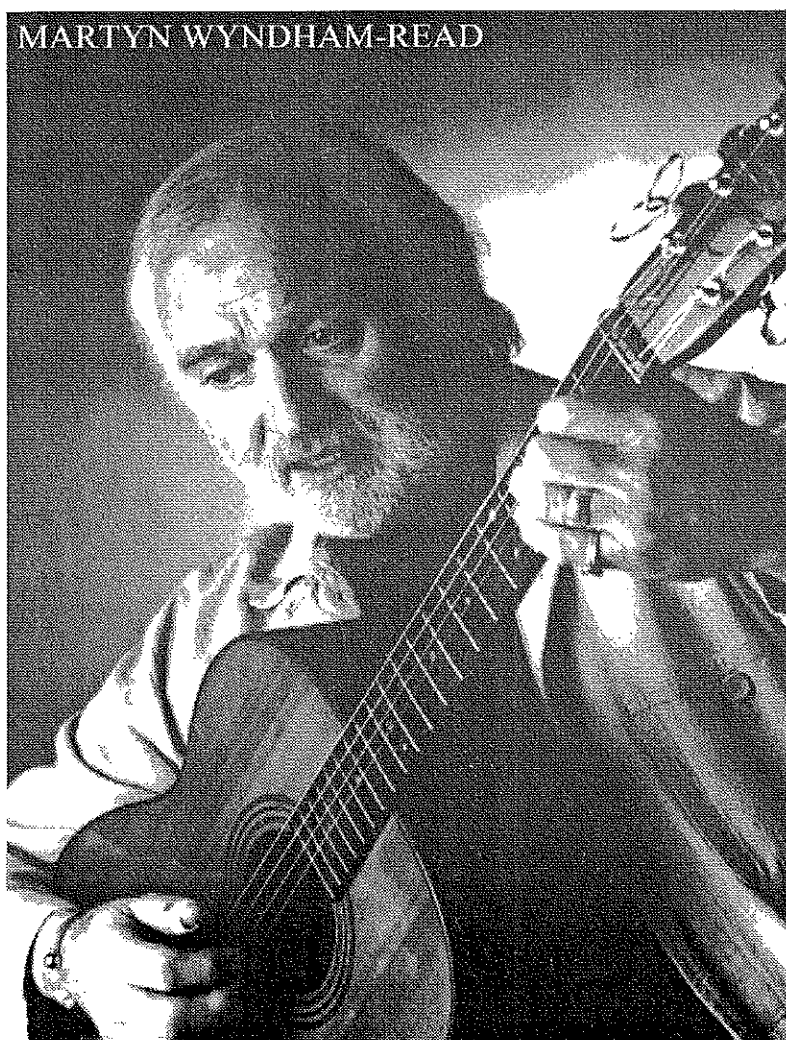


FOLK *North West*

AUTUMN 2001 (SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER & NOVEMBER) £1.50



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Autumn 2001

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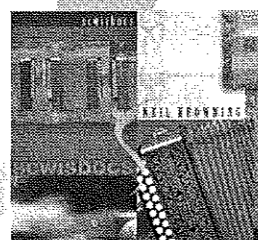
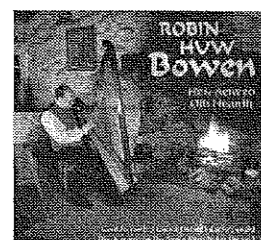
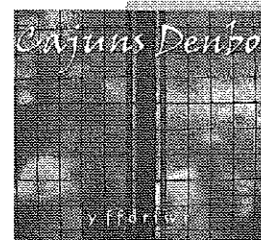
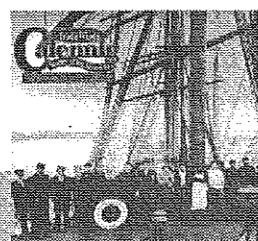
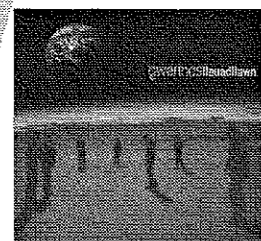
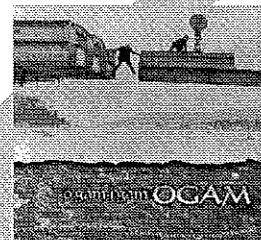
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EDITORIAL

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Yet again we have managed to exceed our 'norm' of 44 pages despite the holiday season or is that the rain, (ideal editorial weather but less than ideal length of grass, which reminds me of statements hastily reconsidered and reissued such as the farm labourer stating "more rain, more rest" and upon having his pardon begged by the farmer 'repeating' the mutterance as 'more rain, more grass' so as not to cause offence). Well it appears that offence has been caused unintentionally by a reference made to an incident at the Bothy in the article entitled 'How Can You Help Preserve Our Tradition'. I have had a letter from one of the people concerned explaining the reasons for the hasty exit and expressing their feelings in no uncertain terms. While I can understand that emotions were running high the tone of the letter is in places less than pleasant. As a contributor to the magazine everyone has the right to express an opinion and as editor I would not censor an article whilst not necessarily agreeing or disagreeing with it. However as further information has come to light, it has become evident that the persons concerned were in a predicament not of their own choosing and had to leave. Therefore under the circumstances we would wish to offer an apology and sympathy to the persons involved on behalf of the magazine.

On a lighter note my new Optical Mouse is proving a great asset. Well I am used to working in the dark and so this is the modern equivalent of the miner's helmet. All I need now is it fitting with a sensor to detect a lethal build up of gas - anyone want a lurcher that passes wind?

Reviewing Hilary Spencer's CD set me thinking about parodies to well known songs. Many excellent parodies and even the original songs themselves have been forgotten and lost in the mists of time (it's that lurcher again!) They seem to be much less in evidence these days, perhaps because many were used to make a satirical point about events happening at the time of writing and are no longer relevant. Many of them were self-penned (without the aid of a border collie, that's the one coughing next to the lurcher) and took a rather sheepish look at life. One of my favourites was the pre Ground Force approach to gardening extolled in a parody of The English Country Garden. With nary a dimmock in site references were made to kamikaze bees and vampire robins and problems with unseemly deposits on garden sheds. Perhaps you too have a favourite parody or have felt moved at times to create one. Well send it along to me explaining, if necessary, the context and quoting the original song to which it owes its origins and we'll see whether readers can match the source with the sauce.

Writing an editorial column is a time for musing as opposed to music. All sorts of thoughts flit (wasn't that a type of fly spray?) through my head and immediately are shot down in flames. Many unanswered questions spring to mind. For instance why are there so many folk festivals beginning with C? (Well how many can you think of in the North West alone?). One thought that has kept springing to mind is 'We must do something more useful with our website' currently located at www.folknorthwest.co.uk. Well, Mark Dowding, god bless him, has got stuck in and done something about it. He is now a fully trained Webmeister and is spinning a web that will hopefully reach out to all parts of the North West and entrap information as well as provide a useful source of information. He is keen to receive contributions both

great and small. Send in details of all sizes about folk activities in and around the North West or North West performers in the global arena. He would like to include details of events that are off the beaten track or occur infrequently and to be able to advise people of changes, cancellations, movements and news that cannot wait for the next issue of the magazine. Perhaps you are the club historian or archivist and can supply him with a potted history of the club. Maybe you are a cartographer and can supply a map to aid people to find the beaten track that the club is off rather than having the weary traveller beaten and returning home never to venture out in search of the Holy Grail (no it's not a new folk club or a storytelling club specialising in Arthurian legends).

Still on the subject of websites, I am impressed by the Radio 2 Folk website. It has a listing of the top 50 Folk Albums and the facility to play a 30 second sampler from each. Perhaps they could parse the sample progressively over the whole album of those, particularly Nic Jones whose albums feature prominently in the listing yet remain locked up in legal constraints and thus unavailable to be re-released as CD's, so that we could collect them by a sort of aural tradition or electronic broadsheet. Along with the excellent Carthy Chronicles there should be a boxed set of Nic Jones CD's. Incidentally I bet none of you would have come up with the same top 50, but it was nice to be reminded of some albums that I had forgotten and yet once held dear to my heart.

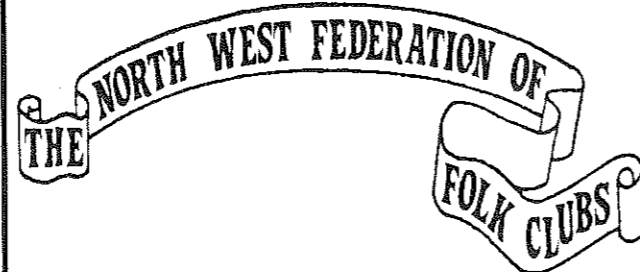
Well that's about all for now, I am going up into the loft to blow some dust of some albums. I may be some time as I will then need to go and sharpen the knitting needle used to play some of them, crank the handle (now you thought the recently invented battery free radio was a new idea didn't you?!) on the gramophone and get up to scratch with my top 50 albums. I'll let you know how I get on and what my top ten are.

The North West Federation of Folk Clubs

Annual General Meeting

**Sunday 18 November 12.30pm
at The Old Dog, Alma Hill, Upholland**

Please make every effort to attend and express your opinions, offer help etc.



THE AIMS OF THE FEDERATION SHALL BE

The promotion of Folk Music in the North-West by:-

- 1) Joint publicity of the Member Clubs
- 2) The general support of the Member Clubs
- 3) Joint organisation of Concerts & Ceilidhs in the area
- 4) The support of Festival Organisers in the area
- 5) The organisation of events to attract the 'under 18s'

Folk North West Contact Information



Who do I send information to ?

Club Dates, information on forthcoming events, changes of venue or organiser to :-

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Moorland View
Hargreaves Street
Huddlesden
Darwen
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BB3 3NB
Tel. No. 01254 705 895 or 07867 831 352
e.mail: chris.mcilveen@icl.com**

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

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

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e.mail: Adverts@folknorthwest.co.uk**

CDs or tapes for review to :-

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Pleckgat
Blackburn
Lancs
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Tel. No. 01254 54877**

Please note that the copy date for the next issue is October 10th 2001.

We would be very grateful to receive your comments, suggestions, criticisms, items for inclusion, letters, corrections, omissions and any other information you believe that we should know about. Please send information to the above or if in doubt to the editor, (who is also usually in doubt so you'll be amongst friends rather than fiends). You can also e-mail us via our editor on four.fools@virgin.net

CHAIRMAN'S JOTTINGS



I wonder how many of you are aware that Liverpool played host to a folk legend recently. As part of the Summer Pops Festival run jointly by CMP Management, Liverpool City Council and The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, Bob Dylan made an all too rare visit to these shores. If you weren't aware of the gig, I'm not surprised for the first I and many other people knew of the concert was when the brochure dropped through the letterbox, with SOLD OUT plastered against July 12th. Tickets were apparently pre-sold through London based agencies, with little chance of the North-West public having the opportunity to purchase them.

So what of the night? Dylan arrived on stage some 45 minutes late, but he more than made up for his late arrival by giving a breathtaking performance. The 60 year old, Mr Zimmerman sang his way through such classics as 'Just Like A Woman', 'We Shall Be Released', 'Wheel's On Fire', 'Like A Rolling Stone', 'Maggies Farm' and 'Knockin' On Heavens Door', with the loudest cheer reserved for 'The Times They Are A-Changing'. He had precious little dialogue with the audience, but this was one occasion when the words of the songs said it all.

Two thousand fans were held in the palm of his hand as he pulled the strings and rolled back time so effortlessly. He swapped guitars, changed mouth organs and showed none of the old sparkle had deserted him. His professionalism belied his advancing years. I just hope he returns again sooner rather than later, with the people of the North-west given a fair opportunity to buy tickets to see this musical icon in action.

Cheers for now David Jones



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Club Dates	Chris McIlveen, Moorland View, Hargreaves Street, Huddlesden, Darwen, Lancs. BB3 3NB Tel 01254 705 895

**FOLK MUSIC
PROGRAMMES
ON LOCAL RADIO**



compiled by Rob Dunford

SUNDAY

BBC Radio Merseyside FM 95.8 MW 1485
FOLKSCENE presented by STAN AMBROSE & GEOFF SPEED

Sunday 7.00-8.00pm (Repeat of Thursdays broadcast)
E MAIL:- radio.merseyside@bbc.co.uk

MANX Radio FM 89/97.2/103.7 MW 1368kHz

MANX FOLK presented by JOHN KANEEN

Sunday 6.00-7.30pm

E MAIL:- johnkaneen@manxradio.com

BBC Radio Shropshire FM 96.0 MW 1584

GENEVIEVE TUDOR'S FOLK SHOW

Sunday 8.00-10.00pm

E MAIL:- genevieve.tudor@bbc.co.uk

also on BBC Radio Stoke FM 94.6/104.1 MW 1503kHz and
BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester FM 94.7/104/104.6 MW 738

BBC Radio Cumbria FM 95.6 (north/west), 95.2 (Kendal), 96.1 (south), 104.1 (Whitehaven), 104.2 (Windermere), MW 756 (north), 837 (south), 1458 (west)

NORTHERN FOLK presented by ALISTAIR ANDERSON

Sunday 9.00-10.00pm

E MAIL:- radio.cumbria@bbc.co.uk or direct to
alistair.anderson@folkworks.co.uk

MONDAY

BBC Radio Derby FM 95.3/104.5 MW 1116

FOLKWAVES presented by MICK PEAT & LESTER SIMPSON

Monday 7.00-9.00pm

E MAIL:- radio.derby@bbc.co.uk

Radio Maldwyn MW 756

THE FOLK PROGRAMME presented by YVONNE & JOHN HART

Monday 8.00-10.00pm

E MAIL:- radio.maldwyn@ukonline.co.uk

WEDNESDAY

BBC Radio 2 FM 88-90.2

FOLK, ROOTS & ACOUSTIC MUSIC presented by MIKE HARDING

Wednesday 8.00-9.00pm

E Mail:- see www.bbc.co.uk/talk

THURSDAY

BBC Radio Lancashire FM 95.5/103.9/104.5 MW 855/1557

LANCASHIRE DRIFT presented by NICK DOW

Thursday 8.00-9.00pm

E MAIL:- radio.lancashire@bbc.co.uk

BBC Radio Merseyside FM 95.8 MW 1485

FOLKSCENE presented by STAN AMBROSE & GEOFF SPEED

Thursday 6.00-7.00pm

E MAIL:- radio.merseyside@bbc.co.uk

BBC Radio Shropshire FM 96.0 MW 1584

FRETWORK presented by NONNY JAMES

Thursday 7.00-8.00pm

E MAIL:- nonny.james@bbc.co.uk

also on BBC Radio Stoke FM 94.6/104.1 MW 1503kHz and
BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester FM 94.7/104/104.6 MW 738

BBC Radio Leeds FM 92.4 MW 774

REAL MUSIC SHOW presented by HENRY AYRTON

Thursday 7.00-10.00pm (Mainly Folk 9.00 -10.00pm)

E MAIL:- henry.ayrton@bbc.co.uk

**FOLK MUSIC
PROGRAMMES
ON INTERNATIONAL RADIO**



compiled by Rob Dunford

BBC RADIO SCOTLAND FM 92.4-94.7 MW 810

Monday to Friday 2.00-4.00pm

IAIN ANDERSON'S FINE TUNES

Tuesday 7.00-10.00pm

CELTIC CONNECTIONS presented by ANNE-MARIE MIDDLETON

Thursday 7.00-10.00pm

TRAVELLING FOLK presented by ARCHIE FISHER

Saturday 6.30-8.00pm

TAKE THE FLOOR presented by ROBBIE SHEPHERD

Saturday 8.00-9.00pm

PIPELINE presented by IAN MACINNES

Saturday 10.00pm-01.00am (repeat of Thursday)

TRAVELLING FOLK presented by ARCHIE FISHER

Sunday 10.00am-12.00pm

THE REEL BLEND presented by ROBBIE SHEPHERD

BBC RADIO ULSTER FM 92.4-95.4 MW 873/1341

Friday 7.00-7.30pm

TRADITIONAL MUSIC presented by KAREN NA HAOINE

E MAIL:- karen.nahaoine@bbc.co.uk

Saturday 10.05pm-12.00am

MAINLY MUSIC presented by TONY McAULEY and COLUM SANDS

E MAIL:- tony.mcauley@bbc.co.uk

colum.sands@bbc.co.uk

Sunday 6.05-7.00pm

AN DLAOI MHULLAIGH presented by COLM MACAINDREASA

EMAIL:- colm.macaindreasa@bbc.co.uk

**RADIO TELIFIS EIRANN (RTE) Radio 1
MW 567 and via ASTRA SATELLITE**

Saturday 9.30-10.15pm

CEILIDH HOUSE presented by KIERAN HANRAHAN

Saturday 10.15-11.00pm

FAILTE ISTEACH presented by DONNCHA O'DULAING

Sunday 8.10-8.55pm

MO CHEOL THU presented by CIARAN MAC MATHUNA

DOWNTOWN RADIO MW 1026

Sunday 10.00-11.00pm

FOLKALPOINT presented by MAURICE LEYDEN

RADIO NA GAELTACHTA FM 93.5/94

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Details from www.nag.ie

RADIO DENMARK MW 1062

Tuesday 9.00-10.45pm

FOLK 2000 mainly Celtic (Scottish) music

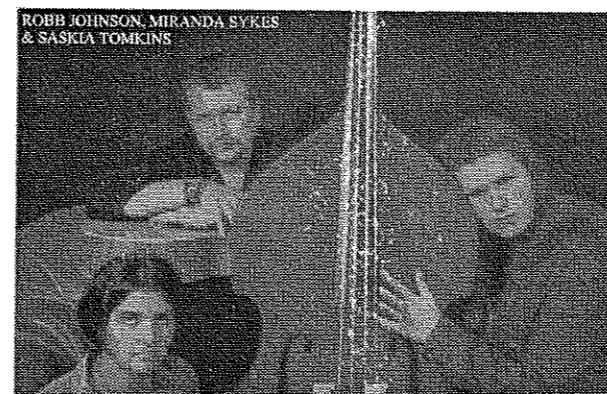
**LIVE
REVIEWS**



**THE ROBB JOHNSON TRIO – Live at Worden Arts Centre
Leyland - Saturday 28th April 2001 + '21st Century Blues' – (IRR043).**

Robb Johnson as a songwriter and solo performer has been around for some time now, but his alliance with double bass player Miranda Sykes and the multi-talented Saskia Tompkins who excels on violin, viola and cello has given him extra impetus and taken his live performance onto a higher plain. Robb will champion anyone and anything he feels is being targeted by injustice and translates that angst into the everyday language we are all exposed to.

A slow burn blues, 'Everybody Wants to Break Your Heart', set the tone for the evening before Robb told a true story in the song, 'Oliver Twist', about Matthew, a boy he taught in the reception class at a north London school. Violin then gave way to cello for, 'Petals Of The Rose'. In the tradition, songs follow a set pattern, she gets killed, falls into the river, turns into a swan etc. This is however a contemporary murder ballad that follows the criteria, but is far more grisly. Pete Morton's album, 'Hunting The Heart', and the track, 'Battle Of Trafalga', inspired Robb into writing, 'A Rainy Afternoon In The Star'. 'When Harry Took Me To See Ypres', is taken verbatim from the diary Robb's grandmother never kept. Granddad took grandmother to France to view the war graves, this is the possible scenario, as the emotion surfaced.



Robb is a great trades union supporter and whilst at a UNISON rally in Truro, Cornwall, he met Andy Anderson, author of, 'The Enemy Is Middle Class', this number, 'Dear Andy', is the letter Robb never wrote to him, thanking him for his inspiration through the pages of his book. Good tight playing and plenty of animation accompanied, 'Changing The Guard'.

The Labour and Conservative parties both have voiced in the past that many asylum seekers are bogus, even before finding out their true status. This is a protest song against that thinking and is for Vic and Youssef, the title, 'These Are My Friends'. Two years ago Robb took his son Harry to see Father Christmas arrive, this is the true story of that outing, 'Father Christmas Down Hounslow High Street'.

The second half opened with, 'The Passers By', observation is everything. Robb goes back to his youth with this song about England, where time stands still on, 'Summerhouse Hill'. Robb's friend Tony Grimes died of a broken neck after a crash on his

motorbike, after which he was refused surgery. Double bass and cello in tandem make, 'I Am The Wind', so dramatic. Celebrated CND member, Eric Winter, founder of Sing magazine died listening to Alan Lomax's collection of selected prison songs, 'Texas Prison Song', is onesuch.

Brilliant guitar intonation, is the key to, 'I Apologise', written for Robb's son, Arvin. Another song borne out of anger is, 'The Coast Road', guilt on a massive scale followed the atrocities of Yugoslavia and how the west accelerated the chaos. One of Robb's most requested songs is, 'Undeclared'. It was penned following the second phase of mine closures ten years ago, after the miners were clobbered in both '84 and '85. The celebrated Jacques Brel wrote, 'Voi Un Ami Pleurer', for his last album called simply, 'Brel', he gave up writing to sail around the world. Powerful violin accompanies, 'The Siege of Madrid', a song for Robb's dad, written while he was in hospital for an operation that sadly went wrong. The title track of the new CD, '21st Century Blues', is a song for today a pinch from Noel Coward. One of my favourites, 'Big Wheel', followed it was inspired by a fairground visit, it's 60% fiction with a skeleton of self experience.

The evening came to an end with real jazz fiddle played on, '10,000 Miles', it comes from a South African recording called, 'Soweto Jive'. Two encores were forthcoming the first, 'Reasonable', deals with the May '68 uprising in Paris, it has a chorus that rouses an audience, "Be reasonable and demand the impossible now". Finally, 'The Clash', provided the inspiration for, 'London's Burning', with boredom now.

Since the trio got together it has enhanced Robb's songs and music and taken him onto a higher plain. The material is a welcome addition to the normal material heard on the folk scene today, thought provoking and powerful, backed up by two musicians who would not be out of place in a symphony orchestra. If you get the opportunity, take a listen, it will enrich your musical outlook.

David Jones

**KIERAN HALPIN & MAARTIN ALLCOCK with ROY WILCOCK
& BRIDGET GUEST at Standish Folk Club, St Wilfrid's Parish
Hall, Standish - 18 May 2001.**

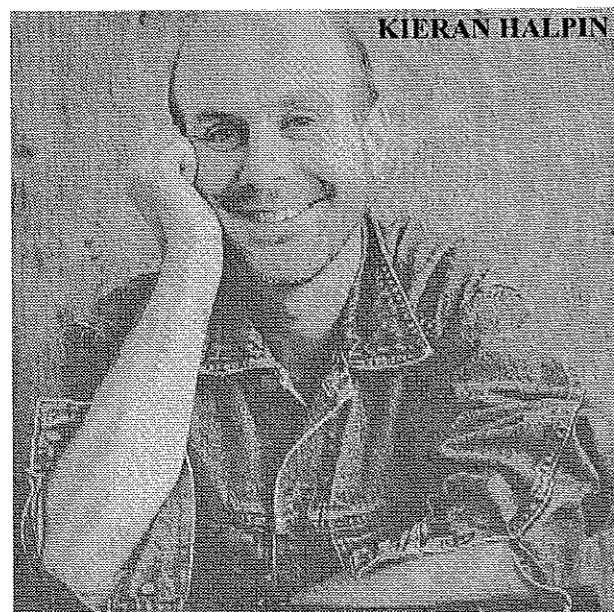
Another fine double bill heralded the welcome appearance of the occasional partnership of that fine Irish performer, Kieran Halpin and his sidekick Maartin Allcock, a brilliant musician who has performed with one of England folk rock's finest folk, Fairport Convention; he is currently part of Little Johnny England's dynamic outfit and is in constant demand for session work.

Supporting the eclectic duo were Roy Wilcock and Bridget Guest. One of the folk club circuit mainstays, they have resided in Kendal for the past seven years after moving from West Yorkshire. Starting off with an a capella version of the popular Mary Chapin Carpenter song, 'Why Walk When You Can Fly', they followed on with several of their own compositions. Bridget wrote the tender 'Farewell Kiss' after her job took her to Cumbria during the week and she was only able to see Roy and their children at the weekend, having to leave again on Sunday night and leave all you love at home.

The scene of two people languishing while listening to the sea and watching the sun slowly sink in the evening sky in Corfu was perfectly captured by 'Lazy Summer Day', with Roy supplying the aromatic sounds of lapping waves and lonely insects. In contrast was the excellent Ewan Carruthers composition, 'Of All The Creatures', sung unaccompanied, recounting the trauma of selling up following a divorce and spending the last night at home in solitude. Bridget wrote 'Rhythm

Of The Room' after watching Bob Fox and Stu Luckley through a haze on a pleasant Sunday afternoon in Oswaldtwistle. This concluded a fine supporting set.

The night of duos continued unabated with the arrival of Halpin and Allcock. Both have a languid stage presence matched with a dry sense of humour. Their performance began with the energising 'Something To Behold', with Halpin's storming vocals and flamboyant acoustic guitar playing complemented by Allcock's sedate electric bass. Maartin Allcock apparently played nine instruments on Kieran's last album - "cheaper than employing nine different musicians - but the bar bill was the same!"



KIERAN HALPIN

of religious sectarian toast making, with Maartin playing acoustic guitar with lots of reverb.

There were some telling songs with acute political and social observations. 'The Hate And The Fame' was written in 1984 in response to the obscene policies of the Thatcher era that generated sights like cardboard city on London's South Bank. Taken from the 'Jangle' album, 'The Christian Thing' illustrated what the empire builders and globalisation had done to the map of Africa; we've sent them religion, television, diseases and tobacco and put their livestock in our zoos.

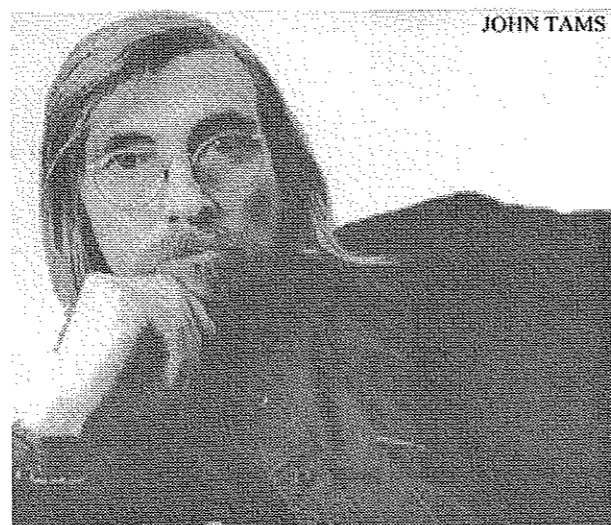
After a breathtaking performance and one of the best evenings of folk music I've experienced, the evening ended fittingly with one of Kieran's widely recorded songs, the wonderful ballad, 'Nothing To Show For It All' which brought a rapturous ovation from the audience.

Halpin has a rough edge to a distinctive voice that is proudly Irish. It wouldn't surprise me if he gargled razor blades occasionally to keep it in trim. His singing conveys passion and conviction in delivering superbly crafted, and often acerbic lyrics that go deeper than the heart and soul. The combination of Halpin's outstanding voice, guitar playing and song writing ability and Allcock's exemplary musicianship made for a rare treat.

Lewis Jones

JOHN TAMS BAND - Accrington Town Hall - Sunday 20th May 2001 - + 'Unity' [TSCD508].

One artist in particular has flourished during the past two years, John Tams, thespian, singer, songwriter, musician and performer extraordinaire has proved yet again that simple observation allied to total belief can be translated into something tangible that can touch a nerve and provide food for thought. 'Unity' was named album of the year at the 2nd BBC Radio Two Folk Awards in February, while 'Harry Stone', took the accolade for best song.



JOHN TAMS

'Unity', the album, has proved to be an inspiration to many and 'Lay Me Low', started proceedings on this particular evening. Inspired by a four line stanza from a book, 'Tis A Gift To Be Simple'. It explains how the Quaker movement died out due to a vow of celibacy. Knowing John's strong beliefs, 'Whole New Vision', could easily have been adopted as the Labour Party's manifesto slogan. 'Boswell For The Defence', is the title of a film starring Michael Caine and John Tams as a gaoler hence John's, perfect excuse for his flowing locks. 'The American Dream', includes the immortal line, 'She was a girl in Texas, but a woman in Tennessee'!!!!!!

According to Kieran, 'Solo' is a strange title for a love song. No disagreement there! It's a great ballad, written when he was 19 and reflects on the lack of a relationship at that stage in his life. Halpin is never afraid to attack existing orthodoxies, particularly where religion is involved. 'Jesus Was a Jew' is such a composition reminding us that he was brought up a Jew and died a Jew - "something never mentioned in my Catholic upbringing". One of the finest songs Kieran has written - and there are many - is 'All The Answers' recorded also by the John Wright Band and Dutch singer, Isle De Lange. 'I may not have all the answers/ I wouldn't have it any other way'. Indeed.

Two old men lamenting change but having no regrets is the theme of 'The Old Simplicity', first recorded in 1985 and since covered by Cilla Fisher and Artie Trezise. The peril of drinking alone is the subject of 'Angela in Paradise'. As Kieran said, "I tried it once - it was crap. It's the company I keep".

Kieran took the stage alone for 'China Rose' the first number of their second set. He wrote when living in Amsterdam "where people leave their curtains open". It refers to a woman called Leonora who paints her toes a shade of China Rose. The idea for the colour was apparently taken from a B&Q Dulux chart! Substituting a fretless electric bass for a fretful acoustic guitar, Allcock rejoined his partner for 'A Touch Of Fear', demonstrating intricate combinations close to the neck end.

'Jangle' was an attempt at heavy metal folk music - perhaps nearer to wood and aluminium in this case. It's about a friend who can't decide whether he's going through a bad patch or a bad life. He's trying to make up his mind by looking into the bottom of a vodka bottle. This was followed by 'I Will Only Be Your Friend' introduced with a surreal discourse of the vagaries

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'Remembrance Day', is a powerful song about pit closure that's been around for quite a while, with the added poignancy of being sung to the hymn tune, 'There Is A Green Hill Far Away'. 'Harry Stone', followed immediately and was written following a period spent in Russia, at the time when all the pits were damned by the Tory Government. The 1984 miners strike was the inspiration for 'Unity', a song that clearly, as the title suggests demonstrates solidarity. Bill Caddick wrote, 'The Old Man's Song', for Paul Schofield who was playing Don Quixote at the National Theatre, it proved a fitting end to the first half.

'From Where I Lie'/'Sheep Counting', is a lullaby taken from the play, 'Lie Of The Land', by Maureen Lawrence, it featured drummer Keith Angel on Marimba and is about sheep farming, but it could also be allied to many other skills. John's links between the songs give an insight into not only his songwriting, but also the many other aspects of his life. Llewelyn Jowett's book, 'Anthology of Derbyshire Ballads And Songs', gave John, 'Hugh Stenson and Molly Green', it tells of a deserter in King George's army who ran away to find his true love. The tune is entitled, 'Tis A Tune Sent From Above'.

Three for the price of one brought, 'Pretty Nancy', a variation of 'Nancy of Yarmouth', but this time she abides in London. 'Sailors Life', was performed to the tune of, 'The Sailors Alphabet', whilst, 'One More Day', from Capt. Whall's book of, 'Sea Songs And Shanties', was again performed to a familiar tune, 'As I Looked East And I Looked West'.

A complete change of mood followed with a song that originated because of homesickness. 'Winds Of Change', was penned when John was acting in Russia, while his family was at home in Derbyshire. There was always a queue to leave the airport on board Aeroflot!! The final number, 'Scarecrows', is the product of a family squabble between, a Kaiser, a Czar and a King who were all cousins, the disagreement led to the Great War of 1914-18. Three kings came out of the west and vowed half of the human race should die. Since then the world has witnessed 101 wars. A marvellous evening was rounded off with, 'Rolling Home', although the audience sadly didn't keep it going once the band left the stage.

John's handpicked band are all highly successful musicians, who come together to express John's thoughts and feelings so expertly. Barry Coope, Andy Seward, Alan Dunn, Graeme Taylor and Keith Angel, as John will testify have done so much to focus deserved attention on the album, 'Unity'. It's an outstanding work, superbly recorded and engineered and is worthy of all the accolades it has received thus far. John Tams is a remarkable human being on so many levels and should be treasured.

David Jones

MAGIC MOMENTS – HANNAH HUTTON – Sunday 10th & Monday 11th June 2001.

Magical evenings don't come along very often but recently I was treated to two of them, one after the other. The occasions? an only too rare visit south from one of our finest traditional singers, Hannah Hutton.

Hannah is a wonderful singer from Northumberland and wife of the late Joe Hutton, the legendary Northumbrian piper. During his lifetime the love Joe had for the pipes was an inspiration to many players and he passed on his passion for that instrument to a great many people, both players and listeners. In his hands the pipes really 'sang'.

Hannah was the guest at the Bothy Folk Club in Southport and also at the Broken Token Club in Standish.

went along to the Bothy on the Sunday and it was certainly a memorable evening. We were treated to some great songs from the residents and then Hannah Hutton and Alison Younger took the stage. Hannah and Alison have been friends for quite a while and Hannah makes a guest appearance on Alison's CD 'Blythe and Bonny'. Hannah may have been a bit nervous at first but Clive (as only he can) soon put her at ease, and asked her to tell us a bit about her background and upbringing, as well as singing a few songs. The time simply flew by; having worked in service and then been married to a shepherd, she had the audience spellbound throughout with her tales.

The second half took the same format as the first, more excellent songs from the residents and then Hannah and Alison. Clive really is a great MC and made a superb job of the evening, knowing just the right thing to say and the right question to ask. Alison and Hannah sang a couple of songs together at the end of the evening and people reluctantly made their way home.

The following evening Hannah was the guest at the Broken Token Club. The format for this club is a bit different, the club runs as singaround every week, whether there is a guest or not (it also has 3 halves, but we won't go into that). It was a very informal evening, with some great songs, but again the star of the night was Hannah. This lady has a wealth of songs and stories that really deserve to be heard and she had the audience in the palm of her hand by the end of evening.

This was traditional song at its best. Two really great evenings, different in format but each one 'special' in its own way.

Special thanks to Alison for persuading Hannah to visit us, we put our heads together quite a while ago to bring this about and it certainly worked.

Many thanks to Clive and the Bothy for a memorable evening but most of all, congratulations and thanks to a wonderful lady for two magical evenings. Thanks Hannah, come back and see us again.

Angie Bladen

VIN GARBUTT at Standish Folk Club, St Wilfrid's Parish Hall, Standish – Thursday 28 June 2001.

This was a special and different type of evening to close the season at Standish prior to a Summer break. In a cabaret style setting the organiser had arranged a four course meal (fortunately, there was no truth in the rumour that Dave Jones had done a special deal with Meals on Wheels!) followed by a splendid treat - the mercurial award winning Vin Garbutt, well deserved recipient of a BBC2 Radio 2 2001 Folk Award.

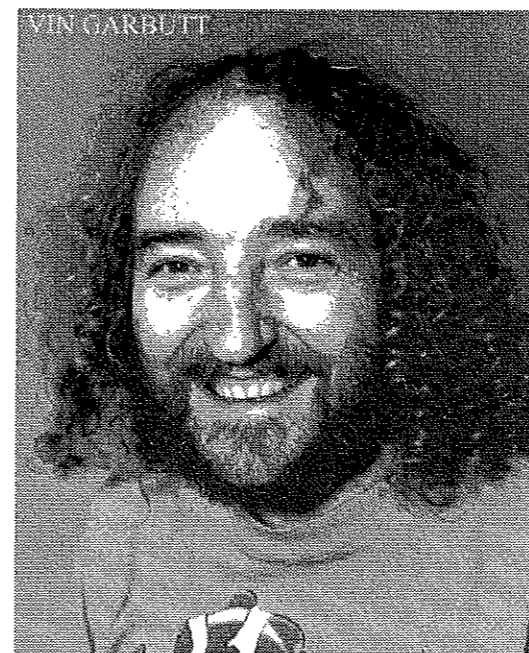
During a professional career that stretches over 32 years, Vin has remained one of the outstanding entertainers on the UK folk circuit, mixing his inimitable brand of humour with the knack of writing and picking some excellent modern folk songs firmly embedded in tradition.

His opening song, 'The Turner', took us back to the days when Vin began his working life, serving a six-year engineering apprentice at ICI Wilton in his hometown of Middlesborough. It was his experiences in this trade that gave him the motivation to become a folk singer and he has stayed firmly entrenched in his North Eastern homeland.

Like Billy Connolly, his humour is based on keen, perceptive observation of people and events. His wit is sharp and spontaneous without being offensive, picking on non-vulnerable targets such as establishment institutions and authority figures.

An example of this was when he regaled us with the latest obstacle that Virgin Trains has thrown in the way of its customers - a voice recognition telephone ticket booking service that is tailored to accepting accents from Middle England rather than Middlesborough.

An important element of Vin's work is to draw attention to political, social and environmental injustice whether that is in this country or in some of the less publicised struggles abroad. Four songs in the first set exemplified this strand of his music. 'Forty Thieves', composed by Dave Evaradson, is based on the illicit practice of unscrupulous employers in the fish supply industry around Grimsby. In the dead of night they send vans to take the best of the catch and the fisherfolk are only paid on that which is left behind. No one dare complain, as they can't afford to rock the boat for fear of losing their jobs.



The second relates to the Piper Alpha disaster, one in a long line of avoidable disasters in which workers have lost their lives at work. The Piper Alpha was an oilrig in the North Sea that collapsed due to negligent health and safety practices by the big oil companies, more interested in shoring up their profits. 'Waits And Weeps' tells the story of one of the workers who died and of his widow left behind. Many had no choice but to work on the rigs because of the lack of jobs in the North East - "Redundancy or exile was the choice they offered me." Death was the result.

The environmental dangers posed to 'The Black Poplar Tree' formed the basis of the third song. It's taken from a three-track benefit CD. The tree in question has been traditionally found on the flood plain. It is now endangered because of the clearance of the flood plains to build new houses. The folly of this type of development was clearly during the heavy rain of last winter - many people found out the hard way why trees rather than people had traditionally inhabited these areas!

Concluding the quartet was 'The Troubles Of Erin', a song that remains frighteningly topical, referring, as it does, to the continuing problems in the island of Ireland. It's a song that chillingly recounts the unnecessary deaths that have taken place over the last 30 years, yet offers hope that one day peace will not only arrive but also settle down to stay. The final line of the song echoes the sentiment of those who reject guns and violence - "may the living and dead rest in peace".

In a lighter vein Vin treated us to a couple of classic monologues introducing two of his best-known songs. 'Fell Off The Back Of A Boat' is based on an incident near Saltburn when a container was wrecked; it provided the local population with the opportunity to avail themselves of enough sweatshirts and underpants to last a lifetime. 'The Beggar's Bridge' rates as one of the finest ballads Vin has written and the lengthy background story of the tale of the beggar Tom Ferris and his true love, Agnes, had the audience in hysterics, although the song itself is a touching sensitive ballad.

The evening swayed between humour and pathos - not necessarily in equal amounts. 'Morning Informs On My Dreaming' is a wonderful contemplative ballad; yet to be recorded, it portrays a husband reflecting sadly on his wife's departure as he is left to bring up two children alone. 'The Ballad Of Leslie' recounts the story of the tragic destiny of an old friend. Sociable enough when sober, he turned particularly violent when drunk, ending up isolated and desolate - "a lone stick of wheat in a whole field of barley" - dead at 29. The evening drew to an apt finish with Brian Bedford's 'Wings'. Many have recorded it; none have interpreted better than Vin.

After seeing Vin Garbutt you can understand why he's fully booked for gigs until 2002. The combination of his exceptional humour and wonderful musical talent are unrivalled on the British folk scene. His greatest talent is his disarming ability to move the audience seamlessly from belly aching laughter to tears of emotion in the blink of an eye. The food was enough to satiate most culinary appetites, but Vin Garbutt fare left us wanting more and more.

Lewis Jones

BUDDY MONDLOCK at Jim's Café, Colne - Tuesday July 24th

Music and food always provides an interesting dynamic. On a recent trip to Ronnie Scott's Club in Birmingham, I was appalled by the battle between munchers and musicians which had the over dinner chat drowning out the quieter musical moments. So, arriving in Colne, I was intrigued as to whether Buddy Mondlock's soft-spoken vocal could capture the attention of the clientele at Jim's Café. The venue is a small restaurant down the side of the Town Hall operated by music friendly locals booking acoustic acts such as Dick Gaughan.

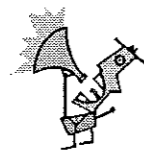
Buddy arrived fresh from a triumph at the Brampton Festival where he'd shared a stage with Jez Lowe and Kristina Olsen in a song swap typical of his native home of Nashville. From the opening notes of 'Poetic Justice', he began creating an intimate relationship with the audience that was quite spellbinding. Most of the songs came from the 'Poetic Justice' CD with the title track swiftly followed by 'Westbound Fast Lane' and 'Comin' Down In The Rain'. A song recently recorded by Nanci Griffith with her returning the favour by appearing on 'Poetic Justice'. During this song, you could see Buddy carefully scanning the audience as if singing to each one of us personally. Such professional performing quickly helped foster that intimate relationship between performer and audience. The audience were so quiet that you could hear a pin drop. As he sang 'Magnolia Street' with some great harmony vocals from his wife, Carol Elliott, he looked her straight in the eye as he sang the words 'come with me, my sweet'. This was just the sort of romantic intimacy to help further the spellbound room. Though this changed with Carol's raunchier vocal on the Buddy song, 'Break The Cup', by now the audience was hooked.

More songs from the latest CD followed with a new song written

with Garth Brooks and Joe Henry called 'Bosco And Admira' based on the tragic death of two lovers on opposite sides of the Bosnian divide. The set closed with 'No Choice' and an encore of 'Heavy Coat' leaving an audience in no doubt that they'd witnessed a top quality act. Clearly, others agree as Buddy is heading towards a recording studio to record as part of a trio including Art Garfunkel. Meanwhile, a little dog sneaks through the restaurant to check if anyone's food had been forgotten. Seems like everyone got satisfaction tonight.

Steve Henderson

FESTIVAL REVIEWS



MUSIC IN THE CASTLE – Friday 13th to Sunday 15th April 2001 (A Festival With a Difference)

I'm delighted to say that the essence of the Mini Festival is very much alive and well in Dunoon on the Cowal Peninsular. For the last 2 years I've attended the Easter Weekend Festival run by Dave & Lorna Dewar at the Benmore Centre on the outskirts of Dunoon in Scotland. If anyone wants a quality weekend without the hustle and bustle of the large Festival, this is one I would recommend. Whether you play an instrument, sing or just enjoy listening, this is one of the very best around. It comes complete with it's own personality, a sort of warm welcoming feeling that gets to you from day one. It's compact and cosy without being over fussy and dare I say star studded. You really can get involved in all the events and activities and most important, to my mind, the people who attended were fantastic. All the ingredients are there, plenty of good music, a lively Saturday evening Ceilidh, daytime guitar and song writing workshops, open music sessions which go on until the early hours, a Sunday evening Concert, good food, accommodation in the main venue and as I mentioned earlier warm friendly people.

The open sessions at the Benmore Centre were particularly good, everyone got a chance to sing, and sing we did until the early hours. In the morning after a hearty breakfast, we would stroll around the Younger Botanic Gardens, or take part in one of the many activities supervised by the staff at the Centre. I would recommend the walk up Puck's Glen or for the more adventurous there's abseiling, canoeing and hiking. The staff were particularly helpful and efficient and of course the ever attentive Dave & Lorna were always on hand to ensure that everything ran smoothly, what more could you ask for? I thought it was great value for money, all the main activities, the food, accommodation and the concerts were included in the price of the ticket. I also believe that Dave would like to expand the range of musical activities next year, so if you have any bright ideas let him know.

The highlight of the weekend was the Sunday evening concert. This years guests, Jez Lowe and The Bad Pennies, were in superb form. Jez's song writing is outstanding and the bands line-up is better than ever, with Judy Dinning, Kate Bramley and Simon Haworth. They provided an excellent evenings entertainment and they get better every time I see them. I was also very impressed by the other performers, specially selected by Dave Dewar, who supported them throughout the evening.

Fortunately, due to limited capacity at the main concert venue, this little gem of a festival has a good chance of remaining just

that. If you are interested, you'll need to get your name down fairly early, because once this event becomes well known, places will be very much in demand. Well done Dave & Lorna for organising such a great weekend.

Stan Graham (Black Swan Folk Club – York)

For more information contact: Dave & Lorna Dewar, 15 Portland Terrace, Troon, Ayrshire, KA10 6AS Tel:01292-313205 E Mail: connectionscultural@hotmail.com

CHESTER FOLK FESTIVAL – Friday 25th to Monday 28th May 2001.

It never ceases to amaze me how warm and friendly the Chester Folk Festival is, it's like coming home! The sun was the spotlight for the Spring Bank Holiday weekend festival, held in the picturesque village of Kelsall. Wherever I went there was music inside and outside the pubs, camping sites, Social Club, Community Hall, marquee and village church.

What an excellent line up! The Doonan Family Band, Tanglefoot (Canada), Strawhead, Cock & Bull Band, Sid Kipper, Pete Coe, Cyril Tawney, The Rocky Mountain Ploughboys, Napper, Le Faux & Boyle, Bill Caddick, Marie Little, Mundy-Turner, Solan, Quartz, Jake Walton & Billy Surgeoner, Jon Brindley. Plus our own local folk champions, Full House, The Waite Collective, Roy Clinging, The Prospect, Graham Bellinger & Steve Goodchild, Trefor & Vicki Williams, Taggart & Wright and of course the Chester City Morris Men.

The festival was without question a large helping of qualitative and quantitative performance. The Doonan Family Band charmed their audience with their Irish music and dancing performed by three generations of the family. Tanglefoot stormed the marquee with their Canadian sense of humour and artistry. Sid Kipper kept a smile on everybody's face. The ever popular Marie Little has lost none of her sparkle and never fails to bring a smile or a tear to the eyes. The inspirational Pete Coe multi instrumentalist and singer yet again pulled in the crowds to wonder at his mastery of performance.



Although a newcomer to the festival, Jon Brindley was the name on everyone's lips, his sheer stage presence and dynamism



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held audiences spellbound, his name is sure to spread rapidly across the folk world.

Taggart and Wright also made their debut at the Chester Festival to delight the audience with their harmonies. They met for the first time, a couple of years ago, at the Tuesday's Ship Victory Jam nights in Chester and immediately struck up a partnership. I still think they ought to be called 'Ann 'n' Angie'. Thanks, you two, I really enjoyed your set.

Two more good friends of mine whom I could not leave out are, Trefor and Vicki Williams, from North Wales, who are even now as I write, preparing the Rhuddlan Folk Day on Saturday, 4th August. It was also their first time to grace the entertainment list for the Chester Folk Festival. As you might guess they didn't let the Welsh side down. They both have fine voices and are accomplished musicians. The audience warmed to their soft singing harmonies with guitars and fiddle accompaniment.

As always, the children were well catered for with various circus workshops, family ceilidhs, Punch and Judy, making things for the children's folk procession, tall tales, how to make a flute and music workshops for beginners. It was an excellent weekend occasion for families and individuals alike.

Of course the fact that camping is all included in the weekend ticket made a great difference to me. It meant that I could forget about the car or getting home and just relax with a drink and enjoy. I can't wait until the next Chester Folk Festival but I suppose I'm going to have to. On behalf of all the festival goers, I would like to say a great big thank you to the organisers for yet another wonderful festival.

Colin Matthews

FLASH COMPANY FESTIVAL - at the Theatre by the Lake - Keswick Sunday 29th April 2001 + Flash Company - A Celebration of 25 years of Fellside Records (1976-2001) (FECD156).

One of the most enduring and thoroughly professional recording labels that has proved to be a real champion of folk music has just entered its fourth decade. Fellside Records based in Workington, Cumbria, is celebrating its silver anniversary and to mark the occasion brought together a real who's who of artists for this special day. Run by the Adams family, (that would make a great film title), Paul and Linda, along with their off-springs, Richard and Susan, were paid the ultimate complement by many performers who took time away from their busy schedules to tangibly record their thanks. Both the main house stage and the studio in this delightful, relatively new theatre, were put into constant use as the music flowed from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

By far the longest journey was undertaken by the Ragtime Millionaires, a duo based in St. Just near Land's End, Cornwall and their wonderful guitar/bass combination allied to some fine jazz harmony singing set the tone for the rest of the day in the studio, whilst local six piece band, Tryckster, performed on the main stage. After appearing on many other artists albums as a session musician, Northumberland based singer/guitarist/songwriter, Simon Haworth, showed just how versatile he is, as he showcased his debut CD, 'Coast To Coast', before a full studio. A new album is due shortly.

Melodeon legend, John Kirkpatrick, brought the loudest applause of the day for his sheer musical brilliance which culminated in a performance of, 'Blaze Away', an American penned march, much loved by brass bands. Bram Taylor performed his usually competent and informed set on the main stage, whilst Maggie Boyle, Lynda Hardcastle and Hellen Hockenhull who collectively

perform under the name, 'Grace Notes', lived up to that title fully.

With Buzz Collins unable to attend, I managed to persuade Derek Gifford, Patti Reid, a fit again Hughie Jones and shantyman supreme Johnny Collins to plug the gap, each performed three songs before linking up to bring the session to a close with, 'Rolling Home', by John Tams.

After a two hour break, during which time a huge session ensued in the Friends Gallery, the evening session began, again both stages ran in parallel. The exquisite, Cockersdale, on the main stage, while Sandra Kerr shone brightly in the studio. Clive Gregson making a quick visit to this country was determined to be there along with Boo Hewardine whilst for me, the highlight was the set performed by Martyn Wyndham-Read, accompanied on accordion and concertina by Iris Bishop. Martyn's voice just gets better and his new album of Graham Miles songs promises to be a big seller they were performed with sensitivity and panache.

The final set, brought the combined talents of Nancy Kerr and Australian James Fagan to the fore, whilst Jez Lowe both solo and then with the Bad Pennies had the audience in the studio captivated. The final half hour up to 11 p.m. on the main stage saw Sam Pirt and Simon Haworth link up for a superbly performed set of tunes, whilst Martyn Wyndham-Read performed the title track from his new album. Linda Adams and daughter Susan gave us a rendition of, 'Yellow Handkerchief', before husband Paul joined them for the final number, 'Only Remembered'. Audience pressure brought the bonus of, 'Wild Mountain Thyme'.

It was a truly memorable day, with a line up of real quality and a chance to catch up with people who we simply don't see often enough.

Recording an album with Fellside isn't just a contractual obligation, but a visit to friends who know the business thoroughly and treat you as one of their family. Nothing is ever too much trouble no matter how big or small and that translates itself in the quality of the finished product. Long may that loving care and understanding continue to flourish.

David Jones

5th MERSEY INTERNATIONAL SHANTY FESTIVAL - Friday 8th to Sunday 10th June 2001

Fantastic, absolutely superb, wonderful. These are just a few adjectives, which describe our experiences at this our first visit to a full-blown maritime festival. In the past we have always been at Middlewich Folk and Boat Festival but I understand foot and mouth took its toll there this year. Spread over four sites, the Baltic Fleet pub (dock road), the Adelphi Hotel (just sing will yeh??), Doctor Duncan's pub (city centre), and the main site - Albert Dock's Maritime Museum Festival Marquee, this shanty festival dovetailed delightfully into the much larger week-long Mersey River Festival.

Pre-event publicity by Radio Merseyside ensured a massive turnout of probably well over a hundred thousand visitors to the beautifully renovated Liverpool docks. The organisers must take great credit for providing a massive kaleidoscope of activity, most of which was free. My group and myself paid three visits starting on Friday night at the real-ale Baltic Fleet pub. Personal space was at a premium so much so that we were unable to get into the back lounge where salty dog and ex-Spinner - Hughie Jones was hosting a programmed session featuring many of the shanty festival singers. As my group do not give in easily we gravitated

to a corner of the main bar where 'we could aspy guitars and banjo cases awaitin' to be unlocked'. They belonged to the skipper ('Topsy') and crew of a beautifully rigged ship, the 'Phoenix' from Portsmouth. My first conversation with Topsy was to attempt to answer his question, "Do you sing shanties?" Before I could answer he said in a strong Cornish accent, "It be berrer if it were Folk". This put us all at ease and before long we were lifting the roof off with all kinds of folk, roots, sea and pop songs. At the end of the night, with no caravan to stumble back to it felt unusual to return home in mid-festival for a well-earned rest.

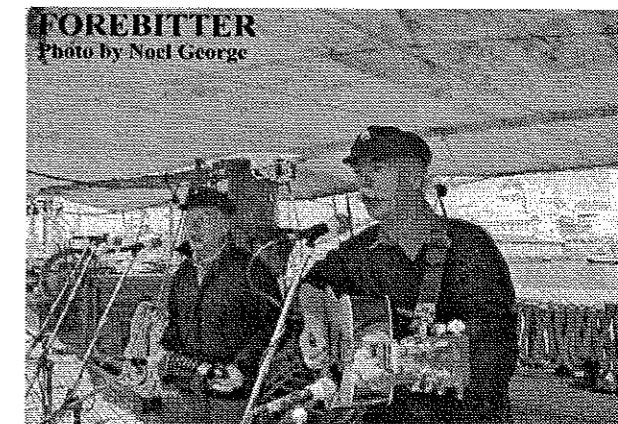
Saturday afternoon saw us purchasing tickets for the shanty marquee at £3 a head, which included free admission on Sunday, and free access to eight museums on Merseyside, ('gorra gerrin' to some culture you know'). We arrived at the marquee just in time to see Hughie Jones concluding his set with 'The Leaving of Liverpool', a classic song that we were to hear many times over the weekend. The 'Tom Topping Band' followed and true to form within minutes Tom had the audience in the palm of his hand. With songs such as 'Bound To Go Sailing', 'Bully In The Alley', 'Bound For South Australia', and 'Mary Ellen Carter', the audience were in full voice throughout. Slick, well-timed humour had the patrons rocking with laughter particularly when Tom disclosed that he hailed from a 'little fishing village called Rock Ferry'. He also admitted that when his family knew they were to be housed there, they felt 'gutted'. After the obligatory encore TTB retired to be followed by an excellent seven-piece shanty group from that well-known 'port' of Doncaster. The very aptly named 'Landlocked' gave a jaw-dropping performance of powerful shanty songs with each in turn taking the lead. 'Robin Garside and Paul Gough' then arrived from performing on board the sailing ship 'The Earl of Pembroke'. They soon excelled with typical Yorkshire humour and no little skill both instrumentally and when singing. Next was a shanty group named 'Ship'n Whales' from Langesund, Norway. Their excellent mastery of the English language made it easy for the audience to enjoy their interpretation of many popular shanty songs.

The final act of this concert was that wonderful top Irish band 'Garva'. Tony Gibbons and Terry Coyne, excellent musicians in their own right, are these days very capably complimented by the ivory tinkling of Lesley McGough. Tony wondered why they had been booked for this concert as he told the audience, 'We don't sing any shanties, only Irish or James Taylor'. Nevertheless they clearly enjoy demonstrating close harmony singing at its best with exceptional talent displayed on bouzouki by Tony, woodwind (Terry) and keyboard (Lesley). My particular favourites were the JT songs, 'The Frozen Man' and 'Copperline' and a selection of jigs and reels, which can be found on the original Garva's first recording, 'Sweet Liberty'.

The concert was brilliantly compered by the Federation's Chairman, one Dave Jones, who brought a smile to the faces of those who witnessed it when he fell off his perch, a mobile sound equipment case, as it inadvertently rolled towards the marquee wall. Luckily a large decorative pot plant alongside came in useful for Dave to hide his blushes. I thought you were 'Leaving Liverpool' early Dave.

A meal in the city centre was followed by a visit to the Pig and Whistle, Chapel Street, a venue not directly connected to the festival, (nb: sessions on Tuesday nights). As we entered, the regular pub singer Mike exclaimed, "Hello am I double-booked"? On seeing our instruments he asked laughingly, "What's this the mafia??" Within minutes the pub was 'up' and it remained so all night until regrettably we had to give the licensee his pub back and leave for home. Our night was in contrast to the previous one at the 'Baltic' but was nevertheless equally enjoyable. I think you could call it, 'Folk meets Elvis/Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra'.

This year BBC Radio Merseyside sponsored two concerts at the famous (or should it be infamous?), Adelphi Hotel (Lime Street), which featured many of the foreign guests including Kat yn't Seil (Netherlands), Cztery Refy (Poland), Les Pirates (Brittany), Dan Milner & Bob Conroy (USA) plus Forebitter, Hughie Jones, Garva, Stormalong John and the event host Stan Ambrose. Our Pig and Whistle exploits prohibits me from commenting on these two concerts but I hear they went off very well.



On Sunday afternoon we returned to the Albert Dock. The sunny weather swelled the crowds to huge proportions. We endeavoured to make it to the shanty marquee but our access to the other side of the dock was blocked as the footbridge across the water was closed, (a better location for the marquee perhaps, next year?). A number of River Festival events were taking place around us and a large flotilla of ships and boats of all shapes and sizes were leaving the Canning Half-tide dock for a regatta on the river. The Vicar of Liverpool Parish Church, Pier Head, (the church referred to in 'Bells of the Town' written by Nick Keir of The McAlmans), was marrying the City of Liverpool to the River Mersey and the Mayor ceremoniously threw a wedding 'ring' into the water as they both said, 'I will'.

Once the bridge was re-opened to the public we eventually arrived at the marquee well over an hour later than originally intended. Unfortunately we missed the first half of the concert, which included the Shellback Chorus, 3 Sheets to the Wind, John Connolly, Kat yn't Seil, Johnny Collins and Jim Mageean and Milner/Conroy. We did see 'Loctup Together' however. They displayed their versatility with a variety of sea songs and performed admirably under extreme distraction as, part way through their set, the Royal Marines paid a visit to the site - by helicopter. The crew were obviously impressed with their act as they hovered above for many minutes. The next military visitors were Spitfires and Hurricanes whose crew also wanted to listen, because they flew past on a number of occasions. Reference to thunder and the sky in their songs were completely appropriate and at the end of their set Ian and Chris received rapturous applause. What's that about God loving a tryer? The Polish band Cztery Refy followed and lived up to their billing as 'exciting as any Irish pub band but with amazing vocal strength'. Finally, the concert was brought to a wonderful climax by the five-strong shanty-men Stormalong John. Their two absent members would have been proud of their colleagues as the volume of sound increased. I could swear I saw the marquee move off the ground.

To conclude the proceedings the stage was then 'filled to busting' by all of the remaining festival performers and Hughie Jones led them in one final rendition of 'The Leaving of Liverpool'. It brought a lump to my throat and a little tear. I must say, I do get full of 'emulsion' at finales.

Still game for more music (and real ale) we then paid our final

visit to the Baltic Fleet. A number of festival guests were present and of similar mind. Bernie Davies (Forebitter), Shellback Chorus, Bob Conroy and others were ably assisted by folk harmony trio 'Brass Tacks' (I knew they'd get a mention somewhere) in singing out the weekend.

Votes of thanks had been expressed by the two principal architects of the shanty festival – Jack Coutts (Stormalong John) and Bernie Davies (Forebitter). Their vision is to make this festival one of the best of its kind in the country. I believe that the vision has been achieved. All involved must take great credit for their efforts.

I conclude with a polite request to the organisers of Middlewich 2002, - 'Please ensure your dates do not clash with the great Mersey Maritime Shanty Festival', 14th/15th/16th June, otherwise, how can I be in two places at once?

John Owen

MERSEY INTERNATIONAL SHANTY FESTIVAL – Albert Dock, Liverpool, 9th - 10th June 2001

The Mersey Shanty Festival is a part of the Mersey River Festival and on this at times bright, and always breezy day, I think half the population of Merseyside had turned up in party mood ready for a good day out. Mary and I arrived at the Albert Dock just after 11 a.m. and by then the enormous car park was almost full. We just about got a space!

Our first mission was to get down to the Pier Head for the noon ferry to join 'Loctup Together' for a musical cruise on the river. This sounded easy enough, but there was that much going on we were constantly distracted by the many activities and our progress was slowed by the sheer numbers of folk on the site. There was a convivial atmosphere everywhere and anticipation of pleasure all around. I had not been on the Mersey ferry for some years and so was looking forward to the experience very much. Chris and Ian (Loctup Together), established themselves in the forward, or should I say for'ard saloon and straight away started to sing. People quickly gathered to listen and in no time at all, the place was just like a folk club. It was mostly a non-folk audience but the response to the shanties and sea songs was terrific. Loctup did a really grand set; good singing and superb communication with the audience. It was a perfect example of "how it's done" and it's no wonder they are so popular at festivals. Their set included, 'Leaving Of Liverpool', just as we pulled away from "Princes landing stage" and later, 'The Alabama', when we were passing the Cammel Laird shipyard. How jammy can you get with the settings for your songs? They were joined for a while by their friends Helen Pitt and Steve Dawes from the north east. It was a most enjoyable experience, and it could have gone on for another hour as far as we were concerned. We landed at the Pier Head and neatly side-stepped the, "flash judies", as well as the Clam Wallace Pipe Band, who were marching down the slope to board the boat which was bound away for a cruise up the Manchester Ship Canal. Had Manchester had fair warning of their coming?

Next stop was the Festival Marquee which was the main daytime concert venue. We caught several acts there starting with 'Forebitter', a duo made up of Bernie Davies and Andy Kenna. If you didn't know them better, Bernie's and Andy's zany sense of fun could conceal their fine musicianship, which is at the heart of all they do. Even when they are singing a "straight" song, Bernie's face says to me "this is the music, but don't take me too seriously". A very entertaining duo; one of my favourites, especially the manic dancing dolls.

16 We stayed on in the big tent for a salty blast from 'The Portsmouth

Shanty men'. Good strong singing with some great harmonies. They gave Tom Lewis', 'Last Shanty', a good going over and then as if on cue, 'Marco Polo', just as Hughie Jones entered the tent for his set. Perfect timing!

When I refer to Hughie Jones as the evergreen favourite of Liverpool's folk scene, I hope I won't be accused of ageism. I say it to show how long he has been held in high regard around these parts and further afield. He always comes up with the goods, it's not just his musicianship; he has a considerable knowledge of our maritime history which informs his presentation and performance. The music and the commentary are all of a piece. Favourites, 'Marques', 'Champion Of The Seas' and 'Ellen Vannen', are as fresh as ever in his hands. He says that, 'Derbyshire', the song about the sinking of the bulk carrier of that name, is the only song he has ever written in anger, but it still has the Jones' stamp on it.

We thoroughly enjoyed Hughie's set, but then we left the marquee to wander along the quay to see what was going on there. Strains of the Dave Boulton/Geoff Parton song, 'Goodbye To The Sea', caught our attentions and there singing it, from the deck of the Phoenix was, '3 Sheets To The Wind'. Derek Gifford, Keith Kendrick and Geoff Higginbottom make up this talented trio. We just caught the end of their lively set as they finished with John Connolly's, 'Trawling Trade' and 'John Kaniakanaka'.

There was so much going on in different places at the same time it was impossible to keep up with everything. Still, we were doing our best. I had anticipated a leisurely day strolling about until I met Dave Jones who was compering the concert in the marquee. "Are you writing anything for today?" he asked, "No", I says. "You are now", he says and that was that; a done deal. Scramble about for something on which to write and scuttle about to hear as much as I could. Still, it was most enjoyable and great fun.

Further along the quay was a beautiful tall ship the 'Earl of Pembroke', where, singing from the deck were New Yorkers Dan Milner and Bob Conroy. There was a sound system rigged up here that helped the performers considerably in the windy outdoor conditions. We liked their laid back, understated delivery, and it was refreshing to hear the songs and anecdotes from the American side of the water. Although, 'Paddy West's', 'New York Gals' and 'Erie Canal', are familiar to home folkies, we hear them slightly differently when sung by performers from across the pond. If you like your folk music in a straight forward unfussy way; retaining its essence, then Dan and Bob are the men for you. We loved them!

I fancied a drink at this point, so as we were right outside of the Pumphouse, I went in to see if I could get something to quench my thirst. What a disappointment! There was a long line of devices for dispensing various kinds of "Eurofizz", but not a pint of real beer in sight. I left with my thirst unquenched.

We were drawn by some big sounds from inside the Albert Dock. It sounded good, so following our ears and instincts we soon discovered Johnny Collins, Jim Mageean and Graham Knights doing a set from the deck of the Zebu. Wow! what power, what class! I won't list any of the songs individually because the whole set was of a piece and it would be inappropriate to separate one song from another. It was a great experience to hear the shanties echoing around those old buildings - buildings that for me evoke so much of Liverpool's maritime history.

After the big three, we were treated to a complete contrast with the appearance of 'Les Pirates', youngsters from, St. Malo in Brittany, who sing with such enthusiasm and joie de vivre. Great kids. They sang in French and English, and their rendition of,



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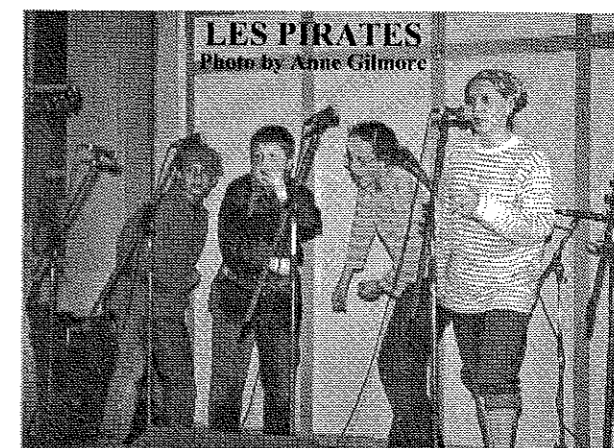
Ken Niccol

SOLO TOUR - AUTUMN/WINTER 2001

26th October	Dickie Doodles, Kendal.	01539 737784
27th October	Clock's Back Festival, Lancaster.	01524 847135
2nd November	Bollington F.C., Cheshire.	01625 573596
3rd November	Hunsley Acoustic Music Club, Hull.	01482 665656
5th November	Prospect F.C., Runcorn.	01928 731567
9th November	New Express F.C., Bournemouth.	01202 428455
10th November	Folk on the Fosse, Banbury.	01788 567338
13th November	Sandbach F.C.	01270 872875
16th November	Bulkeley Hotel, Anglesey.	01925 210265
17th November	University Arts Centre, Preston.	01524 39057
22nd November	The Grove, Holbeck, Leeds.	0113 2439254
24th November	Playhouse Theatre, Shaw, Oldham.	01706 665649
8th December	Congleton Town Hall, (special guest of The Oyster Band).	01782 514896
19th December	The Hole In One, St Annes.	01772 683027

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'South Australia', in English is truly captivating.



The afternoon was growing late and it was time to go and eat. We had had a most enjoyable day and felt thoroughly satisfied. Our thanks and congratulations to the organisers and all the performers, including those who we did not get to hear. Long may the Mersey River Festival thrive and long may the Shanty Festival be a part of it.

Norman Wilson

Footnote: The notes for this review were scribbled on the back of a performers timetable which Chris Lock very kindly gave me. Many people saw me referring to it, and wondered where I got it from as no detailed programme of who was on where, was available to the public. In my view this was a serious omission. There was tremendous interest shown in the shanty performers by the public and I feel that a detailed programme of performances would encourage a big enthusiastic audience to the Shanty Festival.

SINGLETON CLOGGERS DAY OF DANCE, MUSIC & SONG at Poulton-Le-Fylde – Saturday 16th June 2001.

The days preceding this event were fraught with anxiety. The already poor summer weather was deteriorating and the forecasters were predicting much worse to come. It seemed that a washout was expected.

Amazingly, the day dawned bright, and the unique Fylde coastal weather system produced a perfect summer day. Our guest dance teams included the Flag Crackers of Craven (Border Morris team), Westmorland Step and Garland Dancers and Fiddle 'n' Feet Appalachian Dancers. The Market Place was crowded with an excited and appreciative audience obviously enjoying the spectacle of such well demonstrated music and dance.

Singleton Cloggers, a smartly dressed and stylish team, opened the event in precise North West Morris tradition with their own dance named, of course, Singleton. The Flag Crackers of Craven delighted onlookers with their exuberant and boisterous formations and unique musical arrangements. The more gentle rhythms of the Westmorland team evoked feelings of the summertimes of a less frantic and technological age and was much enjoyed. By contract Fiddle 'n' Feet presented a classic programme of Appalachian dance which was most professional. Backed by a superb musical group they delighted the crowd who always demanded more.

Mention should also be made regarding John Gibney who, as Master of Ceremonies, directed the proceedings with aplomb and humour. The highlights of a day crowded with excitement

were a rendition of 'Mad Tom of Bedlam' by the Flag Crackers which held the audience spellbound; and the Fiddle 'n' Feet's final dance to the tune of 'Old Joe Clark' which received an ovation.

Concurrently, in the adjacent Old Town Hall pub a marathon folk concert commenced at 10.30am and continued non-stop until closing time at 11.00pm. A succession of performers were hosted by Pete Skinner and John Bond from the local Penny Black Trio. The constantly overflowing bar was in peril of running out of ale but, amazingly, the intrepid duo of Pete and John never flagged and they closed the whole event with a rocking rendition of 'Midnight Special'.

Barrie Parker

FOUR FOOLS FESTIVAL at St Michael's C of E High School, Chorley – Friday 29th June to Sunday 1st July 2001.

After a week of dry weather it seemed as though the festival might be off to a bad start, as in the middle of Friday afternoon there was a torrential downpour – not the best thing if you're trying to put your tent up. Luckily everything brightened up and because the camping area is well situated there were no lasting effects. The site is excellent for the smaller festival, being indoor events in St Michael's CE secondary school, hard standing for caravans, loads of space for tents (and also for children to play) and no parking problems. The whole area is well stewarded with no vandal interference.

Friday night was free and easy with an acoustic concert in the main hall. Festival guests as they arrived did a short spot with a few floor singers interspersed. This worked very well for most of the evening but as the hall and bar outside the hall filled up, the noise from the meeting area made it quite difficult to hear actual dialogue between songs. I suppose the answer is not to sit at the back near the dividing partition. This was something peculiar to Friday night as people greeted each other at the start of the festival. Quite often if you've travelled a distance it's nice to unwind in the bar and chat with old or new friends.

Saturday night concert although it started on time did run a little behind which resulted in Les Barker having to cut down his allotted time, because the school has to run to strict licensing times. However the festival was so well time tabled that there were many other opportunities to make up for this. As far as I know all the other events ran to time.



The Sunday concert was a brilliant mix and although I don't intend to go through the festival artists, the acoustic finish to the night was a joint wall of sound from Cockersdale, Quartz, Dave Webber and Annie Fentiman and the audience in full flow. It was magical!

Throughout the weekend there were numerous "artist meets

artist" and audience sessions. There were some interesting combinations and it really did show the many facets of performers in a relaxed atmosphere rather than just in a concert situation.

Four Fools has a tradition of fine singarounds and this year was no exception. I sometimes think we take for granted and perhaps even undervalue the talents we have within our ranks, and that weekend it shone.

This year there was a large presence of Morris teams who worked very hard over the weekend both at the festival, and in and around Chorley town. The Ceilidh in the school sports hall on the Saturday night was buzzing. The festival has broadened its horizons and it's definitely for the better. Well done to Newburgh Morris who co-ordinated the teams.

Thanks to all who gave us a super weekend. It was well organised and well run. It might not be on the grand scale of some of our festivals but it was truly a great little gathering.

Kath Holden

FOUR FOOLS FESTIVAL :at St Michael's C of E High School, Chorley - Friday 29th June to Sunday 1st July 2001

Four Fools is another of those festivals that I'd harboured every intention of supporting for a few years now, but only this year did the chance to attend finally present itself. And what an excellent little event, too. Run on a compact, self-contained campus (St. Michael's C of E High School, Chorley) with all facilities on site, the only difficulty seemed to be actually navigating my way round Chorley's many roundabouts to find the correct network of residential streets! I still only managed to attend on the Saturday and Sunday, but I was well impressed. I was (quite fairly) warned beforehand that it might not be my type of festival - ie., that it's a singers' festival primarily, rather than a concert platform/guest-oriented event. No problem there, but I know what Angie means. There are concerts, music sessions, instrumental workshops etc., all of superb quality, but the focus is rightly on good singing and participation.

The guest-list gives an idea of the overall flavour: this year it included Dave Webber & Anni Fentiman, Cockersdale, Pete Coe, Joyce & Danny Macleod, Th' Antique Roadshow, Derek Gifford, John Prentice, Jim Mageean, Geoff Higginbottom, Bob Fox, Tom McConville & Pauline Cato, Martin Young ... and representing the humorous side, who better than Les Barker and His Worship & The Pig (whose various appearances were, inevitably, badly



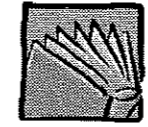
overcrowded)! More than at any other festival I've attended this year, I was seriously spoilt for choice at almost every turn, and I had to miss out on some crucial sessions. Real highlights for me, however, were the spellbinding solo appearances by Kevin

Mitchell, a singer of exceptional presence and grace, and those sessions involving the complementary personalities of the fantastic Sarah Morgan and/or that excellent but still little-known Cornwall-based storyteller/fiddler/singer Mike O'Connor - that on the Sunday which also involved Ray Fisher and both Kevin & Ellen Mitchell (what a combination!) being specially magical. The "Kipling/Bellamy Connection" was explored in a packed session by Dave & Anni and Cockersdale, who were supplemented by the awesomely rich baritone of John Morris (veteran of the original Widow's Uniform presentation); one unforgettable moment of light relief came when Dave Webber compared the front-line of singers to the Muppet Show, with Cockersdale's John and Graham remonstrating like the two old stagers in their box!

The Festival suffered from a couple of unavoidable no-shows this year - Tony Rose, whose continuing ill health is much regretted on the scene, and the Lincolnshire duo of Bill Whaley & Dave Fletcher, who were forced to cancel because of a throat infection. The unbilled appearances of John Morris and master harpist/storyteller Nick Hennessey gave some absolutely top-quality compensation, however. All in all, I can't praise this great little festival highly enough, on the evidence of this year's offering; it sure is my kind of festival, and I'll be making every effort to return to Chorley next year.

David Kidman

DIARY CHAT



Please note that all input for Club Dates and Diary Chat should be sent to Chris McIlveen at:

Moorland View
Hargreaves Street
Hoddlesden
Nr Blackburn
BB3 3NB

Tel: 01254 705895 or 07867 831353 Fax: 01254 708430

Email Address

Please note that you can now email information to me at chris.mcilveen@icl.com

Club News

Regrettably the **Castle Folk Club** at Runcorn has closed down. I also understand from Joan Blackburn that the monthly folk/Irish nights at the **Beer Engine** in Wigan have ceased.

The **Hale & Hearty Folk Club** is in the process of capturing on CD the talents of the residents and friends who form the nucleus of this flourishing singers club. Frank Lewis says that getting this hefty shower of performers into the studio for individual recordings is not the easiest task he has undertaken, but the signs are that it will be a treasure in store. Entitled "Grassroots", it is due for release in September with all profits going to charity.

That's all for now, don't forget to keep the diary chat coming in for the next issue!

Best Wishes

Chris McIlveen

LETTERS



Dear Ken

I can add to and correct some of the information in Alan Bell's letter in the last issue about the Paul Simon tour of folk clubs in the North West during which he penned "Homeward Bound". Corrections first. The tour took place in September 1965 not 1964. The Minor Birds Club in Warrington was on Wednesdays not Sundays and was run by the group which gave its name to it. By 1965 there was a club in Widnes called the Howff run by Geoff Speed with the Black Diamonds as residents in, as I recall, a palatial suite of rooms usually used for wedding receptions and the like and owned by, I think, Butlers the Merseyside caterers.

For a long time I laboured under the delusion – and my boasts about it gave me much-needed street cred amongst the younger members of my family! – that I arranged a week's gigs for Paul Simon. I certainly recall a telephone call on his behalf from a singer called Terry Gould who lived in Hampstead and with whom we were friendly at the time, in which he asked me to arrange some booking for him. Two gigs that I certainly was responsible for were at our own Calton Folksong Club at that time in the basement of Sampson & Barlows Restaurant in Liverpool and at a club in Wirral, Bebington I think, rejoicing in the name of "Barnacle Bill's" where our group The Calton Three were the support for him. Geoff Speed informs me that he arranged with a London agent the appearance at Chester at the Black Diamonds' Club and on Monday at the Howff. The actual dates were – Thursday 9 September Calton Folksong Club; Friday 10 September Chester, Black Diamonds; Saturday 11 September Barnacle Bills; Monday 12 September The Howff, Widnes. This would make the morning of Tuesday 14 September the date the song was composed after Paul Simon had stayed at Geoff Speed's home in Farnworth.

If there was an appearance on the Sunday night it might well have been at the Leesiders' Club at the Central Hotel in Birkenhead and there might possibly have been one at The Minor Birds' Club but this is merely speculation on my part.

My recollections of his performances is that they were of course highly professional although, apart from "Scarborough Fair" which he learned from Martin Carthy, I didn't see that it had much to do with folksong. One thing that did strike us – and with appearing with him twice we had the opportunity to observe this – was that the two performances were identical even to the point where he asked for a light for his cigarette between songs. There was not the spontaneity and rapport with the audience which marks the great folk performers. He stayed with us on the Thursday night and we were struck by his burning ambition to succeed in the music business, contrasting sharply with our own happy-go-lucky approach.

Although from the above account it might appear as though my records are detailed, nothing could be further from the truth. Unfortunately the cash book covering the club and group's activities went missing years ago but by a lucky chance one member of the group, Cyril Baxter, kept a diary for 1965. I see from this that during the year we also had as guests Pete Stanley and Wizz Jones, Cyril Tawney, John Foreman, The Watsons, Redd Sullivan, Bill Clifton, Roy Harris, The Crimple Mountain Boys (The Dransfields were members of this group), Hedy West,

BROKEN TOKEN FOLK CLUB

on Monday Nights
at The Globe Inn,

94 High Street, Standish

A warm welcome awaits singers, musicians and listeners
in the Upstairs Clubroom from 8.15pm.



Mon 16, 23 & 30 July Singers Nights

Mon 6, 13 & 20 Aug. Singers Nights

Mon 27 Aug **CLUB CLOSED (BANK HOLIDAY)**

Mon 3 Sept Singers Night

Mon 10 Sept Singers Night

Mon 17 Sept Singers Night

Mon 24 Sept **BRIAN PETERS**

Songs & tunes galore from this maestro of song and squeezebox

Mon 1 Oct **THE OLDHAM TINKERS**

(They certainly need no introduction - What a night!!!!)

Mon 8 Oct Singers Night

Mon 15 Oct Singers Night

Mon 22 Oct **TOM & BARBARA BROWN**

Glorious songs & choruses galore from this west country duo

Mon 29 Oct Singers Night

Mon 5 Nov **ARCHIE FISHER (tbc)**

A rare chance to see one of Scotland's finest singers

Mon 12 Nov **GEOFF HIGGINBOTTOM**

Traditional and self-penned songs with plenty of choruses

Mon 19 Nov Singers Night

Mon 26 Nov Singers Night

Mon 3 Dec **MARTIN CARTHY**

YES, the man himself - don't miss him

Mon 10 Dec Singers Night

Mon 17 Dec Singers Night

For further information or advance tickets please contact
Angie & Ken Bladen, 36 The Oaks, Eaves Green, Chorley, Lancs
PR7 3QU. Tel 01257 263 678 or e.mail: four.fools@virgin.net



THE FEDERATION FOLK CLUBS

Club Day/Name	Time	Address	Organiser	Phone
Sunday				
Accrington Town Hall	7:30 PM	Blackburn Road, Accrington	Box Office	01254 380293
Albion	8:30 PM	Albion Hotel, Albion Street, New Brighton	Roger Parker	0151 638 1987
Beer Engine	8:30 PM	The Beer Engine, Poolstock Lane, Wigan	Lawrence Hby	01942 709736
Bothy	8:00 PM	Blundell Arms, Upper Aughton Road, Birkdale, Southport	Olive Pownceby	0151 924 5078
Walton (Sunday)	8:45 PM	County Ward Labour Club, 39 Hale Road, Walton, Liverpool	Lilian French	0151 474 0979
Wooden Horse	8:30 PM	The Junction, New's Lane, Rainford	Jim Coan	01772 452782
Monday				
Bridge	8:30 PM	The Bridge Inn, Georges Road, Stockport	Peter Hood	0161 432 4142
Broken Token	8:15 PM	The Globe Inn, High Street, Standish	Ken & Angie Bladen	01257 263678
Corwy	8:30 PM	The Malt Loaf, Rosehill Street, Corwy	Denis Bennett	01492 877324
Prospect	8:30 PM	The Prospect Inn, Weston Road, Weston Village, Runcorn	Roger Hanslip	01928 731567
Swinton	8:30 PM	The White Lion, 242 Manchester Road, Swinton	Ged Todd	01942 811527
The Shippons	9:00 PM	The Shippons Inn, Irby Village, Wirral	Alison Parker	0151 648 4444
Triton	8:30 PM	Aigburth Peoples Hall, Aigburth Vale, Liverpool	Barry Meyer	0151 733 4159
Verse & Worse	8:30 PM	Silverwell, Darlington Street East, Wigan	Sheila Mellor-Barnes	01942 741220
Tuesday				
Folk at The Inn on The Park	8:30 PM	The Inn on The Park, Astley Village, Chorley	Steve Clifford	01257 268116
Furness	8:30 PM	The Cavendish Arms, Market Street, Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria	Graham Atkinson	01229 832354
Hwycroft Inn	8:30 PM	The Hwycroft Inn, 36 Pool Street, Bolton	Ron Calow	01204 381956
Jacqui's Folk Club	8:30 PM	Sefton Park Cricket Club, Croxth Drive (Sefton Park), Liverpool	Jacqui McDonald	01244 300576
Johnson's Acoustic Circus	7:00 PM	Red Triangle Boxing Club, Everton Road, Liverpool	Roy Johnson	0151 286 2974
Liverpool	8:30 PM	The Ship & Mire, Dale St, Liverpool	Helen Hadden	0151 727 0088
Maghull	8:30 PM	Maghull Community Association, Green Lane, Maghull	Tony Gibbons	01695 424327
Ring 'O Bells	8:30 PM	Ring 'O Bells, Farnworth Street, Widnes, Cheshire	Iris Bickerstaffe	0151 424 7072
St Annes Acoustic Roots Club	8:30 PM	The Bedford Hotel, Clifton Drive South, St Annes-on-Sea	Sue Arrow	01253 721503
Urmston Acoustics	8:30 PM	The Fox & Hounds, Woodsend Road, Flixton	Martin Kavanagh	0161 748 5497
Wigan (Royal Oak)	9:00 PM	Royal Oak, Wigan Lane, Wigan	Joan Blackburn	01942 321223
Wednesday				
Alison Arms	8:30 PM	The Alison Arms, Preston Rd, Coppull Moor, Nr Chorley	Hilda Foy	01257 792246
Blackburn	8:30 PM	Fleece Inn, Penny Street, Blackburn	Brian Kirkham	01254 720745
Burnley	8:30 PM	Waggon & Horses Inn, Colne Rd, Brierfield	Rhyl Watson	01282 774077
Deeside	8:30 PM	The Jug and Bottle, Mount Avenue, Heswall, Wirral	Alison Parker	0151 648 4444
Hole in One	8:30 PM	Hole in One, Forest Drive, South Park, Lytham FY8 4QF	Ann Green	01772 683027
Jacqui's British Legion Club	8:30 PM	British Legion, Heath Road, Upton-by-Chester	Jacqui McDonald	01244 300576
The Falcon	9:00 PM	The Falcon Hotel, Hardhorn Way, Poulton-le-Fylde	Pete Skinner	01253 301483
The Kings Arms	8:30 PM	The Kings Arms, Delph Lane, Haskeyne	Sue Howard	0151 526 9927
The Red Bull	8:30 PM	The Red Bull, Hilgate, Stockport	Peter Hood	0161 432 4142
Thursday				
Biddulph	8:15 PM	The Biddulph Arms, Congleton Road, Biddulph, Stoke-on-Trent	Eric Cox	01782 514896
Fleetwood	8:30 PM	Steamer Hotel, Queens Terrace, Fleetwood	Dave Ryan	01253 876351
Gregson Lane	8:30 PM	Gregson Lane Sports & Social Club, Gregson Lane, Houghton	Graham Dixon	01254 853929
Parkgate	8:15 PM	The Boathouse, 1 The Parade, Parkgate, Wirral	Eddie Morris	0151 677 1840
Railway	8:30 PM	Railway Hotel, Heatley, Lyrrn	Don Davies	0161 432 4317
Ruthin Acoustic Music	8:30 PM	Castle Hotel, St Peter's Square, Ruthin, Denbighshire	Campbell Finnie	01824 750730
The Greyhound	8:30 PM	The Greyhound, Bowden Street, Off King Street, Edgeley, Stockport	Kieron & Mary Hartley	0161 480 4993
Wigan (7 Stars)	9:00 PM	Seven Stars Hotel, Seven Stars Bridge, Walgate, Wigan	Joan Blackburn	01942 321223
Wrexham Folk & Acoustic	8:30 PM	Nags Head Inn, Mount Street, Wrexham	Ian Chesterman	01978 357307
Friday				
Bollington	8:30 PM	Dog & Partridge, Palmerston Street, Bollington, Nr Macclesfield	Arthur Wakefield	01625 573596
Carlisle Folk & Blues	8:00 PM	The Coach House, Heads Nook, Carlisle	Ken & Sue Bradburn	01228 670580
Hale & Hearty	8:30 PM	The Kings Arms, Hale, Cumbria	Frank Lewis	01524 734440
Northwich	8:30 PM	Harlequin Theatre, Queen St, Northwich	John Booth	01606 79356
Porkies	8:30 PM	Royal British Legion, Georges Road, Poynton	Judy Hancock	01260 252633
Preston	8:30 PM	Moorbrook Inn, North Road, Preston	Rob Malaney	01257 231463
Rhyl	8:30 PM	Costigan's Pub, Bodfor Street, Rhyl	Darryl Moorley	01745 353859
Second Friday	8:30 PM	Servite Parish Centre, Cavendish Road, Sedgely Park, Prestwich	Bill Smethurst	0161 796 0698
The Big Sing	8:30 PM	Saffra Club, Masonic Lodge, High Street, Uppermill, Saddleworth	Ali O'Brien	01457 870391
Walton (Friday)	8:30 PM	County Ward Labour Club, 39 Hale Road, Walton, Liverpool	Lilian French	0151 474 0979
Westthoughton	8:15 PM	Westthoughton Golf Club, Long Island, Westthoughton	Pat Batty	01942 812301
Saturday				
Brewery Arts	8:30 PM	Brewery Arts Centre, 122a Hghgate, Kendal	Box Office	01539 725133
Citadel Arts Centre	8:30 PM	Waterloo Street, St Helens, WA10 1PX	Box Office	01744 735 436
Hazel Pear	8:30 PM	Hazel Pear Inn, Hill Top Road, Acton Bridge, Near Northwich	Nick Tamblin	01606 852006
Mr Kite Benefits	8:00 PM	Worden Arts Centre, Worden Park, Leyland	Steve Henderson	01772 621411
Oswaldtwistle	8:30 PM	St Mary's Parish Centre, Lock Street, Oswaldtwistle	Dylan Owen	01254 390391
Playhouse 2	8:30 PM	Newtown Street, Shaw, Oldham	Barrie Cottam	01706 847494
Standish	8:15 PM	St Wilfrid's Parish Centre, Standish, Nr Wigan	David Jones	01254 54877
The Platform	8:00 PM	The Platform, Station Buildings, Central Promenade, Mbrecombe	Box Office	01524 582803

Club Dates for September 2001

(Please note it's best to check with Organisers before travelling)

SUNDAY	02-Sep-01	09-Sep-01	16-Sep-01	23-Sep-01
Accrington Town Hall			Jez Lowe & The Bad Pennies	
Albion	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Beer Engine				William Pint & Felicia Dale
Bothy	Closed	Roam	Singers Night	Singers Night
Walton (Sunday)	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Red 10
Wooden Horse	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	
MONDAY	03-Sep-01	10-Sep-01	17-Sep-01	24-Sep-01
Bridge	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Broken Token	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Brian Peters
Conwy	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Prospect	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Swinton	Singers Night	Singers Night	Kinin	Singers Night
The Shippons	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Triton	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Verse & Worse				Poets & Singers
TUESDAY	04-Sep-01	11-Sep-01	18-Sep-01	25-Sep-01
Folk at The Inn on The Park		Singers Night		Singers Night
Furness	Singers Night		TBA	
Howcroft Inn		John Joyce		Mark Atherton
Jacqui's Folk Club	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Johnson's Acoustic Circus	Performers Night	Performers Night	Performers Night	Performers Night
Liverpool	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Maghull	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Ring 'O' Bells	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
St Annes Acoustic Roots Club	Open Session	Open Session	Duende	Open Session
Urmston Acoustics	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Wigan (Royal Oak)	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
WEDNESDAY	05-Sep-01	12-Sep-01	19-Sep-01	26-Sep-01
Alison Arms	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Blackburn	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Burnley	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians
Deeside	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night

WEDNESDAY	05-Sep-01	12-Sep-01	19-Sep-01	26-Sep-01
Hole In One	Closed	Maggie Boyle & Jon Brindley	Les Barker	By Request - Band from the Wood
The Falcon	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Open Mike - PA Provided
The Kings Arms	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
The Red Bull	Mainly English Session			
THURSDAY	06-Sep-01	13-Sep-01	20-Sep-01	27-Sep-01
Biddulph			Les Barker with His Worship & The Pig (TBC)	
Fleetwood	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Gregson Lane	Susan Faulkner		Singers Night	Cathryn Craig & Brian Willoughby
Parkgate				Ian Goodier & Tom Browne
Railway	Singers Night	Martin Carthy & Dave Swarbrick	Singers Night	Singers Night
Ruthin Acoustic Music	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Standish				
The Greyhound	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Wigan (7 Stars)	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Wrexham	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
FRIDAY	07-Sep-01	14-Sep-01	21-Sep-01	28-Sep-01
Bollington	Jon Harvison	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Carlisle Folk & Blues				
Hale & Harty	Singaround		Singaround	
Northwich	Singers Night	Flook	Gordon Tyrall & Maggie Boyle	Singers Night
Playhouse 2			Phil Beer Band	
Porkies				
Preston	Singaround		Singaround	Singaround
Rhyl	Singers Night	Redmayne	Singers Night	Singers Night
Second Friday				
The Big Sing				
The Platform				
Walton (Friday)	Chicago Music Explosion			Eduardo Niebla Experience
Westhoughton	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
SATURDAY	08-Sep-01	15-Sep-01	22-Sep-01	29-Sep-01
Brewery Arts	Closed	Closed	MacAlias	Bruce Davies
Citadel Arts Centre				
Hazel Pear				
Mr Kite Benefits		Kristina Olsen & Peter Grayling with Roam (Worden Arts Centre)		Kate Rusby with John McCusker & Andy Cutting (Chorley Town Hall)
Oswaldtwistle	Singers Night			Saturday Railway Special with Huw & Tony Williams
Railway				Bernard Wrigley and The Oldham Tinkers
The Platform				

Notes: If Club name has "*" in front, it's not the usual club night.

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Club Dates for October 2001

(Please note it's best to check with Organisers before travelling)

SUNDAY	30-Sep-01	07-Oct-01	14-Oct-01	21-Oct-01	28-Oct-01
Albion	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Beer Engine					
Bothy	Singers Night	Pete Rimmer's 50th Birthday	Emily Slade	Singers Night	Debbie McClatchy
The Platform			Drop The Box		
Walton (Sunday)	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Wooden Horse	Singers Night	Singers Night	Artisan	Singers Night	Singers Night
MONDAY	01-Oct-01	08-Oct-01	15-Oct-01	22-Oct-01	29-Oct-01
Bridge	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Broken Token	The Oldham Tinkers	Singers Night	Singers Night	Tom & Barbara Brown	Singers Night
Conwy	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Mr Kite Benefits			Mary Gauthier (St Bedes Club, Clayton-Le-Woods)		
Prospect	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Swinton	Dave Tuxford	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
The Shippons	Singers Night	Singers Night	Clive Leyland	Singers Night	Singers Night
Triton	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Verse & Worse					Poets & Singers
TUESDAY	02-Oct-01	09-Oct-01	16-Oct-01	23-Oct-01	30-Oct-01
Folk at The Inn on The Park		Singers Night		Singers Night	
Furness	Alan Bell Band	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	
Howcroft Inn		Jon Harvison		Anne English & Stuart French	
Jacqui's Folk Club	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Johnson's Acoustic Circus	Performers Night	Performers Night	Performers Night	Performers Night	Performers Night
Liverpool	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Maghull	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Ring 'O' Bells	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
St Annes Acoustic Roots Club	Open Session Theme Night - Make 'Em Laugh	Open Session	Open Session	Bob & Sheila Everhart	Open Session
Urnston Acoustics	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Wigan (Royal Oak)	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
WEDNESDAY	03-Oct-01	10-Oct-01	17-Oct-01	24-Oct-01	31-Oct-01
Alison Arms	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Blackburn	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Burnley	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians
Castle	Guest tbc	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Guest tbc
Deeside	Singers Night				
Hole In One	Jen & Hen	Thistle	Bruce Molsky	Jeremy Taylor	Singers Night
The Falcon	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Open Mike - PA Provided

WEDNESDAY	03-Oct-01	10-Oct-01	17-Oct-01	24-Oct-01	31-Oct-01
The Kings Arms	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
The Red Bull	Mainly English Session				
THURSDAY	04-Oct-01	11-Oct-01	18-Oct-01	25-Oct-01	01-Nov-01
Biddulph			Martin Simpson		Cross O'th Hands
Fleetwood	Jon Harvison	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Gregson Lane	Singers Night		Nick Jackson		Singers Night
Parkgate				Chris While & Julie Matthews	
Railway	Singers Night	Dave Webber & Annie Fentiman	Singers Night	Martin Wyndham Read	Singers Night
Ruthin Acoustic Music	Singers Night	Adrian Byron Burns	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
The Greyhound	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Wigan (7 Stars)	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Wrexham	Singers Night		Singers Night		Singers Night
FRIDAY	05-Oct-01	12-Oct-01	19-Oct-01	26-Oct-01	02-Nov-01
Bollington	Singers Night	Solan	Singers Night	Jamie Kerr & Nancy Fagan	Ken Nicol
Carlisle Folk & Blues					
Hale & Hearly	Singaround		Singaround		Singaround
*Gregson Lane					Trouble at Mill @ Darwen Library Theatre
Mr Kite Benefits		The Oldham Tinkers (St Bedes Club, Clayton-Le-Woods)			
Northwich	Coope, Boyes & Simpson	Singers Night	Steve Tilston	Charlie Reade & Mark Sutcliffe	Tarras (TBC)
Porkies	Artisan				Gentleman Soldier
Preston	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround
Rlyl	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Second Friday					
The Big Sing		Singers Night	All About Eve		Niamh Parsons
The Platform		Cheryl Beer	Singers Night		Singers Night
Walton (Friday)	Singers Night	Singers Night	The Dylan Project (Ticket only)	Jez Lowe	Clive Gregson
Westhoughton	Waterson Carthy (Ticket only)	Tom Russell with Andrew Hardin (Ticket only)			
SATURDAY	06-Oct-01	13-Oct-01	20-Oct-01	27-Oct-01	03-Nov-01
Biddulph		Show of Hands @ The Daneside Theatre, Congleton			
Hazel Pear					
Mr Kite Benefits	Tarras (Worden Arts Centre)				
Oswaldtwistle	Singers Night				Singers Night
Playhouse 2		The Oldham Tinkers & Friends			Anthony John Clarke
Railway			Saturday Railway Special with Harvey Andrews		Saturday Railway Special with Bernard Wrigley
The Platform	Colin Vearncombe		Fundamental plus Charged		

Notes: If Club name has "" in front, it's not the usual club night.

If entry has "" in front, it's being held at a different venue (unless venue is named)

Club Dates for November 2001

(Please note it's best to check with Organisers before travelling)

SUNDAY	04-Nov-01	11-Nov-01	18-Nov-01	25-Nov-01	02-Dec-01
Accrington Town Hall	Niamh Parsons Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Albion	Singers Night				
Beer Engine		Raphael Callaghan & Christine Purnell	Singers Night	Bob Fox	2nd Annual Bothy Folk Reunion
Bothy	Singers Night			Kate Campbell (St Bedes Club, Clayton-Le-Woods)	St Agnes Fountain (St Bedes Club, Clayton-Le-Woods)
Mr Kite Benefits				Clean Feet presented by The Pavilion Music Club	
The Platform	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Walton (Sunday)	Singers Night	Singers Night	Derek Gifford	Singers Night	Singers Night
Wooden Horse	Singers Night				
MONDAY	05-Nov-01	12-Nov-01	19-Nov-01	26-Nov-01	03-Dec-01
Bridge	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Broken Token	Archie Fisher	Geoff Higginbottom	Singers Night	Singers Night	Martin Carthy
Conwy	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Prospect	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Swinton	Singers Night	Singers Night	Jim Malcolm	Singers Night	Singers Night
The Shippons	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Triton	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Verse & Verse			Poets & Singers		
TUESDAY	06-Nov-01	13-Nov-01	20-Nov-01	27-Nov-01	04-Dec-01
Folk at The Inn on The Park		Singers Night		Singers Night	
Furness		Singers Night		Singers Night	
Howcroft Inn		Lynne & Barry Hardman		Singers Night	
Jacqui's Folk Club	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Pete Ryder	Singers Night
Johnson's Acoustic Circus	Singers Night	Performers Night	Performers Night	Singers Night	Performers Night
Liverpool	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Maghull	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Ring 'O' Bells	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
St Annes Acoustic Roots Club	Open Session Theme Night - A Drop o' The Irish	Open Session	Dai Thomas	Open Session	Open Session
Urmston Acoustics	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Wigan (Royal Oak)	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
WEDNESDAY	07-Nov-01	14-Nov-01	21-Nov-01	28-Nov-01	05-Dec-01
Alison Arms	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Blackburn	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night

WEDNESDAY	07-Nov-01	14-Nov-01	21-Nov-01	28-Nov-01	05-Dec-01
Burnley	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians	Singers & Musicians
Deeside					
Hole In One	Strawhead & Tall Stories	Dick Gaughan	Andy Irvine	Balshazzar's Feast	By Request - Andrew Green
The Falcon	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Open Mike - PA Provided	Singers Night
The Kings Arms	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
The Red Bull	Mainly English Session				Mainly English Session
THURSDAY	08-Nov-01	15-Nov-01	22-Nov-01	29-Nov-01	06-Dec-01
Biddulph		Chris White & Julie Matthews			
Fleetwood	Geoff Higginbottom	Singers Night	Singers Night	Pete Ryder	Singers Night
Gregson Lane Parkgate		Singers Night		Singers Night	
Railway	Steve Tilston	Singers Night	Kathryn Roberts & Sean Lake man	Harvey Andrews	Tom McConville
Ruthin Acoustic Music	Nick Harper	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
The Greyhound	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Kevin Dempsey & Joe Broughton	Singers Night
The Platform	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	The Bill Jones Band	The Oysterband
Wigan (7 Stars)	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Wrexham		Singers Night			Singers Night
FRIDAY	09-Nov-01	16-Nov-01	23-Nov-01	30-Nov-01	07-Dec-01
Bollington	Singers Night	Derek Gifford	Singers Night	Jim Malcolm	Singers Night
Carlisle Folk & Blues					
Citadel Arts Centre					
Hale & Hearty		Singaround			Singaround
Northwich	Tom Francis & Ailisa Booth	Last Night's Fun	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Playhouse 2					
Porkies	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	Singaround	John Wright Band
Preston	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night
Rhyl					
Second Friday	Singers Night				
The Big Sing	Baka Beyond	Rory Block	Howard Marks		
The Platform	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	Singers Night	King Pleasure & The Biscuit Boys
Walton (Friday)	Steve Tilston & Maartin Allcock	Huw & Tony Williams	Chris White & Julie Matthews (Ticket only)	The McCalmans	Lucy Kaplansky (Ticket only)
Westhoughton					
SATURDAY	10-Nov-01	17-Nov-01	24-Nov-01	01-Dec-01	08-Dec-01
Hazel Pear	Singers Night				
Oswaldtwistle					
Playhouse 2					
Standish					
The Platform	Dick Gaughan				

Notes: If Club name has "" in front, it's not the usual club night.

If entry has "" in front, it's being held at a different venue (unless venue is named)

ADVANCE DATES FOR DECEMBER 2001 AND BEYOND

Bollington

Dec 14 - Ian Bruce

Bothy

Dec 9 - Rocky Mountain Ploughboys Dec 16 - Office Party
Dec 23 - Closed Dec 30 - Closed Jan 20 - Damian Barber
Feb 3 - Hilary Spencer & George Norris

Broken Token

Dec 10 - Singers Night Dec 17 - Singers Night

Furness

Dec 11 - Christmas Party - Guest Tony Capstick

Hole in One

Dec 12 - Tom McConville & Pauline Cato Dec 19 - Ken Nicol

Howcroft Inn

Dec 11 - Staff Folk Jan 22 - Joe Thomas & Mark Jones
Feb 26 - Class 49

Parkgate

Dec 20 - TBA Jan 31 - Vin Garbutt
Feb 28 - Houghton Weavers

Playhouse 2

Jan 25 & 26 - Gordon Giltrap

Porkies

Dec 21 - Xmas Party

Railway

Dec 13 - Railway Singers Xmas Party
Dec 20 - Railway Irish Xmas Party with Garva
Dec 27 - Singers Night Jan 3 - Singers Night Jan 10 - TBA
Jan 26 - Vin Garbutt Feb 28 - Allan Taylor??

St Annes Acoustic Roots Club

Dec 11 - Anthony John Clarke
Dec 18 - Open Session - Christmas Party night
Dec 25 - Closed

Swinton

Dec 10 - Kate Howden and Paul Jones

The Platform

Dec 14 - Sweet Lorraine
Dec 15 - The Platform's 4th Birthday with Rollin Stoned
Dec 19 - Five Penny Piece and Norman Prnce

Westhoughton

Dec 8 - Lucy Kaplansky (Ticket Only) Dec 14 - Closed
Reopen Jan 11 - The John Wright Band (Ticket Only)
18th January Anthony John Clarke
25th January Vin Garbutt - Ticket only
1st February James Keelaghan 8th February Dick Gaughan
15th February Brian Willoughby and Cathryn Craig
22nd February Sean Keane - Ticket only
1st March Paul Downes and Phil Beer
8th March The Tom Topping Big Band
15th March Colum Sands 22nd March Garva

Wooden Horse

Dec 9 - Singers Night
Dec 16 - Christmas Guests Dave Webber and Annie Fentiman
WITH Cockersdale
Dec 23 - Christmas Party Dec 30 - Closed
Jan 6 - Singers Night Jan 13 - Singers Night
Jan 20 - Th' Antiques Roadshow Jan 27 - Singers Night
April 14 - Harvey Andrews



CLUB RESIDENTS

ALBION - Gill & George Peckham, Roger Parker, Bill & Co, Marje Ferrier

BLACKBURN - Flatbroke

BOTHY - Clive Pownceby, Pete Rimmer, Ray Rooney, Bev Sanders, Neville Grundy, Bill Hackney, Alison Younger

BRIDGE - Peter Hood, Phil and Claire Allen

BROKEN TOKEN - Mark Dowding, Gill Coyne, Angie Bladen, Tom & Ann.

BURNLEY - Brillig, Korrgan.

CASTLE - Chris & Roger, Cheryl & Dave, Carol & John, Bob Elliot, Bob O'Callaghan

DEESIDE - Ficklefinger (Alison Parker, Jim Gallacher, Jon Oxley, John Hopkins, Paul Bonnet & Liz McIlwain)

FALCON - John Bond, Clansfolk

FLEETWOOD - Spitting on a Roast

GREGSON LANE - Trouble at Mill, Celtic Fringe

GREYHOUND - Kieron & Mary Hartley

HALE & HEARTY - Frank & Sheila Lewis, Steve Black, Dave Summers, Roy Wilcock & Bridget Guest, Paul & Jan Ramsey, John Hodgson, Bob Hellon, Gill Turner, Ken Lawson, david Littlewood, Roy Adams, David Hall

HAZEL PEAR - Pigeon English

HOLE IN ONE - Scold's Bridle, Rebecca Green

HOWCROFT INN - Ron Callow, Mick Unsworth (Micron)

JACQUI'S FOLK CLUB - Jacqui McDonald & Friends

MAGHULL - Tony Gibbons, Loctup Together, Bob Tyrer, Clover, Paul Robinson, Joan Gallimore, Joe Ryan, Back in Business, Jane Day

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

OSWALDTWISTLE - Dylan Owen, Slopstones

PARKGATE - Eddie Morris, Brass Tacks

PORKIES - Sad Pig Band, Dave Walmsley

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

PROSPECT - Roger Hanslip, Chris Hanslip, Carol & John Coxon, Cheryl & Dave

RAILWAY - Heather and Don Davies, Trevor Morton and Geoff Smith

SECOND FRIDAY - Redmayne

TRITON - Bob Tyrer

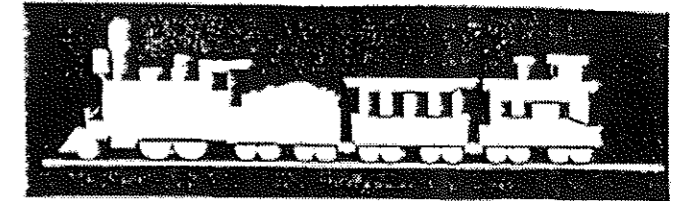
URMSTON ACOUSTICS - Keith Northover, Them Lot, Martin & Mandy Kavanagh

WESTHOUGHTON - Auld Triangle

WOODEN HORSE - Quartz, Rob Peacock, Back in Business, LocTup Together

WREXHAM - Offa (Goff Jones & Ian Chesterman), Yardarm

THE RAILWAY FOLK CLUB
The Railway Hotel
Mill Lane, Heatley
Lymm, Cheshire



Tel 0161 432 4317

Websites <http://146.87.237.21/railway/> and <http://railwayfolkclub.co.uk>

SEASON 2001 - 2002

<p>13 SEPT 20 SEPT 27 SEPT 29 SEPT</p> <p>4 OCT 11 OCT 18 OCT 20 OCT</p> <p>25 OCT 1 NOV 3 NOV</p> <p>8 NOV 15 NOV 22 NOV 29 NOV 6 DEC 13 DEC 20 DEC</p> <p>27 DEC 3 JAN</p>	<p>MARTIN CARTHY & DAVE SWARBRICK Singers Night IAN GOODIER & TOM BROWNE "SATURDAY RAILWAY SPECIAL" HUW & TONY WILLIAMS Singers Night DAVE WEBBER & ANNIE FENTIMAN Singers Night "SATURDAY RAILWAY SPECIAL" HARVEY ANDREWS MARTIN WYNDHAM READ Singers Night "SATURDAY RAILWAY SPECIAL" BERNARD WRIGLEY STEVE TILSTON Singers Night KATHRYN ROBERTS & SEAN LAKEMAN Singers Night TOM McCONVILLE The Railway Singers Christmas Party The Railway Irish Christmas Party with GARVA The "I'm glad I survived Xmas" Singers Night The "I'm glad I survived New Year" Singers Night Contact: Don Davies 0161 432 4317</p>
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Sandy and Jeannie and Packie Byrne. Not a bad guest list! I see also that The Calton Three appeared in Harrogate in a concert with Shirley Collins and The New Lost City Ramblers. I recall that when we came out of the theatre to drive home over the Pennines there was a real pea-souper of a fog - but that's another story!

Yours sincerely

Jim Peden

Dear Editor

I wish to challenge Angie Bladen's reference to the Bothy Club in her otherwise uncontentious item about supporting local clubs. She commented that two residents, who were also professionals, arrived late at the Bothy one evening and left shortly after doing their resident spot, thus showing disrespect to the booked guest. Angie added that, as an organiser herself, she would not want such support. I am not certain who exactly she is referring to (we have no couples, professional or otherwise, among the residents) but I totally refute her implication that any Bothy resident uses the club merely for self-publicity.

The Bothy is fortunate to have one or two semi-professionals (not professionals) among our residents. These people, as well as holding down day jobs like most of us, also spend many of their weekend doing folk clubs and festivals. If people choose to support the club for one part of a Sunday evening, despite tiredness caused by a weekend of travelling and performing and the day job looming the next morning, then criticising them is rather unfair. Under such circumstances, most of us would have declared that we were shattered and flopped in front of the television.

I would have expected an experienced club organiser to have thought all this through, but none of us is perfect I suppose. At this point I should declare an interest; I am a (totally amateur) resident of the club. I can confirm with absolute certainty that none of my fellow residents, whatever their professional status, perform for any reasons other than the pleasure of performance, friendship and commitment to the club.

Yours sincerely

Neville Grundy

BOOK REVIEWS



MICK RYAN - The Song Book Volume 1 [Jacaranda Music]

Some of you may remember my review of Mick Ryan and Pete Harris's CD *Hard Season* in which I extolled the superb talents of those two gentlemen. Well, to back up at least some of the songs from that album as well as songs from Mick's folk drama productions comes this excellently produced song book.

There are 21 songs in notation form complete with chords and even some with alternative keys to save you having to do your own transpositions. The songs are wide ranging in their subject matter and include nine *Miscellaneous* songs, three from the folk drama *A Day's Work* and eight from another folk drama called *The Voyage*.

The fact that this is called *Volume 1* indicates that there must surely be more books to follow and I look forward to seeing them published.

Derek Gifford

WWW.ONLINE



Check out the web page for information on a fabulous weekend in the north east of Scotland. It promises you a fun packed time with sessions, workshops, concerts, an aqua ceillidh (yes we dance in the water) and a children's concert. Why not hold a paper 'n' comb competition at your club and enter your winner in the World Paper 'n' Comb Championship now in its 4 year at Stonehaven Folk Festival. (categories for individual, group and under 12s).

Contact www.stonehavenfolkfestival.co.uk

(Ed:- Presumably for an aqua ceillidh one would book *The Old Swan Band*)

There is a great website advertised in 'Doors', The Sunday Times Guide to the Internet on 15th July 2001. Check it out at www.bbc.co.uk/radio2/folk and let's start a discussion about the top 50 folk albums. Do you agree with the choice, what is missing what is 'The Weakest Link' and should get the boot. What are your top 50 folk albums? Write or e.mail the editor with your ideas or suggestions.

Don't forget to look at our website on www.folknorthwest.co.uk and observe the improvements masterminded by Mark Dowding and Kath Holden. Contact Mark Dowding via the website with suggestions for improvements and details of what you would like to see included in the website. It needs to more interactive and both a source of information and a receptacle for you to inform us what is going on and what we should be developing in the future. Though great improvements have been made already there are many exciting possibilities to add information to the website to compliment the magazine. For instance Mark has asked clubs to supply a brief history of the club and details of how to find it on a dark and stormy night.

For details of What's On In Lancashire please logon to:- www.troubleatmill.btinternet.co.uk This is a free service for events that happen within (approx) 1 hours drive of Preston. If you are organising an event - or if you run an evening, in addition to letting Folk North West in on your secret send details for publication to troubleatmill@btinternet.com

There is a great deal of information on the internet about the Carthy Chronicles, the 4 CD boxed set issued on 1st April to celebrate 40 years of Carthy's life and music. Most of the information you may require can be seen on the website pages set up by Free Reed Records and Music at www.free-reed.co.uk/carthy. Also included is a Carthy Chronicle booklet article by Colin Irwin at www.free-reed.co.uk/carthy/colinirwin.htm and a full tracklisting at www.free-reed.co.uk/carthy/tracklist.htm

Finally send us details of websites that you have found interesting and useful so that we can share them with our readers and help to reduce their telephone.

OBITUARIES

SAM SHERRY. A personal tribute.

Sam Sherry was born into a family of entertainers. He was the youngest of 9 children. His father, who was a music hall artist, taught his children to dance and sing and encouraged Sam to follow in the family tradition and Sam became a very versatile performer, becoming an acrobat, singer, guitarist and dancer. His father also taught him how to clog dance. Performing with his brothers and sisters in various acts, the brothers finally became known as the Five Sherry Brothers. In an era of mass entertainment, the variety theatres were very popular and the innovative and exciting Sherry Brothers were never short of work.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, the brothers disbanded for the duration and Sam served in the army. On his return from active service the elder brothers decided to pursue other careers, but Sam and his brother Peter became a duo and continued to work the summer shows for some years, but by the early fifties the advent of television hastened the decline of the variety theatres. Peter retired and Sam bought a boat yard on the Preston to Lancaster canal at Galgate.

In time ill health forced his retirement from the yard, though Sam and his first wife Marjorie continued to live in Galgate.

With the revival of interest in folk music song and dance, Sam was discovered by a growing band of singers, and particularly dancers who were desperate to learn how to clog dance. Sam was soon organising dance workshops in Lancaster and Preston and as his fame grew, Sam found himself in great demand, back on the London stage working with Albert Finny and Max Wall. Sam also appeared in Coronation Street.

At the Durham City Folk Festival in 1976, Sam and I fell into conversation and discussed the different styles of clog dancing as we watched the late and great Northern Counties Champion, Johnson Ellwood, give an exhibition of clog dancing off the toe and heel. Sam told me that Lancashire & Cheshire clog dancing was always off the toe. Though the legendary Dan Leno had won the World Clog Dancing Championship in Oldham in 1888, and clog contests were very popular for many years afterwards, no clog contests had been staged in the North West since the end of the First World War. We decided to revive the Lancashire & Cheshire Clog Dancing contests at the Fylde Folk Festival with Sam being in charge of the workshops whilst I found the venues.

The Championships have now been held every year at Fylde for the last 25 years, with Sam always in attendance to teach, advise and encourage.

It was therefore very fitting for Sam to be presented with the Gold Medal for services to folk music by the chief executive of the EFSS at the 1982 Fylde Festival. Sam received a standing ovation and was very touched and proud with the award.

Sam was invited to America to teach when he was in his seventies and worked hard with his pupils during the day, and sang happily into the night. Back home, he continued with his workshops and appeared regularly as a teacher and performer at many major festivals every year.

Age and ill health began to take their toll. Sam was warned not to exert himself so he built a wooden frame upon which he stood whilst exhibiting dance steps. His enthusiasm never waned.

Sam was seen dancing for the last time in a BBC Omnibus programme "Fascinatin' Rhythm" The Story of Tap, screened earlier this year. He was 88 years old at the time of filming.

Some weeks before his death the Fylde Festival organising committee decided to produce a new Clog Dancing Championship Belt, which will be called the Sam Sherry Belt. Unfortunately, Sam died without knowing of this.

Sam was a gentleman. He was always smart, smiling and ever friendly. I was spellbound with his stories of working the variety shows. Some years ago I wrote the song "The Minstrel" which was inspired by Sam and dedicated to him.

At his funeral, the choice of the piano piece "The Entertainer" played whilst Sam was carried into the Crematorium, was the inspirational choice of his wife Daphne. The room in Lancaster was full to overflowing, with his many friends and a great number of his former pupils from over the years. They are his disciples, for many of them are now teaching and encouraging a whole new generation of young people to clog dance.

Just two days after Sam's funeral I attended the Lancashire Clog and Folk Festival in Accrington. Some of the clog dance teams danced in the Sam Sherry style and his unique dancing steps were instantly recognisable. Sam would have been delighted.

"Old Clever Clogs" as Sam used to call himself is no longer with us, but his spirit lives on.

Sam Sherry Born 12th January 1912. Died 9th May 2001.

Alan Bell

ROD SHEARMAN

Rod Shearman passed away in July. Rod wrote some great songs - perhaps his best was 'London River' which has been recorded by quite a few performers including Fairport. I got the following letter from Jim Mageean...Joe Stead

Friends,
Sorry to be the bearer of sad tidings but our good pal Rod Shearman passed away yesterday at a hospital in London around 10 am. He had been very ill with cancer for some time and fading away rapidly over the last few days with his two sisters Nina and Greta at his bedside. There is to be a humanist cremation, probably next Friday afternoon, I'll let people know as soon as I have more details. I'm sure we'll all carry on playing his music and singing his songs for many years to come. He was a lovely bloke and will be a great miss to us Here's to a Friend,

Jim Mageean

ARTICLES



THREE STEPS TO HEAVEN
(or "how to get bookings for folk clubs")
by Graham Holland

I accidentally fell into folk music after wandering into the Liverpool Singaround Folk Club one evening over four years ago. All of a sudden I was introduced to a network of folk music clubs that I was previously unaware of. "Hey! I write songs and sing them,

and according to some people I am not too bad at all! I think I'll try to get bookings from some local clubs." Or so I thought. Since then I have been trying to work out what it is that I'm either doing wrong, or not doing right. After prising some advice from wiser, older heads at various clubs and festivals I have come up with the following conclusion: it isn't worth it. You see, it's like this. I have tried the three steps that have been suggested, but to no avail.

Step 1: Visit different folk clubs and get yourself noticed.
What a brilliant idea! Then those wonderful, tireless organisers can listen to you in the flesh (as it were). I have been to singarounds, open-floor, and guest nights at north west folk clubs far and wide. There is only so much time, effort, petrol and expense that I can afford to spend on this seemingly fruitless task. Sure there are some clubs who will give priority to newcomers and to those who have travelled further than the local 72 bus ever ventures, but the number of songs one can sing is often limited. I have been offered bookings after appearances at different folk training days and festivals but despite following these offers up by phoning or visiting these clubs the bookings never materialised...

Step 2: Record your songs on a CD and pass it to folk club organisers
What a brilliant idea! Then those wonderful, tireless organisers can listen to new performers in the comfort of their own living room before pouncing on the phone all too eager to offer a residency or, more realistically, a guest spot (I don't want to set my sights too high!). Well I won't embarrass the north west folk club organisers who have received my CD by hand and have not even had the courtesy to contact me with a polite "thanks, but no thanks".

3: Send your CD to Folk North West magazine to be reviewed
What a brilliant idea! Then those wonderful, tireless organisers can read the (hopefully positive) review and book you on the strength of that. I tried this last July and sat back and waited, and waited, and (yes, you guessed it) as of now (Summer 2001) I am still waiting. Of course if the review appears in the same issue as this article it will be entirely coincidental, won't it? I realise that there were problems with the winter issue having been "missing" but when I picked up the Summer 2001 issue and found an article about political correctness at blues festivals, a review of a blues album (is "blues" the new "folk"?), and a review of a poetry book (is "poetry" the new "blues"?), it was then that I started to wonder if it was all worth bothering with at all. I would have thought that Folk North West would be giving priority to reviewing concerts, appearances and recordings from north west folk artists, rather than blues, poetry, and professional recordings from across the UK. Should FNW really be duplicating what is already available to us in fRoots and other national magazines?

So there you have it, the three steps to persuading folk club organisers to stick out their necks and boldly book an artist that their club has not booked before. What more can realistically and practically be done? And what about other artists caught in the same situation? If, as I would be willing to admit may be the case, I am not good enough to be booked as an artist in my own right then would someone at least have the guts to tell me to my face and save me the time and effort? You have my permission. I read with interest Angie Bladen's article in the last issue of FNW entitled "How can you help preserve our tradition?". If folk clubs don't support the new performers trying to break through then the folk tradition will die, and we will only have ourselves to blame.

Hold on there, I don't want to leave you with all doom and gloom as there has been some success. I was booked to appear at the

Stainsby Festival this year after winning the songwriting competition last year, and I have featured on BBC Radio Merseyside's Folkscene programme. I have also appeared at Heswall Folk Club and have been re-booked for May next year (thanks, Alison!). I was offered a date by a second club for a time when I would be away, and a third club which I visit on an irregular basis has offered me a thirty minute spot on a date to be confirmed some time next year. In the world of folk, I think that's what's called progress

(Ed:- Unfortunately I was not able to arrange the desired coincidence. All I can do is apologise, find out what has happened to the CD and get it into the next issue. I am sorry to have given Graham the blues and do hope that he is not going to give up the perpetual struggle for recognition of his undoubted talent. I do wonder how he manages to write his well crafted songs without accidentally writing a poem first but he said nice things about our festival so I'll shut up for now and grovel in person when I next see him)

A CHAT WITH TH'ANTIQUÉ ROADSHOW by Victoria Lewis

This popular trio, consisting of Nick Caffrey, George Critchley and Rob Malaney, was formed twelve years ago, though each member had been on the folk scene some time before that. With a reputation for being enthusiastic and talented, they have acquired a big following and are familiar figures at folk clubs and festivals. I caught up with them one evening over a pizza and a pint.



QUESTION: You've been together for twelve years now, but you were prominent in the folk scene sometime previously. What drew you to the folk music genre initially?

GEORGE: Nick and I both started going to Folk Clubs in the 1960's. I enjoyed the music of Lonnie Donegan and Chris Barber in my youth but when I heard The Spinners singing "Dirty Old Town", I thought "I can do that" and became interested in performing songs myself. Then I came across The Clancy Brothers' work and had an immediate source of material. In fact, when The Blue Water Folk opened a club at the Eagle and Child in Chorley, I was often introduced as George Clancy! I worked with Stoney Broke, Foxes Lair and Acoustic Reps.

NICK: As a child, I remember listening to a programme on the home service presenting field recordings of traditional singers. It was hosted by Peter Kennedy. But really, I think I turned to folk music because it was fashionable. It was Bob Dylan singing "Times They are A'Changin'" and the work of Joan Baez, Martin Carthy, A.L. Lloyd, The Spinners and the Dubliners that really made me think "I can do that". I became a member of The Wassailers.

ROB: My pedigree is a bit different to that. When I lived in London, I was a singer-songwriter and performed in pubs and coffee bars. I remember being followed by Bert Jansch and The Finches. After I married, I became more interested in classical music and Reggae. I more or less stumbled onto folk music one night on the way home from a piano lesson. As I passed The Lamb the strains of wonderful music wafted over me and inside I found Tom Walsh and Hugh O'Donnell. I still do a session to this day with them at the Moorbrook on a Friday. I loved the freedom and simplicity of the medium and the idea that there was little restriction to the possibilities of interpretation.

GEORGE: Of course, since those early days, we have all been influenced by Ewan McColl, The Dransfields and The Watsons. We have always admired the work of Brian Dewhurst, now known as Brian Preston, who meticulously researched his material and who was always generous in sharing it.

QUESTION: How did you first get together?

GEORGE: We were accidentally at the same place at the same time. Rob and I started a singers club at The Railway in Heapey and we met Nick there.

ROB: We started entertaining old folk at Christmas with Terry Martin completing a quartet, but Terry later graciously withdrew and so we became three. We found we had similar tastes in songs. We sang in complimentary keys. We worked hard getting our interpretation to blend voice and song. We started getting bookings.

NICK: Then we found we needed a name. Th' Antique Road Show went into the hat with others. It was not a leading contender initially, but it seemed to fit well. We like singing traditional songs and we were getting older - it was quirky.

QUESTION: So, what do you enjoy singing?

GEORGE: I like songs with depth and passion; songs that are colourful and acceptable. My current favourites are "Raglan Road" and "Jamie Raeburn".

NICK: I like full-throated ballads delivered directly to the heart of the audience, traditional ballads that reflect what's going on now. My current favourite is "The Dowie Dens Of Yarrow", but I find it hard to choose. I'm passionate about them all, complex songs of death, love and domestic tales.

ROB: When I'm at home, I sing Paul Simon songs all the time, but when I sing in clubs, I really enjoy the traditional "Down The Moor" and "Fires of Strathnaver" which I wrote myself.

QUESTION: What is most important to you about each performance you deliver?

ROB: We want to get songs back into circulation. We want to get people singing those songs. We hope they will enjoy singing them as much as we do. We want to project a social and warm atmosphere which will encourage audience involvement, so that at the end of the evening, people feel that they've been to a "reet good do".

GEORGE: We try to ensure audience enjoyment in a variety of ways. We try not to be too strict and rigid, so although we have new songs which we introduce gradually, we also include old favourites to avoid disappointments. We try to match the mood to the programme. We like to deliver songs which have full harmonies like "Icy Acres" and "Flash Lad", but we try to avoid

monotony by introducing solos and instrumentals.

NICK: We want to keep our audiences entertained, but it is interesting how many people there are out there who have great knowledge of the songs in the medium. I research each song we sing very thoroughly and we attempt to keep our interpretation within the context of the song. It's special to sing a song if you know where it's coming from.

QUESTION: What plans do you have for the future?

ROB: It's hard to say. We have done a lot already. We are very flexible and although the group comes first, we have done gigs and made CD's and tapes as individuals. We've also sung with other people. I suppose we will always want to try to keep improving our performances.

NICK:and carry on learning new songs.....

GEORGE:.....meeting new friends, having good weekends at folk venues.....

ALL:and help carry on the tradition.

Well there you are folks. A bunch of people who are serious about the tradition and its delivery; serious about their audiences and their enjoyment. They know how to show you a good time. Nick is developing their own web site, so look out for the URL to be announced at a later date.

SONG FOR MAYDAY

There's a New World Order and they say it's for the best
Each country in the east is now becoming like the west
And the people are all wealthy now, well some of them at least,
And it's beggar all the others not invited to the feast
For we are entering a Brave New World

Down in some Taiwan sweatshop they work all the hours
God sends
Make designer Nike trainers, paid not dollars only cents
But if you're ten-years old and younger you just do as you are told
When the choice is be exploited or be homeless, hungry, cold
That's what happens in this Brave New World

See the pretty little brown-skinned, barely 12 and a delight
For not too many tourist dollars you can have her for the night
Is she a virgin? Well almost sir - and she isn't HIV
For her parents guaranteed it when they sold her on to me
For she's a jewel in this Brave New World

Let's put some coppers in collecting tins our consciences to stroke
Then we'll drive down to McDonalds for a burger and a coke
Buy a tenner's worth of scratch cards, win or lose it's just a joke
If social justice was a bank account I guess we'd all be broke
Living in this Brave New World
Welcome to the Brave New World.

This song was written for a theme night at Fleetwood Folk Club called "Brave New World" and, as it was held in early May, I decided to write about the joys and delights of globalized Capitalism. I wasn't been able to come up with a suitable tune so I recited it as a poem, but if any readers would care to perform it then (to quote Ron Baxter) "any tune that fits" will do just fine.

Yours sincerely,

Ivan McKeon

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12th-16th June 2002

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Confirmed artist's to date-subject to contract-

Fairport(acoustic)



Convention >

WIN TICKETS TO CROPREDY 2002 I

Black Umfolosi(Zimbabwe)

'SENSATIONAL 8 MAN ZULU SHOW IS BACK-From Gumboots to Gospel'

AND THATS JUST FOR STARTERS-

THE BUILD-UP TO MIDDLEWICH 2002 HAS NOW STARTED. FROM 1st OCTOBER THE NEW WEBSITE WILL BE LAUNCHED ANNOUNCING SPECIAL EVENTS/ARTISTS TO COINCIDE WITH THE 2002 COMMONWEALTH GAMES CULTURAL FESTIVAL PROGRAMME.

MIDDLEWICH HAS NEVER BEEN 'JUST ANOTHER FOLK FESTIVAL. WE BELIEVE OUR POLICY TO ACTIVELY INCLUDE AS MUCH OF THE TOWN AS POSSIBLE IS NOW PAYING OFF-25,000 VISITORS AT FESTIVAL 2000 CAN'T BE WRONG!

VVVVVV.

REGISTER NOW 'ON LINE TO RECEIVE MONTHLY UP DATES-CLICK ON 'E GROUP.



CONGLETON Borough Council



www.middlewichfolkandboatfestival.com

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NEWSREEL



The Open Door Folk Club in Failsworth have had a change of venue and organiser. They now meet at the Bull's Head, Oldham Road (still on Sunday evenings). Janet and George, who have done a sterling job of running the club for many years, have now stepped down to take a well-earned rest, and Pauline has taken over the reins. (See 'The Federation Clubs on page 23 for contact details.)

Look out for appearances by Cathryn Craig and Brian Willoughby at the following venues in the North West.

September 27:- Parkgate, The Boathouse 0151 677 1840

September 29:- Stalybridge, The Platform 01457 833897

October 6:- Llandudno, Clarence Hotel Songwriting Workshop 01766 810414

October 17:- Llangollen, Jonkers 01978 861158

November 1:- Wrexham, The Nag's Head 01978 357307

November 2/3:- Penrith, Beckfoot House Songwriting Workshop 01931-713241

November 4:- Kirkby Stephen, Rattan & Rush 017683 72123

CD REVIEWS



IAN ALVESTON - 'Songs From The Grane' [Misguided Productions]

The familiar thud came from the speakers as I once again pushed the start button, and once again, out came the chugging riff that introduces 'Gabriel Rothwell' ("a creature of great beauty, sitting in his picture frame")

The first few plays had proved that this CD, succeeds in all departments; peerless production, well written - well constructed songs, an admirable restraint against over-crowding and the pin point accurate, melodic, rhythmic, driving, cascading guitar work of Ian Alveston, but I knew there was something more.

The key was 'Northern Skies'. This song, with its beautiful melody, plaintive lyrics and measured delivery slowly took on a very personal feel. Then one by one, the other songs began to slot into place taking me back to visit various scenes and experiences both within and without this wonderful gritty corner of Northern England. Songs of discovery, songs of lost love, of new love, fond memories and not so fond memories. All containing lyrics that led me back to various stopping-off points.

The imagery in 'Black Hawthorn' and 'If My Baby Where Here Tonight' gave me a real sense of attachment, and in addition the carefully crafted lyrics used the right words in the right places, and used them in such a manner so as not to sacrifice the power of align on the altar of the rhyming couplet.

Each song slotted nicely into one of my pet theories i.e. that all the best music celebrates the background from which it emerges and does it in a very subtle way especially when it's autobiographical. The songs are not archetypal northern (although the streets, mills, weather and moors do feature) but

they brought out the feeling that 'This is my element' particularly the closing song, the affectionate and at times emotional 'Song for Ossy', written (I guess) in dedication to Oswaldtwistle, tastefully stripped down production-wise to the bare essentials - perfect.

At one time this would have been called a concept album, but the term became discredited through misuse so I won't use it, even so, this is a collection of songs, each individual, but with a thread loosely connecting them and when you pull on this thread, the songs are pulled together in completeness.

Well done Ian, for steering clear of over production, too many solos and multi tracked harmonies (although I did develop a weakness for mentally mixing in my own string arrangements on 'Memories Falling Like The Rain', 'Jesus On The Cross' and 'Lizzies Song').

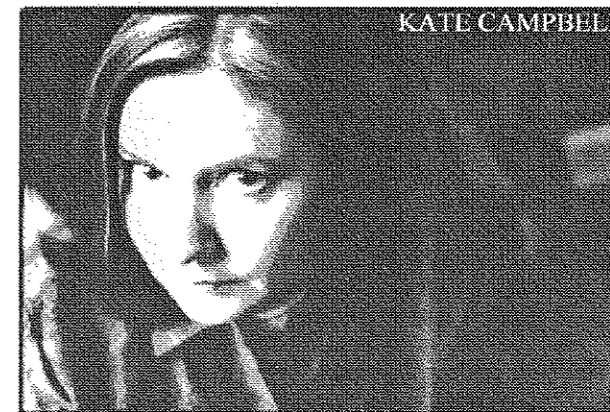
As Graham Dixon handed me this CD he was on his way to a gig with my good friend and tasty bass player Denis Wane, as Denis climbed into the car he pointed and said "It's good that" - I agree Denis!

Harold Dearden

NB Ian can be contacted on 01254 235472 or see him at the Weavers Institute - Lock St, Oswaldtwistle - first Saturday in the month (Dylan Owens Club).

KATE CAMPBELL - 'Wandering Strange' [Eminent Records EM-25050-2]

'Wandering Strange' is Kate Campbell's fifth record and the first for Eminent Records. The fact that she's had so many releases is testament to the fact that she has many supporters. Past records have seen contributions from Emmylou Harris, Guy Clark, Spooner Oldham, David Hood and more of the Muscle Shoals crowd who provided the backing for many of those great R'n'B hits of the 60's. Indeed, she's garnered something of a 'musician's musician' image herself. A short hand way of saying that her work is much appreciated by those 'in the know' but hasn't made her a major star...yet.



KATE CAMPBELL

Earlier albums have been nominated for 'Folk Album Of The Year' by the Nashville Music Awards. Their styles have moved from straightforward singer-songwriter affairs to full blown 'we're going to turn you into Shania Twain' productions. Personally, I'm pleased that 'Wandering Strange' returns to a less produced feel. Furthermore, the album has a heartfelt gospel theme though the music remains firmly in the territory of Folk/Country. The former is not too surprising as earlier records have hinted at strong religious sentiments and, after all, she is the daughter of a Baptist preacher from Mississippi. Listening to the album, you'll soon find the two key reasons why Kate Campbell has so

many admirers. Tracks like '10,000 Lures' show off her rich deep Southern States American vocal which warms you all the way through just as if you're sat on the front porch right next to her. Of course, selecting some fine songs with a gospel theme is no problem given the lengthy heritage of this style. However, why not use your own songs if you're second strength is an ability to turn out delightful story telling songs? So, we get treated to 'Now Is The Day Of Salvation' and 'The Last Song' amongst a number of other songs that will enhance her reputation further still. I'd love the general public to wake up to Kate's talents and a visit to these shores later in the year will be her first proper tour of the country. Hopefully, the tour and this new album will convert a number of music fans to this lady's considerable talent.

Steve Henderson.

CHRISTINE COLLISTER – 'An Equal Love' [Topic Records TSCD1001]

There's no question that Christine Collister has one of the finest voices to be found in Folk. However, I'm not sure that she'd see herself in the 'Folk' category. Indeed, herein lies the conundrum with Christine. Is it Folk? Is it Jazz? Is it Rock? Should we care? The answer to the latter is definitely 'no'. We shouldn't worry what category we apply to an artist. Good music is simply good music. Unfortunately, a category or, at least, a musical direction does help the music industry sell an artist to us and 'An Equal Love' provides a confusing picture for all concerned.



CHRISTINE COLLISTER

The root of the problem with this record is in the production and the use of arrangements that relate to 'programming and keyboards'. Perhaps, this is some sort of effort to turn her into the next Celine Dion? Whatever, 'Can't Cry Hard Enough' has a pop approach that wouldn't go astray with a pitch at the Eurovision Song Contest. Though 'Full Of Grace' lacks the 'programming and keyboards', it sounds like she's taken lessons in power ballads from Meatloaf. The jazzy swing of 'Venus Proud' gets another dose of 'programming and keyboards' that is partly rescued by real music from Annie Whitehead's trombone. Similar rescues occur elsewhere with sax from John Surman. Her ability to attract musicians of this calibre does beg the question as to why there is a need for a production approach that drowns out the undoubted musical talents on this record. Sadly, even the unaccompanied 'Motherless Child' has someone adding heavy

echo on to the vocal. The same occurs with 'Moon River'. A song that flies in the face of her usual impeccable choice of less well known but excellent material. Whether Christine is unsure of her own approach, I don't know. Certainly, this reviewer suggests getting a grip of the knob twiddlers and their 'programming and keyboards'. Blimey, I sound like I'm joining The Folk Police!

Steve Henderson

DEREK GIFFORD – 'Sailing By' [CRMCD 050]

Upon retiring after a lifetime spent in education, Derek Gifford finally took up the job he'd spent forty years auditioning for, full time folk singer. Derek has been very much part of the fabric that has seen the tradition flourish in the North-West, but with his dream now realised, his enthusiasm knows no boundaries. 'Sailing By', is a tribute to his hard work in researching and presenting new songs of the sea, whilst not forgetting those that are held dear by many.

The doyen of all things maritime, Cicely Fox Smith, provides the opening a-cappella number, 'Shanghai Brown', sign on the Harvest Moon at your peril, great controlled vocals set the tone for the CD. 'Kent, Keer and Lune', are three rivers that flow through some of this country's most breathtaking scenery before emptying into Morecambe Bay. If only the rivers knew what was going on all around - or do they? A rousing rendition of, 'Old Maui', introduces the chorus of Keith Kendrick, Geoff Higginbottom, Alison Younger and Janet Hale to the listener.

Jayne Coyle plays a superb viola solo at the start of Mal Waite's lovely song, 'Wild Geese', parting is such sweet sorrow. Derek gives it a stately feel and deserved solemnity, working your passage is not a comfortable way to travel in the, 'Bosun's Chair', but no less effective for that. Keith Kendrick adds understated concertina. Nelson's ships echoed with such songs as, 'Valiant Sailor', a ballad from the time of the Napoleonic wars. Progress finally spelt the end for sail, as the steam engine took over. One of the first ship's to use this source of power was the, 'Aaron Manby'. Derek again employs his gifted chorus on this song.

Trinity House finally signed off their last lighthouse keeper during the past decade. Technology again having the last word. Chris Manners wrote, 'Last Man Leaving', bemoaning their fate. A fine song enhanced by the use of guitar allied to viola. 'Bright Star', is a song that proves home really is where the heart is. Sailors used the night sky as a guide to gauge their distance from home. Really effective harmony gives this track an edge.

Liverpool born Stan Hugill was the font of all knowledge when it came to things maritime. His book, 'Shanties From The Seven Seas', is a bible for anyone remotely interested in the history of the sea. Bolton's Joe Grundy, wrote, 'Old Stan', as a tribute to the great man. Tales of the high seas abound when in convivial company, but it's mainly bravado, not experience talking. Pubs have a lot to answer for in, 'Shantymen Bold'.

Australia's John Warner provides, 'Anderson's Coast'. Those convicts sent to Van Diemens Land (Tasmania), did everything in their power in their bid for freedom. Even the futility of trying to flee across the Bass Strait. Derek's treatment of this number is sympathetic to their plight. It's all hands to the pump!! for Derek and the chorus on, 'Leaky Ship'. The decimation of the British fishing industry meant many 'men of the sea', had to retrain in a totally alien skill to maintain their livelihood. As you would expect from Dave Boulton and Jeff Parton (His Worship And The Pig), this is a lively up-tempo number. A song from across the pond, more specifically, from the Eastern Seaboard of the United States. 'Rock Port Farewell', explains the ties that bind together

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sailors everywhere.

When I tell you Les Barker wrote, 'Shipping Forecast', I expect you'll quickly get the picture that this short diatribe is all at sea. To round it off the title track, 'Sailing By', which is the actual tune played on Radio 4 before the shipping forecast.

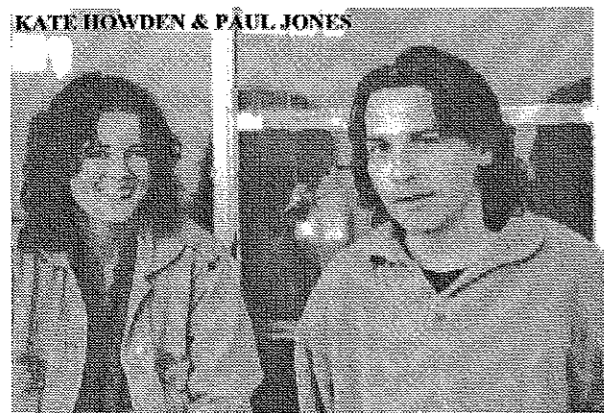
Derek Gifford has a voice that compels you to listen. It's rich and authoritative and with his understanding of each nuance, he delivers a definitive interpretation of each song he sings. Derek's 'new career', has made a promising start and as it gathers momentum a much wider and varied audience will appreciate what we here in the North-West have known for many years, Derek Gifford is a fine singer and musician.

David Jones

KATE HOWDEN and PAUL JONES – 'Silver Waters' [MVS CD 101]

Website: www.howdenjones.co.uk

'Silver Waters' is the eagerly awaited official debut recording of the Lancaster based duo who are beginning to establish a formidable reputation in folk clubs around the North West region. The duo writes all their own material and takes turns in fronting the vocals. Having been singer-songwriters in their own right, they decided to combine their talents in 1998 and have developed a creditable niche in the contemporary folk music market.



They are pair of singers with strong distinctive voices delivering their songs in an understated way. Their vocal talent is well suited to the simple acoustic accompaniment that pervades most of the CD. Paul Jones's vocals have a tinge of Plainsong's Andy Roberts combined with a splattering of early Al Stewart, while Kate Howden's voice suits the melodic songs within her repertoire.

The album opens with Jones taking the lead on 'New York' that takes you back to the atmosphere of 1960s Greenwich Village. There's a hint of Spanish guitar and mandolin on 'Andalucia'. The quality of Kate Howden's singing shines through on 'Never Say Never', and 'Peter Bradley', the contemplative story of an old man looking back on his hard working and the enduring friendships and tribulations. The title track also shows Kate's voice to fine effect. The album finishes on a traditional note with the airy and tuneful ditty, 'Pretty Fair Maid'.

It's a strikingly good CD. Both artists produce well-crafted lyrics, backed up by some fine acoustic guitar work. For me, the opening track 'New York' is the best song As you would expect from a project produced by Albion Band stalwart Ken Nicol, the arrangements are simple and clear, relying on minimalist acoustic accompaniment, supplemented by Nicol's mandolin and guitar

on two tracks, with percussionist Neil Marshall chipping in on another. If there is a criticism of the CD it's the lack of variation in tempo and sometimes the style is too languid. However, on this evidence, this duo has a bright future and this CD will be the first of many. I look forward to seeing them perform live.

Lewis Jones

BILL JONES - 'Panchpuran' [Brick Wall Music BRICK 002CD]

The arrival of 'Turn To Me' from Bill Jones caused quite a flurry of excitement on the Folk Circuit with some extravagant claims akin to the second coming. Good record that it is, some of those claims were a little over the top and some just misunderstood her. So, though Bill has a lovely voice, she doesn't 'sing like a linnet' and, no, she isn't 'the next Kate Rusby'. Having got that off my chest, we can concentrate on the fact that 'Panchpuran' is really excellent and continues to fulfil the promise shown on the first record.



The ace card that Bill holds is that she is a trained musician and her ability to arrange songs and surprise the listener gives her an edge on the average performer. You'll see what I mean when I tell you that this record contains unaccompanied singing, brass bands and strings. You'll get no chance to be bored listening to this. Her skills in this area have helped co-ordinate the support of others. Who else could have pulled in Coope, Boyes and Simpson to sing backing on the traditional opening track 'William Taylor'? Kathryn Tickell turns up on 'The Barley And The Rye' and, not to forget, the playing and production skills of Karen Tweed. However, I shouldn't let you think that this is just some sort of clever mixing and matching trick in the studio because the title track inspired by her Anglo-Indian roots proves that she can write a great song, too. Yes, she sings it in a soft and gentle style that is most attractive to the ear though not linnet-like and her instrumental skills shine through on the record, too. However, the really exciting news here is that this record is not only great but Bill Jones is just going to get better. She's willing to take musical chances that will annoy The Folk Police but those with open minds (should that be – ears) will delight in her work.

Steve Henderson

THE JOYCE GANG – 'No True Road' [Pickaxe Publishing PA004]

Paul Downes is a remarkable musician. In a career spanning four decades he has never been short of admirers for both his songwriting and his instrumental talents. He has also enjoyed success under several guises in addition to some brilliant solo



work. The now disbanded and much missed Arizona Smoke Review, a collaboration with that other master musician, Phil Beer, immediately springs to mind. However, on this occasion, it is as a member of another band, The Joyce Gang, that we find him performing as well as ever. Paul, himself, gave me the CD for review when he last visited Wrexham on a solo gig and seemed justly proud of this, the "Gang's" 4th album. The opener, '600,000', is based on a headline from the Christmas edition of The Big Issue some years ago. Homelessness, it seems, has still not improved. This is followed by 'Campus Crusader', a Downes original, and the 1st of two instrumental tracks, 'White Is The True Colour Of My True Loves Hair/The Hand In The Bush', both tracks being played on sax and guitar. 'Closer' is from the pen of Jonathon Asprey but most of the remaining songs are band compositions. The instrumentation and musicianship is as you would expect from such an experienced trio and the production and arrangements are also spot on.

No doubt you will have your own favourites but mine were Downes' great song about the sad vagrants who still inhabit our streets, 'Robert And The Cowboys', the atmospheric and lyrically brilliant 'Holy Woeful Mound' by Redmond and McKeown's lighter 'Sailing'. The CD and further details on tours, etc. can be obtained from the band's web site at www.joycegang.co.uk

Ian Chesterman

LADIES OF A CERTAIN AGE – 'Dangerous Curves' [Home Park Studios]

You know how some products don't live up to the wrapping, especially chocolate ones? Well, I was intrigued to receive a CD that actually had, as its cover, a facsimile of a certain well-known chocolate bar, and I was even more surprised that both opening and consumption of the contents proved so agreeable. This was a nifty and novel idea with all tracks on the album receiving, in the best confectioner's tradition, a rating - e.g. "Another soft centre", "Pure self-indulgence", "A confectioner's dream", etc. The ladies in question, Viva Smith, Jen Ingersoll

and Anne Rickard, are obviously having a ball (maybe a mint one?) and not taking themselves too seriously which all adds to the charm of the album.

There is a paucity of in depth sleeve notes but maybe the product needs little embellishment. As they say, "the proof of the pudding is in the eating", or something like that. I do know that one of the ladies husbands is no stranger to the recording studio himself, being that excellent musician and singer, Paul Downes, but I will leave you to "mix'n match" that one!

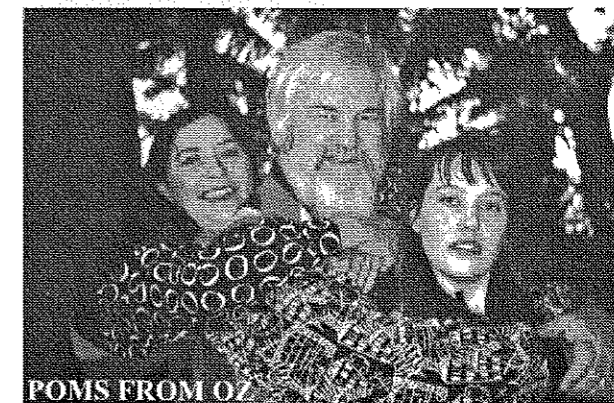
The album whizzes by with 9 of the 12 tracks running less than 3 minutes, with two of these under 2 minutes, the exception being the Rodney Crowell song, 'Till I Gain Control Again' at over 6 minutes. There are some pretty well-known standards here too with Richard Thompson songs ('Sam Jones' and 'Dimming of the Day') rubbing shoulders with 'The Battle of Jericho', Billy Joel's 'So it Goes' and even an O'Carolan tune. In addition, the ladies own compositions feature strongly, with sharply observed humour, at the male ego's expense, on 'Solo Benefits' and at their own expense on the autobiographical 'Ladies of a Certain Age'.

Overall the impression is one of huge enjoyment with great close harmony singing and the sheer variety of material holding the listener's attention. I bet they are great live too. The CD is certainly different, as are 'The Ladies' and their concept of a good time. To misquote one famous chocolate manufacturers slogan there is "a lass and a half in every bra". The album is available from Home Park Studios on 01252 870571.

Ian Chesterman

POMS FROM OZ – 'Oz Tale Soup' [PFOZCD101]

If you were at the Four Fools Folk Festival last or this year you may well have come across the Poms from Oz. You will also have realised that they are not 'Poms' at all but the Pomeroy family and genuine Ozzies from Townsville, Queensland. As has been the case in England in the tradition we have here a 'singing family'. This family - dad - Alan; mum - Judy; and daughter Kathy however have their own songs, not from a long lived tradition a la Coppers or Watsons but from more contemporary Australian composers and songwriters such as Judy Small and poet Henry Lawson. Judy and Kathy are both descendants of First Fleeters so at least their pedigree gives them credence in the European folk history of Australia. (Judy's forebearers were true felons but I reckon she's kicked the habit out of the genes by now!)



The Poms sing some nice harmonies, backed by minimal guitar and/or harmonica accompaniments for most tracks. The songs have been carefully chosen to suit their singing style with the opening track 'Hey Rain' (Bill Scott and Alan) and Judy's solo on 'From the Lambing to the Wool' (Judy Small) being particularly

striking. They even manage to include Hughie Jones' 'Marco Polo', which is highly appropriate being a song about a Blackball Line clipper that transported would be miners to the Australian gold rush!

Being Henry Lawson fans (show me an Ozzie folkie that isn't!) there are two of his poems on the album, 'Waterlily', with tune by Priscilla Hurdman and 'Watch on the Kerb' with tune by Judy. Incidentally, the Poms do a very interesting workshop on Lawson's poems that have been made into songs.

Humour, is provided by Alan's own song 'How to Gag a Hippo' (distinctly fourth form Johnners!) and Judy Smalls' 'Apart from That' which describes the nightmare 'holidays' so many of us have experienced!

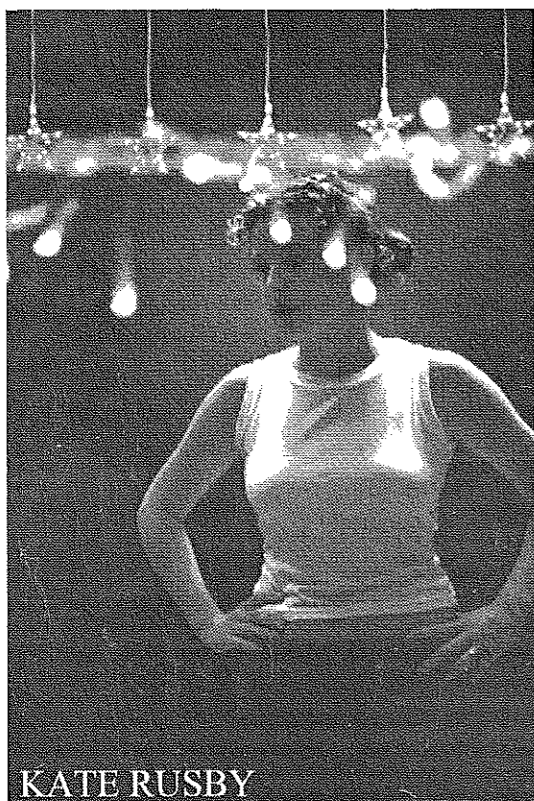
There are background notes on all of the songs and the whole package is well presented.. well .. er.. apart from the cover... let's just say that there probably isn't a marketing manager in the world that would have passed it as saleable! Never mind the cover, just close your eyes and listen and you'll not be disappointed... it's a bit like eating snails, the initial sight isn't appetising but the food is wonderful!!

The Pomeroy's can be contacted via e-mail on alan.pomeroy@bigpond.com Look out for them over here too - they make regular forays to the 'Mother Country'!

Derek Gifford

KATE RUSBY - 'Little Lights' [Pure Records PRCD07]

It would be easy to take a cursory listen to 'Little Lights' and tell you that it's just another Kate Rusby CD. This would dismiss the fact that, musically, she stands head and shoulders above folk contemporaries of her own age. So, yes, 'Little Lights' is



KATE RUSBY

just another *indispensable* Kate Rusby recording. I needn't tell you much about her vocal that you should already know is as sweet as a nut. However, there are a couple of elements that show Kate to be developing as an artist. Firstly, 'Little Lights'

contains five of her own compositions. This from a Barnsley lass who, not long ago, was so shy about her composing efforts that she didn't mention this in live performance. Now, 'Little Lights' reveals compositions that sit comfortably side by side with traditional songs. Indeed, a couple may well become minor classics. 'Who Will Sing Me Lullabies' is a heartfelt dedication to the recently departed Davy Steele. A song that is so sad and sensitive, it will have you reaching for a hanky to wipe away the tears (trust me, I know). Her 'I Courted A Sailor' has benefited from being played in the live set for some months as well as some tasty production work from John McCusker.

Kate is also making a habit of taking a standard and making it something of her own. Last time out; 'Our Town' by Iris Dement got the treatment. This time, Richard Thompson's 'Withered And Died' is taken to another dimension by a fine performance all round. Indeed, the playing across all the record is immaculate with contributions from Tim O'Brien, Danny Thompson, Alison Brown, The Grimethorpe Colliery Band and, even, Eddi Reader adding backing vocals. Of course, the usual suspects such as Andy Cutting, Michael McGoldrick, etc. are in place and organised by the aforementioned Mr. McCusker. If that isn't enough, America beckons with a record deal over there and a recent successful tour. If you ask me, there's no stopping her.

Steve Henderson

HILARY SPENCER - 'Afterimage' Strawberry Music (Sheffield) [SMSCD02]

This is Hilary Spencer's second CD and features a wide variety of songs ranging from the traditional ('Broomfield Wager', 'Twa' Magicians') to a range of illustrious and industrious songwriters such as Alan Bell, Peter Bellamy, Keith Marsden, Peter Knight, Brian Bedford, Les Barker and John Lennon/Paul McCartney. Hilary's singing is excellent and has been recorded/engineered to perfection. I much preferred the unaccompanied tracks with the exception of 'You Will Burn', which is a happy little song by Peter Knight. No one expects the Spanish Inquisition but after Hilary's rousing rendition you may want to leave the light on when you go to bed.

The CD demonstrates Hilary's versatility, passion, enthusiasm and humour in ample and equal proportions as promised on the sleeve notes. Humour is represented by two nautical (but nice) parodies of sea songs representing the extremes of wind power both for the speed of the sailing ships involved and the lung power required to steer the songs safely home. The title of the first of these and the fact that the author of the second is well known for his (in)exhaustible supply of words explains all. They are respectively 'Slowing Down To Lethargy' and Brian Bedford who's 'Willy Went To Sea' requires Hilary to accumulate 2m29s of air and check for any loose fillings before launching into the song. Additional humour is provided at normal speed by Les Barker's insight into the great porridge robbery perpetrated by Goldilocks, 'My Husband's Got No Porridge In Him'. The humorously incisive, 'Why Am I Painting The Living Room' by Lou and Peter Berryman of Wisconsin appropriately follows 'Alice White' and thus enables Hilary to approach Dulux for sponsorship.

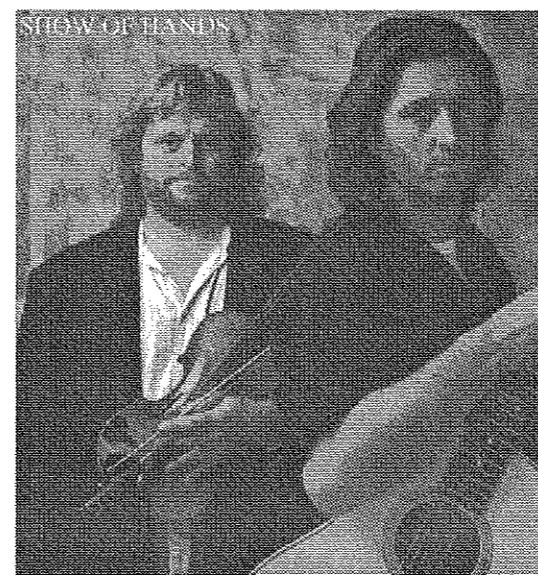
The first track was for me a disappointment as I was expecting 'Broomfield Wager' to be an unaccompanied song and found the attached guitar work to be too distracting from the lyrics of a great song. However the guitar (George Norris) and acoustic bass (Trevor Lines) find their rightful place and blend in beautifully on the second track 'Never Be The Sun' so all was forgiven. Further enhancements on several tracks were provided by Keith Kendrick on concertina and an esteemed chorus line up. However it was great to hear such good songs as 'Morley Main'

(Keith Marsden) and 'I Once Lived In Service' (Peter Bellamy) both sung a capella with great relish and such obvious enjoyment.

In conclusion this CD represents Hilary Spencer doing what she does best, indulging herself in the songs she has accumulated because she admires the style, the story, the sentiment, the songwriter and even the speed of the song. Indulge yourself, ignore the lethargy, stop painting the living room and string a few words together with great speed so that the postman in his Bedford can deliver your request with alacrity for a CD to Hilary Spencer, 368 Manchester Road, Deepcar, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S36 2RH. Tel 0114 2830531. e.mail:- hilary@hilaryspencer.com Website: www.hilaryspencer.com

SHOW OF HANDS - 'No Song To Sing' [Delta CD 47054]

The mere mention of Show Of Hands in some quarters causes pandemonium with grown men and women desperate to get a piece of their action. Indeed, a live recording of their fans annual pilgrimage to The Albert Hall in London is heading for the shops



as I write. Yet, to date, I must admit that they've passed by this reviewer to some extent. Having thoroughly enjoyed the acoustic show that they recently provided for long time supporters and North West Folk Club organisers, Ann and Eddie Green, I was pleased to find this CD dropping through the letter box for review though listening to it has got me rather confused.

According to the publicity blurb, 'No Song To Sing' is meant to act as an introduction to Show Of Hands as well as gathering together some of their rare recordings. Perhaps there is a conflict here, Mr. Record Company? Anyway, you'll see what I mean when I tell you that the tracks vary from their interpretations of traditional folk tunes such as 'John Riley' to covers of Little Feat and Radiohead. Yes, you read that correctly on the latter and, no, regarding the former, you can't beat Lowell George singing 'Willin'. Interpretations of these songs range from simple acoustic guitar and vocal to backing from Indian musicians on a live recording that takes in the Taj Mahal somewhere along the line. Now, those that know me from either lively conversation in local music venues or the columns of this magazine will know that my taste is wide enough to take on board all those elements. Indeed, my music collection includes Radiohead, Little Feat and traditional Indian music. However, is this really the Show Of Hands that is known and loved by the masses? I know they can pick a decent tune (Jethro Tull's 'Wondering Aloud', Jacques Brel's 'My Death', Nic Jones's 'Courting Is A Pleasure' and more). However, it seems that this is something of a 'catch all' bringing together various tracks that will be enjoyed by the established

fan but, surely, it is not an introduction to Show Of Hands for the uninitiated? Confused of Leyland.

Steve Henderson

SCOLD'S BRIDLE - 'Circumstances' [CRM 046]

Liz Moore and Sue Bousfield have been plying their trade on the folk scene for a number of years, but unlike many of their contemporaries they have continued to evolve and an evening spent in their company is both informative and pleasing on the ear. 'Circumstances', their current CD release is a true cross section of just such an event and represents another notch on their musical journey. Half of the tracks are traditional in origin, whilst they've called on some of the best songwriters around to provide real quality numbers.

'Blackfrost', is the ideal starting song, sung in perfect harmony, but will the subject of the song also finish in harmony? Liz leads on, 'Bedlam', again a song of love, seemingly a favourite subject with the girls. Sue takes over on, 'Lovers Task', a song that is self-explanatory as the title would suggest. Each of us has our own breaking point, reached, I would suggest in this instance, rather quickly by the object of her affection. Sue excels with her rendition of one of the most popular traditional songs, 'Though I Live Not Where I Love', covered by many, this version is up there with the best of them. Geoff Parry was responsible for the title track, 'Circumstances' We all change with each passing year and not always for the better, sadly. Great guitar from Liz with real quality harmony that we've come to expect.

A totally different beat and discipline is required on, 'Sweet William', but again the execution is spot on. A song something akin to, 'Matty Groves', is, 'Lucy Wan', who is the sad victim. Ron Baxter, Fleetwood's very own Neptune, penned, 'We've Fished These Grounds', a nostalgic look back at what was once a thriving industry, but bureaucracy has killed the fishing forever. A tale of lust, rather than love, is dealt with in, 'The Blacksmith'. The years certainly have not diluted the message that lies within. Ron Baxter's song of anxious hope, as the wives left behind on land, worry about their menfolk on the high seas. 'We Are The Women', is very poignant. 'The Quiet People', by Anne Lister, provides a real contrast. War is always a constant threat, be you pacifist or warmonger.



Solo accordion provides fitting accompaniment on, 'Pull For The Shore', ably backed by, 'Th' Antique Road Show'. From the sea to the land with, 'The Ploughman', a study of the strength needed to perform this arduous task. Another traditional number loved by many is, 'Do You Love An Apple?', constancy is the key to the song. Bill Caddick's wonderful, 'Unicorns', is the perfect choice for Liz and Sue on this album. Listening to the words you get a real picture of these mythical, graceful creatures in your minds eye. 'Fisherman's Dream', written by John Martyn is a

fitting finale in view of the girls love of the sea, something that stems from their Fylde coast roots.

The CD offers a good mix of material and displays Liz and Sue's considerable talent to its full potential. Chris Harvey at Cock Robin Studios has captured the essence of the material and maintained a fine balance in performance. Liz and Sue are finally making deserved progress and taking their music out to a wider audience. Their hard work and dedication deserves to succeed.

David Jones

MARTYN WYNDHAM-READ AND NO-MAN'S BAND - 'Where Ravens Feed' [FCD 157]

This CD is devoted exclusively to the songs of Teeside songwriter, Graeme Miles. Many singers over the past 30 years including, Vin Garbutt, Ewan MacColl, Archie Fisher and Bob Fox have covered his songs, whilst the Wilson Family also devoted a CD in 1980 to Graeme's material with such songs as, 'Ring Of Iron', 'My Eldorado' and 'The Shores Of Old Blighty'.

The songs on this CD have either never been recorded before or, if so, sung rarely. A slow deliberate journey, in late summer through the North York Moors was the inspiration for, 'Fair The Heather Grows', the change of colours between late summer and autumn is amazing. Guitar allied to accordion gives a jaunty treatment to, 'The Green Banks Of Grain', one of the tributaries to the River Esk.

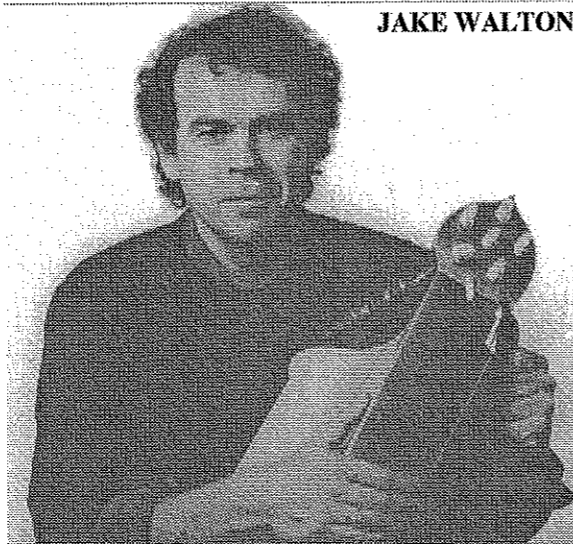
Down a gear, as we wait to cross the Tees by ferry. 'Waiting For The Ferry', is part of the, 'Aspects Of A Northern River', song cycle. The ferry travels between Middlesborough and Port Clarence. Understated accordion provides the strains as the lovers say a last farewell. A trip through the seasons is the key to, 'When The Green Man Walks The Forest'. Spring is seen as the re-newer of life, following the cold and lifeless winter. Based on a letter from one of Graeme's Irish friends, 'Smoke Over Belfast', written in 1972 is still sadly relevant today, despite new buildings springing up and much regeneration. The lack of any lasting solution to the problems hangs over the Province like a pall of smoke.

For me, the title track, 'Where Ravens Feed', has no equal. The more I hear it the more I understand the beauty of the great outdoors. Penned following a walk in the Honister Pass in the Lake District, the words are based on 1 Kings 17:6. It was a necessity for many to leave the land to seek employment in the cities. 'The Drift From The Land', tells how money is a far more powerful tool than any farm implement. 'Romney Way', is a series of walks undertaken on shingle beaches, hop gardens and fields in and around Kent, told in slow, deliberate tones. The life and times of the River Tees in the depths of winter are allied to the progression of a relationship. Good, rhythmic guitar is the key to, 'When The Tees Ran Warm'. Concertina and bass represent, 'The Eagle And The Dove', a song written about the Congolese war, with a traditional feel in its progression.

The Kent, Surrey and Sussex boundaries are cricketer strongholds. The area is known collectively as the Weald. 'The Wealden Men', harks back to cricket played by gentlemen for gentlemen. A fictitious town made up in this case from elements of West Hartlepool, Wearside and the city of Durham is the setting for, 'Over Yonder Banks', Martyn again excels both vocally and on guitar. The British Army and their preponderance for playing war games on the training ranges in peacetime are gently chided in, 'The Heath Of Luneburg', making sense of a situation which in reality made little or no sense at all. This song was written in 1955 as one way of passing the dark hours as a conscript, 'The Squaddie's Lullaby', has more than a hint of, "Kiss Me Goodnight

JAKE WALTON EMAIN (THE UNKNOWN LAND)

JAKE WALTON



Reviews

A celtic music pioneer before the term was invented returns with a mystical album. But Jake Walton's spiritualism is firmly rooted in the solid values of the folk singer - songwriter and when he cranks his hurdy-gurdy into action, you have to sit up and pay attention...
Mojo - Colin Irwin (March 2001).

His stunning guitar and hurdy-gurdy playing are in a class all their own. The songwriting is of a very high standard and originals like 'The Plain of Silver' and the adapted John Masefield poem 'The West Wind' are not exceptions but the rule.

Time Out - John Crosby (Jan 2001).

Songs such as 'The West Wind' and the title track shimmer like a distant heat haze. All told this is a fascinating and endearing release. With guests the like of Mike O'Connor on fiddle and Jez Lowe, harmony vocals, added to Jake's guitar and effective though never overused hurdy gurdy, this results in a haunting filmic, almost trance-like quality at times. Dazzling stuff!

The instrumentals are robustly stirring, the harmonic modulations attractive and 'Emain' makes for music of the lasting kind. Enchanting.

Folk North West - Clive Pownceby (June 2001).

This is a beautifully wrought album.

Ralph McTell.

Prices and further details:-

Emain £11 including post and packing.

Two a Roue £13 including post and packing.

Available from Jake Walton, P.O. Box 2,

Wadebridge, Cornwall, PL27 6YJ.

For bookings and further information please

contact Mel: 01395 579089

or visit www.jakewaltonmusic.co.uk

Sgt. Major", about it.

For the final track it's batten down the hatches cut wood and stack coke, winter and more especially snow is imminent. 'When The Snows Of Winter Fall', is a slow air, beautifully delivered. Martyn is an outstanding singer and instrumentalist who has captured the life, thoughts and music of Graeme Miles superbly. Iris Bishop adds duet concertina and accordion 'Par Excellence' giving this CD a real quality feel in every way.

Paul and Linda Adams at Fellside recordings have added their usual expertise and touch to what for me is one of the outstanding recordings of the year so far.

David Jones

SONGS FROM HAMPSHIRE COMMUNITY CHOIRS 'Beneath Our Changing Sky' [Wild Goose WGS302CD]

This CD is the culmination of a Traditional Arts Project funded by Hampshire C.C. and Southern Arts through their Folk Development Agency. The two community choirs involved, Andover Museum Loft Singers and Broughton Village Choir, are both situated in the beautiful Test valley district of Hampshire.

I have to admit that I always worry a little about choirs tackling English folk song in case we get barbers'-shop type or other inappropriate harmonies! However, these choirs have been led by TAPS Artistic Director, Roger Watson who most of you will remember is a traditionalist folk performer and therefore unlikely to resort to anything untoward! He has been more than ably assisted by Sarah Morgan and Paul Sartin with both directing the choirs and researching the sources of the songs.

The arrangements are based on three or four-part harmonies echoing the styles adopted by 'West Gallery' church music or those of rural traditional singers such as the Copper family of Sussex. Thus the arrangements, the almost faultless singing and the texture of the sound are all very well produced. The performances have been authentically recorded in the Church of St. Mary the Less, Chilbolton, near Stockbridge in Hampshire giving a very rounded sound to the production. Unfortunately, as is the way with this sort of treatment, it is the dynamics that suffer and some of the songs end up with little emotion or expression.

The material is varied and includes some old favourites such as 'When This Old Hat Was New', 'Fathom The Bowl' and 'The Streams of Lovely Nancy'. There are also lesser known songs (in this part of the world anyway!) such as 'The Farmer's Arms' and the title song 'Beneath Our Changing Sky' the lyrics of which were created by children from Wherwell Primary School as part of a TAPS song writing project in 1995. There are also interesting and unusual versions of 'Young Edwin in the Lowlands' and 'The Night Visiting Song'. (The use of the definite article in the last title is misleading, of course, as it should be 'A Night Visiting Song'!)

I suspect that the majority of the sales of this CD will be to people local to the Test valley and the friends and relatives of the choirs but it will also appeal to those who like to hear good harmony singing and those who might be involved in local community choirs. If you'd like a copy you can contact WildGoose Studios, May Cottage, Wherwell, Hampshire SP11 7JS.

Derek Gifford.

(Ed:- Apologies in particular to Martin Long whose CD review is second in line for inclusion after Graham Holland's in the next issue and to anyone else we may have overlooked.)

PRESS RELEASE



Middlewich Folk & Boat Festival 2001

Just a brief note to everyone at Folk North West to say thank you. Thank you for being the ONLY folk magazine to offer a refund for advertising already booked and paid for, prior to cancellation of the festival this year due to the foot and mouth epidemic. The refund is accepted with gratitude and will not be forgotten.

Middlewich Folk & Boat Festival 2002.

As can be seen from the ad, plans have already begun for 2002. Federation Folk Clubs are most welcome to be part of Middlewich next year. As the 'festival fringe' continues to grow, a select number of venues are beginning to understand - at last - that acoustic sessions and singarounds can be just as popular as bands providing a full-on show (and full-on PA)!

So how about hosting a couple of sessions or singarounds during the festival weekend? Or why not be part of the '2002 Folk Club Showcase' - why not do both??

Give me a call to find out more ie free camping, free tickets, free beer????????????

Regards - Dave Thompson Tel: 01606 836896 (after 6pm).

FIREBRAND - New Album and Tour in October.

Acoustic five piece Firebrand are pleased to announce an October tour with an exciting new line up and a brand new album. In fact the album is so new it is as yet untitled at the time of going to press. The original three piece line up of John Harris (Celtic harp/vocals), Peter Miln (fiddle/vocals) and Daniel James (cittern/vocals) has now been augmented by fantastic young vocalist (and double bass player) Miranda Sykes and sparkling flute virtuoso Imogen O'Rourke. Miranda's vocals and double bass add even greater richness and power to the sound of Firebrand in addition to a greater diversity of influences with her Lincolnshire roots. Brilliant young flautist Imogen O'Rourke brings even more diversity with her incredible technical abilities as a tune player, tune writer and arranger.

Firebrand play traditional and original material with acoustic instruments in a contemporary and unique style. Their music comes from the four corners of the British Isles as well as mainland Europe and is arranged with great sophistication and sensitivity, giving new vitality to traditional songs and tunes in addition to creating some wonderful original material. They give great attention to vocal and instrumental harmonies and draw on a wide range of influences for their backings including jazz, funk and even classical elements.

Fans of Firebrand will already be familiar with their previous CD album Kyng Horn which received excellent reviews from as far afield as the USA. They have even higher hopes for the new album (see review of pre release tracks on page 51) which will be out in October to coincide with the tour. Full details will be announced on their website as soon as they become available. The address is www.firebrand.org.uk

Anthem- A music network for Wales

Anthem is the name for a new and ambitious project to promote further the music industry in Wales, an industry which already makes a significant contribution to the Welsh economy.

Anthem has two main objectives- to collect details about all the individuals and bodies who provide music-related services- from the national orchestra to individual piano tuners or small music shops- the traditional to the modern- and everyone who is involved in music promotion from the National Eisteddfod to people who organise music concerts of any type in village halls, and to make that information available nationally and internationally, to be published as a Welsh Music Directory and via a web-site. Anthem will also be working towards creating new networks and partnerships, encouraging individuals and companies to work together for the benefit of their businesses and to enable them to benefit from the expertise in music and music technology that exists within the School of Music at the University of Wales, Bangor.

The Project, which is to be launched during the National Eisteddfod of Wales at Denbigh, follows a successful grant application by the University's School of Music to the Knowledge Exploitation Fund, to ensure that the music sector in Wales is aware of and can access the knowledge and expertise within the School of Music.

"Our aim is to create a new music network in Wales. Through our experience of working with music companies we have seen how co-operation can lead to new ideas, markets, products and audiences. By working on joint projects we have also been able to transfer new skills and techniques to the recording industry in Wales," said Wyn Thomas of the University's School of Music, who will be leading the project.

"The concept is not unique, the Irish Music Network provides an excellent example for us to emulate. There are also publications such as the Irish Music Handbook, a similar publication in Scotland and the British Music Yearbook, but nothing exists for Wales. Creating a Directory for Welsh Music would enable people from within Wales and beyond, who want to work or organise concerts in Wales, to be able to find all the resources they may need," added Wyn Thomas.

The University will be employing two researchers to work on the project, with one based in Bangor and the other in Cardiff. The Network will also invite specialists who can share expertise and training in other areas such as copyright law, European legislation and e-commerce, all of which may be of particular interest to small businesses working in the music field. Anyone who would like to be included in the project should contact the School of Music by e mail to Anthem@bangor.ac.uk or by post to the Anthem Project, School of Music, University of Wales, Bangor, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2DG.

As well as their expertise in traditional Welsh music the School boasts a digital recording studio of professional standard and two state of the art composition studios. The School of Music has a range of facilities and expertise including: a music library containing over 20,000 scores and over 15,000 commercial recordings; an Archive of Welsh traditional music, supported by the Arts Council of Wales and by private funds; a large concert hall seating 700 people and a smaller concert hall seating 200 people; the Welsh Music Institute, which carries out research and publishes the journal, Welsh Music History.

The School has an excellent reputation for its standard of teaching and is recognised as an innovator in its approach to working with business- it was the first humanities department in the UK

to adopt the TCS Programme - a scheme developed for engineering and adapted to sciences to enable transfer of expertise between university and industry. The Department has worked recently with Sain Cyf, The Old Smithy Recording Studios (Worcester), Carreg Ateb (Caernarfon) and London Sinfonietta Orchestra.

Folkus - The Folk Arts Network of the North West Newsletter

The organising committee of Folkus, the Folk Arts Network of the North West, is pleased to announce the completion of the spring 2001 series of musical workshops. These one day workshops were staged in Leyland and Burnley. In addition Folkus provided tutors for workshops at Oswaldtwistle, in support of the Lancashire Clog & Fold Festival in May. Further workshops were recently staged in Poulton le Fylde to support the Lancashire based youth musical initiative. This half day workshop attracted a great deal of interest and also attracted many people of all ages to attend musical workshops for the first time.

The organising committee is now planning the autumn tour of workshops. Folkus will be providing tutors and workshops at the Fylde Folk Festival on Saturday 1st September and also for the Clocks Back Festival in Lancaster in October. With a brief, to stage as many workshops as possible reaching out to the communities throughout Lancashire, Folkus will be organising full one day workshops in Clitheroe, Ormskirk and Preston between October and December 2001. Full details will be published soon.

Folkus can now offer tuition in workshops for Guitar, Penny Whistle, Melodeon, Bodhran (Irish Drum), Fiddle, Piano, Accordion, Keyboards. Workshops on other instruments such as Concertina, Banjo or Voice can be arranged depending on demand and advance notice. The Folkus tutors are very experienced musicians and performers in their own right and are very enthusiastically teaching and passing on their skills at the workshops.

A full residential weekend of music, workshops and concerts is now under consideration for the autumn. Further details to follow soon.

As Folkus activities have become more widely known during the last year, people from all over the North West have attended the workshops. The Folkus data base includes the names of men and women and young people who live as far apart as Barrow, Carlisle, Manchester, Liverpool, Accrington, Lancaster and Blackpool, not forgetting our supporter from Kirkby Stephen.

The Folkus committee is also very pleased and proud to announce that Roisin Boadle of St. Anne's, has qualified to enter the World Championships of Irish Traditional Music which takes place in August in Listowel, County Kerry. Roisin won the Slow Airs category for the Penny Whistle. Roisin has attended every Folkus workshop from the beginning, though she was primarily a pupil for the Penny Whistle. She can now play Fiddle and Bodhran. Roisin is a very talented young lady. The organising committee of Folkus is proud to have played a part in the development of Roisin's musical talent and wish her every success in Ireland.

Folkus is currently exploring the possibility of staging small concerts throughout Lancashire featuring outstanding musicians from the Indian, Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities, in addition to supporting touring bands from Europe and the New World.

A Folkus leaflet detailing Folkus activities is freely available. For

further details and information on Folkus contact me at the following address:- Alan Bell, Folkus, 55 The Strand, Fleetwood, Lancashire. FY7 8NP. Tel. 01253 872317. Fax: 01253 878382. Email: alanbell@fylde-folk-fest.demon.co.uk. Or visit our website: www.folkus.co.uk

HORSE or HOARSE?

A rustic respite, celebrating a **Festival of The Horse** will take place on Saturday 8th September at Lytham Green (opposite the Clifton Hotel), Lytham St Anne's, Lancashire. This is an event for horse lovers from all disciplines of equestrian activity. It will feature the Bishop of Lancaster (in a horse drawn dray), The Mayor and Mayoress of Fylde, The Freckleton Brass Band (National Champions '97-'98) plus celebrity guests. The day will feature a celebration of all aspects of the horse, donkey rides and traditional roundabouts, horse stories and anecdotes and community singing. There will be free commemorative rosettes for all entrants. Horse-back blessings for all will be provided by The Canterin Canon of Lytham. Ample car and box parking available, for more information please contact Toby Burnham on 0207 291 6383.

Direct Roots: The guide to folk, roots and related music and arts in the British Isles

The first in-depth guide to what's happening beneath the surface of the folk, roots and acoustic music business.

Published by Mrs Casey Music on 1st June 2001, **Direct Roots** is the new directory, resource book for the folk, roots and acoustic music business. It contains thousands of verified free entries, these provide:

Contacts for artists, venues, festivals, record labels, media, organisations and services.

The guide will detail resources in the ten English regions plus focus sections on Ireland, Wales and Scotland with a special European chapter.

How is this directory different?

The thousands of entries are annotated to help find the right artist, venue, festival or service. It contains recommendations and pointers from dozens of people at grass roots, it has detailed lead articles by specialist in the field like **Colin Irwin, Ian Anderson, John Kirkpatrick, Andrew Cronshaw, John Howson** and many more.

Rooting around the Net is a guide to folk and roots music on the web.

If you need to be more convinced, there are articles introducing **World Roots UK, Irish Music, Ceilidh, English Traditional Music, African, Caribbean, Asian, Latin, Cajun, Blues, Bluegrass, Street bands, Storytelling, Morris, Community Arts, Customs, Percussive Dance** and many more - all with detailed resource lists.

With a **foreword by Martin Carthy MBE**, the first volume of this long awaited and much needed guide to the fast expanding corner of the arts will be an invaluable guide to anyone interested in knowing more about the business, finding the contact, instrument, venue or just learning more about the music, dance & song available in the British Isles today.

How Do You Get A Copy?

Direct Roots is available on mail order from Mrs Casey Music at a discounted price of only **£17.50** (normally £20.00) including p&p. in the UK (add £2.50 for overseas orders). All prices in UK Sterling.

Website: www.direct-roots.com Email mailorder@direct-roots.com Tel: 01296 433669 Fax: 01296 392300

Also available in many good bookshops and record stores or from **The Music Room** and **Hobgoblin**.

STOP PRESS If you or someone you know should be listed or quoted in Direct Roots and are missing from this section - fill in an entry form at www.direct-roots.com or email us on info@direct-roots.com. Don't be missing from Volume 2 due out in 2002.

THE WRIGLEY SISTERS

It's ten whole years since the first album which launched those prodigious musical daughters of the Orkneys, JENNIFER and HAZEL WRIGLEY. They are celebrating this fact with a new album entitled, 'Skyran', (which means, "to glitter brightly" in the Old Orkney language, Norn). And what's more, they are releasing it on their own label Geo Sound which is named after the beach in Deerness where the twins used to play as children.

In addition to this step further into the music business Jennifer and Hazel have an extravaganza of events and unusual collaborations to look forward to over the next 12 months. At the grand old age of twenty six, they are professional music veterans enjoyed by audiences all over the world, as much for their sense of humour and joy of the music as for their technical ability and they'll be showing this in their third World Tour series which begins in earnest in September 2001 and runs on to May 2002.

The twins have come a long way in the ten years since their first duo album 'Dancing Fingers'. Since then they have justifiably earned jointly a high reputation as musicians of considerable skill, integrity, competence and originality. They compose much of the music they play, they've played for the late Yehudi Menuhin, performed in front of 20,000-plus people at festivals in America, organised two world tours, collaborated on a range of projects with story-tellers, other musicians and all-female line-ups and they continue to nurture others as instrumental teachers.

The Wrigley Sisters' new CD was launched at the 19th Orkney Folk Festival in late May 2001 as a gesture to the influence their beautiful home islands continue to exert on their music. Although this hardly needs underlining for it is self-evident to everyone who meets them that the islands' influence permeates all their work. 'Skyran' contains many original compositions and some previously unrecorded Orkney tunes and features a small handful of favourite Orkney musicians on fiddle, double bass and accordion.

Fiddler, Jennifer Wrigley, said, 'We are really excited about returning home for this event and it means a lot to us to be able to put something back into our roots'. Hazel Wrigley who plays guitar and keyboards with equal facility said, 'Our Skyran album has resulted in a unique collaboration with a range of jewellery from Sheila Fleet. It happened very naturally as we are both from Orkney's East Mainland and were at school with her children. Sheila has named her collection 'Skyran' and individual pieces are named after tunes and sets in the album'.

Asked about the last ten years, Hazel commented, 'Far more has happened in the last ten years than we ever imagined possible. We are absolutely exhausted but really excited. There are several projects yet to be started, like a book of Orkney tunes and we have some ideas for television about music on the road ... so maybe in the next ten years...'

Well, 'maybe' indeed. But if the next decade is anything like the last, The Wrigley Sisters will be a seriously major force in Scottish traditional music by 2011. Watch this space! For information about where the Wrigley Sisters are appearing check <http://www.stoneyport.demon.co.uk/gigs/allgigs.html#wrig>

PRE LAUNCH CD REVIEWS



ANTHONY JOHN CLARKE - 'An Acquaintance Of Mine'
[OSMOSYS CD018]

Album launch Friday 19th October STANDISH FOLK CLUB

Anthony John Clarke's first and second albums were in the main exploratory and experimental. They possessed all the ingredients of an artist finding his feet and making mistakes. There was self-indulgence a naivety and a lack of confidence. How quickly things changed for this charming Irishman. With the advent of 1997's superb 'Straight On-No Problem' and the inspired 'Man With a Red Guitar' in 1999, Anthony John Clarke became an artist to be reckoned with; an artist with a lot to say and an artist in demand. So along comes the new collection, 'An Acquaintance Of Mine'. I put it on in anticipation and my word I am not disappointed. This album contains some of the most touching and searching songs that the folk world has welcomed in for some time. The ideas are fresh and well treated. I listen to 'The Wrong Way Round' first of all (Track 5) I heard the song at a concert recently and wanted to see if it sat comfortably on an album. It is the strange tale of Jesus arriving in Northern Ireland at Christmas and is as novel as it is exciting. The lyric is bizarre and enthralling. Like Anthony's best work, it pulls you in and asks you questions. The end result is a wonderful piece of writing with all the art and sensitivity I would expect from this talented and poetic songwriter.

To be honest though I have not always been a fan. The first time I heard Anthony John Clarke I winced at the banality of a song entitled 'Replay' from the first album 'I Get Lost'. How strange that that CD from 1992 should have hidden such gems as 'Short Weekend' and 'Seven In Ireland'. Several albums and hundreds of concerts and ten years later he makes no such mistakes. The title track on this new album 'An Acquaintance Of Mine' is Anthony's greatest achievement yet. The song on first hearing is reminiscent of the road songs. Two lovers meeting in the wilderness of life at a lonely hotel may not be the most original idea but then Anthony John Clarke paints that idea in to the most wonderful scenario full of mystery and romance. I heard the song for the first time at Parkgate Folk Club in July and it took my breath away. It is truly evidence if indeed evidence is needed that this Irishman is turning out some of the best tunes and stories around. There is even a 'live' version tagged onto the end of the album as a bonus track that has just one guitar, Anthony himself and a pair of backing vocalists. It's an exceptional song.

Regulars at Anthony's shows will know that he lives not on ballads alone. There is still the smattering of witty anecdotal mischief that we associate him with. 'Smooth Old Talk' is great fun as is 'That's Life' which again holds appeal for men of forty plus who think life has passed them by. The arrangements are 'a cut above' as they say and the musicians (mainly unknowns) are obviously folk of considerable talent and ability. Anthony's version of Pete Abbott's 'Another Evening In' is delicately delivered and the vocal arrangement fits like a glove. A brief chat with Anthony recently lets me in on a secret that Anthony is a big fan of the Lancashire songwriter. Anthony invited Pete to play on the album and the collaboration has certainly been fruitful. Add to this new songs about women and alcohol, bar room romances and Dublin at 5pm and the picture is slowly completed. If there is a flaw it's

possibly Anthony's inclusion of 'Killaloo' by Dave Shannon. I know he does it live from time to time but it's not a favourite of mine. I heard this track as an unnecessary cover in the midst of gems. Therapy did it years back and it should have been left with them.

So what have we here? A singer songwriter of importance and note. A performer so in tune with his growing audience that he never disappoints. An album of quality recorded with professionalism and care surpassing much around him. A modest individual who spent nearly all the time I chatted with him telling me how great other people were and how he felt lucky every time the phone went with someone wanting to book him. He still talks about the small crowds and the early days. The joy of breaking into the clubs in Scotland and being accepted. The excitement of working with the likes of Frances Black and Sean Keane. Most importantly though Anthony talks about the friends he has made. They were there in abundance at Parkgate and Westhoughton Folk Clubs, all respectfully listening to a songwriter singing about real things that actually touch their lives. Respectful, humorous, witty and charming - 'An Acquaintance Of Mine' contains all these facets of Anthony's personality. Go no further if you must than Track 3 'Johnny Bought Himself A Brand New Guitar - It was Red'. If it's a self-parody, it works! If it's a song about us all we welcome it. When I'd heard the album through three times and played my favourites into the early hours, I had only one option. I made a quick tape for the car and looked forward to a long and healthy acquaintance with Anthony John Clarke. Then I remembered that this singer songwriter has already given us 'The Broken Years', 'Irish Eyes', 'The Only Life Gloria Knows' and 'Lies!'. He is truly the troubadour and balladeer. Tucked in at the end of the album is a new song 'No Excuses'. It's up there with the best of them. So I'm a fan now. There are thousands like me.

David Gamble

FIREBRAND - Pre Release Tracks from New Album

The first thing that strikes you about this pre release CD of 5 tracks is the flute playing of Imogen O'Rourke. It is both breathy and breathtaking and the opening track is a great delight. I do not like reviewing CD's that I am not keen on and since I have got a strong traditional bias I was concerned that the modern influences described in the press release would, for me, get in the way of a good tune. Instead a good tune with not such an inspiring title, 'Oikish Pete Set' was made great and I eagerly awaited the second track which is a song entitled 'Moll Malone' which again has a traditional feel but with a refreshing vitality about it that I'm rather getting to like. There's hope for me yet and I shall eagerly await the full CD and an opportunity to see them perform live.

Track three is called 'Mad Mothers' though I expect the respective mothers of the band members will be glad to hear this instrumental track if a little dubious about the choice of title. 'Will Ye Go To Flanders' is sung with great clarity and expression, ably accompanied with the double bass much in evidence and the fiddle to the fore between the verses. Well done and yes I will go to Flanders if Firebrand are there performing this song. The final track with the title 'New Breton Set' features the celtic harp of John Harris augmented by the flute and ably supported by the other instruments and then switches to the fiddle and the double bass a neat and seamless transition that works really effectively and brings a more European feel to the track. By now I even like this and so the 5 tracks have broadened my musical tolerance, no mean achievement. Well done Firebrand, this is a brand of fire that will turn up the heat in our homes in the autumn and winter months to come when it is ignited in October and the sparks start to fly.

Ken Bladen

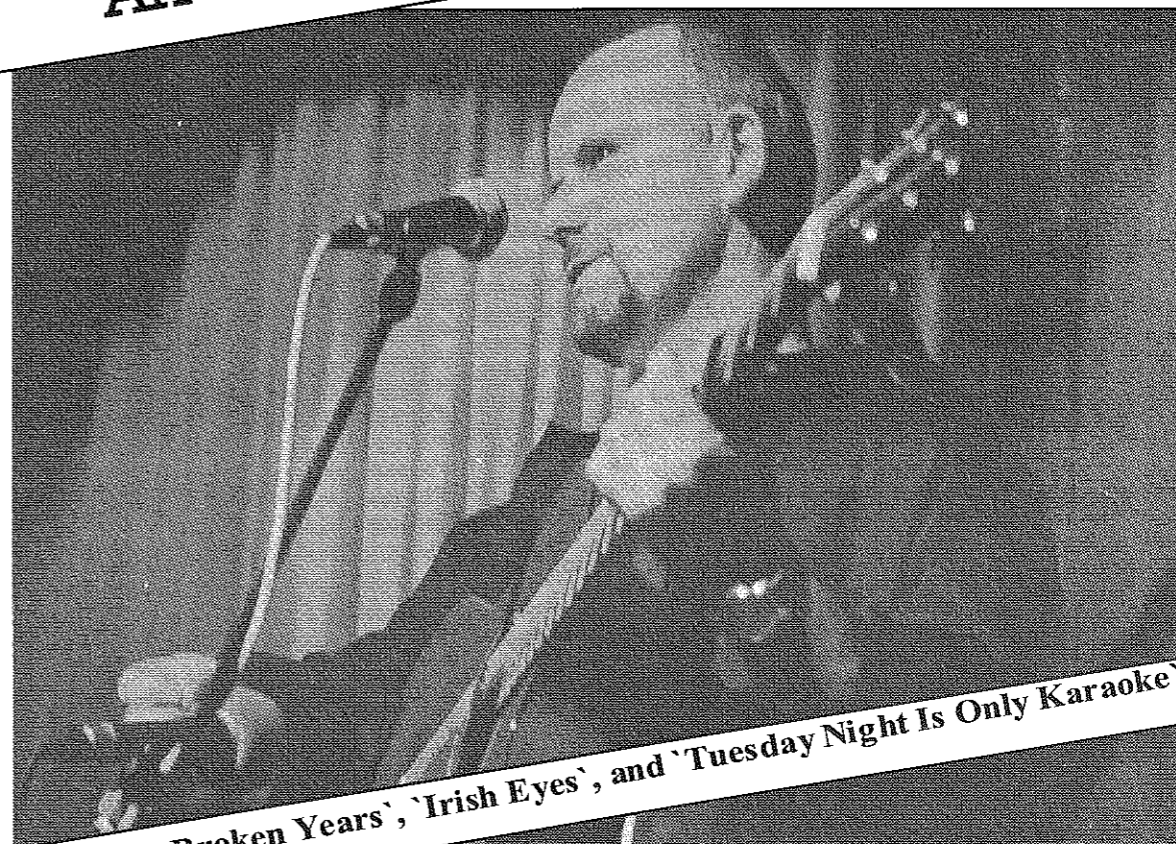
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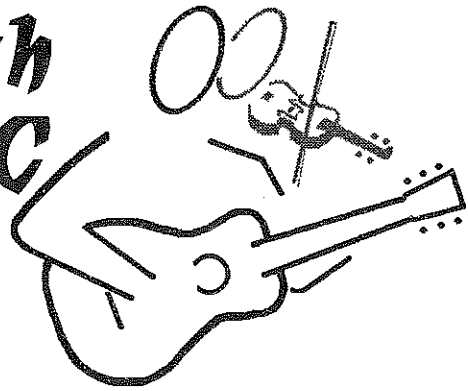
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