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NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN FOLK MUSIC CLUB INCORPORATED

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MEMORIES OF OUR NORMAL TUESDAY EVENING SESSIONS—NOW GOING VIRTUAL WITH ZOOM!



Photo by Stephen Whiteside

VFMC MEMBERS—PLEASE NOTE: Due to the current coronavirus pandemic, all our normal upcoming musical and dance events have been cancelled until further notice. Items for the newsletter are most welcome!

**PLEASE SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR MAY NEWSLETTER
BY: FRIDAY 17TH APRIL TO: EDITOR@VFMC.ORG.AU**

CLUB EVENT CALENDAR

Club Sessions

Every Tuesday except the 2nd (concert night), Ringwood East Community Hall, Knaith Rd Reserve. 7.30 Australian Folk Songs; 8.00-10.15 main supportive round robin session for singing, playing, reciting, performing, yarns, workshops, etc. Supper. \$5 members, \$6 non members. The 4th Tues is for all-in round robin tunes, dance sets & group singing. All welcome. www.vfmc.org.au

Guest Performer Concert

On the second Tuesday of the month (instead of the weekly session) a concert is held featuring top acoustic performers. Ringwood East Community Hall. Concerts start with open stage acts at 7.45pm, finishing 10.15pm. \$14, \$12 conces and \$10 members, kids no charge. All welcome. www.vfmc.org.au

By-Ear Sessions

To be organised at a future date hopefully.

Ringwood Colonial Dance

Family Bush Dance, first Saturday of every month except January 8-11pm at the Ringwood East Senior Citizens Hall, Laurence Grove. A different band each month and all ages are welcome. \$12, \$10 concession and members, kids free. No charge. Contact: Jane 9762-1389 / www.vfmc.org.au

Ringwood Children's Dance

Every 3rd Saturday of each month except December and January. 2-3.30pm at the Ringwood East Senior Citizens Hall, Laurence Grove. Live band each month. All school age children welcome. \$5 a child, \$10 a family. Adults free.

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31st					1st May	2nd VFMC Dance CANCELLED
3rd	4th	5th Club Session CANCELLED	6th	7th	8th	9th
10th	11th	12th Concert Night CANCELLED	13th	14th	15th	16th Children's Dance CANCELLED
17th	18th	19th Club Session CANCELLED	20th	21st	22nd	23rd
24th	25th	26th Club Session CANCELLED	27th	28th	29th	30th

WE'RE ZOOMING INTO THE FUTURE—OR ACTUALLY INTO THE (CORONAVIRUS) PRESENT

On Tuesday evening 7th April the VFMC attempted something new and scary - and exciting. We had our very first ZOOM session! Thanks largely to the efforts of Bill Buttler and his superior IT skills, about 12 or 13 VFMC members bravely hooked up with each other via computer from our houses. We all agreed that we'd had enough of social isolation!

We were all earlier provided (by Bill) with an ID number and a password, which we had to activate by 7.30 pm. There were of course some technical hitches at first, with some of us having audio problems—either being unable to hear each other or not being able to be heard ourselves. But then we settled down and began to play music...

Unfortunately, we could only hear ONE person at a time or a duo if they live together, so solo performances were mostly the go. We could, however, all play along and feel quite relaxed knowing that our mistakes could not be heard by others unless we were the soloist at that moment. Overall this session with a difference went quite well, although there were random technical problems, such as the audio gradually fading during a soloist's performance and strange beeps and buzzes interfering—surely a case of GREMLINS!? But one of the best things about it all was actually seeing each other's faces after so long!



The following Tuesday, 14th April, was a little different, with far less technical hitches (although we kept being timed out) and a more structured format—members being on a pre-organised list and music displayed on the screen for others to play along with. It is all a steep learning curve at the moment!



During the weekend between these two weeks, several members also joined an extra Zoom meeting to wish Don Gingrich (who has been ill for some time) a Happy Birthday. It was great to see him smiling, singing and strumming his guitar again! And please note the balloons in the background. The wonders of technology in social isolation!

- report by Maggie Somerville ; photos by Stephen Whiteside

IN PLACE OF CONCERT NIGHT REPORT—

Let's forget coronavirus and take a look at some folk news from over 50 years ago:-

The Tribune – Wednesday February 14, 1968

Port Phillip Goes Folk - by WENDY LOWENSTEIN

The second Port Phillip Festival was held in Melbourne over the Australia Day weekend at the Pharmacy College. More than two hundred artists took part, of whom about half had travelled from all parts of Australia and even New Zealand for the occasion.

Folk music from all over the world was presented with the emphasis on folklore with an Australian setting. Many of the songs were contemporary, written by Australians about questions of the day. In fact the Contemporary Concert, arranged by Geoff Wills of Brisbane's Union Singers was the first to put up the Full House sign. This concert brought forward an almost completely new group of young songwriters.

Scots-born Harry Robertson, another member of the Union Singers, was a star of the Festival, both at the Contemporary Concert, the big Sunday night concert and at the Sea Shanties Concert where his was the only modern shanty to be sung.

Former Sydney singer Declan Affley sang Harry's songs "Queensland Whalers", "Homeless Man" and "Antarctic Fleet" at the Sunday night concert. "In the Antarctic" said Harry "they shout 'Thar she blows', but in Queensland they shout "There goes a bloody beauty mate, so take your finger out.""

Geoff Wills, who is probably the most dedicated singer of songs in the labour movement, sings songs "which remind workers of the achievements of the unions and the dignity of labor." He said, "At every strike meeting, someone at some stage should sing a song." He illustrated his point by singing the Basic Wage Dream, an early Don Henderson song about the Arbitration Court judge who, hearing that he hasn't long to live, decides to make up for his unjust past by giving the workers a whacking great rise and making it retrospective to 1907. Mayne Nickless has to send an armoured car to see the men home safely with their wages!

The Festival wasn't only full of contemporary songs. Far from it! There were thirty different talks, workshops and concerts during the weekend with up to four sessions going at a time. There were illustrated talks on the Blues, English Industrial Songs by Mark Gregory, and a concert for children. There was a workshop on Australian Hillbilly songs run by bandleader Mike Hayes, and another on Instrumental Techniques by Chris Duffy. American Country Music, Greek Music, Negro Music and the Influence of Pop and Folk on each other, were all songs run by bandleader Mike Hayes, and another on Instrumental Techniques by Chris Duffy. The Negro music concert featured many singers plus the Langford Lever, Adderley Smith and Gut Bucket Jug bands.

But perhaps the most astonishing feature of the Festival was the number and variety of talks held. They covered a wide range of topics in which a panel of Australia's most distinguished authorities, both academic and non academic, took part. Alan Marshall, Bill Wannan, Richard Leach and others delighted the audience in The Talkers' Workshop in a yarn swapping session which developed into one of those rare affairs when the division between audience and speaker was quite lost.

(continued over...)

IN PLACE OF CONCERT NIGHT REPORT (cont.)

Wagga Teachers' College gave a fascinating talk on "Using Folklore in Teaching the Social Sciences" and Dr. Edgar Waters of the University of Papua New Guinea spoke on the "Anglo-American Background of Australian Folksongs."

Dr. Ian Turner of Monash University spoke on "Australian Children's Play Rhymes" illustrated by tapes made by the Folk Lore Society of Australia, and Mr. Weston Bate of Melbourne University and Mr. Ian Jones and Mr. Hugh Anderson took part in a panel discussion with the other historians and folklorists on "Oral History, what it is and its uses for the historian". Shirley Andrews ran an illustrated, all-join-in workshop demonstration of Australian Traditional Dancing.

One outstanding feature of the Festival was a Come-all-ye, or continuous concert. It provided all comers with an opportunity to take part in the Festival program and featured most of the well known artists as well as the unknown. It proved most popular with audiences, too.

Perhaps the most valuable feature of the Festival was the opportunity to meet other singers, other folklorists, other collectors and other academics all in a pleasant, if exceedingly hectic, weekend. Many fruitful ideas for future meetings, festivals, and activities flowed from the endless cups of coffee in the caf, and the glasses of beer at the Sarah Sands Hotel just up the road. In addition there was a wonderful party where the entire company danced wild Irish reels and jigs to the incredibly lively, and somewhat demented music of the Monaro Boys from Canberra.

I can't mention all of them, but folkwise, I think you could say "You name 'em, we had 'em" and if we didn't have 'em this time, we certainly will next time!

Bob Michell and Mike O'Rourke from Brisbane were there, along with Margaret Kitamura, Jean Lewis, Carol and Mike Wilkinson, Colin Dryden, Peter Parkhill, Brian Grayson, Danny Gillespie, Mike Eves, Mike McLellan, Don Henderson and lots of others from Sydney, Jock Munro's Skillet Lickers from Adelaide, Ron Piper from Yellourn Folk Club, people from Newcastle Folk Club, from Flinders University, as well as singers like Danny Spooner and Gordon McIntyre, Shayna Karlin, Norm and Pat O'Connor, Gwenda Davey, Glenn Foster, Margaret Roadknight, Glen Tomassetti, the Bush Band, and the most fabulous singer of all, Cyril Phillips, a farmer from Sussex, England, who, dressed in a century old shepherd's smock, sheepskin beard and red spotted kerchief, showed everyone something about traditional folk-singing and good fellowship.

In all, the folk festival showed the existence of a really big interest in folklore and folk music. It's grown immensely since last year and this sort of Festival, which must spread to other states and proliferate, provides a stimulus and focus for an immensely popular, broad mass folk movement.

- with thanks to Stephen Whiteside for finding and providing this article from Trove

The Dance Pages



Diary dates for May:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
ALL	EVENTS	CANCELLED	AT	PRESENT	DUE TO	THE GLOBAL
PANDEMIC	CRISIS					
						

Photo by Trevor Voake

As this would normally be one of the Dance Pages—memories:-



Note the appalling lack of social distancing!



- photos by Trevor Voake

Tell Me, Please...

Tell me, please, coronavirus,
Of what fate are you desirous?
Do you wish to prosper long?
Maybe you have got things wrong.
Can't you see that if you kill
Us you must also take a spill,
For you cannot for long survive
Outside a being that's alive.
If your host draws their last breath,
It won't be long before your death.
Perhaps you would be safer in
A bat, or little pangolin.
After all, they cannot plan
To bring you down as well as Man.
Then again, I guess you'd say
You're pretty comfy either way.
Things, for you, are looking good
In nearly every neighbourhood.
Enjoy, for now, your victory.
It won't be long – just wait and see –
Before we have a new vaccine
Guaranteed to wipe you clean
From all groups of humanity,
No matter where they choose to be.
People in the highest hills
Will be protected from your ills,
While dwellers of the lowlands, too,
Will fear you no more than the flu.
Your number's nearly up, my friend.
Another year will bring your end.
You'll envy soon those scaredy-cats
Who shook their heads, and stuck to bats!

NATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL

As we sadly couldn't give our planned themed Concert at the National Folk Festival this year at Easter, here are some photos of us warming up for our 2019 themed concert on Victorian bushrangers last Easter:-



*Photos by
Stephen Whiteside*

A new song inspired by current events:-

ISOLATION NOW

CHORUS:

The musical score is written on a sheet of paper with four hole punches on the left. It features two main sections: a Chorus and a Verse. The Chorus section consists of four staves of music, with guitar chords D, Bm, Em, A7, and A marked above the notes. The Verse section consists of eight staves of music, with guitar chords D, Bm, Em, A7, A, D, Bm, Em, A7, A, and A7 marked above the notes. The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The copyright notice at the bottom right reads '© Maggie Somerville, 2020'.

(see words on next page...)

ISOLATION NOW

CHORUS:

D Bm Em
 We're in isolation now in this new pandemic scene
 A7 A D
 For it's in every nation, wow! and we keep our hands so clean.
 Bm Em
 And we ask should we wear a mask tho' we don't know the why or how
 A7 A A7 D
 We're doing social distancing, is anybody listening? Isolation now.

D
 Well, it started out in China and seemed so very minor
 Bm Em
 Yet quickly spread to countries that were near
 A7 A
 For it moved into Japan where the people turned and ran
 A7 D
 But the figures they were climbing in Korea.
 .Then the numbers kept on rising and it wasn't so surprising
 Bm Em
 That Australia would be caught like all the rest
 A7 A
 Just look at Italy and Spain - like a runaway train
 A7 D
 With every country trying to do its best. *CHORUS - A7 / D*

There are cruise ships stuck at sea with Aussies just like me
 And really all they want is to go home
 But with coronavirus cases we see only their sad faces
 As we glumly watch the news all on our own.
 So we sit inside our houses and move our laptop browsers
 And our supermarket visit makes our day
 But there are just no toilet rolls in Woolworths or Coles
 And the checkout chicks all wish we'd stay away.

CHORUS - A7 / A / A7 / D

(continued over...)

(ISOLATION NOW—continued)

And the jobless count their losses and plead with union bosses
 As tenants wonder how they'll pay the rent
 And the schools have all been closing and it seems we're all supposing
 Saving lives is worth the effort being spent.
 With the Olympics now postponed survival skills are honed
 As we're moving into lockdown super-fast
 But to avoid another death, another gasping dying breath
 It's now the present and the future – not the past.

INSTRUMENTAL (to tune of Chorus – whistled?)

So we make our home a gym, instead of church we sing a hymn
 And our focus now becomes each daily meal
 Our world has grown smaller though the graphs keep growing taller
 And we hear the politicians' daily spiel.
 But even they are not immune and we hope the day comes soon
 When we all just wander down for our vaccine
 When we can once again embrace and look each other in the face
 And gaze in wonder at the year that has just been.

CHORUS

Then repeat last two lines of Chorus with different words:-

So we are all in quarantine if you know just what I mean -
 Isolation now
 For we are each in our own bubble so we stay out of trouble -
 Isolation now
 And there is more and more requesting that there be much wider
 testing—Isolation now
 Yet while our bodies are now fattening we're told the curve is flattening
 - Isolation now
 And it's a maximum of two so it looks like me and you -
 Isolation now
 And I am looking at the clock now as we go into lockdown -
 Isolation now... Isolation now... Social isolation now.

JOHN PRINE—QUIZ

- 1) Who was John Prine? 2) What year was he born? 3) What was his job before he became a full-time musician? 4) What is the name of his famous song about a drug-addicted Vietnam War veteran? 5) How does his song 'Hello in There' relate to many of our folk club members? 6) What disease did Prine contract in 1998? 7) What has John Prine just died of in hospital in intensive care? (one guess)

Answers to last quiz: 1) An American folk group formed during the folk revival. 2) 1961 3) Blowing in the Wind, Puff the Magic Dragon 4) Mary Travers 5) The Hit Parade of Fame.

BILLABONG BAND REPORT—APRIL 2020

There are unfortunately no gigs to report on due to the current health crisis and subsequent forced cancellation of large gatherings.

Upcoming gigs (most of which will obviously be cancelled):

- May 23rd - Woolshed Ball
- June 5th - Lionsbrae
- July 22nd - Mooroolbark Residential Care
- Aug 28th - Lionsbrae
- Sept 19th - Children's Dance
- Oct 7th - Donwood
- Oct 23rd - Lionsbrae
- Dec 2nd - Yarrunga Retirees Christmas party
- Dec 5th - VFMC dance
- Dec 18th - Lionsbrae

- Billabong Band coordinators: Maree and Trevor

30 SONGS IN 30 DAYS

PLEASE NOTE: Singer-songwriter **Bruce Watson** has decided to deal with at least one month of social isolation by setting himself the goal of writing 30 songs in 30 days! Anyone wishing to see/hear these songs can do so by via YouTube. So far Bruce has entertained us with songs of varying themes, e.g. our current crisis, learning to play a new instrument, aboriginal issues, etc.

**PORT FAIRY FOLK FESTIVAL 2020
ALBUM LAUNCH—'THE FOREST PRAYED'**

I was most honoured to be able to do the last of my launches for this Mary Gilmore album at such a great festival—in fact at the last of the great festivals for quite some time as it's turned out! However, it was unlike my earlier launches in Melbourne in that I had no backing band as it was just too far away and too costly to take other musicians. So I had to do it karaoke style—a challenging and at times stressful experience, such as when the laptop audio refused to work for one song. Luckily it was 'Old Botany Bay' (see photo below with axe & chain), which has only piano and drum played simultaneously and sporadically, so the audience willingly obliged with forceful, energetic clapping instead.



*Report by Maggie Somerville ;
photos by Gerry Kottek*

REGULAR FUNCTIONS AT OTHER VENUES

Bendigo Folk Club

Graham Borrell, 0438 437 680
 buzzza@bendigo.net.au
 Feature concert on the 3rd Friday of each month 8-11pm, under the grandstand at the Queen Elizabeth oval, Bendigo

Bush Dance and Music Club of Bendigo Inc

Monthly bush dance at Bendigo East, third Saturday every month, at Holy Trinity Church Hall, Keck St, Flora Hill. Contact Mary Smith 5442-1153 or email secretary@bendigobushdance.org.au

Berwick and District Folk Club

Edward Nass / Christine Trimmell,
 03 9702 1223 /0418 535 264
 badfolk@optusnet.com.au
 Featured artist 3rd Friday February to December, The Old Cheese Factory, 34 Homestead Road, Berwick Vic. 3806
 www.badfolk.org.au

Boite World Music Cafe

Theseire Virtue 03 9417 1983
 admin@boite.asn.au
 Friday & Saturday - March to November, 1 Mark St, North Fitzroy, www.boite.asn.au

Geelong Folk Music Club

Ade Kelly (03)5241-3749,
 adenmyra@bigpond.com.au, Pete Fogarty (03)5339-7887. Featuring quality acts from around the country and overseas. Sessions every Thursday at Hotel Max, 2 Gheringhap St, Geelong. Open Mic. Performance events first Tuesday at Irish Murphy's, 30 Aberdeen St & 3rd Tuesdays at Hotel Max. Bookings: Paula Grembka 0401 671 1310.
<http://www.geelongfolkmusicclub.com/>

Comhaltas (Collingwood)

Joan and Ray Mundy run a session on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month, starts 7.30pm. Supper. Maree: 9471-0690

Gippsland Acoustic Music Club

Barbara Brabets, 03 5174 7403
 Local musicians and concert opportunities.
 1st Sunday at 7:45 pm, Tyers Hall, Tyers
 www.musicclub.org

Selby Folk Club

David Miller, 03 9751 1218
 miller@a1.com.au
 1st Friday every month, at 8:00 pm, Selby Community House Minok Reserve
 www.home.aone.net.au/~selbyfolkclub

Peninsula Folk Club

First Sunday of each month, at the Frankston Bowling Club on the corner of Yuille Street and Williams Rd, Frankston, from 6:30 pm on. Carparking, great facilities, no stairs.
 peninsulafolkclub.org.au

Creswick Folk Club

Second Friday, from 7.30 pm at the American Hotel in Creswick; and Fourth Friday, from 7.30 pm at the Old Station in Creswick.
 Enquiries: Graeme: 03 5334 5551
www.facebook.com/creswickfolkclub/

Fireside Fiddlers

For fiddles plus other string melody instruments, such as mandolins.
 Every Monday evening at various venues. For further information, contact Denise Hibbs: 0402 050 524

Newport Folk Club

Certain Friday nights at 7.30 pm plus other evenings, e.g. Tues Blues and Sunday 2 pm singalongs etc.
 See website for up-to-date calendar.

THE VICTORIAN FOLK MUSIC CLUB INCORPORATED

INVITES YOU TO JOIN THE CLUB

Members of the VFMC are entitled to -

- The monthly Club Newsletter
- Concessions at Club events
- Discounts on Club publications
- Discounts on Club CD's
- Affiliation with other organizations

VFMC Postal Address

P.O. Box 215, Ringwood East, Vic. 3135

VFMC Website

<http://www.vfmc.org.au>

CONTACTS

Secretary

Jane Bullock
Telephone: 9762 1389
Email: secretary@vfmc.org.au

Ringwood East Folk Club

Don Fraser
Telephone: 0407 737 202
Email: sessions@vfmc.org.au

Family/Children's Bush Dance

Jane Bullock
Telephone: 9762 1389
Email: dance@vfmc.org.au

Concert Party Engagements

Maree Buttler
Telephone: 9733 0802
Email: billabongband@vfmc.org.au

Iwish to become a member of the Victorian Folk Music Club Inc. and will

- (a) Support the aims of the Victorian Folk Music Club Inc and
 - (b) Abide by the rules of the Victorian Folk Music Club Inc.
- (For details see: - <http://www.vfmc.org.au/Constitution.pdf>)

Signed

I wish to receive my Newsletter by:

- (a) Email or/and
 - (b) Post
- (Cross out whichever is not applicable)

Membership Type (please circle)

<u>Metro</u> Single	\$25
Family*	\$30
Junior (u 18)	\$15
Student (full time)	\$20
Single Concession	\$20
Family Concession*	\$25
<u>Country</u> Single	\$20
Family*	\$25

Please post completed form to:

The Secretary
VFMC
PO Box 215
Ringwood East 3135 Victoria

*Family – Parent/s & any children under 18

Name:

Address:

Email

Phone/s: