion of lightweight pop/jazz. For Marianne Segal it is a throwback to her days in the late 60s and early 70s when she sang with the band "Jade". In 1970, Jade made a sole album Fly On Strange Wings, I have to confess I have never heard it, but it seems

to have gained some notoriety with collectors of the genre. It was re-released in 2003 on CD, and cumulated with a one-off concert in London. The seed was planted, and the next year

found Marianne and Michael Tyack of the neo-folk rock band Circulus working together on a set of new songs, which was to be Marianne's first full-length album since 1970.

Marianne has moved from the big city to live by the sea, and now takes her inspiration for her songs from her new environment. She has assembled around her guest musicians: Amy May from Paris Motel, Root Cartwright from Principle Edwards Magic Theatre, Bill Steer from Napalm Death, Carcass and Firebird, plus about a dozen other musicians.

Marianne sings very well and handles all the main vocals, taking on the style of a jazz singer. There are 12 tracks, eight of which are songs written by Marianne separated by four "Little Lucy Vignettes" lasting about 30 seconds each. (To set the mood?)

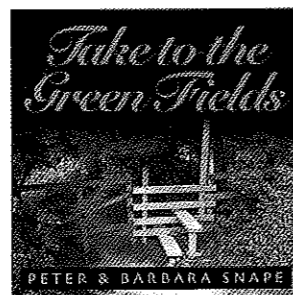
In my opinion, I can't honestly say I found the album riveting. Although the musicians perform faultlessly, none of the songs hit the spot for me, they don't seem to go anywhere or have a purpose. If you are already a fan of Marianne Segal I suspect you may find the album to your liking. Sorry I can't be more positive about this album, but it wouldn't do if we were all the same!

You can find more details on Marianne Segal and what she is about on her Web site. you will also find a link to her MySpace web site, there you can hear some sample tracks before you buy the album. I recommend you do just that.

Peter Massey

PETER AND BARBARA SNAPE Take To The Green Fields Luke's Row Music LRCD002

www.thesnapes.org.uk



Things may come and things may go and a lot of what purports to be Folk music these days, simply isn't, no matter how smartly it's pitched at us. However I know it when I hear it and I expect you do too, - my ears detected it instantly on this album. The Snapes, based in Whittle-le-Woods, dig into their backgrounds for a debut that radiates warmth and involvement, based on an accessible blend

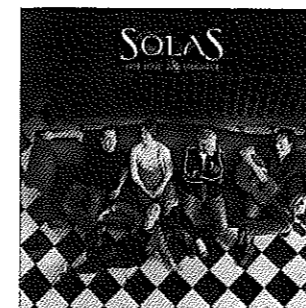
of music and song, founded on their love of, and respect for the tradition with some well-chosen covers such as Dougie Maclean's 'The Storm,' and Nick Caffrey's 'Dandy Factory.' Peter's melodeon provides a solid and at times, stunning base for Barbara's voice and guitar to flow over, her playful enthusiasm carrying the day on the Gracie Fields items here - the wordplay of 'Co-op Shop' and sheer bizarreness that is 'Little Pudding Basin' gleaned from their 78rpm archive.

Peter's grounding as a musician with the seminal Garstang Morris, is reflected in the lift and bounce to his playing (check his 'Lengthsman's Hornpipe') and I recognise some of Barbara's repertory ('T Stands For Thomas' for example) from her singing on the Liverpool traditional scene of a while back. Impeccable pedigrees then, and these substantial 15 tracks prove their worth with considerable aplomb.

Never trying to be anything they aren't, and boasting no chin studs nor tattoos either, it's been a real joy to have seen Peter and Barbara live at Whitby and Fylde Festivals this summer. Unhip then, but these two sidestep such concerns with confidence and wear their old school credentials on their sleeves. Club and Event Organisers should take note.

Clive Pownceby

SOLAS For Love And Laughter (Compass Records 4490)



Strap yourselves in for another whirlwind ride on what is the 'Solas' roller-coaster - and oh boy, what a ride! Well, where to start? At the beginning I suppose which sees the band in full flow on the set "Eoin Bear's" including the flashily syncopated "Rossa Reel" that will have everyone 'moshing' like a demented audience at Glastonbury Festival.

Not letting up for a second the band then hit the country music trail with the seriously groovy "Seven Curses" introducing the vocal talents of latest member Mairead Phelan. Although speed plays an important part in the band's make-up, it isn't everything and on tracks such as the beautifully metered "Tilly's Jig" you'll find yourself happily rocking from side to side whilst willing the tune never to stop...surely the ultimate accolade for any composer (in this case the band's astonishing multi-instrumentalist Seamus Egan).

In more melancholy mood the accordion of Mick McAuley, fiddle of Winifred Horan and delicate guitar accompaniment from Eamon McElholm create a musical artistry more suited to a laid-back pre "Robin Of Sherwood" performance by Clannad. This is the kind of performance that delivers on all fronts and as I write this review having just downloaded it onto my iPod and listened to the album several times whilst going for a walk in the rain down by the coast it will leave you with a warm glow and a smile on your face as broad as the proverbial Cheshire Cat.

The score ten out of ten doesn't even come close to how I much I'd like to rate the CD needless to say it couldn't come more highly recommended in my humble opinion. Don't even think about it... rush out and purchase a copy at the earliest opportunity! www.solasmusic.com

Pete Fyfe

SRON Electric (Own release, 2006)

My friend Paddy said "Get your ears round this" as he handed me the copy of this album. Apparently, Sron is Gaelic for nose, so as he had just returned from Dublin, I was one half expecting it to be a usual Irish album of 'diddy diddy' music, - how wrong I was!

Sron are a 4 piece band based in Ireland. They are Damian MacGabhann: Vocals, percussion. Padraig Walsh: Vocal & Accordion. Ciaran Massey: Vocals & percussion. Ardan Cranny Vocals, bass, guitars, Mandola, & drum programming. Also included on the album are guest musicians Liz Coleman: fiddle. Domhall Banks: pipes & flute, and Ray Walsh: bass. John Cullen: drums.

The first thing that strikes you about Sron, is the quality of the vocals, especially the close barbershop harmony they are capable of. This demonstrated by the diversity of the songs. I only detected one original song, sung in Gaelic, 'Is feidir linn bheith saer' written by Mac Gabhann (apologises if I have spelt it wrong, but the cover notes are printed over a photo backing with the smallest font possible and are not very clear!) The rest are a collective of covers. Including a couple of Sandy Denny/Fairport Convention songs, 'Who Knows Where the Time Goes' and 'It Suits Me Well'. Along with some traditional tunes and songs.

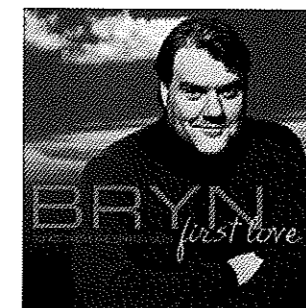
As I said, Sron's strength is in the vocals, and the 'diversity' is

demonstrated once again by the excellent close harmony singing on songs such as Leon Russelson 'The Motorway Song', and a couple Mills brothers arrangements of 'Choo Choo ChooBoogie' & 'Nagasaki' plus Springstein's 'It's A Working Life'. All are performed really well, and if anything they put me in mind of the early MacCalmans recording. One track I thought stood out as unusual and worthy of an extra mention is 'Cunla' - this is the first time I've heard it sung in Irish Gaelic, - plus a brilliant arrangement.

This is the first time I've heard of Sron, and I think it's a surprising band in many ways. Indeed, the band is worthy of wider audience outside of Ireland. I liked the album and I think you will too. If this is the bands 1st album?- It is well worth searching for. I can recommend it, as this band is on the way up.

Peter Massey

BRYN TERFEL First Love (00289 477 7865)



I've just caught sight of Bryn Terfel singing "Danny Boy" (a wonderful rendition as it goes!) on the Alan Titchmarsh show and in the interview that follows he states why he's featuring 'folk' songs on this latest recording. Well, it appears that not everything is rosy in the field of Operatic arias with this form of music just not being commercial enough to sell shedloads to the masses.

Some will cynically see this as a case of jumping on the latest (isn't folk music wonderful) bandwagon and, although Bryn's truly refreshing comments might not enamour him to the 'folk' purists let's face it, in this real world of dog eat dog it shouldn't really surprise anyone who's trying to make a crust. Certain tracks might prove a tad pompous as on "Scarborough Fair" where his duet with Kate Royal sounds positively priggish or the disastrous coupling with Ronan Keating but on the whole, and it has to be said his solo performances are what really makes the CD memorable.

The timbre of his voice is, at times reminiscent of Josef Locke and the sheer power and emotion with which he projects has got to be admired. Unfortunately for those who like their 'folk' a little rough around the edges this recording more than likely won't be for them but on the whole this is the kind of album that will appeal to a far wider majority. www.brynterfel.com

Pete Fyfe

STEVE TILSTON Ziggurat (Hubris Records HUB004) www.stevetilston.com



Liverpool-born, Leicestershire-raised Steve Tilston has spent over 30 years making music with an articulate intimacy that perfectly plays to his strengths: intelligent, thoughtful, played on acoustic guitar with discreet support.

Tilston is worth hearing for his expressive voice alone but his\$compositions are what set him apart. Mid-80s pieces like 'Slip Jigs And Reels' and 'Naked Highwayman', covered by, amongst others, Peter Bellamy and Fairport guaranteed his immortality. However, there are many, many others too in his portfolio such as 'The Turncoat' (from 'Solorubato') and 'These Days' (from 'Life By Misadventure')

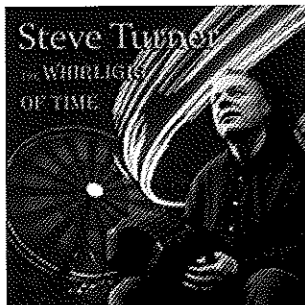
which hold serious currency with your reviewer, and this new recording contains songs which are up there with his finest work.

I calculate this as his 12th solo album, not including live recordings, compilations and last year's 'Reaching Back' box set, and he's never sounded more self-possessed. Tasteful, crafted, and sure-footed with occasional traditional items a la 'Rambling Comber,' here are cameos of loss and struggle, with lives, and feelings thrown into focus alongside well-observed detail. From the prescient 'A Pretty Penny' (the City's dog-eat-dog greed) to the lyrical acuity that is 'The Spoils Of War,' (the Iraq catastrophe) Steve deals in deeper truths than the usual singer/songwriter stock-in-trade relationship blues.

Wistful on the opening autobiographical 'The Road When I Was Young,' compassionate and reflective on 'The Devil May Care,' Tilston's compositions have brio and invention, always allied to a fine tune. A positively jaunty 'Jacaranda' inspired by an Australian Spring, the pearl-like clarity of a worldview washed clean 'After Summer Rain' - these are very fine songs indeed.

Steve Tilston's is an arresting talent and 'Ziggurat's' mix of the meditative with the trenchant is a timely reminder that his momentum, if anything is accelerating.

Clive Pownceby



STEVE TURNER - The Whirligig of Time The Tradition Bearers (LTCD 1103)

Steve Turner from Nottingham came to the folk scene in the late sixties in Manchester and after many and varied dabbles in bands and as a solo artist - he also dealt in folk instruments for 3 years - he made four solo albums all with Fellside. After a

twelve year break away from the scene it has taken him three years to record this labour of love of which he can be justifiably proud.

A good, solid, rendition of, "The Isle of St. Helena", provides the best possible start for this CD. Even Napoleon himself would concur. "The Dry Cardrona", is a song from the other side of the world, in this case Steve first heard it in Auckland, New Zealand. It concludes with an instrumental, "One Bad Link in the Chain". A traditional Scottish broken token ballad, "The Poor and Single Sailor", follows and I would label this a hide and seek song played by Steve on the cittern. Next it's to a Child ballad, "Bonnie George Campbell". It's a lament for James Campbell who died at the battle of Glenlivet in 1594.

The dour, "The Rambling Beauty", is a Scots ballad of destiny. In complete contrast, "The Glendy Burke", goes with a real swing, it was written in 1860 and comes from Stephen Foster's collection with a little more elaboration. It features Nancy Kerr and James Fagan on harmonies and Miranda Sykes on the double bass. This ballad suggests, "Young Waters", was a Scottish noble executed by James I after returning from captivity in England.

Jack Tar pays a high price for his night out on the town. "The Gold Watch" comes from the, "Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland", collected in 1929. "Sir Colvin", is a ballad that in various guises runs to 400 verses, but not here you'll be pleased to hear. All in all an interesting way to win the hand of the King's daughter. Martin Carthy adds guitar as only he can.

Dating back to the late 18th Century, "The Brave Dudley Boys", is concerned with riots against the high price of food. Steve

plays concertina and tenor banjo on this track. A touch of class to finish, "Where'er You Walk", by George Frederick Handel. An aria from his opera, "Semele", written in 1743. It was adapted as a Victorian parlour ballad later made famous by Kathleen Ferrier.

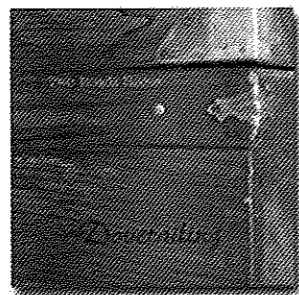
This CD is a triumph inasmuch as it brings together traditional songs with one of the most traditional of instruments, the concertina. It has been recorded by the outstandingly talented Oliver Knight with great sensitivity and deserves to be recognised as one of the year's best traditional albums.

For those officianados amongst you Steve plays a wooden ended 64 key Wheatstone English system bass/baritone/tenor aeola in High Pitch (i.e. A-452). It's serial number is 32306 made in 1929. It is an ex-Salvation Army band instrument with the buttons arranged to be played comfortably in flat keys. The four bottom buttons on the left hand side have "anglo" action, i.e. they play two notes per button, thus extending the range of the instrument to 68 notes.

That said Steve has really taken his time to get this recording spot on - no double tracking on the concertina here - a talented musician who I'm sure will continue to regale us with expertise.

David Jones

TWO ROADS HOME Dovetailing (Own release, 2002)



Living in the U.K., it's not surprising that I had never heard of Two Roads Home before. The first thing that crossed my mind when listened to this album was out of work opera singer meets ex folkie. But don't get me wrong, it's not that bad! Two Roads Home are Abby Zolt and Bryan Williston from Toronto, Canada, who up to now have only performed locally in Canada and the U.S.A.

It was obvious that this is their debut album from the play list and the arrangements for the songs. The album starts with a cover of the Suzanne Vega song "Some Journey", followed by "I Am Stretch on Your Grave" (S. O'Connor & P. King) sung by Abby. This is followed by some traditional songs - "John Peel" sung by Bryan, and "Loch Lomond" and "The Selkie of Sule Skerrie" - an unusual mixture I thought, and I got the feeling they were trying to decide which road to go down.

Bryan sings well and play the guitar, while Abby is solely a vocalist. She is good, perhaps too good for folk song, for she sounds like she has been trained as an operatic singer. Balanced against some of the song they have chosen, plus too much reverb (which she honestly does not need!) I found it irritating to listen to. Truly, they are both excellent singers and the harmonies well. I think they are capable of something much stronger and deserving. I imagine they are much better in a "live" performance.

There are 10 songs on the album and one spoken track. Other songs include "Down By the Sally Gardens", "Bonny Portmore", which is probably my favourite track, and "Black Jack Davey" (arr. Steeleye Span).

I understand this may be their first album, recorded in 2002. As I am writing this review in 2008, I am willing to bet that if they have recorded any more albums, they will be much more experienced and stronger than this particular one, however, this

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is only my view. You might view it differently. After all, music is in the ear of the beholder!

Peter Massey

LUCINDA WILLIAMS Little Honey (Lost Highway 1785915)



LUCINDA WILLIAMS LITTLE HONEY

Lucinda Williams has been around the patch for some years now and has established a loyal following ready to listen to her rootsy, bluesy, folksy songs. Though the style has changed little over recent albums, the quality of the songs rarely drops below the standards set on the early records that inspired the likes of Chris White and Julie Matthews. She has more of a

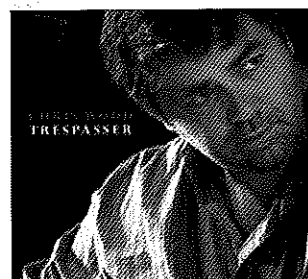
foot in the rock music camp than those early days but, if you've liked that more recent approach, 'Little Honey' is not going to disappoint.

As usual, much of her material centres on matters of the heart starting with the 'Real Love' of the opening track through to the classic blues motif of 'Honey Bee'. Mind you, she later manages to turn that optimistic view of love into describing marriage as the last refuge of lovers beleaguered by the woes of life with 'Plan To Marry'. She certainly has a natural leaning towards the dark side of life and couldn't be described as the eternal optimist. As you'll hear, she calls for a second chance on 'If Wishes Were Horses' and, in case we didn't believe how bad it can get, Elvis Costello joins her to sing 'Jailhouse Tears'.

So, 'Little Honey' is pretty much what you'd expect from Lucinda including the bad mouth rock attitude. Fans will be happy that it's more of the same though there might be some debate about how or whether she adds to this established successful approach. If you haven't heard her and like your music with a hard edge, she's worth checking out but it needn't be this record.

Steve Henderson

CHRIS WOOD Trespasser (RUFCD11)



This debut solo album from Chris Wood has already received widespread critical acclaim and it's all not only richly deserved but also long overdue. It will come as no surprise if this is reinforced by a bundle of awards for his solo work and extensive collaborations when the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards come around.

As a musician's musician, Chris Wood has been a familiar and highly regarded figure around the folk scene for many years, whether it's been working with the likes of Andy Cutting or more recently as part of the fusion of modern Asian and more traditional Western music folk styles, imaginatively integrated through the vehicle of the groundbreaking Imagined Village project.

The eight excellent tracks on Trespass use enclosure - in a number of guises - as a running theme. As the sleeve notes illustrate "Spiritual, geographical, cultural, legislative, chronological, imaginative..." You get the picture. The songs illustrate the oral tradition of working class events that have been kept alive by word of mouth and song as most of those writing about contemporary or recent history mostly excluded ordinary people (unless of course it was to patronise or demonise them).

This is illustrated on the album in the Sydney Carter song, "John Ball". Ball's church sermons in Colchester criticised the feudal system, upset his bishop so that in 1366 he was removed from his post as the priest of St James' Church. He subsequently couldn't get a parish so he became a 'hedgerow priest', one who preached his radical messages at the roadside. He was eventually found guilty of high treason and was hung, drawn and quartered on 15th July 1381.

However, the greatest crime of enclosure (the song "Mad John" captures the theme perfectly) was the common land stolen from ordinary working people by the landgrabbing aristocracy under the guise of improving land cultivation - in much the same way that the privatisation of our national assets under Thatcher was sold to the public on the basis of wider share ownership. Those geese and chickens have certainly come home to roost! One of Chris's quotes from an anonymous writer aptly illustrates the double standards of enclosure and our criminal justice system:

"The law will hang the man or woman
Who steals the goose from the common
But lets the greater thief go loose
Who steals the common from the goose"

My particular favourites on this album are the opening track, 'Summerfield Avenue' which has an urban pastoral feel about it, and the outstanding "Come Down Jehovah", subtitled as an atheist spiritual (shows that neither god or the devil has the best tunes!). It aptly rounds off this superb thought provoking collection of songs (mostly written or co written by Chris Wood), brilliantly produced with exemplary musical backing and vocals. No wonder Billy Bragg has said, "Trespasser is my album of the year". Too true. No contest.

Visit: www.englishacousticcollective.org.uk for further information and check the YouTube webpages for videos of some excellent live performances including "Come Down Jehovah" and Ewan MacColl's wonderful "Moving On Songs" performed with Neil MacColl and Karine Polwart.

Lewis Jones

CD COLLECTIONS,
LIVE ALBUMS &
RE-ISUES



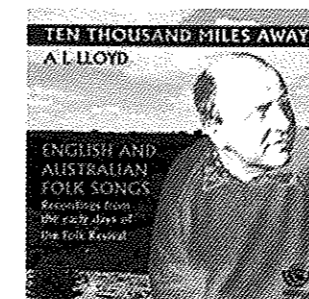
PETER BELLAMY Fair England's Shore (Fellside Records FECD216) and A.L.LLOYD Ten Thousand Miles Away (Fellside Records FECD219)

Peter Bellamy
Fair England's Shore



Rather like Nick Drake, Peter Bellamy's tragic death has given him something of a cult status on the folk music scene. He's regarded by many as a leading exponent of the art of folk song interpretation. One such fan, Jon Boden (partner of Spiers and singer in Bellowhead), has helped pull together 'Fair England's Shore' which gathers Bellamy's first three solo albums across 38 tracks.

Largely unaccompanied singing such as this is not everyone's cup of tea but it is listening to folk in its purest tradition. Furthermore, this collection highlights many of the songs that you'll have heard given more contemporary interpretation. Take, for example, 'All Around My Hat' (Steeleye Span), 'Dark Eyed Sailor' (Tarras), 'The Rigs of London Town' (Bellowhead) and 'Here's Adieu Sweet Lovely Nancy' (loads of versions!). In this sense alone, those interested in the roots of folk music will find this a fascinating record.

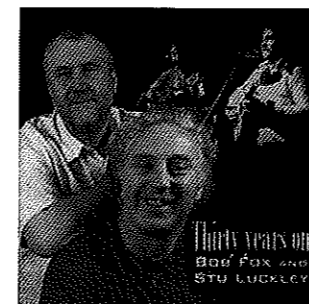


Bellamy did get criticised for his individual style by critics who preferred the pioneering approaches of A.L.Lloyd and Ewan MacColl. Though the latter has been well covered down the years, the arrival of 'Ten Thousand Miles Away' fills a gap on the CD shelves where A.L.Lloyd should sit. Again, there are songs that will be familiar such as 'Dark Eyed Sailor' (yes, that one again), 'Lord Bateman' (Chris Wood and others), 'The Banks of The Condamine' (Nancy Kerr and James Fagan) and 'Bold Jack Donahue' (Fotheringay).

By now, the smart readers have figured that the title gets its name from the fact that there are 18 English songs and 21 Australian songs in this collection and makes it a great accompaniment to Peter Bellamy's 'Fair England's Shore'. You'll have a marvellous set of songs that highlights many of the songs that root the folk music tradition. Fellside Records have done a great job here for all those who missed out on these wonderful artists the first time around as well as offering an option to replace old vinyl to those familiar with this material. And, as double CDs for the price of a single CD, who can argue with buying these?

Steve Henderson

BOB FOX & STU LUCKLEY Thirty Years On (BFMCD010)



It would be criminal of me to not flag up this recording of Bob Fox & Stu Luckley as one of the finest examples of musicianship anywhere! A bold statement but, if you'll bear with me and if, more importantly you'll buy this two-disc album you too will be equally astonished.

From the opening track, the jaunty "Bonny Gateshead Lass" you can't be anything but impressed by Bob's beautifully finger-picked guitar and with the addition of those rich baritone vocals backed with just the right amount of acoustic bass and harmony from Stu you just know you're in for a treat. OK, so it might not be politically correct in the current climate but the next track "Reynard The Fox" with its intricately placed time signatures is a musical tour de force that I defy anyone (musician or not) to say "How good was that?" and leave you grinning at the wonder of it all.

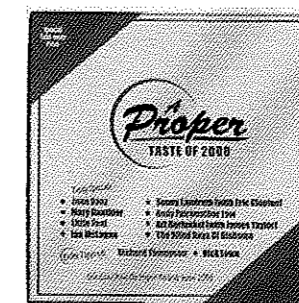
To give you some idea of how good it really is you need to experience the duo at a live concert where they inject the same enthusiasm and fun with (if it's possible) even more passion. Waxing lyrical writing this review you'll have to excuse me the indulgence of extolling Bob & Stu's virtues as they have been instrumental in inspiring many artists (including yours truly) to take up the challenge of promoting folk music to a wider audience - a thankless task at the best of times but a worthy challenge that the lads seem only too happy to take up the gauntlet.

Utilising contemporary songs such as Donovan's wistful "Isle Of Islay" and that old folk chestnut "Ruby Tuesday", Luckley proves no slouch when helming the vocals and Bob's rendition of Graeme Miles "The Shores Of Old Blighty" (every bit as good as the "Green Fields Of France" in my opinion) will leave you pondering the futility of war. Songs to make you laugh, songs to make you cry...they're all here in all their glory and I can truthfully say there's not a bad track (all 21 of them) on this album.

Fox & Luckley's CDs should have a health warning stating that this music will bring a smile to anyone who has a heart. Unfortunately, it doesn't but with the tremendous artwork from the near legendary Bryan Ledgard and the recording wizardry of Ron Angus this album should be on every folk enthusiast's wish list for Christmas. The CD is only available from Bob & Stu on their tour or from the website (a shame really as it definitely deserves a wider audience. www.bobfoxmusic.com

Pete Fyfe

VARIOUS ARTISTS A Proper Taste Of 2008 (Proper Records PRPS2008)



As a sampler, this CD can't be faulted - particularly when it comes in at the budget price of just £1.99 and features tracks by artists such as Blind Boys Of Alabama, Tim O'Brien and Richard Thompson. But, then again I'd more than likely have purchased it (at that price) for the Art Garfunkel and James Taylor duet of "Crying In The Rain". Other artists featured include Andy Fairweather Low,

Nick Lowe and Joan Baez and if that array floats your boat why not get a copy? www.propermusic.com

Pete Fyfe

PRESS
RELEASES



MXP4 INTERACTIVE MUSIC TECHNOLOGY

Musonaut interactive music launched MXP4 technology in September, which they say is a breakthrough interactive digital multimedia audio file platform offering artists and music fans an enriched and dynamic music experience. Launching internationally the MXP4 file format takes the current digital music and multiplies the experience to make it 4D. This enables digital music to be more expressive, interactive, adaptive, and surprising.

Using the MXP4Creator software program, professional and amateur musicians can now create a single file containing different arrangements or 'skins'. For example a rock band can add acoustic, dub and a cappella flavours of their latest single. The very adventurous can add skins in completely different musical styles. All these takes are contained within one interactive MXP4 file.

MXP4 technology means that artists no longer have to decide on a final version, they can now lay down several versions

depending on what the different band members prefer. Solo producers using Logic, Cubase or Ableton can now include more than one bass-line, vocal or guitar track. The technology will then play back each arrangement based on the rules decided by the artist. This gives the finished work an extra fourth dimension. Depending on how much control the artist or producer wants this can stretch to thousands of possible playback variations of any given song.

Music fans can listen to MXP4 files using the free-to-download MXP4Player. They simply select a skin to suit their mood or, if they are undecided, they can use the 'auto mode' to let the technology seamlessly choose for them. A surprise quality also occurs when an unexpected instrument or section arrangement appears in playback giving the end user a music experience closer to the unpredictability of a live performance.

The artist can get closer to the listener by adding multimedia content to the file. Text, artwork, photographs, and lyrics can easily be added to the file to show up during playback. This lets fans find out more about the artists and his music.

The launch version of MXP4Player and MXP4Creator are both PC and Mac compatible and can be downloaded from www.mxp4.com. Simple tutorials and MXP4 music in action videos can be viewed at www.youtube.com/musicnautmxp4. You can check out MXP4 technology at www.myspace.com/mxp4.

NEW MUSIC DISTRIBUTION SERVICE

Tema Digital Media is a new music distribution that can release artists' music to over 300 download sites including iTunes, and they also work with radio stations, ring tone providers, film, media and advertisers to place music into their productions. They are based in the United Kingdom and you can find out more about them at www.temadigital.com

MAVERICK FESTIVAL GUIDE 2009

We have listened to our readers and are pleased to announce that we will produce a free 2009 Maverick Festival Guide that will be published at the beginning of March 2009.

As well as being sent out to all subscribers along with the April issue of the magazine the supplement will be inserted into all magazines that are for sale in newsagents and other retail outlets throughout the UK. The supplement will also be available at the UK's leading roots music venues and will be available at many festivals throughout the year.

We plan to produce 20,000 copies of the guide, all of which will reach current and potential festival goers and will be available completely free of charge creating the ultimate 2009 festival guide for any fan of country, folk and roots music in the UK.

As well as printing a calendar of events we will invite all advertisers to supply a brief description of their event to be added to the calendar entry.

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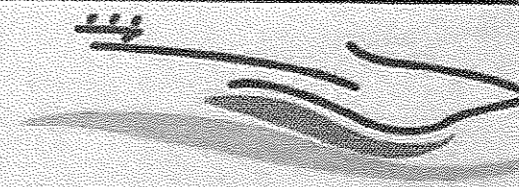
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