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FOLK SONG & DANCE SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The extraordinary meeting called on August 31st to consider constitutional review was in my opinion a resounding success even though the major motion was defeated. The discussion held on considering the motion regarding the addition of the 1954 International Folk Music Council's definition of folk music to Section One of the Objects of the F.S.D.S.V. was of a very high standard. It was obvious that many had done a considerable amount of research into the matter. The arguments for and against were well prepared and, I felt, highly informative. Most of those present at the meeting gained fresh insights into what we are really on about and it left a lot of us thinking deeply about our aims and folk music. It was discouraging to find that there was such a small attendance at what turned out to be an extremely valuable and informative meeting.

Thanks to all the members and friends who turned out in spite of the rain to "Meet the President". It was encouraging to see so many present and so well prepared for the Barbeque. The standard of cookery was high and there was a great variety of food consumed including the O'Connor/Watkins Barbequed Fish. Among the new faces present was Eric Purdy recently from Scotland who contributed along with many others to the musical success of the day. I feel sure that the local Bottle-O will also benefit greatly from the afternoon.

The "Silly Season" (Festivals) gets underway soon so keep your eyes and ears open for details of the Festivals - some of which are in this issue.

The F.S.D.S.V. has use of a notice board in the Tankard Room of the Tankerville Arms Hotel. On it we place all current information i.e. clubs, festivals, interstate newsletters and general folk information. More and more people are taking an interest in this board and funnily enough are finding themselves reasonably well informed about what's going on around and about. Please see me if you wish to place something on the board.

MICHAEL CRICHTON
President

P.S. Apologies to members for the late issue of this September edition of the Newsletter, due to industrial unrest (i.e. the newsletter sub-committee has not had much sleep lately, let alone getting the paper to bed on deadline). Rest assured, the October Newsletter will appear in October.

INTERSTATE NEWS

CANBERRA

The Christmas concert and banquet is on again this year over the weekend of 17/18/19 December. More details when they come to hand.

The last of the Winter Woolies was held at the Albert Hall on Saturday 25th September, Back to the Yarralumla Woolshed for the last weekend in October and through the summer months. Not too many Melbourne people may be at the October one as that's the Maldon Festival Weekend!

INTERSTATE NEWS cont...

Heard from one of my Canberra grape vines that the Session Folk Club has closed down. This has been replaced by a session every second Friday night at the A.N.U. Staff Centre.

SYDNEY

Sydney now have a weekly radio programme on 3MBG-FM ably hosted by Dermot and Allison Ryder, Huffy and others. Titled "Burn the Candle Slowly" it runs from Midnight to 6am every Tuesday night/Wednesday morning!

The N.S.W. Folk Federation has started a new series of monthly dances at the Finnish Club in Balmain. I believe they are held on the second Friday of each month.

Sad to hear that Sydney Folk Society's regular hole, Tony Doyle's Woodhouse Park Hotel is to close at the end of November so that the Brewery can give the license to a new one and glass beer parties in the western suburbs. Also sorry to find that the Saturday "Folk" is closing.

SYNOPSIS OF THE HISTORY OF THE F.S.D.S.V.

by Shirley Andrews

Folk Festivals in Melbourne grew from a very successful Australian one in 1963, organised by the Victorian Folk Music Club in co-operation with the Folklore Society of Victoria and the Council for Adult Education. The possibilities of holding further festivals were considered from time to time in the next few years. Finally, after the semicommercial festivals which had been held in Newport, N.S.W. petered out, the Victorian Folk Music Club in company with Glen Tomasetti and Martin Wyndham-Read took the initiative in setting up a committee to plan for folk festival(s) in Victoria, and the Port Phillip (District) Folk Festival Committee was launched in February, 1966, and started off financially by a grant of 100 pounds from the Victorian Folk Music Club.

It had been intended to have the first festival in a place of special historical interest, and Kilmore was chosen as it is the first inland settlement in Victoria. As the time for the festival approached, it became obvious that the Festival was arousing so much interest from folk enthusiasts in other states that there would not be enough accommodation in Kilmore. A last-minute switch had to be arranged and the Teachers' College at the Melbourne University was obtained for the first festival, which was held on A.N.A. weekend, February 10th to 12th, 1967.

This first festival proved to be a resounding success and set the pattern for other national festivals, with its programme of workshops, lectures, concerts and informal get-togethers of musicians. The crowds proved to be too large for the premises, with queues for the Saturday night concert going out into the street. All sorts of on-the-spot organisation had to be done to cope with the situation as the festival progressed. The overflow audience for the Saturday night concert was hastily installed in the College's large common room and the performers, having appeared in the main hall were rushed around to the other room for a second performance. The Sunday night concert was able to be held in a larger hall due to being able to make telephone arrangements with personal acquaintances on the University Staff. These arrangements were made only at the eleventh hour on the Sunday, and a trail of arrows showing the way was put across the University grounds.

This first festival had a certain excitement along with an atmosphere of friendly participation that has been a feature of these national festivals ever since.

Although the festival had been planned as a truly national festival with emphasis on indigenous music, folklore, etc., it had been decided right from the first committee meeting that all types of folk music which had

This first Port Phillip festival was a financial success as well, so that it was possible to plan another one the following year on a larger scale. We had been asked by interstate participants to have the next festival on one of the few holiday weekends common to all States, so the next one was also held on A.N.A. weekend, 1968, at the Pharmacy College in Parkville. This proved to be a much better venue, being a pleasant modern building with good facilities. The second festival attracted a larger audience and more interstate visitors. The programme included a particularly good range of lecturers, including Professors Russell Ward and Ian Turner, Weston Bate, Dr. David Dufty, Dr. Edgar Waters, Ian Jones, Bill Wannan, Alan Marshall, and many others. I also introduced the "Come-all-ye" concert.

The "Come-all-ye" concert was designed to provide an audience for the many good performers who were not already performing at the evening concerts or the workshops. Once again, workshops included such widely differing subjects as The History of the Blues, Industrial Songs of England, Bush Instruments, Australian Folksongs and their Anglo-American background, Australian Hill-Billy songs, Instrumental Techniques, Collector's Workshop, American Country Music, Australian Traditional Dancing, Negro Music, Talkers' Workshop, Australian Childrens' Playrhymes, and Sea Shanties. The lectures included "Using Folklore in Teaching Social Sciences", "Oral History" and "Folksong and Ballad".

As well as the two evening concerts held in the large theatre at the Pharmacy College, there was a contemporary song concert and a concert of Greek music during the daytime activities.

The Pharmacy College provided cafeteria facilities so that there was an opportunity for socialising without missing any of the proceedings. It also gave the Melbourne committee some opportunity for lobbying among the interstate visitors and by the end of the weekend they succeeded in persuading the Brisbane people that the next festival should be held there, as a start toward the object of having the National Festival (as it became known) in a different place each year.

Because of the longer travelling time involved, the time was altered to Easter. The 1969 festival in Brisbane continued the good tradition of national festivals launched in Melbourne, in fact that Brisbane festival was memorable for the high standard of hospitality extended to interstate visitors. The national festivals have continued on the same high level since then, the 1970 being held in Sydney at the University of N.S.W., the 1971 in Adelaide at Flinders University. Universities and Colleges of Advanced Education are usually the only venues readily available which are able to provide the requisite lecture halls, etc.

The earlier festivals have been at A.N.A. weekend, but Easter is now preferred. Melbourne held a very successful small festival on the A.N.A. weekend of 1972, and Sydney a somewhat larger one in 1973.

The Port Phillip Folk Festival Committee changed its name to the Port Phillip Folk Foundation toward the end of 1971, and both the small 1972 festival and the National Festival in 1973 were organised under this name.

The National Festival in 1973 followed the lead of Sydney's small A.N.A. weekend festival and included folk groups of other nationalities living in Australia. The 1973 National Festival was particularly noted in that dancing was making a very definite comeback.

During 1973 there was another title change, namely to the Folk Song and Dance Society of Victoria, dropping all reference to Port Phillip.

The 1974 National Festival was held in Brisbane, the 1975 in Sydney and the 1976 in Canberra, roughly the same order as in the first sequence. These festivals have followed fairly closely the same format as the earlier ones, and were all successful socially and financially, although perhaps the demand for folk music is being met more commonly in all cities now and the festivals have acquired a very definite holiday atmosphere, which is just slightly different from the family feeling of the earlier

festivals. There were five dance workshops at the 1976 National Festival, showing that there is still a great deal of interest in this pastime, both in our own Colonial dances and in the dances of other nationalities.

STICKYBEAK

CONGRATULATIONS: John and Juanita Boothroyd, on the birth of their first son.

Michael Crichton and Lee Clubbs on their engagement.

WELCOME HOME: Barbie Scott after her sojourn in the Olde Country. Barbie reports that the Sidmouth International Folklore Festival was treated to a visit by the Australian Contingent - Barbie, Jonathan Sear, Ian Thwaite, Val Shortall, Gary Clarke, Chris Foote and The Bushwackers.

FAREWELL: Ken and Maddy McMaster who are leaving early in October to make their way through Asia and the Middle East to Europe. They plan to reach England in about 12 months.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: Lee Clubs, Rowan Webb, Suzette Watkins, Adrienne Gurteen, Phill Day, Heather Wallace, Barry Gillen, Judith Day, Ian Ball, and The Three Drunken Maidens Folk Club.

BEST OF LUCK to "BUTLER'S MATE", the new club opening at Butlers on Wednesday 29th September.

I hear the Dan O'Connell are having another dance afternoon on October 9th.

The last track on the first side of June Tabor's new album "Airs & Graces" is "The Band Played Waltzing Matilda".

Those folkies who have been around a fair while will remember Doug Ashdown - he has become the first white artist to be signed by Tamla Mowtown in America.

Anything interesting happening to the people who make up the FSDSV? Tell STICKYBEAK - ring him on 86-5371 or 80-2068.

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

Thursdays: F.S.D.S.V. Folk Club, Dan O'Connell Hotel, cnr Princes and Canning sts. Carlton. \$1.00 (FSDSV members 80¢) 8pm - 10pm.

Three Drunken Maidens, Tankerville Arms Hotel, Cnr Nicholson and Johnson Streets, Fitzroy. 80¢ (FSDSV members 60¢) 8pm - 11pm.

Coffee Shop, 121 Little Lonsdale Street, City. (near Traynors old haunt). Admission free, 8.30pm. All welcome. Blues and Folk.

Fridays: The Tankard Folk Club, Tankerville Arms Hotel, Cnr Nicholson and Johnson Streets, Fitzroy. \$1.20 (FSDSV members \$1.00) 8pm - 11.30pm.

Saturdays: Dan O'Connell Hotel, cnr Princes and Canning Streets, Carlton. Come-all-ye. Free, from 3pm.

The Commune 183 St. Georges Rd. N.Fitzroy, from 8pm.

Sundays: FSDSV/Carlton Community Centre Dance, first Sunday in the month. The next one is October 2nd. at 2.30pm. Adults \$1 Kids 30¢.

Butler's, 749 Heidelberg Road Alphington. \$1 admission and free coffee.

The Jolly Jumbuck Folk Club, LaTrobe University Union Building. Not on in University vacations.

Mondays: The Colonial Dancers have an open night on the Monday after each FSDSV Dance (first Sunday in the month) at the Neill Street Primary School (Palmerston Street Entrance), Carlton at 8pm. All welcome.

The Melbourne Morris Men practice at the Neill Street Primary School, Carlton, every Monday night 6pm - 8pm. New members welcome.

Tuesdays: The Commune, 183 St. Georges Rd. N.Fitzroy. Folk music night.

V.F.M.C. Dance Workshops, second Tuesday of each month at Royal Park Hall, off Elliot Avenue, 8pm - 11pm.

Wednesdays: Cobbers, at Polaris Inn Hotel, cnr Nicholson & McPherson Sts. N. Carlton. 8pm - 11.30pm. \$2.

Butler's, 749 Heidelberg Road Alphington, 8pm.

The Commune is open with different activities each night of the week:- Mon - Theatre; Tues - Folk Music; Wed - Holyoak; Thurs - Craftwork; Fri - Classical; Sat - Jazz. For further details ring 489 9860. 183 St. Georges Rd. N.Fitzroy.

Dear Members,

Reminders of events in coming weeks.

Two festivals - Maldon the last weekend in October (30-31) and Wedderburn the second weekend in November (13-14). Don't forget also the concert on 8th October. Mel Robertson (Butler), Steve Nethercote and Chris Avent are organising this one at the Lower Melbourne Town Hall at 8pm.

W.A. Folk Federation are presenting their 6th Annual W.A. Folk Festival in Bunbury, 8th - 11th October. For information, phone Perth 62 1303 or Bunbury 21 2833.

A new club will be starting on Wednesday evening 29th September at Butlers. For those that haven't been there yet its at 749 Heidelberg Road, Alphington.

For your amusement we would like to get a few social and sporting events going, both in town and in the country. If you have any ideas and suggestions (within reason) on this, just drop us a line or talk to your friendly committed members and we'll see what we can do for you. If the recent soccer matches at Fairfield Park and the Softball match at Chewton are anything to go by, you'll be guaranteed a hell of a lot of fun, but beware Chewton's hillsides!

Some of you may have noticed that "The Age" newspaper has been running a privilege offer of a book on Australian Folklore entitled "The Complete Book of Australian Folklore". This is an excellent book which no-one genuinely interested in the folk lore of our country should be without. The material has been gathered from several contributors and put together by Bill Scott, a fine folklorist from Queensland. There is a good cross section of songs, poems, yarns, dances, stories - tall and short, and a host of other items of interest. Our own Shirley Andrews has contributed some interesting material on dancing and dances, with instructions on how to do them. The songs have music accompanying them.

Unfortunately I found quite a bit excluded that I would have liked to have seen put in, but obviously it is impossible to include everything in a book of this nature, and extremely difficult to decide what to leave out. Nevertheless, a book well worth the \$9.95 that "The Age" are selling it for.

The offer may well not be on by the time this newsletter is circulated, but don't worry - it will be back before Christmas, so save your pennies, and good reading!

RICHARD LEITCH
on behalf of the Committee