



APRIL - MAY '85

25p

NEWSLETTER

Page 2 Comment:

WELCOME to another issue of the Folk Magazine with the longest title in the U.K. (Well its the longest I know of, anyway). I will have to apologise I'm afraid for this issue being a little late, due to the AGM lying in the middle of the production period.

IT MAY be an appropriate moment to mention that I could still do with more help in its production. In particular I am looking for someone to handle the advertising side of things, as we don't get as many adverts as we should. If you think you would be interested in helping out in this area, please get in touch with me as soon as possible please.

ON NOW to the contents of the magazine, which apart from all our regular features, includes an interview with the inimitable LES BARKER of Mrs. Ackroyd fame. We've also the first in a new series, "A Touch of the Blarney", in which Pat Doyle will be trying to give us some insight into the Irish Folk Scene.

ANOTHER New feature is a dialect one, written by Steve Eckersley, and we shall be devoting at least a page to dialect in each of our issues. In a Personal View article, John Smedley argues that we should try to get folk music back into

the pubs. I'm sure its a view that will inspire much correspondence.

AS YOU may know, the Federation recently held a very successful AGM & Seminar, which we hope to make a regular event. If the Federation itself is to contribute more than just the magazine to the well-being of Folk Music in the North-West, more volunteers are needed. In particular we are anxious to promote events for the under-18's and if anyone (perhaps a teacher) who has an interest in this, please get in touch with either myself on Wigan 215621 or Ian Wells on Hesketh Bank 3267. There are full reports of the AGM & Seminar elsewhere in this issue.

THERE IS still no folk programme on Piccadilly Radio at the time of writing, but if enough people continue to write or 'phone to complain, there must be a chance that they will eventually respond.

FINALLY I musn't forget to thank all those people without whom this issue would not have been possible. Typists Angela Forkin & Elaine Derbyshire; distributors Bill Derbyshire & Pete Rimmer; Ian Wells for writing most of the magazine & for dates; finally to Irene Allen for the cover illustration.



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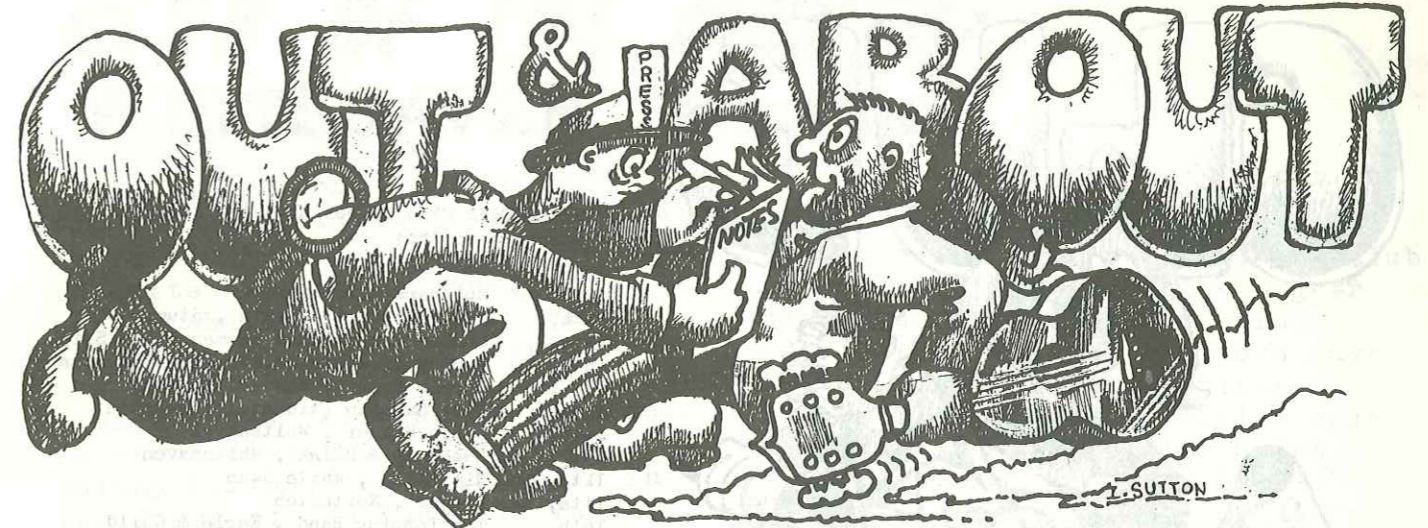
Nigel Firth
EDITOR

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THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE EDITOR OR OF THE FEDERATION.

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THE EDITOR ACCEPTS NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONTRIBUTIONS CLAIMED TO BE ORIGINAL, OR FOR ANY INACCURACIES HEREIN.



THIS YEAR'S POYNTON Easter Folk Festival takes place as usual at the Folk Centre, Park Lane, Poynton over the weekend of 5/6/7 April, starting from 7pm on Friday. As usual there will be Concerts, Ceilidhs, Singarounds, workshops, dance displays & so forth. Among those appearing so far are:

VIN GARBUTT, JOHNNY COLLINS, JOHNNY SILVO, JILL & BERNARD BLACKWELL, ROSIE HARDMAN, ABALON, MARTIN SUMPTON, HUNTER'S MOON, RHIANNAN and many others too numerous to mention. Prices are of course very reasonable at £9.50 for an Adult for the whole weekend, £4.00 for children; both are reduced if you book in advance. For more details, please see the advertisement on page 15, or send an SAE to the Festival Organiser at the above address.

THE SECOND HORWICH TOWN FOLK DAY will take place on Saturday, April 13th from about 11am. During the day there will be Morris teams dancing around the town, singarounds at the Crown Hotel & Toll Bar as well as a Ceilidh, craft fair, workshops & children's entertainment at the Leisure Centre. In the evening, there will be a concert in the Leisure Centre with

VIN GARBUTT, FRASER & IAN BRUCE & BERYL GRAEME, compered by Bernard Wrigley. For more information, please contact Joyce Riding on Coppull 792304 or Sue Grills on Horwich 691430.

THE 31st SIDMOUTH Folklore Festival takes place over the period 2nd-9th August 1985, and among the guests already booked are:

ALISTAIR ANDERSON, STRAWHEAD, BERNARD WRIGLEY, TONY ROSE, THE FISHER FAMILY, HARRY BOARDMAN, NICK DOW, CALENNIG, THE OYSTER BAND, SOUTH DOWNS MORRIS.

For more information, please send SAE to Festival Office, The Knowle, Sidmouth, Devon or telephone Sidmouth 5134.

THE NATIONAL FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL takes place once again at the Sutton Bonnington School of Agriculture near Loughborough on April 19th-21st 1985. Among the guests so far booked are-

PETE COE, ALAN BELL, RAY FISHER, ROY HARRIS, THE HOUSE BAND, STAN HUGILL, FRED JORDAN, PYEWACKETT, OYSTER BAND, SPINNERS, PETA WEBB, TONY ROSE, STRAWHEAD, DOC ROWE plus many others (the above is just a selection). Tickets are £14.50 for the weekend or around £4.00 for a session and you can camp for £1 each, or stay in the halls of residence for £35, including all meals. For more details please send an SAE to John Heydon, Folk Festival, 5, Church Street, Aylesbury, Bucks.

WHITBY FOLK WEEK takes place over the period Saturday 17th to Friday 23rd August. There is as usual a huge list of guests far too numerous to list here, but I'm sure no one would be disappointed. Tickets are £6 per day, or £20 for the week (EPDSS members, before May 1st). More details in the advert, or contact Malcolm Storey 0482 634742.

Contrary to popular belief, the Electropathic Battery Band have NOT split up. They are still available for Ceilidh & clubs.

A NEW KIND OF EVENT is the "Clitheroe Weekend of Traditional Dance" to be held over the period 24th May to 26th May. Friday evening there is a competition for the best Entertainer in any category such as Dialect poetry, step dancing, singing and even gurning! During the day of Saturday 24th May there are displays by the 15 dance teams, as well as sessions & Singarounds. In the evening there is a Concert in the Dog & Partridge, Clitheroe featuring Pat Ryan, Scold's Bridle, Strawhead. Finally on Sunday, there are traditional games such as clog hurling etc, held at Downham Village from 12-4pm. Admission is free to all events, more details from Ian Lowcock, 0282 812842.

IN CASE you didn't know, Nic Dow is now resident in the area, and you can contact him on Blackpool (0253) 401842.

THE 11th CHESTER FOLK FESTIVAL takes place over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend at the 'Morris Dancer', Kelsall near Chester. Among the guests appearing are: WHIPPERSNAPPER, DOONAN FAMILY, MAXI & MITCH, STRAWHEAD, CHRIS & JOE WHILE, COLLINS & MAGEEAN, MAJOR MUSTARD SHOW, CHESTER CITY MORRISMEN

(This is just a selection from an extensive guest list) There are Children's events, concerts, ceilidhs, etc, a craft market & displays. Tickets range from around £4 for a session ticket to £14.00 for the weekend. There are discounts for children. For more details, please see advert or telephone 0244 43734.

FYLDE FOLK FESTIVAL will take place in and around the Marine Hall in Fleetwood over the period 30th August to 1st September. As usual there's an excellent guest list, just some of whom are:

VIN GARBUTT, WHIPPERSNAPPER, HARVEY ANDREWS, ERIC, WILSON FAMILY, DAB HAND, EASY CLUB, MARTIN W-READ. Session tickets are from £2.50, weekend £11 before July 13th. More information, Alan Bell 03917 2317

SOUTHPORT ARTS CENTRE are now featuring regular folk concerts featuring such people as Pyewackett, Whippersnapper, Folk Northwest, Albion Band, Richard Thompson who are all due to appear over the next few months. More details from Box Office, 0704 40011.

RADIO DETAILS:
Folk on 2, BBC Radio 2, 330m (MW only) Saturday 6-7pm (repeated 3am Tuesday)
BBC Radio Lancashire 'Lancashire Drift' Sunday 11.05am to 11.35am, 351m (96.4 VHF), repeat Tuesday 6.35.
(Monthly, Feb 3; March 10th)
BBC Radio Merseyside 'Folk Scene', 202m (95.8 VHF) Tuesday 6.30-7.00pm repeat Saturday
BBC Radio Manchester 'Folk like Us', 206m (95.1 VHF) Sunday 5.4j-6.15pm, repeat Tuesday 7pm
There are no programmes on any of the independent local radio stations, so please write & tell them they should be running Folk programmes.

SAM STEPHENS & ANNE LENNOX-MARTIN are looking for dates early in December to fit in with 5th/6th December already booked. Contact me if you are interested.



THERE IS ONE New club joining the Federation since last issue:

THE FOLK CLUB UPSTAIRS meet on Tuesdays at 8.30pm in the Concert Room of the North Manchester General Hospital Sports & Social Club. This is situated in Delaunays Road, Crumpsall, Manchester. John Willy Lees Ale is served, and for more details you should contact Geoff Pontefract on 061 720 8117 or Mike Smyth on 061 798 7677.

THERE ARE a number of other changes of venue etc, since last issue -

THE BLACKSMITH Folk Club in Widnes has closed until they can find a new venue in the area (preferably one with a music licence). If you know of anywhere suitable, or if you want to know when the club will reopen, please contact Jean Wrigley on 051 424 1878.

THE FERNHURST Folk Club has closed, due to them being denied the use of the venue, but in its place the BLACKBURN Folk Club is now in being. They meet alternate Fridays at the Mill Hill Hotel on Mill Hill Road in Blackburn. Residents are still Pendlem and the organiser is Ron Crane, who you can 'phone on 0254 40347.

THE RING O' BELLS (Middleton) is still closed, due to the pub still being in the process of rebuilding. Watch this space for the reopening, or phone Moira Woodcock on 061 723 1979 for the latest situation.

WIGAN FOLK CLUB have their last night at the Park Hotel in Wigan on April 11th (Thursday) which will feature Gentleman Soldier as special guests. I'm told the club will definitely continue after that date, but as at going to press, the venue & night had not been finalised. Latest info. from Joan Blackburn (Wigan 863389).

ADVANCE NOTICE OF a number of dates during June & subsequent months:

June -
 3rd, Spinners, Triton
 13th, Ken Pearson & Haywain, Stump
 5th, Summer Singarounds commence, Old Ship
 5th, Carthy, Kirkpatrick, Evans, White Swan
 6th, Bernie Parry, Mawdesley
 17th, Dick Gaughan (tickets), Preston
 12th, Eddie Walker, Whitehaven
 19th, Beeching & Haigh, Whitehaven
 12th, Jim Eldon, White Swan
 14th, Blades, Northwich
 16th, Tom Topping Band, Eagle & Child
 23rd, Martin Gittins / Thorn, Eagle & Child
 28th, Ewan McColl & Peggy Seeger, Northwich

July -
 1st, Tony Rose, Preston
 3rd, Tony Rose, White Swan
 4th, Summer Singaround, Mawdesley
 7th, Johnny Collins, Eagle & Child
 5th, Tony Rose, Northwich

(More details of all these & others in the next issue, out before June 1st)

THE BEE FOLK CLUB at Rhyl celebrate their 21st birthday on April 5th, and I'm sure we all hope they'll still be around in another 21 years!

THERE IS A NEW Folk Club in Wallasey which I gather is to be run on the same lines as the defunct Kingsway Folk Club. It meets on Thursdays at the Magazine Hotel in Magazine Lane, Wallasey (near to Vale Park.) The club is being run by Arthur Marshall, Mary-Ann Wise & Black Dog, who also provide the residency. Initially it is being run as a singers club, and more information will be found from Arthur Marshall on 051 638 3964.

THERE IS A regular session at the Railway in Tithebarn St., Liverpool on Wednesday evenings, led by The Fiddle Band.

THE FOLK IN THE PARK series of Folk Concerts is to be held again in Vale Park, Magazine Lane, New Brighton over the summer. The concerts concentrate on local artists and are all free admission; among artists so far booked are Bob Buckle, Jack Owen, Fiddlestone, Caught on the Hop and Tom Topping Band. The first few dates in the series are Monday May 6th & 27th, Sunday June 16th, 23rd & 30th. More information from Geoff Dormand on 051 639 7928.

AMONG THE COURSES being held at Fleetwood's Summer School is one being presented by Ron Baxter, entitled "The Sea in Song". It covers Naval History in song, from the Armada to the Falklands as well as whaling and fishing songs and shanties are included. The cost is £2.55 for the four day course and it is being held twice in late July. More information from the Summer School, 03917 79123 extn. 26.

THE BREWERY ARTS CENTRE in Kendal have just sent me details of their April programme which includes the following:

6th, Three Way Street (Tish Stubbs, Sam Richards & Lewis Riley) at 8.30pm
 11th, Thursday, Whippersnapper at 8.30pm
 27th, Saturday, Swan Arcade at 8.30pm
 More details from Bill Lloyd on Kendal 25133

ADVANCE NOTICE of two festivals:
 June 28/29 Whitehaven Folk Festival - details from club
 Nov 22/23/24 Wirral Folk '85 - details from G. Dormand

FINALLY, such Ceilidhs as I have information about:
 Sat. April 6th, Bury Ceilidh Band; Derby Hall, Bury
 Poynton has a Ceilidh at least twice a month, the dates being April 13th, 27th; May 4th, 11th, 25th.
 Sorry that's all I have!

CLUB OF THE MONTH: WHITEHAVEN Folk Club

It may be presumptuous to say by way of introduction that there can be few folk clubs that are situated in quite such an impressive setting as Whitehaven Folk Club. Perched on the side of a hill overlooking the Irish Sea and the outlines of Dumfries and Galloway in Scotland (a short distance across the Solway Firth), the club meets in the foyer of the Rosehill Theatre, about two miles from Whitehaven town centre.

Financial difficulties prompted the move just over a year ago from the Cahse Hotel in Whitehaven. Rosehill Theatre offered very favourable conditions for the club, and although there were worries that the rather more opulent surroundings would put people off, the club has kept going through some difficult times. The theatre has acted as treasurer for the club, but has allowed the club to retain its autonomy in every area.

Driving force behind the Whitehaven Folk Club (and behind its predecessor, the Egremont Folk Club), is the lanky figure of Ray Downes who has been responsible for all the bookings that the club makes. Ray's encyclopaedic knowledge of traditional folk song coupled with a fine singing voice and an enthusiastic compering style makes him an essential part of the evenings' entertainments. Terry Howarth and John Reay join Ray to make Knotted Cord, the resident group whose mixture of traditional and contemporary material never fails to get an evening off to a good start.

The club's policy is as broad as you could possibly make it. Contemporary performers like Allan Taylor and Paul Metsers rub shoulders with traditional musicians like Jim Eldon and Andy Irvine. Performers are judged very much on how they perform - the 'I don't like it because it's not what I like' brigade are not part of this audience. Many visitors have commented on how much they appreciate such an

attentive crowd, though it can be a little unnerving too!

Due to being in a theatre, the club is now able to put on the bigger bands in the 200 seater main auditorium. Recent visitors have included Toughstone, Skyline and The Battlefield Band, whilst solo performers have included Ralph McTell and Roy Harper. Local performers are an important part of the club, and include unaccompanied traditional singers as well as those who write and perform their own material. Listing names always lays you open to a charge of missing somebody out, so suffice it to say 'You all know who you are!'

Recently a folk dance group has sprung out of a number of the regulars which shows a healthy interest in dance in the area. McCoy's Reel Band has already played for a number of functions and is gaining quite a following for their Barn Dance outings.

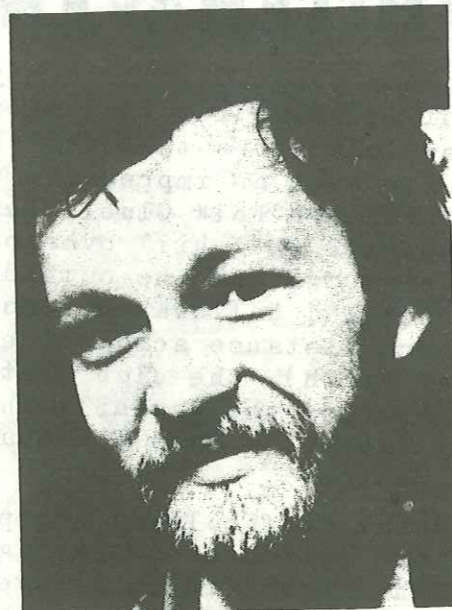
The club has also played an important part in the organisation of the Whitehaven Folk Festival which takes place on the last weekend of June. Last year's was the second and featured Boys of the Lough, amongst many others. Without the hard work of club regulars working in tandem with the Rosehill Theatre staff, the event would never have got off the ground. As it is, it's looking forward to the third festival this year.

So if you're in the Lake District on a Wednesday night and you're looking for some good music, especially if you'd like to give a few songs or tunes yourself, then Whitehaven is not as far away as you might think. You'll always be more than welcome.

PIERS JACKSON.

So I Went to see this man about A Dog...

SIMON JONES talks to LES BARKER



If you'd never met Les Barker, owner of the spectacularly talented canine Mrs Ackroyd, how would you describe him? From his act, or records, you'd take him to be larger than life with always a satirical quip at the ready. Then when you do get to meet the man, he turns out to be quiet, deep thinking and agreeable with a wry smile on his face. He reminds me of the "Peter Sellars Syndrome"... people never give you chance to be serious, because you are a comedy act you are expected to be hilarious all the time. To call Les Barker "comedy" would be both a mistake and an understatement. There is no one like him anywhere, his stage show an amalgam of poetry, monologues and impossible tricks with Mrs Ackroyd who he confesses never does the routines the same way twice! Independent little hound, she's not only got this working relationship with the human Barker but she's also started her own record label, obviously a sound business sense too. Sadly she couldn't make our meeting, no doubt due to the pressures of work so her handler answered for her.

SJ "How would you describe your act?"
 LB "Difficult thing to do, comedy I suppose but I don't like being described as a comic, people expect a stand up comic, I'm not. I just do what I do and folks generally like it".
 SJ "You never sing, have you got a voice?"
 LB "Never, never. That's why I don't. I could have a go but it would spoil my routine".
 SJ "Did such a varied act come together overnight or did you work hard to form it?"
 LB "It started off just standing up and doing a poem. If something works I do it again. If it doesn't I don't. But its taken ten or eleven years".
 SJ "That long? Where did it first start?"
 LB "A mate of mine used to run a folk club at the YMCA, on Parkway. I used to go there and once a week get bullied to do one. So I practised all night for a week, and nobody asked me. Mind you I thought "Sod it, I'm going to do it anyway", I enjoyed it, so did it more often".
 SJ "Did you find you could write poetry easily?"
 LB "Generally yeah, although sometimes I'll go for months not writing a word and then write 3 or 4 in a day".
 SJ "On no specific theme, just whatever takes your fancy?"
 LB "I've tried to write on a theme, books and books, but then you find you have 12 pages of that and have to fill in".
 SJ "Some of your poems are serious".
 LB "Yes".
 SJ "Do you write with a Northern bias?"
 LB "It's easier to work down South when you're doing Northern material, because up here there's so much. Mike Harding, Bob Williamson, Bernard Wrigley, all different in detail, but basically Northern comedy. Down South they concentrate more on folksongs, so I'm quite a change for 'em".
 SJ "Doesn't he find some of his writing reinforces the North's cloth cap image?"
 LB "It probably does. I don't write to prove or disprove anything, I just write to make people laugh, thats my job".
 SJ "Apart from Earl Okin where are the Southern comedians?"
 LB "I often wonder but I just don't know. You get people who do floor spots with comedy, but it just never develops".
 SJ "Why did you start in a folk club?"
 LB "It was the first place I went into, of course a folk audience is more tolerant of beginners".

SJ "Is there anywhere you'd not consider presenting your poetry?"
 LB "There's nowhere I'd ever not consider, but there's some places that 20 minutes is as much as you can do; Working Men's Clubs, they don't like you standing there reading from a book and not singing, they like to join in. They haven't come out to think about your words".
 SJ "So even though its comedy, you like people to think about your words?"
 LB "You've got to, you've got to".
 SJ "Is it like Frankie Howard? Not what he says but what you think?"
 LB "Yeah, you can't do an hours worth of poetry with the same 4 letter words".
 SJ "Did Mrs Ackroyd then come in to break up the poetry and prose?"
 LB "No it was a pure accident. There was a folk club at the Heaton Moor Rugby Club. Big names every week and good residents, 2 or 3 of us regular acts, we made it difficult for guests to do because we were good. I went down on me birthday with the dog and just used her".
 SJ "Does she find the work easy?"
 LB "She reacts naturally to audiences, and just the same as me, if something works she'll do it again. Like she ripped my jeans three times in one week, so I had to stop her doing that".
 SJ "Have you ever had any trouble from landlords or organisers over the dog?"
 LB "Landlords very occasionally I've not been allowed in. But generally, give them an excuse to let her in and they love it".
 SJ "Do you ever do acts without her?"
 LB "I once did some airforce bases in Germany, and one or two others, but not very often".
 SJ "Why did she acquire the name Ackroyd, it could just as easily have been Higginbottom or Yardley?"
 LB "It was always going to be Ackroyd and of course she's a lady, Mrs".
 SJ "Would you ever work with a pedigree?"
 LB "Very doubtful, they just haven't got the character, I'd rather have a dog like her, a cross of border collie and terrier".
 SJ "She's obviously visual, but has she ever contributed to a record?"
 LB "On "Dogmatic" she rattled a fire extinguisher, but she's usually a quiet dog. Except of course when you sit on her, then she'll react".

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SJ "What are her tastes - gin and tonic? Whiskey and Ginger?"
 LB "Robbies, Lorimars, Holts, she puts her paws on the table and will drink it".
 SJ "Does he get much reaction to his poems? Things like "Beware of Girls who have 3 Breasts" would not I imagine go down with rad fems".
 LB "You occasionally get it, I used to do. "The Hecomdwilee Rapist" 2 or 3 years ago I could do it, it even had a chorus you could join in. But these days...!!!".
 SJ "Has he done much TV work? The routine would seem to fit perfectly".
 LB "I've done "Granada Reports" a couple of times and "Greenwich Cable Vision" (Eh? SJ) Oooh, that was a laugh. About 8 years ago, I went with Bob Williamson who Joe Stead had booked at the Tramshed and for this cable station. What a wonderful place it was, in a garage round by a tower block, just like a skittle alley. This garage was divided into two halves, one with equipment and the other a studio. The whole scheme was run by students, two chairs and a plant, you crawled on and off screen".
 SJ "Has the folk scene taken to poetry?"
 LB "That's hard, outside me there's only one or two. John Cooper Clarke even reverted to the folk clubs. I don't really understand the poetry scene, though I've done Art Council things". "You see it on BBC2, these well known poets reading to a hushed audience who smile when they're supposed to. It all seems rather contrived to me. Not enough enjoyment in there".
 SJ "So for inspiration you don't listen to contemporary poets or even dig up old masters?"
 LB "I've read the odd bit of old or new, but not a lot".
 SJ "Les Barker is a keen jogger, and I put it to him that a folkie half marathon for Ethiopia might be a good idea, in fact for any worthy cause (such as Nic Jones)".
 LB "The trouble is it's too regional. You could never organise a thing in Manchester and expect people from outside the city to join it".
 SJ "How many folkie joggers does he know?"
 LB "Peter Bond, ("He never mentioned that in the interview" thinks SJ). Roy Harris, me, the bloke who organises the station club at Derby, Dave Godwin.... that's about it. A pretty small group really".
 SJ "The Barker recordings have been only few, a very early album "Mrs Ackroyd Superstar" for the now defunct Phil Reed label and then "Dogmatic" on Arvada which while still sounding well is not entirely representative of Les Barker 1985. So the man up and founded along with Mrs Ackroyd, his own label. This far it's issued two 45's, one Les Barker's solo "Nigel's/Blues/The Chicken Biriani Conga," and the second a conglomeration of people including Chris White, Les and a Coventry rock band Quiet Riot. Pretty intriguing hotch potch".
 LB "At the moment I'm working on an album with this rock band based in Coventry, and I'll probably put out a live album of me just doing monologues in a couple of months". "It's always difficult to do comedy on a record, because once you've heard it you've heard it. Acts aren't so bad in a concert because that to a limited audience, but when it gets on television or spreads on albums then there can be too much of a good thing and consequently the market is flooded".
 SJ "Do you feel that people like Mike Harding, Billy Connolly, Max Boyce and Jaspar Carrott have monopolised folk comedy?"
 LB "No, they eased the path, made it easier for material from other people to be accepted. There always was and always will be room for someone different. Like Stanley Accrington, now he could make it big, because he's got an agency (Highway) who get him these bookings that pay (huge) fees. He even did the George Orwell festival - really odd".
 SJ "What records would you take to a desert island Les?"
 LB "Mose Allison Sings", a Jake Thackary LP, the live one with sixteen tracks on, and I'm struggling now...".
 Help the man out, you've read the interview, buy a record, read a book, wear a 'T' shirt, and

SIMON JONES

CLUBS!

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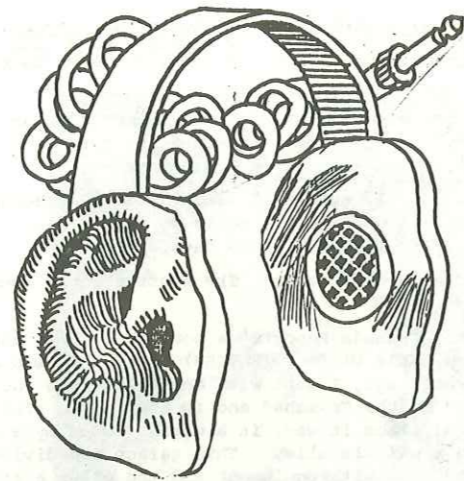
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VILLAGE FESTIVAL

JUNE 14.15.16. 1985

BROADFOLK

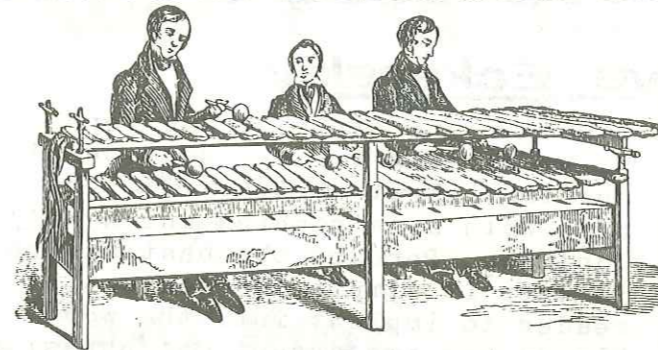
It was fascinating to see how the discussion on broadcast folk music took off at the AGM/Seminar. Interestingly, there was very little comment on a surprising development: the way Yorkshire TV's 'First Tuesday', which is on the ITV main network, is doing the sort of interesting programme that used to be on BBC2 and that we had hoped would be on Channel 4. I believe that it is no accident that this came from a regional production centre: with the honourable exception of Folk on 2, the influence of London on folk music broadcasting has been malign. Certainly the major piece of folk broadcasting in the period under review was the First Tuesday piece on three generations of singing Campbells, set deliberately against three generations of social awareness, and specifically against the miners' strike. Ironically, it went out just as the strike collapsed. Slightly bitty as it moved from one generation to another, it opened with a rousing performance of 'As soon as this pub closes' and followed Robin and Ali (the UB40 members) as they explored their Birmingham past. The best part was the section on the older generation, with David and Betty talking and singing about their Aberdeen life and the gritty events of the 1930's. The shortest section was the '60's experience with Ian and Lorna and the least satisfactory that with UB40. It was demonstrated yet again that dance based music, even Brummagen reggae, is not satisfactory as a medium for ideas. A sobering comment from Ian: "when we took the music into the pubs, the people didn't want us". C4, in a series about ethnic singers, showed a US-made documentary on Phil Ochs, who was one of the quintessential '60's protest singers. It took its text from one of Phil's own songs: "God help the troubadour / who tries to be a star" and mixed dramatised reconstructions with interviews with survivors from the period.



These include Pete Seeger, Tom Paxton, Peter from PP&M, and, at length, Dave von Ronk. It was rather long, and scheduled very late, so I gave up and went to bed at the point where he decided to reincarnate himself as Elvis and before he committed suicide. Also on C4, a series has started called 'Repercussions', which purports to trace the roots of black US music in Africa. The first film was an examination of traditional music in The Gambia, where there has been a tradition of musical families, rather like medieval guilds. This is breaking down under the pressure of imported music, and some of the discussion by rival musicians (carefully subtitled) had echoes of the Critics group ban on US songs or the acoustic v electric or traditional versus contemporary arguments with which we are all so familiar. One diehard traditionalist produced a lovely phrase: he referred to a particular musician as being 'in tune with tradition'. The second film jumped straight to a modern commercial gospel performer. A C4 programme on leisure (Making the most of...) featured Pomfret Morris and Gradely Lasses: Yorkshire TV again! Peter Kennedy has republished his mammoth book on Folk Songs of England and Ireland, and as well as a sensitive interview on Folk on 2, he appeared on Round about Midnight. Brian Matthews was, as usual with folk music, much less at ease than with obscure ballet or mainstream theatre, but did play a couple of relevant songs.

Unusual Instruments

I. The Rock Harmonicon



It is pleasing to contemplate the results of intellectual effort, when made amidst all the advantages that can be commanded: but it is especially so to mark its patient and persevering struggles to accomplish some favourite object, when it can only do so alone and unsustained.

An instance of this kind is found in the invention before us—Joseph Richardson, a plain unassuming man, with no refinements of education, but possessed of musical talent, while working as a mason in Cumberland, discovered that various and melodious sounds were extracted from the rocks amongst which he was accustomed to pursue his daily labours. It then occurred to him that fragments might be collected, and so judiciously arranged, as to form a musical instrument of surpassing sweetness and power. In the year 1827, being employed in building a house at Thornthwaite, and afterwards another at Braithwaite, in the vicinity of Keswick, he began to collect stones for its construction. Those he thus obtained, however, did not answer his purpose, so that at the outset of his undertaking, he lost a large portion of time and labour, and suffered disappointment enough to discourage an ordinary mind.

But stimulated by failure to continue his research and toil, he found that the stones best calculated for his design were only to be met with amongst the rocks of Skiddaw, and on these he expended his future exertions. Animated now by the hope of success, he bore these masses from the mountain on his back to his home at a considerable distance, and there proceeded to reduce them to the shape he considered necessary, and to put to the test their varied tones. This involved an amount of effort not easily estimated: it was made after many a hard day's work in the mountains; and

often did Richardson deny himself the repose he required, and pass whole nights after his family had retired to rest, pursuing the object on which his heart was set. A considerable share of disappointment must still have been his lot; the stone which promised well would not answer the purpose if hammered and chiselled beyond a certain point; and it may be supposed there were times in which his heart failed him, particularly as a family of eight children were dependent on his daily labour for support, and his task was continued amidst much weariness and trial.

At length, however, his skill and perseverance were rewarded, and after more than thirteen years' incessant labour, he succeeded in constructing a musical instrument of a very extraordinary character, which is properly called "The Rock Harmonicon." It consists of rough stones, the longest of which is four feet six inches in length, about three inches in breadth, and about an inch and a half in thickness; and the shortest of which is about six inches in length, an inch in breadth, and half an inch in thickness: these are placed across a pair of wooden bars, covered with twisted straw, and form the keys, like those of a piano-forte; the material of them all being the mica schist, or as it is commonly called, in Cumberland and other places, whinstone. The means employed to extract their sounds are wooden hammers; small, and of lignum-vitæ, for the

treble; larger, and of elm or ash, for the middle notes; and larger still, and covered with leather, for the bass. Sometimes for the centre keys, hammers are used with two knobs on each, in the form of a crutch-handle, to strike thirds. Those who are acquainted with the toy harmonicon, consisting of pieces of glass laid on tapes, to be struck with a cork hammer, will readily form an idea of this singular instrument, and the mode in which its sounds are elicited.

The pieces of stone, it should be remarked, are arranged in two rows; the lower one being tuned in the diatonic scale, and the upper one containing the flats and sharps. A piece of music may therefore be played in any key, with the greatest facility and fidelity. Three sons of the inventor perform on the instrument pieces of music in three distinct parts; one playing the melody, the next executing a clever working inner part, and the third, the fundamental bass. Its power extends to a compass of five octaves and a half, accompanied by all the semi-tones, tuned from F below the bass stave to C in altissimo—extending, in fact, as high as the warble of the lark; down to the deep bass of a funeral bell. The tones produced are equal in quality, and sometimes superior in mellowness and fullness, to those of a fine piano-forte, under the hand of a skilful player. Difficult chromatic ascents and descents are performed with a truly extraordinary brilliancy and crispness. A professor of music at Liverpool produced, in conjunction with the sons of the inventor, and also alone, some very pleasing and striking effects. M. Costa, addressing the inventor, says, "I have been very much gratified with the performance of your three sons on your very ingenious instrument, and sincerely wish you may be recompensed for your wonderful discovery." Sir George Smart also writes, "I am happy to offer my testimony in favour of your very clever invention, and think the production of the 'Rock Harmonicon' does infinite credit to your perseverance and musical feeling; the tones of the instrument are powerful and beautiful, and I was highly pleased with the performance of your three sons upon it. I sincerely hope your labours will be rewarded as they richly deserve."

(P.8) Broadfolk

Ewan MacColl's 70th birthday was noticed by Kaleidoscope, but restricted to 10 minutes linked to the Festival Hall concert. There has been no proper coverage on radio or TV of this major artist at this milestone in his life. At the Manchester production centre, John Leonard, is beavering away quietly with occasional short programmes on folk customs for radio 4. The latest was on the Shetland 'Up Helly Aar'. Another radio 4 gem, made by BBC Scotland, was on the Forest of Ettrick and used Archie Fisher as a ballad singer. S4C has run a series called 'Drann Oeth Y Ssair' which included Moving Hearts. FOLKEAR

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LANCASHIRE DIALECT

by Steve Eckersley

Dialect writing has been a hobby and occupation for a vast number of people, for many years. The popularity of the craft has not been diminished by the efforts of local government to take away the regional identity of the people. Dialect writing and contests flourish, with the Fylde festival drawing a large entry every year, but writers still find the hardest part is to get their work published. "Lancashire Life" have now run a page of Dialect verse monthly for a number of years and the response is so great that verses accepted by the magazine lie pending for approximately eighteen months before appearing in print and this waiting time is getting longer every month.

Last year the Belle Green Folk club organised a Dialect contest and over thirty poems were entered. The judges, who consisted of Harvey Kershaw, Cliff Gerrard and John Howarth (of the Oldham Tinkers) had a difficult job in deciding a winner from the very high standard of entries, but finally decided on "I' Trainin" by Maureen Leech of Leigh. This was the first contest she had entered and encouraged her to enter the Fylde festival in September, where her work won a highly commended certificate.

Private publishing can be the only way for some people to get their work out to the general public, which can be very expensive. Another option is to search out the folk songers in your area and let them have copies of your work, if you are not good at writing music they may be able to add a tune to it. The work will at least get performed.

What other problems are there for the dialect poet? The main one is that there are many dialects. Our language is a mixture of all the area and what is understandable in Wigan could be utter gibberish in Preston. A quick look at the dialect verse of the writers of dialect at the turn of the century show a marked variation in

language and style to the verse being written today. Most people new to dialect writing fill the page with apostrophies which only confuse. Perhaps the best advice is keep it simple and leave the reader to implant into the work his or her own accent and phrasing.

The Lancashire Dialect Society is thriving and holds regular meetings of dialect writers and people interested in the dialect, across the region. Details may be obtained from: Bob Dobson, "Acorns", 3, Staining Rise, STAINING, Blackpool, FY3 OBU.

A writers society has been formed for South Lancashire not in competition with the Lancashire Dialect Society, but in harmony with its aims. The idea for the group to be formed came from the Belle Green Contest when writers, mainly from this area, had a chance to meet and discuss their problems. The inaugural meeting was held in November when certain ideas were put forward, one was that members work be published in a compendium. It gives writers the chance to meet on a regular basis, without the need to travel great distances. It is open to anyone with an interest in dialect and information for this organisation can be obtained from: Alan Magnall, 70 Leigh Music, Leigh Road, Leigh.

Calico, who organised the contest at the Belle Green, have now taken over the residency at Leigh Folk Club. The dialect contest was held there for 1985 on March 24th. This event will now be an annual affair, so although it's too late for this years contest, it's never too early to start writing the winning entry for next year.

All you scribblers out there, why not give it a try, you may find you have a contribution to make. So get out the pen and paper and get writing!

EDITOR'S NOTE: As from next issue, I intend to publish a dialect poem every issue, together with a regular article on dialect.

EAGLE & CHILD

FOLK CLUB

Sundays, 8.30

April 21:

Tony Rose

May 19:

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June 19TH Folk Songwriting Contest (1985)

FULL DETAILS AND ENTRY FORMS FROM
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THE CLUB. CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES-
25TH MAY.

Letters to The Editor...

Dear Editor,

I feel,reluctantly,that I must respond to Mr. Dormand's letter in your last issue.As he does,let me sketch my 'pedigree'.

For three years,from its inception,I was strongly involved with the Kingsway Folk Club in Wallasey,the only local club not only to rely on local singers,but to book the little perishers as well! Where did we go wrong? Anyway,now I help to run the Magazine Folk Club in New Brighton (running on the same principles) and Folk at the Railway in Liverpool. I call for the Fiddle Band (Ceilidhs) and sing & play with Mary-Ann Wise as Grandfather's Axe.With the band I also organise concerts & dances enough of the trumpets,now to the meat.

Sponsorship is an emotive subject on the Wirral,especially where Wirral BC's Leisure Services are concerned.Certainly Mr. Dormand's events are well supported by this department,but they seem to have so little money left after that, they are unable to afford even a stamp to reply to other letters!

The Fiddle Band & I ran a concert last year for which Leisure Services helped with posters,the concert being successful.I reapplied for help for this year's series of concerts ... no reply since October (3 reminders issued).

At the same time,I also mentioned the possibility of organising a Wirral Folk Festival.Each year,from 1982,I had contacted the council about this,only to be told that (each year) there was already one at the planning stage (with Mr. Dormand) and that no help could be given to rivals.What is more, no council property could be utilised for it & nor could they recommend that permission be given for street events, etc. In October 1984, as there had still not been such an event,I stated that I was going ahead anyway &,in view of my record as an efficient organiser (books available for inspection) could they meet me to discuss the matter.

The only response to date was the immediate reaction.They showed the letter to Mr. Dormand,and made finance available (more than I was asking for!) for the festival he mentions in his letter.It's all very odd.

There again,of course,it may not be odd at all.Some motives are easily understood,and it may be wise not to leave Folk Music in the hands of those who recognise music only in the addition of percentages and the ringing of tills.

The Wirral Folk Clubs are generally a sorry lot and at the time of writing there are none in Liverpool that are any different.(Maghull is a beacon, at the edge).I wish I'd read the Chairman's Rant,but Geoff Dormand borrowed the copy I had my eye on, & still hasn't returned it.Perhaps we'd both do better to buy our own copies!

Yours faithfully,
ARTHUR J. MARSHALL

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CHAIRMAN'S RANT by Ian Wells

I've written a report on the seminar elsewhere but I'd like to expand on one or two things that came up. First, if it's publicity you're after, then Local Radio can be very useful but don't restrict your effort to the Folk Ghetto programme. Almost all stations do a 'What's On' listing in general programmes, and, if you're available at the right time, a well written and timed press release can get you and/or your guest on a live daytime show. The seminar is a fair example: I can't think of anything less interesting to the general public than something set up for organisers of a minority interest. Yet Nigel and I made five appearances on four different local radio stations, two of which were on a general afternoon show and a main news programme! Local radio stations are very keen on doing forward looking stories - the regional TV will cover big events but the radio will have told you it will be happening. That is perfect

for generating publicity. Would anyone be interested in having an article on how to write a Press Release, who to contact etc in a future issue?

I've written to a number of senior BBC, C4, ILR, and Arts Council people about the things you raised at the seminar and will report any positive responses. I've also sent a copy of the press release following the seminar to Peter Booth at Merseyside Arts and asked him if he would like us to run something similar in his area: any interest from our Liverpool/Wirral members?

Finally, I would like to thank the members who came to the AGM. I'm not sure whether I should thank you for re-electing me as Chairman! I promise to continue in my normal tactful(?) way in stirring up interest in Folk music in general and the member clubs in particular.

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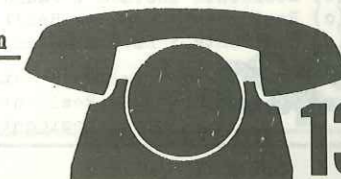
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Club

Calendar

DAY & CLUB	RESIDENTS	DATES IN APRIL			
MONDAY		1st	8th	15th	22nd
Horwich Poynton Preston Triton	Peter Hughes <i>Incubus</i>	Singer's Night Singaround Caught on the Hop Spinners	Singer's Night Singaround Singer's Night Closed	Singer's Night Singaround Singer's Night Portway Pedlars	Singer's Night Singaround George & Phil Singaround
TUESDAY		2nd	9th	16th	23rd
Blackpool Folk Club Upstairs The White Bear	Taverners	Singer's Night <i>Helen Robinson</i> Singer's Night	Singer's Night <i>Guest TBA</i> Singer's Night	Singer's Night <i>Guest TBA</i> Singer's Night	Singer's Night <i>Geoff Higginbottom</i> Singer's Night
WEDNESDAY		3rd	10th	17th	24th
Belle Green Old Ship The Star White Swan Whitehaven	Pennygate See (d) below Knotted Cord	Closed PUB CLOSED FOR REFURBISHMENT <i>Cashmir</i> Roaring Jelly Andy Caven	Singer's Night <i>Beeching/Haigh (j)</i> The Kipper Family Bram Taylor	Closed <i>Guest TBA</i> Heather Whittaker Dave Walters Band	Ken Pearson <i>Marziband</i> Singer's Night Local Singers
THURSDAY		4th	11th	18th	25th
Fleetwood Mawdesley Magazine Poynton Stump Wigan	See (c) below Gifford/Hartley Joan Blackburn	Mike & Tom Beryl Graeme Singer's Night <i>Guest TBA</i> Usher's Well Singer's Night	Singer's Night Closed Singer's Night <i>Guest TBA</i> Singer's Night <i>Gentleman Soldier</i>	Bryony Closed Singer's Night <i>Guest TBA</i> The Watchers <i>Change of Venue *</i>	Tony Rose Closed Singer's Night <i>Guest TBA</i> Singer's Night Singer's Night.
FRIDAY		5th	12th	19th	26th
Bee Blackburn Northwich Newcastle Ring O Bells Middleton Roebuck Blacksmith	Various <i>Pendlem</i> See (a) below <i>See Club News</i>	21st B'day party <i>Singer's Night</i> Nick Dow <i>Singer's Night</i> PUB CLOSED FOR REFURBISHMENT Singaround	TBA <i>Closed</i> Local's Night <i>Beeching/Haigh (j)</i> Singaround	TBA <i>Singer's Night</i> Local's Night <i>Singer's Night</i> Singaround	TBA <i>Closed</i> Carlin/Tindell (t) Kelran Halpin Derek Gifford
SATURDAY		6th	13th	20th	27th
Brewery Bury Club Ceilidhs Local Folk Prom. Poynton	Various See (h) below	Ceilidh - Derby Hall * <i>8/4/85 Whitehaven *</i> <i>FESTIVAL</i>	J. Beeching/C. Haigh (j) WB: Mike Elliott <i>Ceilidh</i>	Gill Burns <i>19/4/85 Whitehaven *</i> <i>Ceilidh</i>	Singer's Night <i>Ceilidh</i>
SUNDAY		7th	14th	21st	28th
Bothy Eagle & Child Leigh Poynton Rave On Rainford St. Maries Valley	See (f) below See (b) below See (g) below See (e) below Volunteers Derek & Di Boak Big Bill Prince Under a Fiver	Singer's Night Closed Closed <i>POYNTON FESTIVAL</i> Singer's Night Closed TBA	Bryony Singer's Night G. & E. Pratt (r) <i>Paul Metzers</i> J. & P. Cunningham (s) Closed Singer's Night	Singer's Night Tony Rose Singer's Night <i>Six Hands in Tempo</i> Singer's Night Roaring Jelly Special guest	The Kipper Family Singer's Night Tony Rose <i>Tarzan's Milkmen</i> Hobson & Lees Closed Jolly Jack.

KEY TO SYMBOLS ABOVE:

- * See Club News, page 4
- & Tickets available from club
- (a) Residents: Sean & Sandy Boyle, Iain Bowley, Tony Howard, Rod McDermot, Paul Taylor
- (b) Residents include: Caught on the Hop, Bric-a-Brac, Quartz
- (c) Residents: Sould's Bridle, Bev & Kevin Wheelan (of Thistle), Peter Smith & others (rotating residency)
- (d) Residents: Dave & Helen Howard, Helen Robinson, Paul, Geoff Higginbottom, John O'Hagan, Steve Jackson, Mike Billington
- (e) Residents for April are: Gentleman Soldier (14th), Tony Hylton (21st), Geoff Higginbottom
- (f) Residents are: Ken Dunlop, Cathie Stuart, Clive Fownceby, Pete Rimmer, Paul Reid (28th)
- (g) Residents are: Calico, Trevor & Joan Hunt

DATES IN / MAY					
29th	6th	13th	20th	27th	MONDAY
Singer's Night Singaround Singer's Night Singer's Night	Singer's Night Singaround Singer's Night Closed	Bram Taylor Singaround Brian Peters Singer's Night	Singer's Night Singaround Derek Gifford Spinners	Singer's Night Singaround Singer's Night Closed	Horwich Poynton Preston Triton
30th	7th	14th	21st	28th	TUESDAY
Singer's Night <i>Guest TBA</i> Singer's Night	Singer's Night <i>Guest TBA</i> Singer's Night	Singer's Night <i>Guest TBA</i> Singer's Night	Singer's Night <i>Guest TBA</i> Singer's Night	Singer's Night <i>Guest TBA</i> Singer's Night	Blackpool Folk Club Upstairs The White Bear
1st	8th	15th	22nd	29th	WEDNESDAY
Closed Closed <i>Guest TBA</i> Johnny Handle Tom Shepley's Band	Singer's Night Singer's Night <i>Guest TBA</i> Tich Frier Amazing Mr. Smith	Closed Closed <i>Guest TBA</i> Pete Coe Tish Stubbs/Richards (n)	Bernard Cromarty Singer's Night <i>Guest TBA</i> Singer's Night Amos & Rooks	Closed Closed <i>Guest TBA</i> Collins/Mageean (l) Knowe O'Deal Band	Belle Green Old Ship The Star White Swan Whitehaven
2nd	9th	16th	23rd	30th	THURSDAY
<i>Alan Bell</i> Peter Smith <i>Singer's Night</i> <i>Guest TBA</i> <i>Janet Jones</i> Singer's Night	TBA Closed <i>Singer's Night</i> <i>Guest TBA</i> <i>Singer's Night</i> Singer's Night	TBA Closed <i>Singer's Night</i> <i>Guest TBA</i> <i>Reflections</i> Singer's Night	TBA Closed <i>Singer's Night</i> <i>Guest TBA</i> <i>Singer's Night</i> Singer's Night	TBA Closed <i>Singer's Night</i> <i>Guest TBA</i> Singer's Night	Fleetwood Mawdesley Magazine Poynton Stump Wigan.
3rd	10th	17th	24th	31st	FRIDAY
TBA <i>Singer's Night</i> Paul Metzers <i>Singer's Night</i> PUB CLOSED FOR REFURBISHMENT Singaround	TBA <i>Closed</i> Singaround <i>Tony Rose</i> Just Chris	TBA <i>Singer's Night</i> Rothfield/Carr (q) <i>Singer's Night</i> Singaround	TBA <i>Closed</i> Local's Night <i>Paul Metzers</i> Singaround	TBA <i>Singer's Night</i> Hobson/Lees (p) <i>Singer's Night</i> Singaround	Bee Blackburn Northwich Newcastle Ring O Bells Middleton Roebuck Blacksmith
4th	11th	18th	25th		SATURDAY
L. Graham/F. McManus (k) <i>Mon. May 6th</i> <i>Bilbo Baggins BDB</i>	T. Stubbs/S. Richards (n) <i>Ceilidh</i>	Wilson Family	Pete Castle <i>CHESTER FESTIVAL *</i> <i>Mon. May 27th</i> <i>Ceilidh</i>		Brewery Bury. Club Ceilidhs Local Folk Proms. Poynton.
5th	12th	19th	26th		SUNDAY
Singer's Night Sad Pig Band Gentleman Soldier <i>Dave Walters Band</i> TBA	Pete Smith Singer's Night Heather Whittaker <i>Roaring Jelly</i> Singer's Night	Tim Laycock <i>Cosmetheka</i> Special Guest <i>Maddy Prior & Rick Kemp</i> House Band	Closed Closed Bram Taylor <i>Marie Little</i> Closed		Bothy Eagle & Child Leigh Poynton Rave On Rainford St. Maries Valley.
Rhiannon	Singer's Night	Chris	Singer's Night		

- (h) All are Ceilidhs with Bands indicated plus song with Abalon
- (j) Jenny Beeching & Chris Haigh
- (k) Len Graham & Pintan McManus (joint with Bury MAA)
- (l) Johnny Collins, Jim Mageean, Ian Woods, Charley Yarwood
- (m) 2nd Horwich Town Day of Folk, see Out & About
- (n) Tish Stubbs & Sam Richards
- (p) John Hobson & Howard Lees
- (q) Jane Rothfield & Alan Carr
- (r) Graham & Bileen Pratt
- (s) John & Phil Cunningham
- (t) Paula Carlin & Stuart Tindall
- (u) WB= White Bear at usual venue (but Saturday)
- (v) Special Whitehaven events - See Club News

Folk Club Organisers' Seminar

A packed room of enthusiastic - and occasionally frustrated - club organisers threw questions and opinions at Tim Joss and Jim Lloyd throughout a long evening at The Fleece in Ashton-in-Makerfield. Indeed, so keen were they that the discovery that the bar was open to 11.00 rather than 10.30 led only to an additional half hour of discussion!

The evening started with a swift summary of the background to NW Arts and the Arts Council of Great Britain by Tim Joss, music officer of North West Arts. He outlined the problems of recognition of Folk Music as "worthy" of official support, being usually dismissed as commercial or amateur. He stated firmly that as far as he was concerned, folk deserved support - but that was not true of all Regional Arts Associations and certainly not centrally by ACGB.

He discussed the sort of new initiative that was likely to get support. This included work in Education. He noted that it was unlikely that support would be available just to prop up a club, but outgoing activities with the local community could well get help. Copies of a leaflet on how to apply for a grant were available.

NW Arts also provides marketing advice and has contacts with general promoters and would be happy to get folk into other peoples promotions. They are also pushing local authority promotions and joint ventures.

Jim Lloyd, who is on the EFDSS liaison committee for RAA's, pointed out the possibility of a folk equivalent to the dance "animateur" - a contract fulltime professional with the job of making things happen.

Tony Lucas, of the Musicians Union, explained that they had a fund that could support live music

activities. Approach is via local MU branches and, of course, was intended to help promotions that use MU members.

Jim Lloyd led the second half with a short, punchy history of Folk on national radio. We'd already heard that the ACGB music panel has no members with folk music knowledge, and the same is true of the BBC music panel. None of the Radio 3 producers - who are supposed to be the serious music providers - have knowledge of or interest in folk. Radio 2 is totally uninterested in any real music programmes, and Folk on 2 survives only because of listener pressure. The same applies to TV, only worse.

Jim suggested that the way to raise TV interest was with competitions. This provoked strong reaction from the audience!

Local radio presenters talked about their problems. The importance of getting onto general programmes on local radio, not just the Folk ghettos, was emphasised. The absence of specialist folk programmes on local ILR stations was noted and generally deplored.

Among other points raised were (i) the lack of credits for folk music used en passant on radio and TV (ii) the last good TV folk programme was 'The Good Old Way' (iii) ILR stations have to cover local activities by their franchise and spend 3% of their sales on live music (iv) try using C4's teletex free notice board and go round the local TV shops switching to p468!

All attending seemed to have gained some benefit from the evening, and the Federation thanks NW Arts for financial support, Tim Joss and Jim Lloyd for leading the discussions, and Mike Billington, Geoff Speed and Derick Stanton for giving their time.

Ian Wells

A TOUCH OF THE BLARNEY... Pat Doyle on the Irish Folk Scene

The eminent composer Sir Hubert Parry, having examined thousands of tunes from various sources, came to the conclusion that "Irish folk music is probably the most varied, most poetical in the world, and is particularly rich in tunes which imply considerable sensitiveness."

Sir Hubert would, I think, be pleased with Macalla, a new group whose press release refers to as "an unusual phenomenon on the Irish Music scene". Macalla (which means "echo") consists of twenty three of Ireland's best young female singers and musicians. The group's recently released debut album, "Mna na hEireann", caused quite a stir, leading to successful concert performances, television appearances and invitations to play in London, including a programme for B.B.C. T.V. A four week summer tour of the United States is also planned.

There is a marvellous freshness to the spirited playing of the reels, jigs and hornpipes included on the album. There are beautifully lyrical songs here also, delightfully performed in choral style.

The women, who come from all over Ireland - from Donegal to Cork and Dublin to Galway - have among them ten fiddlers, three flautists, a harp, a piano and ten singers. Their album is on Gael Linn (Cer 110) - well worth an investment.

Len Graham is one of Ireland's finest traditional singers. You can hear his rich lyrical and expressive voice at its best on his new album "Ye Lovers All" (Claddagh Records CC41). This, Len's fifth album, is an excellent collection of fine songs and ballads which he describes as "a celebration of love under its many different guises". Len's deceptively gentle and effortless treatment of these largely unfamiliar Ulster songs has a hypnotic effect on the lucky listener. Many of the songs are also enhanced by the tasteful guitar and bouzouki accompaniment of Fintan McManus.

Coming from County Antrim, an area

rich in folk music, Len Graham learned most of his songs first hand from the many older singers he met there and in other parts of the North Of Ireland. As the detailed sleeve notes of this and previous albums indicate Len is a true professional, totally immersed in his folk music. You will have an opportunity to see and hear the lads live as they tour Britain in April and May.

It seems like a long time ago since I received a most interesting (and at times highly amusing) letter from Derek Bell of the Chieftains, in which he recounted their historic visit to China in April 1983. Well, happily the long awaited recording of this unique voyage of musical discovery is now available in the form of a remarkable and cleverly produced album, "The Chieftains in China" (Claddagh CC 42). "Fullof Joy", the opening track on which the Chieftains are joined by a Chinese ensemble, is indicative of the happy vivacious music which permeates this outstanding musical work. You may need to brush up on your Chinese if you are to understand the introduction of the band members by a rather sweet voiced Chinese Lady. The Chieftains, distinguished envoys of Irish folk music for 21 years, have produced a masterpiece.

Well, from the Far East to the east coast of Ireland, to Wicklow, and home. Deep in the Wicklow Hills, some two miles from Ireland's highest village, lives one of our finest young pipers, Joe McKenna and his equally talented wife, Antoinette, an accomplished harpist and fine traditional singer. Their recently released third album, "Farewell to Fine Weather" (Seanachie 79043), is undoubtedly their finest achievement on vinyl, displaying to the full the exuberance and zest so characteristic of Joe's piping. As well as providing some fine harp accompaniment, Antoinette breathes new life into four beautiful songs, three of which are in Irish. Johnny "Ringo" McDonagh (bodhran) and Ciaran Curran (bouzouki) supply

A.G.M. REPORT

The AGM was held at The Fleece Hotel, Ashton-in-Makerfield, on Wednesday 13th, March at 9.00pm. 12 clubs were represented. The minutes of the previous AGM were taken as read, and reports taken from the Chairman, Newsletter Editor, and Treasurer. As usual, discussion took place on tardy payments. The Newsletter editor appealed for more help, and especially for dates to be on time. A letter was read from the Membership secretary (current membership is nominally 33). The Tours co-ordinator reported on the relative lack of interest. Election of Officers: Chairman, Ian Wells; Treasurer, Jenny Smith (subject to workload after September); Newsletter Editor, Nigel Firth; Tours Organiser, Sean Boyle; Subscription and Membership, Pete Rimmer. There were no offers to become Youth Organiser. Nigel was offered heartfelt thanks for the work he does in getting the newsletter out. Bernie Forkin was thanked for the satirical fundraising evening run at his club. The AGM closed at 9.35.

BLARNEY (p.17)

subtle, unobtrusive accompaniment on several tracks. No doubt, this album will be enthusiastically received by their many American fans when they tour the United States during the summer months.

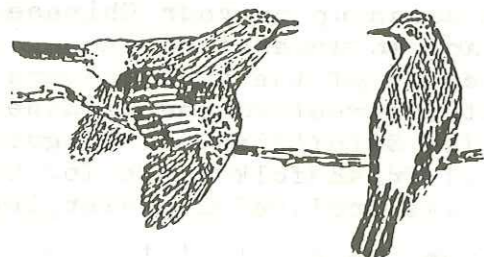
Hopefully this brief review will enlighten you in some small way on aspects of the current Irish folk scene. I look forward to bringing you a closer look at certain facets of our music and I would welcome your comments or queries on any area in which you are particularly interested.

Pat Doyle.

(EDITOR'S Note: If you write to me, I'll pass your comments on to Pat.)

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On Board 'The Kangaroo'
The Miner's Wife's Lament
Red is the Rose
Mary From Dungleo
The Little Husband
Bide a While

On this, his debut album, he is assisted by a few friends who, whilst amply displaying their own talents never detract from Bram himself. The material is a mixture of the traditional and contemporary and demonstrates what can be found in the programme of any night with Bram.

Bram has the ability to appeal to a wide variety of different audiences and to put his songs across convincingly.

Paul Adams
Producer

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Gary & Vera Aspey.



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PERSONAL VIEW:

Out of the Clubs & into the PUBS!

It's a common complaint that TV & radio virtually ignore folk music, or at best slot it into a few specialist compartments with labels like "Folk on 2", "Festival Folk" or whatever. Maybe the media treat our music in this way because that's how they see it, in similar clearly-labelled compartments called Folk Clubs or Festivals. I've never yet seen a sign outside a folk club saying 'Folkies only', but for all the effort that the folk world puts into attracting non-folkies, there might as well be. How many clubs publicise their activities in their local papers to attract the general public? Very few, I'd guess.

While the number of folk clubs throughout the country is steadily decreasing, folk magazines like this one do their valiant bit to provide a service for the committed folk enthusiast. Nevertheless, these publications tend to be available only at folk clubs or other folkie gatherings and as such are an indication of how introvert and insular the folk scene has become - folkies writing for, and advertising to, other folkies. Perhaps the music we hear in folk clubs ought to be renamed "folkie music", ie music performed by and for folkies only.

The sixties' revival brought folk music to the attention of a significant part of that generation, and its beneficial effects will always be with us. No-one can deny, however, that the folk club movement, where this revival began, if not in its death throes, is certainly losing its momentum.

Down here in North West Kent we believe we have made a start in getting folk music out of its rut and bringing it to the attention of a wider public. For the past fifteen months, a group of about ten singers & musicians has been going out to different pubs in the area, singing & playing to anyone who happens to be around & wants to listen. We call ourselves "The Travelling Folk" and, rather than settle into the comfortable routine of a few regular pubs, we go for the challenge of a different pub for each session. We also go after bookings from any local organisation that might

want an evening's entertainment, such as Women's Institutes, 18+ groups, Community associations, Young Conservatives - and folk clubs. Most of us are fair-to-middling floor-singer standard but we have found that any four or five of us can produce a reasonable evening's entertainment. The proof is that, after most sessions, organisers book us for a return visit. The most satisfying thing is when someone comes up after a session and says "I enjoyed your music tonight - I don't think I've heard folk music before - where can I hear more?". Then you know you've made a convert - and it happens quite frequently!

One of the incidental benefits of our sessions is that all our singers & musicians have made great strides in putting over their material. In the indulgent atmosphere of a folk club, it is too easy to make excuses for a mediocre performance - "Sorry I've got a cold tonight" or "I'll try & get through without forgetting the words". In a pub you have to be much more positive - there's an obligation to entertain & to give good value. Talking of which, we always pass the hat round for expenses and collect quite a tidy sum. We also visit the pub a fortnight beforehand to put up a poster.

Quite a few folkies from other areas have expressed an interest in what The Travelling Folk are doing. If anyone would like advice on starting a similar group, I would be very pleased to help. My address is 8, Bayham Road, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 3XA & my phone number is Sevenoakes (0732) 460171.

Let's get folk music back into the pubs. That, after all, is where it came from!

John Smedley

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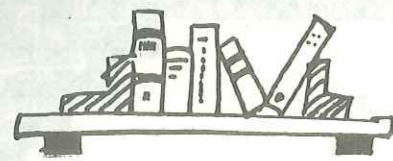
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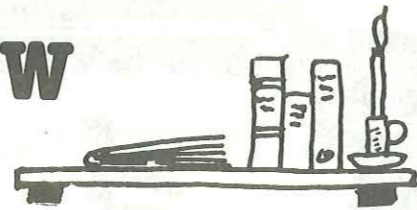
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Book Review



English and Scottish Tunes(HM305)

Tony Sullivan

Sully has followed up his successful 'Last nights Fun' Irish teaching set with this interesting collection of English and Scottish tunes. This is in fact the tape of the book, and the combination should prove an excellent teaching aid. There are 42 tunes (felicitous number!), and on playing it through we had great fun saying "so that's what that tune's called". The first three tracks are full speed arrangements to show what the final effect should be: the remainder of the tape gives all the tunes played exactly as in the book but slowly. A neat extra point is that it is recorded with total stereo separation with the banjo/mandolin on one channel and the guitar on the other, so you can use your balance control to isolate one instrument to help you learn. This is an excellent effort by Halshaw Music.

Ian Wells.



Jsh 83.

CARTOON BY ASH LATHAM

RECORD REVIEWS

FLASH COMPANY "Castle Keep"
Plant Life PLR 067

A whole slew of tracks on a theme album, a musical drama woven around the history of Colchester castle. The action moves chronologically from celtic to the present day and there's chunks of narrative (which get progressively more annoying) linking the songs and tunes. I'm sure Flash Company's heart is in the right place, since the whole concept was originally written to support the campaign to save the castle ruins.

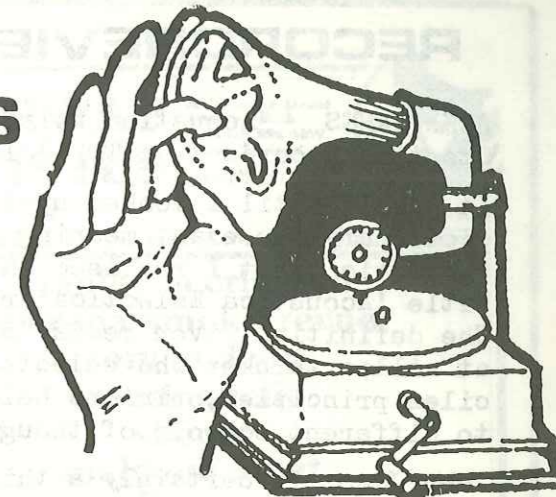
From a critics point of view as a musical exercise it's been done before and done better, although no-one's ever centred a concept album round a castle. However, if this is a musical drama, then Fairport's "Babbacombe Lee" had more impact. If it's an evening at the theatre, "Larkrise to Candleford" put you in the front stalls. And if it's an exercise in folk rock and narration I refer you to that mix of a record "The Complete Dancing Master". The band seem over obsessed with the paganism and could have done with toning down the mystic and concentrated on say, medieval influences. Even putting in more traditional material would have helped as some of their own songs quite honestly are a little short on originality and panache.

What I do hope is that the record helps the fund to rescue Colchester castle, that a building with a varied history and character should vanish is unthinkable. As for the album, its par for the course, but don't get too excited.

SIMON JONES

Mary Black Collected Dara011

Side 1: Mo Ghile Mear; Fare Thee Well My Own True Love; Men of Worth; She Moves Through the Fair; Love's Endless War; Side 2: Both Sides the Tweed; My Youngest Son Came Home Today; Isle of St. Helena; Don't Explain; Everything That Touches Me.



This is my month for raving. Since I first saw Mary Black she has worked with some very big name bands but I still prefer her solo, and this new recording is even better than the previous solo tape. The range of material is breathtaking, from a traditional song in the Gaelic to examples of the current Irish neo-pop. I was particularly taken by 'She Moves Through the Fair' and Gaughan's 'Both Sides the Tweed'. The best track is undoubtedly the low key straight version of Bogle's 'My Youngest Son Came Home Today', sung immaculately without overt emotion. Indeed, the tone is exactly right for that taut, controlled manner in which we contain our private grief in public. The accompaniment is precisely right, with undertones of the pipes and drums but never interfering with the lyric. Buy this record as soon as you can!

Ian Wells

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JOHN JAMES "Acoustica Eclectica"
Stoptime Records STOP 101

It wasn't until I looked up in the dictionary the exact meaning of the word 'eclectic', that I realised what a good title 'Acoustica Eclectica' really is. The definition given reads "selecting at will; a thinker who selects and reconciles principles, opinions belonging to different schools of thought".

John James is certainly a thinker and plays many different styles of guitar music. This album will prove at last that he is undoubtedly far more of a guitarist than many people think. For too long he has been known mainly for his great virtuosity as a ragtime guitar player, but on this album he comes to grips with many exciting and innovative types of music.

It isn't really a solo album; he has surrounded himself with some fine musicians. Old friend Pete Berryman seems not to have lost his touch as a guitar player on a couple of tracks, especially "Dangling", my favourite on the record.

From the Jazz world, Dick Heckstall-Smith comes up (and takes over) on saxophone for a few tracks. For myself, I could have done without it, but other reviewers have noted that many would find these tracks the most interesting on the whole album. These are the tracks on which John is stretching himself musically much further than before.

I know John has been doing gigs with Dick and bass player Chris Billings for some time now, and to see them in concert would be great. In fact I would go a long way just to see the bass player; he's good and adds much to the album.

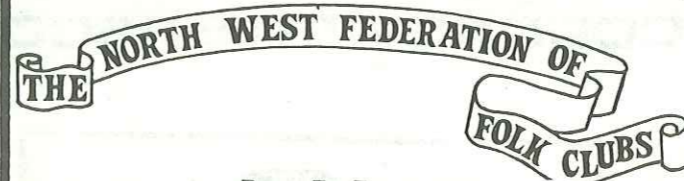
'Acoustica Eclectica' can only bring the music of John James to a much wider audience, and well worth a listen.

Pete Rimmer

LES BARKER "Nigel's Blues/Chicken Biriani Conga" Mrs Ackroyd MRS 001.

THE HOT POT HOTSHOTS "The Manchester Kid"/ "Leslie" CHRIS WHYLE Mrs Ackroyd MRS 002.

Elsewhere in this issue you'll find I chatted to Les Barker about his new label Mrs Ackroyd Records. It's a project that will take time and investment. At present everything comes from Les, so the time is his also, you could and should invest in these records. The first release is two Barker poems put to music and the second is a mix of North West folkies and rockers under an alias rendering a pretty thing about the joys of being seven and generally behaving like a juvenile John Wayne. It contains a classic chorus with the line "Adios Amigo" and "Hey Up my Mate" which reminded me of the superb "Apache Wells" that BBC2 axed after only two episodes because they couldn't see beyond the end of their noses. You should have



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RECORDREVIEWSRECORDREVIEWSRECO

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SIMON JONES

RECENT RELEASES....

(That is to say, recent LP releases that we can't review, not having had review copies of them!)

THE OYSTER BAND have a new LP called "Liberty Hall", its on Pukka Records, YOP 7.

RICHARD THOMPSON will have a new album out shortly "Across a Crowded Room". Its on Polydor POLD 5175.

THE KIPPER FAMILY are at last recorded for posterity (if posterity can stand it!) "Since Time Immoral" is on Dambuster DAMO05.

PYEWACKETT have another record out, mainly of Playford Dance Tunes entitled "seven to Midnight". It's on Familiar records, FAM47.

WHIPPERSNAPPER (Dave Swarbrick's new band) have their first LP out called "PROMISES". It's on their own label Whippersnapper Records WPS001.

ERIC BOGLE'S new release is "When the Wind Blows" on Topic 12TS437.

An unusual record is 'Tam Lin', combining the talents of FRANKIE ARMSTRONG, BRIAN PEARSON, JON GILLASPIE & BLOWZABELLA. It's on Plant Life PLR 063.

And finally this month, MARTIN SIMPSON has an LP out soon entitled "Bad or High Kicking". Topic 12TS438.

This is just a small selection of recent releases that we couldn't review for you, I hope we can do better in future issues.

Nigel Firth

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A unique shop, which sells everything connected with Folk Music, Song and Dance:

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Open Tuesday to Friday 9.30 am to 5.30 pm
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Folk Mail Dept. open Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5.30pm

For further information about books and records please write for catalogue, and send 75p for p & p. Our Mailing Department can send goods all over the world. Access and Barclaycard accepted by phone.

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FEDERATION PAGE

OFFICER	NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
Chairman & Publicity	Ian Wells	62 Sydney Ave. Hesketh Bank.	077 473 3267
Treasurer	Jenny Smith	23, Riverside, Off Broadgate, Preston	0772 50436
Newsletter Editor	Nigel Firth	3 Cromford Drive, Pemberton, Wigan.	0942 215621
Tours Coordinator	Sean Boyle	23a, Cinder Lane, Northwich, Cheshire	0606 44361
Membership Secretary	Pete Rimmer	6, Burlington Rd., Southport, Merseyside	0704 67852

THE AIM OF THE FEDERATION Shall be the promotion of Folk Music in the North-West by:-

1. The 'block booking' of artists for tours.
2. Joint Publicity of the Member Clubs.
3. The general support of the Member Clubs.
4. The joint organisation of concerts and ceilidhs within our area.
5. The support of Festival Organisers within our area.
6. The organisation of events to attract under 18s to Folk Music.

The Member Clubs

FOLK CLUB	START TIME	ADDRESS	ORGANISER	PHONE NO.
SUNDAY				
Bothy	8.00pm	Blundell Arms, Upper Aughton Road, Birkdale, Southport	Clive Pownceby	051 924 5078
Valley	8.30pm	Gardeners Arms, Vallett's Lane, Off Chorley Old Rd., Bolton	Derry Yelding	Bolton 793961
Eagle & Child	8.30 pm.	Eagle & Child, Main Street, Billinge, Nr. Wigan	Bernie Forkin	0744 53058
Leigh	8.00 pm.	Oddfellows Hrms, Twiss Lane, Leigh	Steve Eckersteley	0942 677965
Poynton	8.00 pm.	Poynton Folk Centre, Park Lane, Poynton.	Eric Brock	0625 872626
Rainford	8.15 pm.	Golden Lion Hotel, Rainford.	Bob Leeming	0744 88 3424
Rave On	8.30 pm.	Grosvenor Bowling Club, The Groves, Chester.	Nick Mitchell	0244 315094
Widnes (St. Maries)	8.30 pm.	St. Marie's Am. Rugby League Club, Brentfields, Widnes.	Patrick Hindley	051 423 3775
MONDAY				
Horwich.	8.15 pm.	The Crown Hotel, Horwich.	Sue Grills	0204 691430
Preston	8.15 pm.	Leam Hotel, Church St. Preston.	Rob Twisse	0254 21594
Poynton	8.00 pm.	Poynton Folk Centre, Park Lane, Poynton.	Eric Brock	0625 872626
The Triton	8.00 pm.	Tom Hall's Tavern, near Pier Head, Liverpool.	Doreen Rickart	051 227 3911 x 448 (work)
TUESDAY				
The Folk Club Upstairs	8.30pm	North Manchester General Hospital Sports & Social Club, Crumpsall	Mike Smyth	061-798-7677
Blackpool.	8.00 pm.	Kings Arms Hotel, Talbot St. Blackpool.	Pete Rodger	0253 56290
White Bear	8.30 pm	White Bear (main A6 road), Adlington	Glyn Hughes	Adlington 882520
WEDNESDAY				
Whitehaven	8.15 pm.	Rosehill Theatre Bar, Naresby, Whitehaven.	Ray Downes	0900 826771
Belle Green	8.30 pm.	Palace of Dales, Belle Green Lane, Incs, Wigan.	Kath Holden	Hindley 58459
The Railway	8.00 pm.	Tithebarn St, Liverpool, (opposite Exchange Station)	Arthur Marshall	051 6304239
White Swan	8.00 pm.	White Swan, Green St. Fallowfield, Manchester.	Annie Morris	061 881 8294
The Star	8.30 pm.	Star Inn, Back Hope Street, Salford.	Martin Gittins	061 205 3680
Old Ship	8.30 pm	Old Ship, East Bank St., Southport	Bernie Blaney	0704 77065
THURSDAY				
Stump	8.30pm	Rawsons Arms, Peel Street, Farnworth, Bolton	Bernard Cromarty	Farnworth 71167
Fleetwood	8.15 pm.	North Easton Hotel, Fleetwood. (usu. Vantoni Room)	Don Baxter	03917 78606
Mawdesley	8.30 pm.	Black Bull, Mawdesley (monthly)	Derek Gifford	0704 822571
Poynton	8.00 pm.	Poynton Folk Centre, Park Lane, Poynton.	Eric Brock	0625 872626
Wigan	8.15 pm.	Park Hotel, Market Square, Wigan.	Jean Blackburn	0942 863389
Magazine	8.30pm	Magazine Hotel, Magazine Lane, Wallasey	Arthur Marshall	051 638 3764
FRIDAY				
Blackburn	8.30pm	Blackburn	Ron Crane	0254 40347
Blacksmith	8.30 pm	Black Horse, Cronton	Jean Wrigley	051 424 1878
Bee	8.30 pm.	Bee Hotel, Bodfer St. Rayl	Jave Costello	0745 32488
Newcastle	8.00 pm.	Black Horse, Station St. Longport. Stoke-on-Trent	Jason Hill	0782 813401
Reebuck	8.30 pm.	Reebuck Hotel, Leyland.	Les Stennett	0772 690195
Northwich	8.30 pm.	The Coachman, Hartford, Northwich.	Sean Boyle	0606 44361
Ring o' Bells (Middleton)	8.30 pm.	Ring o' Bells, St. Leonard's Square (opp Parish Church), Middleton	Moirna Woodcock	061 723 1979
SATURDAY				
Bury	8.30 pm.	The Wagier, Bolton St. Bury.	Jean Seymour	061 761 1544
Brewery	8.30 pm.	Brewery Arts Centre, 122a Highgate, Wensley (occasional)	Bill Lloyd	0539 25133
Local Folk Promotions	Varies	Various events in Liverpool and the Wirral	Geoff Dormand	051 639 7928
Poynton.	8.00 pm.	Poynton Folk Centre, Park Lane, Poynton.	Eric Brock.	0625 872626



WATH 1985

10th WATH FOLK FESTIVAL

3rd - 5th MAY 1985

MONTGOMERY HALL, WATH-UPON-DEARNE, ROTHERHAM, S. YORKS.

WHIPPERSNAPPER, COCK & BULL BAND, STRAWHEAD, MAXIE & MITCH,
ELECTROPATHIC BATTERY BAND, OFF THE CUFF,
SONG TRADERS, MAGGIE HOLLAND & CHRIS COE,
BERNARD WRIGLEY, JOHNNY COPPIN & PHIL BEER,
NO RIGHT TURN, LIFE & TIMES, HERRINGS BELLY
RHIANNON,
WATH MORRIS MEN, KEEBLES QUEEN CLOG, COVENTRY MUMMERS,
EBOR MORRIS MEN, LOTHIAN'S MORRIS MEN.

TICKETS: SAME PRICE AS 1984

FURTHER DETAILS & TICKETS

WEEKEND	£8.00 (£9.50 on Door)
FRIDAY CEILIDH	£1.80 (£2.00 on Door)
SATURDAY ONLY	£5.50 (£6.00 on Door)
SUNDAY ONLY	£5.50 (£6.00 on Door)

TICKETS FOR INDIVIDUAL EVENTS AVAILABLE.
UNWAGED - 1/2 PRICE ON THE DOOR

JOAN M. BINNS
26 FITZWILLIAM STREET
WATH-UPON-DEARNE
ROTHERHAM, S. YORKS.
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The Beverley Folk Festival

21st-23rd June 1985

**BRASS MONKEY • ANDY IRVINE
PYEWACKETT • COSMOTHEKA**

DAB HAND • MARTIN SIMPSON & JUNE TABOR
SIX HANDS IN TEMPO • ERIC • THE KIPPER FAMILY
ROGER WATSON • JOHN HOBSON & HOWARD LEES
THE FABULOUS SALAMI BROTHERS

'ALL THAT & T-SHIRTS TOO!'

THE HOP • YORKSHIRE GARLAND

THE WHITE HORSE CEILIDH BAND • KNARESBOROUGH MUMMERS
GREEN GINGER CLOG DANCERS • GREEN GINGER MORRIS
GREEN GINGER GARLAND • POYNTON JEMMERS
CATERING BY 'FOOD FOR FOLK'

Concerts, Ceilidhs, Dance Displays, Childrens Shows, Informal Sessions,
Workshops, Campsite, Crèche, Indoor Craft & Music Carnival

**Season Tickets £11.00 (£10.00 before May 1st) including camping.
Reductions for Children - Tickets available for individual events.**

**TICKETS & INFORMATION: CHRIS WADE, 2 STAR ROW, NORTH DALTON,
DRIFFIELD, EAST YORKSHIRE, YO25 9UR Telephone: 037 781 662 or 0482 892266**

In association with BBC Radio Humberside
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The East Yorkshire Borough of Beverley Borough Council.

ORGANISED BY THE WHITE HORSE FOLK CLUB, BEVERLEY