

**THE NORTH WEST FEDERATION OF
FOLK CLUBS**



NEWSPAPER

FEBRUARY-MARCH

35p

Page 2 Comment:

WELL, after one false start, here I am back in the hot seat, after two issues ably put together by our revered assistant Editor, Mr. Bernie Forkin.

I CAN'T let the last issue pass without some comment on Dave Day's letter in that issue. I know it was intended to be provocative and I'm sure it was successful in its aim, but I can't let Mr. Day get away with factual errors. Tours did happen in the early days, but only work if someone is prepared to put in a lot of work on the telephone trying to fill a set of dates—step forward all you volunteers! Support of the member clubs has happened in the past on two or three occasions; unfortunately we are often the last to know a club is in any trouble—its only when I ring for dates and find they've already closed! Or to put it another way, we can only help the clubs that want to be helped.

I COULD go on about most of his other points, but I'm afraid that the sad fact is that we can't fulfill our aims unless we get people prepared to put in some hard work doing one of the jobs. Those people already involved put in a good deal of time and money for very little thanks.



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BUT ENOUGH of this and on to the contents of this issue. Simon Jones has been unable to complete his Canadian Folk Music article, but instead has interviews with MAGNA CARTA and VOLUNTEERS. Ian (apart from his regular contributions) has been delving into the problems of the EPDSS. I know we've all had a laugh at their expense in the past, but the present situation is a serious crisis that threatens the existence of the library at Cecil Sharp House.

THANKS are due as always to Bernie for assistant editing, to Margaret and Angela for typing. Ian Wells & Bernie have collated the dates and Phil Capper has turned them into something fit to print. The cover is an old one you may recognise by Ian Sutton.

THAT'S ALL for now, see you all next month!

Nigel Firth
EDITOR



FOLK PROGRAMMES ON NATIONAL AND LOCAL RADIO

'Folk on Two'	BBC Radio 2	330m (90.2 VHF)	Wednesday 7.00-8.30pm
'Lancashire Drift' Monthly, second Sunday	BBC R/Lancashire	351m (96.4 VHF)	Sunday 11.05-11.35am
		repeat -	Tuesday 6.35-7.05pm
'Folk Scene'	BBC R/Merseyside	202m (95.8 VHF)	Tuesday 6.30-7.00pm
		repeat -	Sunday 8.30-9.00pm
'Folk like Us'	BBC R/Manchester	206m (95.1 VHF)	Sunday 5.15-6.15pm
		repeat -	Monday 7.00-8.00pm

EPDSS - AWAY

The article on page 11 was written last year, before the EPDSS AGM in December. At that inordinately long and acrimonious meeting, the worst happened. After careful filibustering so that most provincial members and many practising musicians had to leave, the London Dance Tendency defeated the NEC and got the motion in favour of the Friends of Cecil Sharp House passed. This committed the Society to inaction for three months, while the Friends try to get their act together. Following the meeting, a quarter of the NEC resigned, and Jim Lloyd has since left, taking advantage of the break clause in his contract. The magazine has been stopped, dances have been resumed, the library is still at risk. An appeal has gone out for money and help. There will be an EGM in Coventry on April 4th (wouldn't the 1st be more appropriate?).

Ian Wells

I haven't listed programmes on the independents, because NONS of our local one actually have a folk music programme. Write at once to their respective Programme Controllers and protest. It is only by constant pressure that we may eventually get a programme of our own.

BROADREACH HOUSE is a treatment centre for Drug Addiction and Alcoholism in Plymouth. It has had considerable success in treating addicts over the past four years and over £200,000 has so far been raised to support its work. The latest venture is the brainchild of Jon Benns, an LP entitled 'Where would you rather be tonight?', featuring Steeleye Span, Fairport Convention, Jake Thackray, Phil Beer, Mike Oldfield, Johnny Coppin, Mike Silver, Paul Metzers Allan Taylor and many others. If you don't see a copy in your local record shop, it's available from Broadreach House, 465, Tavistock Road, Plymouth, Devon, PL6 7HE, price £5.50 including postage.

THE Fairport Convention "40 Days in the Wilderness Tour" reaches the North-West in late January with concerts at Manchester International Club on Thursday 22nd, The Superdrome Morecambe on the 23rd and Southport Arts Centre on the 24th.

Soots Band Capercaille tour England during April and dates within the Federation area are: 2nd Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal; 3rd, The Derby Halls, Bury; 26th, The Albion Folk Club Liverpool.

VARIOUS Independent Local Radio Stations are combining together to run the "Hobgoblin Folkfinder Competition '87", organised by Radio Orwell/Saxon Radio "Acoustic Attack" presenter Pete Jennings. There are two categories Solo/Duo and Band with prizes as follows:

Solo/Duo	1st	£100	
	2nd	£75	
	3rd	£50	
Band	1st	£150	prizes in
	2nd	£125	instruments
	3rd	£75	

There are cash (lower) equivalents for all the prizes. For further details and copies of the rules contact Pete Jennings, 8, Pinecroft Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 6BW (0473-41203)

BROADSTAIRS Folk Week Trust have written to say that they have room for dancers during the 7th-14th August 1987. The top bands and callers good dance floors and good company; there are dance workshops and dances or ceilidhs every day. They also cater for singers & musicians - something for everyone, everyday. More information from Linda Wood, 0843 603441.

LATEST information of the Edinburgh International Folk Festival (April 10th to 19th) is that the fiddle course has been reintroduced under the tuition of Trevor Hunter and Hamish Moore's successful Lowland Piping Course is also being repeated. Both courses last for five days from Monday April 13th and tuition will take place over 4-5 hours each day. To book a place or receive further details, contact Edinburgh International Folk Festival Shillinghill, Temple, Midlothian, EH23 4SH (Tel 087530 298/328)

ONCE AGAIN the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress has published "American Folk Music & Folklore Recording 1985: A selected list", and copies are available at no cost from Selected List, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20450, USA.

BILL RUTTER MEMORIAL: The South-West Area are opening a fund for a memorial to the memory of this great man, and invite anyone to participate. It is not yet known what form the memorial will take, but an announcement will be made in ED & S magazine in due course. Please send your contributions to John Clegg, Parsons Farwell, Christchurch Close, Nailsea, Bristol, BS19 2DL. A receipt will be forwarded on behalf of the South West Area Council.

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.



FOR ONCE, just a brief Club News to save time-back to normal next issue.

SINCE LAST ISSUE, there is only one new club, which is a Singaround run by Joan Blackburn on Sundays at the P&M Squash Centre, Liverpool Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield. Joan also has a new Telephone number (0942 321223). She is still running Wigan Folk Club on Thursdays at the White Horse, Standishgate, Wigan.

THERE are also a number of Club Organiser changes since last issue, best summarised as follows:

Club	Organiser	Tel No.
Triton	Masie Potts	051 920 4129
Magazine	Jack Coutts	051 220 0152
Darwen	Jean Molloy	0706 220611
Horwich	Joyce Riding	0257 792304

NEWCASTLE folk Club has changed name & venue & is now the POTTERIES Folk Song Club and meets at the Crown & Anchor, Tower Square, Tunstall.

FULL DETAILS of all the above changes will be found on the Federation page (page 27 in this issue).

POYNTON FOLK FESTIVAL will take place over the Easter weekend at the Folk Centre, Park Lane, Poynton. It will I'm sure have all the usual mixture of events for all tastes as well as special events for children. I'm afraid I haven't been sent details or the promised advert, so I can't tell you any more. More information from David Brock on 061 483 6521

HORWICH TOWN FOLK DAY takes place on 25th April in Horwich and features Alan Taylor and the Ripley Wayfarers as well as a host of local acts. More information from Joyce Riding, 0257 792304.

MOORE DAY OF FOLK takes place on April 11th and will feature Jez Lowe, Les Barker and Electropathic Battery Band.

DAVE COSTELLO, who runs the Bee Folk Club in Rhyl is trying to organise a Wales Federation of Folk Clubs, to be run in North and South sections. If successful, they hope to approach funding agencies, etc. If you are interested, please contact Dave Costello on 0745 32488.

BLACKPOOL FOLK CLUB are moving! By the time you read this, they will be at their new venue, the Empress Hotel, Exchange St., Blackpool (behind North Station). They still meet on Tuesdays at 8.30pm. The new organisers are Mick & Eleanor Read, 29, Woolan Road, Blackpool.

ADVANCE DATES (such as I have) are as follows: (all dates for April)

5th Pyewackett	Eagle & Child
8th Hobson/less	Folk @ Tute
15th Tonight @ Noon	Folk @ Tute
22nd Isla St. Clair	Folk @ Tute
25th Celidh (Sat)	Eagle & Child
26th Thorn	Eagle & Child
29th Knowe O'Deill	Folk @ Tute

(more details next issue or contact the respective club organisers).

THERE WILL BE an AGM of the Federation in about April/May which will take the form of a meeting and seminar as happened two years ago. If you've any ideas for exactly what form it should take, or possible venue/evening in mind, please contact Ian Wells as soon as possible.

Club Of The Month

BOTHY Folk Club

The Bothy? Surely that's not still going is it? Yes of course it is — why shouldn't it be? I hardly ever miss a Sunday night. Why the surprise? Well I dunno, bl*dy 'ell it's just unusual. I mean everywhere else has closed hasn't it? Y'know, come and gone — you'll tell me next that they're still at the Blundell Arms in Birkdale I suppose. You're right, it's where the club's met for all but a few months of its life since 1965. 1965, phew, that makes it.....er-rr-rrrr 21 years, correct, they had their big birthday celebrations last April — I'll lend you the video if you like. All the old faces that you'll remember were there.

What Tony Wilson, Stan Ambrose, Dave Boardman — all that lot!

Yes well, they were the original residents along with Hughie Jones' wife, Chris weren't they? But there were lots of others over the years — it was quite an emotional night when they had the reunion and seeing all those people — well the ex-residents must number about 20 but it wasn't just them. It was the atmosphere, the audience. I mean there are regulars at the Bothy who have been around since '65.

Streuth! it sounds like an old folks home!

No that's the secret I reckon, along with all the tradition and loyalty they've always kept up to date. You can do y'know without compromising any of those principles that attracted you to folk music in the first place.

I dunno about 'principles' — I just liked a good sing and a few beers.

So did I mate, so did I and I still get that and more besides, but underneath that the Bothy has always credited its audience with more intelligence than some clubs. It's always trying to expand and develop its awareness of different styles in this broadly termed music that people call Folk. So you'll always see new names in their guest list and not just safe old favourites.

Steady on — you nearly lost me there. You do rabbit on don't you?

Yeh, I'm noted for it.

Do floor singers like me still get a crack of the whip?

Absolutely. The club still keeps to the 'every other week a singers night' principle, — they see it as vital. Y'know a Folk Club is only as good as its last singers night. They're the backbone of the whole scene.

So who are the current residents? Anyone I'll remember?

Yes there's Jim James, y'know the Blueser, 12 string guitar, mouth harp, used to play with Raf Callaghan and Mick Rimmer. Still plays the Blues and his own punchy contemporary material — brilliant stuff. Pete Rimmer's there upfront too, a nifty picker that boy. Y'know he still boasts the largest collection of Donovan records in captivity! Didn't he run the Coronation Club in Southport at one time? With Paul Reid?

That's right, and when that closed, the Bothy got him back into the fold. When Reidy came back from teaching in Cyprus we got him too. You name it traditional or Suzanne Vega, Paul can handle it — superb graphic designer too. He does all the artwork for the club. Then there's Bev Sanders — you should hear her. She'd never sung in public before about 2 years ago, but after a spate of floor spots they just had to have her in. She's that good a singer and getting better all the time. Just proves what I was saying earlier — if the Bothy hadn't encouraged and brought out that talent, she might still be trying to make it big as an archaeologist! You're not their P. R. Man are you? they're not that bl*dy high-tec now are they? or are you on salary? I just can't recall your name. You used to sing too, didn't you?

Well er-rr, yes, no, oh really and yes in that order. I'm Clive Pownceby. I'm the organiser these days. See you Sunday maybe?!

SIMON JONES talks to

VOLUNTEERS

THE VOLUNTEERS have been described as 'red hot roots rockers from within the walled city'. The Newsletter despatched Simon Jones to investigate such elaborate claims.

Back at the tail end of last summer, a tape fell through the front door of chateau Jones and revealed itself to be a corking little sampler for Chester's own Folk Rock band, the Volunteers. After listening to the cassette, forth ventured your faithful hack and tracked down what turned out to be a shy, retiring bunch of lads. We'd arranged to meet at their local, the Boat House, where they were all whooping it up in the bar talking to a microphone stand with a hat on. This they claimed was their flute player Dave Manley, who lived in a house boat and sometimes gave fire eating displays. Now these were my kind of people.

"We've been going since the early 80's with various people" says Nick Mitchell guiding Volunteer and guitar/vocals, "this band has now been together for the longest period of any line-up, and we feel that we've GOT to do something. That was partly the reason for the demo" That Demo was laid down at Dave Pegg's Woodworm studio and they talk about the three-day stint there with glee. "Dave Pegg was just great, he took us all out for lunch and we met all sorts of people. Mark Powell the engineer was a great help, suggesting the way we ought to record the songs." Chris Lee, who is a fine bass guitarist, easing a fluid sound from his bass and driving the Volunteers music along.

Guitarist Nick Smith reckons he wants to take their sound into the mid 1980's. His guitar work is not unrelated to the sound that Stuart Adamson gets from his work with Big Country.

"We try to write the sort of songs that reflect our feelings," Nick imparts, "they all have a sense of place. They're English in the same way that Richard Thompson writes English music. I'm not too sure it's all folk, but because of our background it probably is."

There are two line ups one a trio, playing folk and Irish music (Nick M., Dave & Chris). The other is the full-fledged rock incarnation which writes 90% of its own material and covers numbers by Thompson, Hutchings etc.

"Only their faster, more r'n'b influenced stuff though," asserts Chris. "We do 'Fire in the Engine Room' and songs like that"

Nick M. "We dropped the tunes about twelve months ago. These days we'd rather write our own songs, it helps to build an identity."

They play a regular gig at the Boat House in Chester and are resident at the Rave On Folk Club in Chester.

"The band are veterans of the pubs round here," says Andy Thomas (drums) "We have gigged at most of the known spots around the Chester/Wrexham area. We've also a booking coming up at Manchester Polytechnic which we're pleased with". As writers they admit they've some way to go, but their tape shows them heading in a Strawbs/Fairport contemporary direction, but with their roots firmly in the Folk style.



Nick Mitchell



Chris Lee



Nick Smith

That evening the Volunteers tore up a storm at their local, rocking and swinging through a set that had little wrong with that more live work won't cure. A touch more of their ethnic roots coming through wouldn't come amiss, but then its early days and they've got time to mature.

They are a pool of disparate sources, listing anyone from XTC to Steeleye as among their varied influences. They need to balance the energy of Nick Smith and Andy Thomas with the more experienced approach of the longer serving members. It's a precarious balance, but one that once found could produce some interesting results.

So there we are - the Volunteers, tremendous entertainment; next time you see the name remember it and go & catch them.

Now I wonder who it was called them Red Hot Roots Rockers? It's right too.

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LORD! IT'S BEEN AGES

SIMON JONES talks to MAGNA CARTA

Still slogging away around the clubs, acoustic eternal MAGNA CARTA made another come back last summer. Simon Jones tracked them down and consulted them about life in the 1980's.

Magna Carta were strumming acoustic guitars and singing about airports, Lords of Ages and seasons back in the days of progressive rock. They had varying measures of success, but seemed to grind to a halt around 1981. The guiding hand behind it all was that dour, gritty Yorkshireman Chris Simpson. It was always Simpson at the helm, and it was his songs that became the identifiable Magna Carta sound.

During the early 80's I saw them a couple of times, although albums by the line-ups of that are non-existent. All the early albums are fortunately still available. It was with a twinge of regret I thought they had vanished just about that time, never to return.

I shouldn't have underestimated Chris Simpson, he refused to let the ship go down.

"We've been in Dubai for a couple of years, running a music club which was packed out regularly. All those Brits over there working in the oil industry were just starving for entertainment. One night we had all the members of Steel-eye out there playing the blues. Great" Chris went out there as a duo with later Magna guitarist and vocalist Linda Taylor. On returning to the UK early in 1986, Chris got in touch with a few old mates including Lee Abbot, bass player and second longest Magna stayer, they put a new & variable Carta together.

"There's about four versions of the band depending on what people want, we do a duo, trio, five piece or we go out as a rock band when there are eight of us. I tell you that motors. It's like the Eagles up there, it's got b*lls.

But what do people expect from a Magna Carta gig these days, some eighteen years since it began?

"Music allied with spirit. However unpolished the performances, they've attracted a lot of people with problems and those people have gone away with a warm feeling. They get songs from right across the board, old, new and mid period material"

But why carry it on this long, Chris?

"Somebody always wants to hear the music. I still want to carry it on; my life is in the music"

So Chris Simpson is Magna Carta?

"I have to keep the driving seat of the band, a bit like Ashley in the Albions. I still love the sound of an acoustic guitar and know how it should sound, although I love all kinds of music."

And the reaction to Magna Carta, 1986/7?

"Record companies take one look at an acoustic band and say 'nobody wants that in 1986', yet we've got a tremendous roots audience that snaffle up anything we put out. Like we did this gig at the Dovecote Arts and the place was packed, I couldn't get in through the front, it went on until the early hours of the morning. Some nights we only play to a handful, but it doesn't matter its the atmosphere."

Magna Carta have had a dearth of vinyl in Britain, but have been prolific on the Continent including Mercury & Decca releases. Why this anomaly?

"The continentals are more discerning, they don't put music in boxes; a heavy metal song next to traditional song and its just music."

I wish that would happen here, while the two poles are far apart, the potential for cross-fertilisation and appreciation is wasted and hard working bands like Simpson's latest Magna tend to get lost.

Still at least they are getting gigs and Chris is optimistic that they are going to release a single before long which will go some way to filling the void of Magna material. Unfortunately, I couldn't stay to catch the show, but they later played a mate's club and he told me they took the place apart in no uncertain terms. Good on yer Magna.

"I'm not a folkie, but I still appreciate it very much," decides Chris, "You having another Lager?"

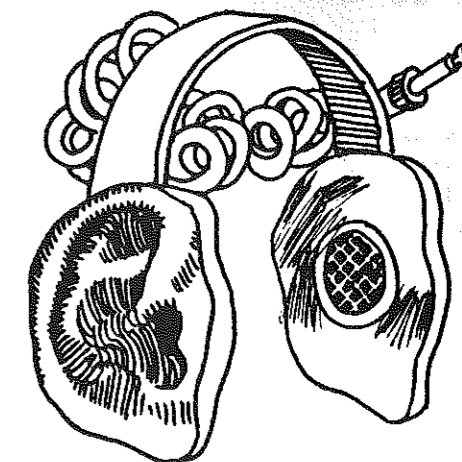
BROADFOLK

Where do you find the most folk music in a general programme? Only those who stay at home will know the answer: Womans' Hour! In the past two months they've used Cosmotheke for a live show (from the Stock Exchange!), run a feature on Peta Webb, and included Sandra Kerr in a piece on songwriting. Sandra got to sing 'Domestic Engineer' and a political version of 'SuperMum'.

Womans' Hour also scooped the arts programmes by talking about the RSC Other Place production 'Country Dancing', a short play using the character of Cecil Sharp and using folk collecting as a metaphor. Kaleidoscope (R4) finally got round to mentioning it in passing, as part of a profile of the author. Someone in that piece stated 'We don't have folk music in Holland': oh, no?

Radio 1 borrowed Christy Moore in Concert from the Glastonbury festival. Radio 2 went folkish for Christmas with the Yetties' Christmas, Ralph McTell & friends, and a Christmas Glow which teamed up Isla St Clair and Mary O'Hara with Roger McGough. Radio 4 reran 'The ballad of John Axon': lovely, but that one's been repeated recently, why not one of the others?

TV highlight was C4's rerun of the US documentary on The Weavers, 'Wasn't That a Time?' The film was built round the preparations for the seminal group's 1980 reunion concert. This was held in Carnegie Hall, which had been the venue 25 years previously for the 1955 comeback concert that defied their blacklisting. The hour and a quarter flew past, with at least eleven songs even before the film got to the concert. Archive film, newspaper clippings, and just plain memories were used to tell the story. Younger performers were canvassed as to the influence the Weavers had had over them, and, of these, the most interesting was Holly Near.



She explained how it was Ronnie Gilbert liberated womens' singing for her: 'There she was, with three men and instruments, just one woman, but she threw back her head, opened her throat and sang clear over the lot of them. Ronnie showed a lot of women that it was OK to sing out.' In turn, Ronnie had been much influenced by Holly's songs, and included 'Los Desperacides' in the concert - an electric moment. That's the sort of topic that got them blacklisted in the 50's and they hadn't mellowed much thirty years on.

The film is now a historic document - the Weaver's bass singer, Lee Hays, died shortly after the concert from the diabetes that had been held off by progressive amputation of his legs. By his own wishes, his ashes were added to his garden compost heap. The fertilising influence of the group has spread much wider than that: their garden is the whole of the English speaking world.

A few final thoughts: BBC 2 greeted the New Year with an Australian rock concert by Dylan and an insomniac extract from Suzanne Vega's Albert Hall concert. Worst sight of the period: Phil Cool doing a fifteen year old impersonation of a bad club singer. Interesting placing: Boys of the Lough competing with Scots' rock bands in STV's resolutely non-tartan Hogmanay show. Fascinating glimpse: a couple of ploughboy songs sung by a ploughman over visuals of a horsedrawn plough in BBC2's history of a farm, Seventy Summers.

Folkear

CHAIRMAN'S RANT by Ian Wells

Derek Gifford has appointed himself historian to the Federation and points out that it was formed in 1977! 10 years on, we hope to do some sort of special event in the autumn. The preliminary meeting was in January, and the first constitution was adopted on the 10th of March.

There were complaints in the last issue about publicity - do you find a national TV appearance acceptable? Thanks to Anne Morris and the White Swan audience for putting up with a BBC crew, and to Keith Hancock and Fiona Simpson for performing, however briefly, for the cameras.

More media news: Radio Lancashire are staging a folk concert at the Burnley Mechanics on February 20th, featuring Martin Carthy and Dick Gaughan. Tickets are £2.50 (£1.50 concessions), only available from the venue. Dick and Martin will be among those featured in a series to go out on Thursday nights from June 10th.

Radio Manchester will once more be supporting and recording the Hindley Song Contest. Masochist that I am, I've agreed to help judge it again - well, at least that means you don't have to listen to me singing my songs.

Ian Wells

TALKING POINT—

Mint Cakes & Humbug

by Arthur J. Marshall

Glancing through the misspelt columns of the last issue of this magazine, I came upon the review of Kendal Folk Festival, and the response to that review from the organisers.

I was impressed by the review, and unsurprised by the response. For why, read on...

Some years ago, while being an organiser of the Kingsway Folk club on the Wirral, I was part of an expedition to this particular Festival. The expedition also contained a fair few members of the Fiddle Band, a Barn dance band that has now transmogrified into the even more glorious Titanic Disaster Band (advert).

We set up stall at the top of the hill behind the grounds of the Arts Centre and had a bit of a play, being joined by several members of other bands - as no singarounds or sessions were currently evident, nor was there anywhere set aside for them that was accessible to passers by, which, after all, is what sessions are all about.

After a while, we slid down the hill and onto the grass nearer the Centre, where soon a full singaround was roaring away. Until the organisers came and told us to shut up, that is, because we were drowning out the next bit of scheduled act. Okay, we said, and looked for somewhere else. Back up the hill...

No, no, they said, that won't do, we can still hear you. That's all right, we said, we can still hear you! No, they said, go away. Where, we said. Oh go and have a coffee in town they said, or go to a real concert or something, they said, it's all properly organised here, they said. Aha, we said, we thought it was a FOLK festival. But now we understand.

And we did.

And what we understood was this.

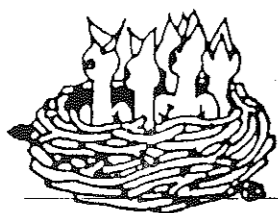
There are those who see folk music through solely contemporary eyes, who see the politics of the balance sheet and read the small print on the tickets and the large print on the sponsorship contract. They see the now, the here, the today. They can read and they can count and they probably have letters after their names. They can read the music and can (and will) tell you when the notes are wrong. They have learned the steps of the dance. They can name the stars.

It is said (and maybe I might even agree) that any fool can set up a series of concerts and call it a Folk Festival. And we can see that a lot of fools do, and a lot of fools pay to go to these foolishnesses and then write foolishly about the fruits of their folly when they learn that they have only served so that others, not so foolish as themselves, have made a little money out of them, even, sometimes, a kind of reputation, a pride of folly.

But a festival is a celebration, a joining together and there are still those times and places where the music (folk music, not that of stars, of entertainers, of tellers of old jokes) seeds itself, grows and the folk (the talkers, the drinkers, the dancers, the players, the singers) hear about it on the wind, in the movement of the grass and they come together as if by chance and there is light, warmth, tradition, even festival.

Sometimes it happens at Festivals, too, but never, never, never when those who organise, blind, deaf and deep in their folly, ban it, break it up, destroy it, and never, never, never at Kendal...

FOLK AT THE NEST



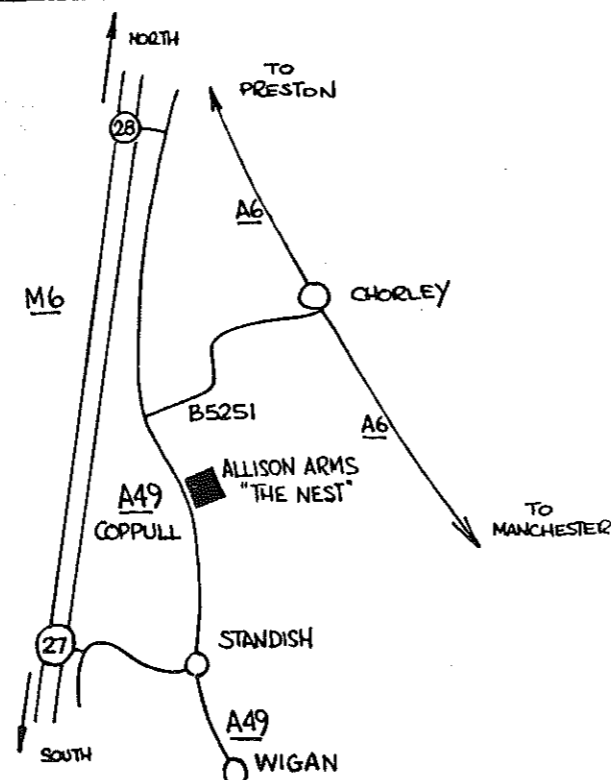
"GUEST LIST"

- 4TH FEBRUARY - ALLAN TAYLOR (TICKET ONLY)
- 25TH FEBRUARY - GENTLEMAN SOLDIER
- 18TH MARCH - NICK DOW
- 15TH APRIL - RICHARD GRAINGER
- ALL OTHER NIGHTS - SINGERS NIGHTS

RESIDENTS:

Northern Comfort
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NORTHERN COMFORT

A Grand Taste of the North

Rise up, Old Horse, and Shine Again : 3

An occasional series, being a critical re-appraisal of some of Folk's seminal albums.

Albion Band/Shirley Collins: No Roses

Released in the tatty sequined '70's, when a lot of good intentions were being mistaken for deeds, this album was quickly being classed as seminal by people who were popularly supposed to know what the word meant.

The cast list reads like a folkies Who's Who - Richard Thompson, Ashley Hutchings, Dave Mattacks, The Watsons, Royston Wood, Barry Dransfield - I dread to imagine what it would cost to make now! Still, assembling a stellar cast is only half the battle. Once gathered they must be given decent material or the end result could be as dire as the "Tommy" soundtrack or the U.S.A. For Africa "We are the World" effort. To Ashley's eternal credit, every track is a classic example of English folk song at it's triumphant best.

Old chestnuts like "Hal-an-Tow" and "Claudy Banks". The one played for laughs with its Jaws Harp solo and gratingly off-key dulcimer: the other featuring Shirley's best 'housewife hanging out the washing' vocals to great effect. The "Little Gypsy Girl" lurching along to Kirkpatrick's wheezing melodeon. "The White Hare" with Shirley fighting Mike Waterson for the melody line.

And Finally - The great brooding ballads. "Van Diemens Land" featuring Shirley's heartrendingly plaintive vocal. The magnificent "Poor Murdered Woman" and the all-time champion version of "Maria Marten", gloriously overdone - as a broadsheet should be - vivid and melodramatic with horses galloping from left to right channel in the stereo mix.

If The Albion Band had never recorded again, this would have been enough to cement their position in the Hall of Fame. Indeed, considering some of the M.O.R. Hogwash purveyed under the Albion banner recently, it's almost a shame they didn't pack up while they were winning.

So, in the final analysis, does 'Seminal' fit the bill? I think it does. The Albion blueprint is still being used by aspiring bands. Last years Folk Roots Poll featured 10,000 Maniacs version of "Just As The Tide Was A-Flowing" at 5th place in the 'Best new version of old song' section. It corresponded exactly with the version on this album - right down to the phased organ solo and the drummers fills.

You can't get much more seminal than that.

Bernie Forkin.

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EFDSS: whither away?

There's a crisis at EFDSS. They're financially broke right now. Jim Lloyd's appointment as director has landed him in the middle of an organisation that's been delaying necessary decisions for years and now finds itself needing to reshape both it's intellectual direction and it's financial basis. By the time you read this one of three decisions will have made. At the AGM on November 22nd the members of the English Folk Dance and Song Society consider the choice between transformation into the Folk Trust of England, preservation of the status quo with bankruptcy not far behind, or, just possibly, a short term compromise.

The NEC's position is that the main asset - Cecil Sharp House - is also a financial millstone. Over the last few years the Society has failed to match it's outgoings with income from membership and the districts. All reserves have been spent.

The members are being invited to agree to disposal of the building, abolition of the regions, and changes to the membership structure. Even before these changes are agreed, the society has slashed it's already slim head office staff, made it's national training officer redundant, given up sales and membership activities in Cecil Sharp House, and made the library available only by appointment.

On the positive side, what should the Society be doing? The Library is central and essential. Whatever else happens, the society must preserve and develop the library. It needs proper housing (it's presently spread over three rooms) and sufficient properly paid staff to do the job that has been shirked over half a century. That needs a suitable building and proper funding. With correct marketing, library services could bring in income.

Marketing of folk expertise through the society is necessary both to open up folk music to a new public and to help fund the central activities. A new emphasis on

Education and Youth policies will appear, with specific projects rather than standing committees. These are just some elements from 'The New Way', director Jim Lloyd's document which spells out the way forward as he sees it. That is the way a national folk organisation will have to move, regardless of financial constraints. The existing financial pressures make the freehold value of Cecil Sharp House the only viable base for restructuring. The NEC say that even without a change of direction, the financial problems mean the building must go.

Is there an alternative to selling the House? Some members who think so have formed a 'Friends of...' organisation which is trying to raise £150,000 in the short term to lease the building and run it for one year. They are less worried about the state of the fabric, and believe that the building can be self supporting. They say that it's the staff salaries that are causing the loss, not the building. They believe that new directions can be achieved better from the existing base than from any new site. Unfortunately, from the point of view of out of town members, they seem to be more attached to the dance floor than the library. However, their scheme might provide breathing space to consider the longterm changes. Might - for can they raise even £150,000 with an appeal to sentiment and is that anywhere near enough?

What would happen to the activities run by north west EFDSS districts if they were abolished? Lancashire might form it's own federation of dance clubs: MADS aren't sure: Cheshire don't seem too bothered: Manchester could well continue. All their committees are in favour of the NEC plan. Of course, all their clubs are welcome to join us!

Ian Wells

Club Dates

February

Sunday	1st	8th	15th	22nd
CROWN	JENNY ARMSTRONG	singers' night	singers' night	singers' night
BOIHY	singers' night	BORIN DENNISFIELD	singers' night	JOHN BOWEN/VIC SHEPHERD
EAGLE & CHILD	singers' night	BIGBOY	singers' night	OUTER BAND
LEIGH	FRANKIE SLEASOS	singers' night	JOHNNY COLLINS	LENDHEAR
POYNTON	MIKE CHAFFAN	CHIEF HIGGINSBOTTOM	DAVE HUGHES & guest	5 GO OFF IN A CARAVAN
RAVE ON	singers' night	BRAIN TAYLOR	singers' night	BEER & KNIGHTLEY *
WIDNES				
LLANDUDNO	singers' night	singers' night	singers' night	singers' night
ROCHDALE	JOHNIEAN GIBBONS	singers' night	"Lanky Nest" & hot pot	singers' night
ASHTON	singaround	singaround	singaround	singaround
BLACK HORSE	ROGER WILSON	singers' night	JOHN PARSONS	HOBBSON & LEES
Monday	2nd	9th	16th	23rd
HORWICH	singers' night	singers' night	7th Birthday Party	GARY & VERA ASPRY
PRESTON	MARTIN CARMY	HUGH DEWT	singaround	singaround
POYNTON	singaround	singaround	singaround	singaround
BREWERY *				
TRITON	THE SPINNERS	singers' night	DEREK GIFFORD	singers' night
Tuesday	3rd	10th	17th	24th
MAWDESLEY	CHARLEY YARWOOD	closed	closed	closed
HINDLEY	singers' night	Charity Night	RICHARD GRADNER	singers' night
MAGHULL	CLOVER	THE BRISNENS	CHRIS KELLY	THE KIPPER FAMILY
BLACKPOOL	PHIL CAPPER	MIKE EVANS	29TH with STEPHENHEAD *	NOTHING YET
Wednesday	4th	11th	18th	25th
WHITEHAVEN				
HOW CROFT	STEVE TURNER	CHRIS COE & JOHN ADAMS	DEREK GIFFORD	TILSTON & BOYLE *
FOLK AT THE TUTE				
WHITE SWAN				
FOLK AT THE NEST	ALLAN TAYLOR	singers' night	singers' night	GENTLEMAN SOLDIER
Thursday	5th	12th	19th	26th
DARWEN	DEREK GIFFORD	closed	singers' night	closed
POYNTON	singaround	singaround	singaround	singaround
WIGAN	singaround	singaround	singaround	singaround
MAGAZINE	singers' night	singers' night	singers' night	BOAK, BOAK & SANDERS *
BURNLEY	singaround	singaround	singaround	singaround
Friday	6th	13th	20th	27th
BEE	singers' night	singers' night	singers' night	singers' night
POTTERIES	FRED JORDAN	singers' night	MORRIS & THE MINORS	STEVE STOKES
NORTHWICH	GREGSON & COLLISTER	BRIAN PEYERS	singers' night *	KASHMIR
FORKIES	closed	CAUGHT ON THE HOP	closed	HARVEY ANDREWS
CUT ABOVE				
BLACKBURN				
Saturday	7th	14th	21st	28th
BURY	STEVE MAYNE	CHESHIRE WAITS	PRICE WOOD	BERNARD WRIGLEY
BREWERY				
SOUTHFORT ARTS				
POYNTON		COUD COLLIDH BAND		
Miscellaneous			HOME SERVICE *	

Residents

BURY - various
 BOIHY - Clive Pownceby, Pete Rimmer, Paul Reid
 EAGLE & CHILD - Caught On The Hop, Quartz, Eric-a-Brac
 LEIGH - Trevor & Joan Hunt, Calico
 RAVE ON - Volunteers
 LLANDUDNO - Stuart King, The Rambling Boys
 HORWICH - Joyce Riding, Tom Farber
 POYNTON (Mon.) - Rick Harrop and friends
 (Tues.) - Vic Hassal and friends
 TRITON - Jerry Wright, Ages Apart
 BREWERY (Mon.) - Mountain Road
 HINDLEY - Pennygate, Pochean
 MAGHULL - hundreds of 'em
 BLACKPOOL - John Gibney (resident heckler)

WHITEHAVEN - Knotted Card
 FOLK AT THE TUTE - Phil Capper, Ian Brandwood, Mike Evans
 WHITE SWAN - Geoff Higginbottom, John O'Hagan, Dave & Helen Howard, Pete Morton, Andy & Alison Whittaker, Hollerin' Pot
 FOLK AT THE NEST - Northern Comfort, Phil Clayton
 MANDLESLEY - Derek Gifford
 WIGAN - Joan Blackburn
 MAGAZINE - Black Dog, Arthur Marshall, Brass Tacks, Dave Locke
 BEE - various
 NORTHWICH - Sean & Sandy Boyle, Graham Sowerby, Tony Howard, Sara Burden & Ian Sheerwood, Jamie Anderson

Club Dates

March

Sunday	1st	8th	15th	22nd	29th
CROWN	singers' night	singers' night	singers' night	CRUICK ON THE HOP	singers' night
BOIHY	singers' night	ALLAN TAYLOR	singers' night	JES LOPE/JAKE WALTON	singers' night
EAGLE & CHILD	singers' night	TABOR & SIMPSON *	singers' night	THE IRISH O'DELL	singers' night
LEIGH	t.b.a.	ISAAC GULLIOREY	THE MCCADAMS	RICHARD GRADNER	THE WILSONS
POYNTON	JOE BEARD & guest	singers' night	MARKED	FIONA SIMPSON	STANLEY ACCORINGTON
RAVE ON	singers' night	singers' night	JOHN JAMES	singers' night	RICHARD GRADNER
WIDNES					
LLANDUDNO	singers' night	singers' night	singers' night	singers' night	singers' night
ROCHDALE	PHIL MAYERS	singers' night	surprise Irish guest	singers' night	BILL TUCKER
ASHTON	singaround	singaround	singaround	singaround	singaround
BLACK HORSE	KELLY HANCOCK	singers' night	AMOS & BOCES	ISAAC GULLIOREY	IAIN MCGILLIVRAY
Monday	2nd	9th	16th	23rd	30th
HORWICH	singers' night	singers' night	singers' night	HOBBSON & LEES	singers' night
PRESTON	singaround	E.S.P.	singaround	singaround	UNBLESSED GENTLEFOLK
POYNTON	singaround	singaround	singaround	singaround	singaround
BREWERY					
TRITON	THE SPINNERS	singers' night	Special Evening	singers' night	singers' night
Tuesday	3rd	10th	17th	24th	31st
MAWDESLEY	PHIL MEYERS	closed	closed	closed	closed
HINDLEY	singers' night	PIRE CASTLE	singers' night	HANE & WISE *	singers' night
MAGHULL	DAVE GODDEN	Club Swap *	TONY GIBBONS *	CHRIS LOOPE/DAVE DAY	FULLERTON/SISTERS
BLACKPOOL	REV NEELAN	DEREK & DI BOAK	PHIL SWAIN	HUGH DEWT	ROSS CAMPBELL
Wednesday	4th	11th	18th	25th	Apr. 1st
WHITEHAVEN					
HOW CROFT					
FOLK AT THE TUTE	DICK GAUGHAN	CHRIS WHITE	PIRE COE	FIONA SIMPSON	singers' night
WHITE SWAN					
FOLK AT THE NEST	singers' night	singers' night	NICK DOW	singers' night	singers' night
Thursday	5th	12th	19th	26th	Apr. 2nd
DARWEN	singers' night	closed	singers' night	closed	singers' night
POYNTON	singaround	singaround	singaround	singaround	singaround
WIGAN	singaround	singaround	singaround	singaround	singaround
MAGAZINE	singers' night	singers' night	singers' night	QUARTZ	singers' night
BURNLEY	singaround	singaround	singaround	singaround	singaround
Friday	6th	13th	20th	27th	Apr. 3rd
BEE	singers' night	HANE & WISE *	singers' night	singers' night	singers' night
POTTERIES	t.b.a.	singers' night	GRAY & ELLIS *	MARGANT	t.b.a.
NORTHWICH	singers' night	10th Birthday Night	JULIE HENNINGHAM	TONY WYLAND	t.b.a.
FORKY'S	closed	JOHNNY COFFIN	closed	THE FEMMINES	closed
CUT ABOVE					
BLACKBURN					
Saturday	7th	14th	21st	28th	Apr. 4th
BURY	BRAIN TAYLOR	t.b.a.	SARAH MORGAN	IAIN MCGILLIVRAY	t.b.a.
BREWERY					
SOUTHFORT ARTS					
POYNTON					
Miscellaneous		JAMES/ TOPPING *			

Notes

Mondays - Brewery - MOUNTAIN ROAD plus guests
 Feb. 17th - Blackpool - 29th Birthday Night with STEPHENHEAD
 20th - Northwich - at Davenham Players
 21st - Misc. - HOME SERVICE - Eagle & Child special
 22nd - Rave On - PHIL BEER & STEVE KNIGHTLEY
 25th - Tute - STEVE TILSTON & MAGGIE BOYLE
 26th - Magazine - DEREK & DI BOAK & BEV SANDERS
 Mar. 6th - Eagle & Child - JUNE TACOR & MARTIN SIMPSON
 10th - Maghull - club swap with Eagle & Crown, Upton
 13th - Bee - PHIL HANE & MARY-ANN WISE
 14th - Misc. - JOHN JAMES & TOM TOPPING BAND at Northwich
 17th - Maghull - TONY GIBBONS' "CELTIC HEROES"
 20th - Potteries - SARAH GRAY & ELLIE ELLIS
 24th - Hindley - PHIL HANE & MARY-ANN WISE

Are your club's dates missing?

April & May in by

FEBRUARY 28TH

or miss publication

Letters to The Editor...

Dear undeserving reader!

It's not often I'm tempted to write to a magazine, but the atrocious turnout at the Federation's Annual General Meeting bears more than comment; it almost bears scrutiny of the Federation as an entity. I know, that the Fed. is looking at the "aims" as published at the back of each issue of the magazine, but such apathy on the part of supposed dedicated organisers provokes several questions about the point of having a Federation in the first place.

To be quite clear, I am in full favour of clubs such as ours forming a liaison in order to strengthen our own positions, both within ourselves and when facing an unsympathetic media, whether T.V. or radio. However, an association can only be as strong as its collective self and this is where our Federation falls down.

Our revered Chair, Ian Wells, regularly suggests writing to our local radio stations about the lack of folk coverage. Well, one of our members did just that, writing to Red Rose Radio. The reply included the comment that this had been the first letter received on the subject, so how can we justifiably complain about it in these pages? Ian also managed to get time on BBC T.V. to air his views on the lack of coverage, but when was this put out? Yes, you've guessed, at 10 past 12, when most of us are at work and unable to watch, let alone ring up and comment on what we've seen (or not). A nice try, but the waffle that came from Auntie Beeb was almost enough to put you off trying for life!

It is when we are faced with situations like this, that we should be getting together to put our views as strongly as possible, with the widest representative authority we can muster and it is only by federating and attending Federation meetings that our officers can truly speak on our behalf. Where does the confidence come from when you know that less than a quarter of the member clubs were bothered enough to send a delegate to the A.G.M.?

This brings me to my main point. In April, the Federation will be holding its 1987 A.G.M.. This gives every member club an opportunity to speak up, or out as the case may be, elect the right officers, decide various issues, including the state of the magazine, the aims of the Fed., etc., and to generate a genuine enthusiasm at regional and club levels. A healthy Federation is vital to folk music in the North-West, especially since the apparent demise of DEAFASS and the failure, some years ago, of PERFORM. I am not going to propose any theories here about the way forward; I will be putting those at the A.G.M.; but I am going to suggest that every club gets off its ass and sends at least a couple of representatives to what is the most important meeting of the year for Folk Music in the North-West and for our beloved Folk Clubs. Your Fed. needs you!

Phil Capper

P.S. If you were at the A.G.M., or you sent a delegate, exclude yourself from the opening line.

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EDITORIAL

From: IAN WELLS,
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HESKETH BANK,
MERSYSIDE.
NWREC.

To: NIGEL FIRTH, TEL NO.
118 BOLTON RD. (0942)
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EAGLE AND CHILD FOLK CLUB

Eagle and Child
Main Street
Billinge

February

March

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 Singers Night | 1 Singers Night |
| 8 Bryony | 8 June Tabor and
Martin Simpson |
| 15 Singers Night | 15 Singers Night |
| Sat. 21 Special —
The Home Service | 22 Know 'O' Deil |
| 22 Oyster Band | 29 Singers Night |

April

5 Pyewackett

Sat. 25 Club Ceilidh

RESIDENTS

CAUGHT ON THE HOP

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PERSONAL VIEW:

The National Folk Music Festival

I'll always think we're lucky having The National Folk Music Festival right here in the East Midlands. This "Celebration of Folk Music" that Roy Harris used to organise at Loughborough University, has been held for the last three years in the School of Agriculture, Sutton Bonington, just on the Leicestershire/Nottinghamshire border. The School is beautifully situated in blossoming grounds, and although it's not ideally suited for a festival simply because it is an institution, for 48 hours every year the corridors and lecture rooms echo with music and song.

Only a very few folk performers can survive the larger-than-life conditions of the big concert hall, and my personal taste is for the more intimate atmosphere of an unamplified club session. This is where the strength of the National lies, with lots of small venues and bar sessions. A REALLY FULL PROGRAMME with 5 or 6 events happening simultaneously means I can never go to every session I want to, and always end up saying "I never got to see....." This year it was John and Phil Cunningham I missed, (but I did avoid the concert hall - see above!)

The alternative title of the Festival is "A Celebration of Folk Music" and there were plenty of styles and instruments in evidence this year. As a sample, 19-year-old Kathryn Tickell on Northumbrian pipes and fiddle, Sue Harris with hammered dulcimer and oboe, Greg Ross with flash guitar, Old Swan Band with lots of fiddles, and Kate Howson, Bob Cann and John Kirkpatrick, all with melodeons, but very different styles.

The unbroken tradition of song is always well represented and this year included Rita and Sara Keane from Galway, the Copper Family and Gordon Hall from Sussex, the Holme Valley Tradition from Yorkshire, Fred Jordan from Shropshire, Freddy Mackay from Belfast and Tony Harvey and Ted Chaplin from Suffolk. It says much for the friendly atmosphere of the Festival that many of the folk named above, and many more that would read

like a who's who of folk, were not officially booked as guests, but come back each year "just for the crack". And there is no distinction made between guests and audience, everyone is part of the whole.

The area of growth that I was pleased to see this year was The Library Goes National, a series of illustrated talks set up by Malcolm Taylor, Librarian at the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, Cecil Sharp House. Really fascinating stuff from some of the people who make their contribution to folk music, not always as performers but as collectors and recorders; Mike Yates on some of the singers he has collected from over 25 years, and the difficulties of making the material available to folk, Reg Hall on the life and music of Scan Tester, the Copper Family on their personal view of folksong, Vic Gammon on Folk and the Media, and Doc Rowe on calendar customs. I was very impressed with the level of scholarship and the commitment to folk music and song.

Another addition this year was the commendable widening of horizons to include European music with Cabestan a group who have researched and collected songs and music from the north coast of France, performed with great style and conviction, and proving that the language of music is universal. It was nice, too, to see a session of women singers not billed as something special though there are still not enough women on the guest list, in my view. As Peta Webb pointed out at Roly Brown's Downs Festival in May, women guests rarely get the chance to hear each other as generally only one is booked per festival.

Something you might miss at the National is dancing, but this is well catered for elsewhere, and the venue just doesn't lend itself to display dance. Sam Sherry showed us some nifty footwork, so did Cyril Barber from Suffolk, whose style of East Anglian stepping totally defies my efforts to learn. There's always a couple of ceilidhs for those who need


to keep the blood circulating.

The National is organised by John Heydon on behalf of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, and a festival this complex takes a lot of organising! At the local level, people will know that Sue Burnett takes on the thankless job of organising the Stewards each year. Of course there are lots of sessions at the National that are not "organised", but just happen spontaneously. Everyone will have their own special high spot to remember, maybe the Friday and Saturday music sessions in the bar, and Jim Eldon, Keith Summers and Greg Ross singing a traditionally-learned "Put Your Sweet Lips a Little Closer to the Phone" will be talked about for


several years! For me, the find of the year was Gordon Hall, and I look forward to hearing more from his family.

The Festival ended on Sunday afternoon with Fred Jordan returning just in time from a night in hospital after "a bit of a turn" on Saturday. Fred's finishing song has become a tradition in it's own right, and long may it continue. See you next year at the National!


Heather Horner.



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REVIEW

fylde folk festival

The only disappointment at the 14th Fylde was that the tent hang gliding competition was cancelled due to lack of weather. The entire weekend is blending in the memory into a romantic haze of sunshine, superb music, and happy festival goers. In a festival crammed with alternatives, I realised afterwards that I'd somehow managed to hear virtually all acoustic artists, in spite of the presence of lots of good electric musicians. Perhaps that reflects my view that what is important is the electricity inside the music, not the instruments on which it is played.

There was certainly lots of sparkle around all weekend, starting with the evening concert on Friday. The legendary Kipper family convulsed the audience then and several more times during the weekend (Peter Bellamy has just analysed their act at length in English Dance & Song) - it's their attention to detail and timing, matching their parodic brilliance, that I appreciate. Who could follow that? Martin Carthy had no trouble, with tunes and several well known songs, and an extraordinary song, Ancient Parapets, by Miles Wootton to a tune by Anton Karas. We dropped into the evening ceilidh and caught the Oysters going well.

Saturday dawned bright and sunny, with all weekend tickets sold, and by the crack of noon I was in a Mount singaround hosted by Hugh Diamond. This produced an interesting visiting Yank called John McCormack (no connection!).

The afternoon concert opened with Kent duo Andy Turner & Chris Wood - look out for them. Ray Fisher produced a splendid set, including all the old favourites.

The early evening gap was filled by a session at the Steamer: Calennig, Paul Metsers, Hobson & Lees, and Alistair Anderson with Joe Hutton, Will Atkinson, Willy Taylor.

To me, that session epitomised some of the best in folk music. The atmosphere was tremendous and the performances even better. We finished the day as we had begun, in a singaround at the Mount, a crowded session well run by Ian & Charlie.

Sunday, 11.15am, still fine, Geoff Higginbottom was singing in the Marine Hall to an appreciative handful plus the procession across for coffee, and I wandered off to join the Mount singaround. I didn't feel up to the trek to the Tavern so missed the mostly female session there but made it back to the Euston. This concert opened with Hobson & Lees, who make any concert worth the effort, followed by Pete Morton. Pete did a taut set, with a minimum of chat. His songs continue to spark response and what he needs now is a little more stage presence - I hope he took the opportunity to take advice from older performers. Hobson & Lees have nicely developed their chat between numbers so that it complements their brilliant playing. They'll also play with anyone, and added bits of a jug band to great effect. A welcome unadvertised addition to the bill was Roger Wilson, another performer to watch.

Next came my biggest disappointment of the weekend, the much heralded Californian band Golden Bough. Undoubtedly fluent and excellent multi-instrumentalists, a female lead singer with good voice and good looks, a smoulderingly attractive Norse for the ladies, but ... soft centred. Their own songs are sentimentally loving, hung up on pretty forest images, missing the dark side of folk myth and primitive religion so prominent in Frazer's study from which they take their name. No social consciousness, nothing you could join in - very superior wallpaper music or folk based cabaret.

Meanwhile Sue had been overdosing on the Kippers again and folkies had a chance to catch Alan Bell's oratorio Wind, Sea, Sail & Sky for the Fleetwood Choral Society. The final concert was sold out, showing that interest was retained to the end.

Somewhere about here my notes run out except for this thought: if the atmosphere at this weekend could have been collected, packaged and sold, Fleetwood would have had a product to outsell Fishermens' Friends. Longest in my memory will be the session at the Steamer, with the energy of Pat (Calennig) Smith, the appreciative silence for Hobson & Lees, the instant response to Paul Metser's 'Peace Must Come', but above all the playing of the 'old stagers'. Thank you, Joe, Will and Willy, not forgetting young Alistair, their chauffeur.

Ian Wells

Wind, Sail, Sea & Sky

Fleetwood is precisely 150 years old this year. Alan Bell has contributed something new to the celebrations - a song cycle for the Choral Society. Alan wrote seven songs on different aspects of seagoing, and the Society's accompanist John R Fishwick, a composer in his own right, arranged them for choral singing.


So what did the assembled ranks of the Fleetwood and District Choral Society and their four soloists make of these songs in the folk style? First, the arrangements were straightforward and appropriate, with only a tinge of over-politeness, that curse of folksong in choral settings. 'Seek a fair wind', in shanty form, was sung a capella and in strict tempo, just as a shanty should be. 'A Sailor's Hymn', appropriately, had a touch of Moody and Sanky. 'A Sailor's Sky', for contralto and chorus, reflected accurately the attitudes of the waiting wife 'looking for my man, when tomorrow comes.' 'Homeward Bound' occasionally sounded like Hugh Robertson's famous arrangements of Scots traditional songs for the Glasgow Orpheus Choir. The song that got the most response from a mostly unfolkish audience was 'The Bosun', which is a lighthearted piece in forebitter form, and which had the most conventional choral arrangement, with false endings and partial repeats. The choir and soloists were in excellent voice and seemed to be enjoying themselves immensely.

The last mentioned song also pointed up slight problems with the words. Alan had written the songs and handed them over to the arranger. So, unlike all his other songs, he had not performed them, and the normal performance polishing was missing. This showed in occasional infelicities of word fitting and in two rather odd choices of word play. I don't think Alan himself would have gone on singing 'with the skipper getting tight / sipping gin and shandy'; he'd have found another rhyme for 'rum and brandy'.

Similarly, in 'Off to be a Sailor': 'if I meet a mermaid, I will send her home to you' is a bit unlikely in the mouth of a lad going to sea from Fleetwood! These are merely minor criticisms of an otherwise highly successful piece.

By the time you read this, you will also have missed the repeat performance at Fylde. I hope this sequence will continue to have a life as a choral piece with at least a folkish feel about it.

Ian Wells.







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RECORD REVIEWS

FLASH COMPANY Fellside FE050

A celebration of the first 10 years of Fellside Records

It must have been a temptation to Paul Adams when putting this album together to simply have taken tracks from several earlier LP's. I am pleased to say he hasn't done that; most of the tracks were specially recorded for this LP and are mainly artists who have recorded at least one album for Fellside.

It's safe to say there is something for almost any taste and with 15 tracks in all totally nearly an hour of music it is also good value. Artists on the LP include Martin Carthy, Nic Jones, Jolly Jack, Roy Harris, and Swan Arcade, and their present a familiar repertoire of mainly traditional songs.

To pick some favourite tracks would be very difficult, so I'll settle for saying instead that there isn't a track I can honestly say I don't like. I look forward to the next 10 years of Fellside.

Nigel Firth

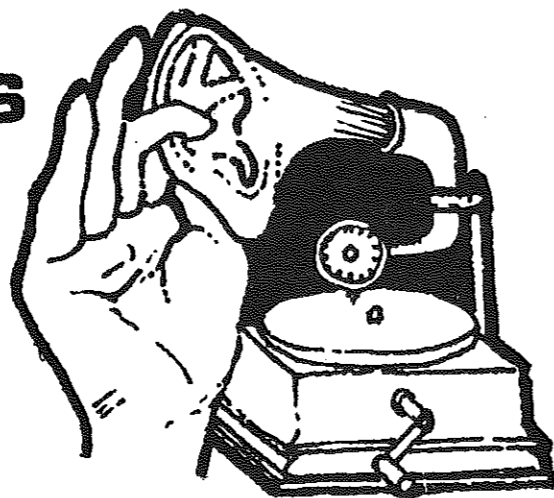
Dances From Community Dances Manual
7 Played by The Falconers: EFDSS CMD7

The cover of this wittily entitled collection sports an artless conceit of curly lines in red and grey: - the kind of wallpaper design no sane person would buy. But no-one buys EFDSS records for their originality or wit, they are functional items. I can easily imagine the 12 sets of jigs herein doing yeoman service for Junior school country dancing classes.

If your mental age is greater than ten, however, you might find the relentless 'fixed grin jollity' a bit much. The character of the music is perversely reminiscent of the similarly absurd 'everything's cool, so strut your stuff' brand of the hated American disco music.

No surprises here just autoplay accordians pumping out jigs galore.

Steve Jackman.



A Sort Cut: Maggie Holland/Jon Moore. Rogue.

Cry Of Love: Kevin Dempsey. Dex.

The Rogue Mini-album, launched with maximum ballyhoo, purports to be the ghost of folk yet to come but sounds distressingly like the ghost of M.O.R. present. Six tracks. Two work fine ("Locks and Bolts and Hinges" and, especially, "My Back Pages"). One works alright - the re-recording of old Misery's "Shame of doing wrong" from the 'Pour Down Like Silver' album. O.K., I suppose, if you can forget the original. The other three blend easily with wallpaper and pine scatter cushions. So what? Well really, apart from the production and the odd spot of instrumentation there's nothing new here to set the world on fire. Maggie and Jon can sing and play fine but the great leap forward won't be accomplished by re-treading the oldies. File under Radio 2 and forget.

Kevin Dempsey's album, launched with the secrecy usually accorded a new Polaris Submarine, is the 3rd best album of '86 for me. Whippersnapper's twanger has produced an absolute gem here.

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RECORD REVIEWS RECORD REVIEWS RECOR

Totally uncategorisable as folk, blues or rock, it's simply fifty minutes of glorious listening. Terrific playing, great songs and production up to 'Rock' standards as opposed to the cack-handed, fuzzy, pre-echoed, made-in-a-suitcase sound which robs most independant label folk discs of whatever slim chance they had of mainstream air-play.

To watch him, diffidently strumming behind Swarbrick, one minute and hear this hammering out of the Sony the next, is akin to finding out that George Harrison really did all the work and that John and Paul were only miming to backing tapes.

If you only buy one more album this year after "Graceland" and "Alright Jack", this is the one to get. S'cuse me while I kiss the sky.

Bernie Forkin.

BRAM TAYLOR:

Dreams and Songs to Sing: FE057

Confession is good for the soul. If John Adams can use the record sleeve to confess how he changed his mind about Bram and signed him, then I'd better confess too. One of the things that helped him to a new view of Bram was a tape: yes, the one I dismissed in these pages as 'not likely to further Bram's career'! You may have noticed I didn't get to review Bram's first Fellside pressing - it got a good review from the mag - but this one is even better.

Side one opens with two - yes, two! - of the songs from the 86 Hindley song contest. Bram does justice not only to the song he sang on that evening, Brian Clare's 'Cry Wild Bird', but also to the winning 'Lady of Beauty' by Tony Hewitt. Other new songs include one by Fiona Simpson, who also sings harmony vocals on some tracks. I liked the brass quartet arrangement for 'Dancing at Whitsun', the

ironic music hall 'Wheel the Perambulator, John', and especially 'Hard Times Come Again No More'. The only track I had reservations about was the version of Annan Water to a Nic Jones tune: not quite interesting enough to sustain six and a half minutes. The whole album was relaxed in feel and very relaxing. Paul Adams twiddled the knobs to good effect, even keeping one D.Gifford's contribution to the chorus under control. Another knob twiddler, Dave Howard, contributed good multi-instrumental support, there's nifty flute from Steve Jackman and equally nifty fiddle from Paul Witty, and Paul changed sides of the mike for a quick burst on the drums. The brass quartet were Brian, John and Robert Taylor and John Curran. These formidable forces are deployed carefully and with restraint to support, not submerge, Bram's characteristic style.

Anything I didn't like? Well, in one or two songs Bram doubled note lengths or inserted pauses in a way that interferes with singing along. Otherwise, I have no hesitation in reversing my earlier comment: this record should definitely further his career. The title of one of the tracks says it all: 'How Can I Keep from Singing'?

Ian Wells

John Martyn

It's a long time since John Martyn released a 'real' folk album, but we are a loyal audience and, anyway, this is greatly superior to most of the pseudo-American tripe that passes for 'contemporary' folk these days.

The creamy voiced master can out M.O.R. the best of them if he wants to, but songs like "John Wayne" reveal a vein of neurotic savagery and power that is beyond the 'oozing heart on sleeve' boys.

There is no follow up to "Spencer The Rover" but any singer could learn much from the authoritative and emotional vocal style.

Steve Jackman.

Songs from the Levensholme
Triangle: Geoff Higginbottom

When I saw Geoff flogging away at morning coffee time at Fylde this year I thought we should try and catch his act at a better time for him and us. This opportunity came at the friendly, if noisy, Black Bull, courtesy of the Gifford of Mawdesley. He performed well, handling the singing audience with aplomb and a well calculated mixture of modern and traditional songs. That is also the recipe for this excellent cassette (FRUITY 1). It's a good selection of material performed well. Geoff obviously likes people to sing, and chooses songs like The Miners Life, Alabama, and Ye Jacobites with this in mind. Half of the tracks are traditional, half composed. Even the modern songs include some singalong material. The less usual ones are, like the title track, Geoff's own. His notorious sense of humour has been poured into these compositions, culminating in the comprehensive destruction of a well known modern classic with 'Wincing at Datsuns'. Geoff's performance is consistently enjoyable and the backing musicians (including Mike Billington and the massed Howards) complement him well. Dave Howard's recording is up to his usual standard. This is more than just a gig souvenir - it's a good recording in it's own right.

Ian Wells

THE OYSTER BAND 'Step Outside'
Cooking Vinyl COOK 001
No longer the exclusive darlings of the folk clubs, the Oysters are on the verge of something big. With this album on a major new independent label has come acceptance on a scale undreamed of 12 months ago. Much of the hustle which the pop comics seem to be making about the band comes through hanging around with Billy Bragg & Andy Kershaw. But the success of the record is firmly laid in the hands of the producer, Clive Gregson. He seems to have recognised the bands potential beyond electric folk and been able to bring it out. This is their most contemporary album to date; those expecting another Liberty Hall had better think again. The bouncy, bubbly attack of the single 'Hal an' Tow' makes that an excellent sampler for the LP. The electricity is influenced most certainly by 1980's rock - 'Molly Bond' is quite startling and could have come from Police or XTC. Clearly not all of you are going to like this LP, but given that its the most exciting electric folk vinyl to cross my deck in many a moon, then thats your problem. At long last, english music has come of age and done it in style. The fact that such a leap forward has come from such a downright likeable bunch as the Oysters is a double bonus. What a way to begin 1987!

Simon Jones

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SWAN ARCADE Fellside FE054 GONE TO EARTH: "Blinded In Love"
'Diving For Pearls' Probe, PP20T

I have to admit to a personal bias when I listen to Swan Arcade their singing is so punchy and round that it makes for mandatory listening. You feel like joining in on chorus songs like 'Raise Your Banner', 'Four Green Fields' and 'Dwelling in Beulahland' the latter of which is a raunchy gospel stylesong helped along by the Caeser Singers (who-now you'll have to get a copy to find out!).

There are some rarities in this album too; certainly many of the songs are new to me anyway and I hear a hell of a lot on my travels. Of these, 'Bitch Fox' a hunting song with an unusual chorus (but, unnecessary electric guitar work which spoils it by over-indulgence) and 'Brilliant Mistake' a modern love song with an original story line are notable. There are two very powerful songs as well one is 'Peat Bog Soldiers' and the other is 'Black Seam'. This latter one for me is the highlight of the album and an answer to BNFL's complacency and the National Coal Boards hamfistedness - over four minutes of compulsive listening.

The title for the album comes from 'Shipbuilding' which is a song with a deep (pardon the pun) message subtly told. My main grouse, however, is the lack of sleeve notes. This is especially annoying with songs like 'Donbristle Mine Disaster' which although self-explanatory in theme still needs a background detail or two and 'only Remembered' which is one of those inreplaceable songs being neither gospel country or music hall or all of these!

My only other moan is that the use of electric guitars on some tracks is overdone whereas the use of percussion and saxophones on 'Hounds of Meynall' is effective but then sometimes drowns the lyrics. By the way - a note for Ron Baxter and the 'final Trawl' crew - have a listen to 'Weary Whaling Grounds' if you get the chance you'll find a real empathy with 'Weary Trawlerman'.

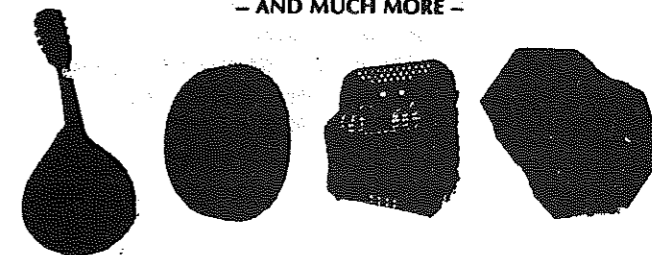
Derek Gifford.

Who are Gone To Earth? you ask. They'd probably have half the readers of the Newsletter fleeing the room in horror. Gone To Earth are excellent - they're a blend of the Irish duo with a rock band who have a spiky-haired and extremely aggressive new-wave guitarist, name of Tudor. This dodgy but wonderful mix leads to either syrupy Clannad-type hippy drivel like the A-side of this E.P., "Blinded In Love" or cosmic thrash jiggling, such as the traditional "Martin's One-Horned Cow" - a live reel. They've got a double album of folk/punk/noise due any day now for their debut vinyl at 33 1/3 and are likely to be found supporting alternate rock bands round Liverpool. They'll never play a folk club, but will probably take folk to more people than the guest you saw in the pub last Sunday. Well done, lads. Four out of ten for the record, though. Simon Jones



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Various 'Traditional Music & Beyond'
Green Linnet SIF 102
SILLY WIZARD 'A Gint of Silver'
Green Linnet SIF 1070
TANNAHILL WEAYERS 'Land of Light'
Green Linnet SIF 1067

This is the forward assault of Green Linnet's European launch, the US-based Celtic label has worked out a deal with WEA Eire and has chosen a formidable trio to open with. The sampler shows just how ignorant we are over here that no one has thought of putting out albums by bands like Relativity & Touchstone. Both these bands have discs which are essential purchases once their full catalogue is available, meanwhile pick this up for Touchstone's brilliant bluegrass Irish rock piece, 'Jealousy' from the album of the same name. It is so powerful, I wondered at first what it was doing on an album of airs, fiddle tunes & sea shanties. I guess its the 'beyond' bit of the title.

Crash, bang, clatter, skirl of the pipes and a whiff of whisky, its the Tannahill Weavers, first seen by this scribe on Steeleye's farewell tour; I dismissed them then as jigging Scots and a good example of Caledonian trad. It would seem I've maligned them, this is a very fair album. They still use pipes but with only two originals from the glory days, they've mellowed enough to include some ballads like 'Land of Light' and the 'Rovin' Heiland Man'. Seek it out, you won't be dissatisfied. What can I say about Silly Wizard, but that its a superb album. They are writing more than they ever were, with Phil Cunningham & Andy Stewart taking the lion's share. They still translate traditional material excellently, see 'Willie Archer' for evidence. Five Gold Stars, I'm giving up rabbiting about the record for lack of superlatives. Welcome to the UK, Green Linnet. What a way to start 1987!

Simon Jones

IAIN MACGILLIVRAY. Fellside
'Rolling Home' FE053.

I hadn't heard of Iain MacGillivray before I received this LP for review, and the sleeve only tells me that he comes from Inverness. Fortunately although the selection is noticeably Scottish, as indeed is the accent, he sings clearly so I didn't miss any of the words.

This is very much solo LP, most arrangements being just for his own guitar and vocals, so if you saw him live the effect would be very similar. He has chosen a broad spectrum from the traditional Scottish songs such as 'Dowie Dens O Yarrow' to more recent ones like 'Norland Wind'. My own favourites are 'Anthony Riley' written by an ex-miner about the disasters that make the newspaper headlines and the well-known title track 'Rolling Home'.

If I have a complaint it is that only 5 tracks/side is poorish value for the price of LP's these days. That apart I can only recommend it highly, whether you like traditional Scottish or something a little more contemporary.

Nigel Firth.

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