

AUSTRALIAN

Tradition

Special edition July 2009

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Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Victorian Folk Music Club incorporated.



July 2009 Commemorative issue

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On the cover:

- Bottom right: Woolshed Ball at St Brigid's Parish Hall
- Bottom left: Harry Gardner and Cameron Hibbs busking at Ringwood East shopping strip
- Top: The Billabong Band at Ringwood Lake, Australia Day 2009

CLUB EVENTS

Ringwood Folk

Tuesdays 7, 21 and 28 July from 8:00 PM at East Ringwood Community Hall (enter from Knaith road, off Dublin Road, Melway 50 B8). All welcome any or every night as singers, players or to tell a yarn. Contact Don (0407-737-202).



Ringwood Folk Guest Night

Tuesday, July 14 is our Guest Artist night, with Vince Brophy.

Admission \$10 adults, children with adult free. Evening commences at 8:00 pm and concludes with a short session after the Guest Performer around 10:15 pm. Contact Maree (03-9733-0802) or see the Club website at www.vfmc.org.au.

Slow Session

Third Wednesday of every month, next is July 15, at Ringwood Folk. Tunes played at a more relaxed tempo, great for learning them before attending a full-on session.

Singing Session

First and last Tuesday every month (7 and 28 July) 7:00 to 7:45 pm.



Ringwood Colonial dance

Family Bush Dance, first Saturday of every month at the East Ringwood Senior Citizens Club Hall, Laurence Grove, Ringwood East.

Next dance 4th July, with Blackberry Jam. Come along and enjoy dancing to live music with all dances explained and called. Contact Jane Bullock (03 9762-1389) or Robin Simpson (03 9723-2453).

By-ear sessions

Join us to learn how to play by following someone else rather than reading from written notation, at:

First Thursday every month (2 July), all instruments at Harry's place

Weekly, every Monday (6, 13, 20 and 27 July), fiddles and mandolins at Harry's place

Second Tuesday, every month (14 July), all instruments at 10:15 pm after the concert at Ringwood Folk (Community Hall, Knaith Road, Ringwood East).

... Harry Gardner (03 9870-8998)

RINGWOOD GUEST NIGHT - NEXT GUEST: 14TH JULY 2009

Vince Brophy

A National & International touring artist, Vince has developed his own unique finger-style guitar playing & songwriting using alternate and standard tunings ...

Vince is a regular at festivals in Australia and Overseas and has appeared at: Wooden Boats Festival - Brest, Brittany, France, Isle of Skye Festival - Scotland, Port Fairy Folk Festival - Victoria Tasmania Summer Festival - Tasmania Opera in the Outback - South Australia Artist in Residence - Georgetown, Tasmania ABC National Tour - Australia Vince is also an APRA award winning songwriter and a regular tutor at The Lake School of Music, Song & Dance



Children's Session

With an eye to the future of the Club, it would be good to repeat the successful experiment of 2004 when a group of children and youths played on Friday evenings in the Community Hall by firelight, leading thereby to the present Fireside Fiddlers who now meet at my place on Monday evenings.

However children do grow up but several of that 2004 batch are still with us or in contact even though they are dispersed at university or for one, now married and living in Wales. During the intervening period we have played at nursing homes and on stage at Ringwood Lake and The Basin Folk Music Festival. Two have contributed their own tunes, Helen's Heart Waltz (by Helen MacKay) and The Mist on the Valley (by Cameron Hibbs), to the Australian Settlers' and Dance Music published by Ray Mulligan, Monaro Folk Club, Canberra, ACT.

The search therefore is on for an adult who wants to work with children and is prepared to find more who want to play by ear on say Friday evenings again. Club members could share the tutoring.

The adult would probably need to have a Working With Children Check, which I also have.

Please contact me!

... *Harry Gardner, 03 9870-8998*
or *0408-70 8-998*

REVIEW: GUEST NIGHT 9 JUNE 2009

On a rainy and cold June 9th Braemar and Colin McLeod played to a packed hall of enthusiastic fans of Scottish music. The heaters were on, the fire was lit, and it was a very pleasant and cosy evening, and one of the best attendances for a long time. A session followed Braemar's act and as we had a few Scottish dancers in the audience it was really good to see some lively dancing too.

Alex was the MC for the night. Chris and Don started on a Scottish theme, a slow march pipe tune then a medley of My Love She's But A Lassie Yet and Petronella. Bill and Maree continued with an interesting version of Ye Banks And Braes played on kalimba (thumb piano) and harp, before singing the same with guitar. Visitors Rhonda and Colin performed Where The Wildflowers Go and When The Black Rose Is Blooming Again. Julia then sang the lovely Canadian fishing song, Song Of The Mira. It was good to have Sophie give performing a go, accompanied by Alex she sang Sailing and Music, Music, Music. Kelvin followed this with a clever poem called Corny Bill.

A chance meeting on the train by Alex with Barbara Jeffrey resulted in Barbara coming along and singing a self composed song with harp, and I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen. Very nice. Harry concluded the spot acts with My Home Is In The Highlands, sung to one of the nicest waltz tunes you'll ever find, The Spanish Waltz. Alex awarded the encouragement award to Sophie for her act. Congratulations, and thanks to all who participated and entertained us, and thanks to those who helped with everything else on the night.

Despite being a little on the husky side due to the recent Celtic festival Braemar and Colin MacLeod put on a great show for everyone. They are amiable and good natured and had an excellent rapport with the audience. They opened with a sensitive Maggie, then Destitution Road. A spirited bit of Scottish history followed with My Name Is William Wallace. Eddie and Mark then downed instruments and performed Come O' The Stream Charlie with two rather heavy duty frame drums which one can apparently use as a kind of coracle if the need arises, though I am yet to see it done. When You Were Sweet Sixteen and the moving surrogate Scottish national song Caledonia by Dougie McLean followed. Mark then did a nice solo with guitar called My Old Friend The Blues. His accompaniment is restrained and controlled, so nice to hear. The audience were invited to join in on a rousing My Bonny Lies Over The Ocean, then Wi' You My Johnny Lad.

Colin MacLeod is a member of the Melbourne Scottish Fiddle Club and as you would expect from that group a very fine fiddler. His playing is also controlled but that's probably because he insists on dancing while playing, like the famed McPherson did. He and Mark did a medley consisting of a lament, a hornpipe, and a reel. Glencoe, The Battle Of Bannockburn, and Flower Of Scotland finished off nicely this great night of Scottish music.

Irish singer/songwriter Vince Brophy will perform at the next concert, then The Melbourne Scottish Fiddle Club in August. Something else to look forward to.

... Don Fraser

WOOLSHED BALL REPORT MAY 2009

What a wonderful occasion was the Woolshed Ball on May 23rd 2009 at St Brigid's Hall! It was one of the celebrations for the 50th Anniversary of the VFMC. The hall had recently been painted cream and apricot, so the abundant gold balloons glowed against the colour. The table decorations of gold centrepieces with the gold draped sheep and 50 sign were appropriate and festive. Also, Harry Gardner provided a VFMC activities display at the back of the hall, which looked great.

For the first time, supper was a communal affair. It began with the cutting of the cake by the President, Steve Bullock and Bert Gibson, the oldest member. It was a challenge to stop the people chatting/eating and resume the dancing.

It was a lovely night of dancing with many more dancers than in recent years. There was a pleasing number from the Ringwood dance and from the latest beginner class. Everyone had such a great time that the buzz was talked about for many days afterwards. The progressive barn dance was special, with the passing of the coloured sash, so that the dancer who was holding it when the music stopped, had a chance to bash the Golden Ram piñata. Janet King had made the piñata which adorned the stage. Eventually, it was smashed open by Melanie Ball.

The wonderful music was supplied by the VFMC players "*The Billabong Band*" and blended by Sue Harriage, who was the sound person, as well as a band member. Carol Rowe was the excellent MC for the evening.

The next ball, on October 10th, will have us reliving a 1940s ball program from Yarrowonga.

RINGWOOD COLONIAL DANCE

JUNE 2009

The June dance had an Irish feel to the evening. On stage were Ray and Joan with Paddy and Ron and a great sound came forth. We did some traditional Irish dances and some that are regularly done at the club. All participants had great fun. A dance called, "Shoe the Donkey" made everyone laugh before we attempted it and that evoked yet more laughter as our feet became entangled.

With no children in attendance this month, the adults were hunting for shamrocks and getting the prizes (as they were chocolate liqueurs, perhaps it was as well there were no children!)

Next month "Blackberry Jam" will be playing for us so look forward to seeing everyone then.

... Jane Bullock

Singing Session

Ringwood Folk intends to conduct a series of singing sessions on the first and last Tuesdays of the month, 7:00 to 7.45 pm before the normal sessions.

The aim is to have fun and gain confidence in singing, plus explore harmony and accompaniment. It should be a great learning experience.

The cost will be \$2 a session to help with the rent. Later we may hire a voice coach which will be extra of course. Dates are Tuesday July 28th, August 4th and 25th, September 1st and 29th.

Bring your instrument and if you have one an MP3 or tape recorder. Dick Smith has a good range of recording products.

Contact Don Fraser on 0407-737-202

BERT GIBSON - PROFILE

The very first General Meeting of what was to become the Victorian Folk Music Club was held on 26 June, 1959.

The 50th celebration of this date is not only a great milestone for the club, but it is also an appropriate time to reflect on the considerable depth of experience possessed by some of the club's longer serving members.

One member who comes readily to mind is Albert Edward Gibson. Bert has been a member of the VFMC for the whole 50 years of its existence, thus there is a personal reason for him to celebrate year 2009 also.

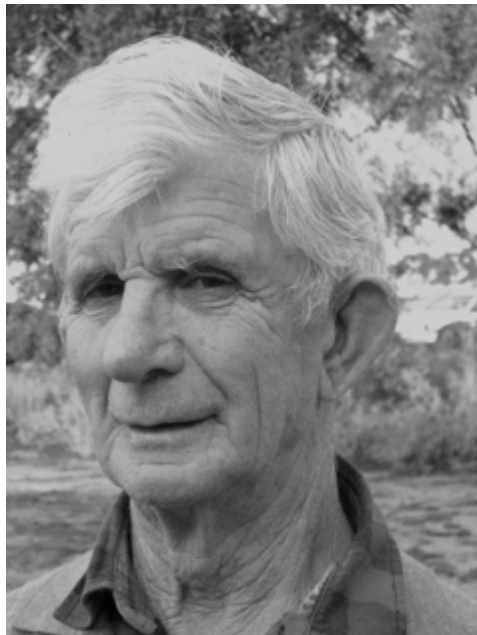
We see Bert regularly at club functions and at a host of folk festivals either as a singer or enjoying a dance and he likes nothing better than to join in a music session with his accordion. His usual entry is to appear with his accordion tucked under one arm and at the same time clutching a binder of songs, including his beloved Joy Durst club song book.

But I wonder how much our members really know about him?

“Our Bert” was born on 25th October, 1928, and lived his very early years at Collingwood. Predictably, he developed a strong affinity for the Magpies football team. ‘Not that I go to the footy much these days, but I do come out of the woodwork a bit when Collingwood win a game,’ Bert quips with a wry smile.

He had two brothers and a sister, none of whom showed much interest in music. ‘Perhaps I was the reason,’ he adds with another wry smile.

As Bert tells his story, one senses a special affinity and deep respect for his mother,



who was the chief organiser and the main decision maker in the family unit. ‘My mother was someone very special, not only did she rear her family when times were really tough, but she always seemed to find that bit extra when it was required. The purchase and setting up of our home in Preston was directly due to her efforts. My father lost his job the year I was born and was out of work for quite a few years but we all contributed where we could and mother did the organising,’ recalls Bert, clearly not wanting to dwell on these difficult childhood days.

‘My first job was at (ex-racing car driver) Lex Davison’s Paragon Shoe factory, but that didn’t last long – I had no interest in shoe manufacture whatsoever, and couldn’t get out of the place quick enough’.

BERT GIBSON - PROFILE *CONTINUED*

His next position didn't last long either. That job was at MacRobertsons chocolate factory and although it suited him much better, his worries began when the nursing sister told him that he would surely die if he stayed working there, pointing to his blotchy skin condition which was brought about by his constant and compulsive gourmandising of the company's fine products.

His keenness to be in employment then led him to short stints at the Richmond Cyclone factory and at McDonalds Engineering, where he joined long-time family friend, Frank Nickel, before taking on his major station in life at the tramway manufacturing depot at Preston. Here Bert learned and applied some of the special skills required in the manufacture of the iconic "W" class green and yellow trams, and was soon appointed to the position of Union Shop Steward, a position which he held for 35 years.

Always a person who enjoys a good laugh, even at his own expense, Bert continues: 'I got into strife one time - management called me in and asked me what the trouble was all about in my particular shop'. 'What trouble?' I asked. It turns out that my whole shop had gone on strike and I didn't even know about it - that took some fast action and smart thinking on my part but I managed to survive it alright'.

Bert also tells the tale of a part-time job he at one time had which required him to make deliveries by horse-drawn cart for an uncle. Beginning in Preston he would make deliveries around the city and suburbs as far afield as South Melbourne.

During one such delivery, whilst at the corner of Elizabeth and Swanston Streets, the ex-trotter he was driving somehow

outmanoeuvred a little old lady who was trying to make a street crossing at the very same time. She came off a sad second-best although was not really hurt. 'Fortunately, for once in my life, the police were on my side, but I wasted absolutely no time whatsoever getting away from there,' recalls Bert as he describes his hasty decamp from the scene. Who else do you know who has delivered goods around the city by horse-drawn cart?

But when the subject turns to music, Bert's life takes on a whole new meaning:

'When I was in my thirties Shirley Andrews, who was very well known and respected in dance circles, got me a dancing and singing role in the Australian production of Reedy River until the show went to Sydney. My interest in singing and dancing reached a new level with Reedy River.' When the show went to Sydney, Bert then followed his heart's interest in the collection of Australian tunes and songs.

'Many weekends were spent scouring the country-side in the company of either or both the Nickel brothers, Frank and Noel, and occasionally Shirley Andrews would go also. We would go to places such as Shepparton, Echuca, Mildura and Kyabram all of which were considerable journeys in those days, and more often than not we would borrow my father's Dodge car for the trips. We would ask at pubs and police stations if there were any muso's around-about and then make contact with them. But we got a scare one night,' Bert recalls, 'when the car suddenly broke through the decking of a wooden bridge when we were part way across it.

With the usual expected cursing and hand-jacking we managed to free the car and continue on our way but were always wary of wooden bridges after that'.

BERT GIBSON - PROFILE *CONTINUED*

‘On one of the country trips to the Omeo and the Dargo High Plains area we met accomplished singers, Alf and Max Dyer, at Benambra. They suggested that we make contact with the Klippels and the Simpsons of Nariel Creek, which we duly did. That was in 1962. Meeting the Nariel people had a major impact on the whole folk music scene; it was as if a whole new world had opened up with new tunes, new dances and some highly skilled dancers and musicians. It was a real inspiration. They were a bit reserved at first, not knowing what to make of us city people arriving in the area and asking all sorts of questions about their local dances and dance tunes, but it wasn’t too long (another couple of visits) before the good intentions of the VFMC people were recognised and accepted’. This contact ultimately resulted in the very first Nariel Creek Festival in 1963. Bert is justifiably proud to have been part of this process and is an inaugural member of the festival. He is also very proud of the fact that he has not missed a Nariel Creek Festival ever since - a truly remarkable achievement.

His introduction to the accordion is another of his many stories worth relating: In 1948 a very kind female friend loaned Bert her 2-row C/F Hohner accordion. Although Bert could manage a tune on a harmonica to a standard that one really wouldn’t brag about, the accordion presented a whole new ball-game so he practiced regularly and over quite a long period of time, too. In fact it was not until 1978 before he finally let the accordion go back to its rightful owner.

Yes, you read this correctly 1948 to 1978 = a whole 30 years. Sometimes it doesn’t pay to be too hasty. This then lead to Bert purchasing his very own accordion, a 3-row Hohner.

Bert also has a soft spot for the guitar and strums it in a cursory manner when the mood takes him. ‘If there is one regret that I have it is that I didn’t try the guitar earlier in life’, he admits, ‘I enjoy it best of all’.

Obvious to anyone who knows him, his overlying great passion is Australian song, dance and music. Also obvious is the fact that he relishes the opportunity to perform at any time. He has performed widely and rarely misses a club activity, or festival of any consequence. His background in the folk movement is a subject recognised as being well worth exploring – such was the case at a recent National FF in Canberra when he was keenly sought out for an interview by Jay Turner of the noted Cathy Mundy/Jay Turner international duo.

Tunes he favours include his signature tunes of The Old Black Billy, and Jindabyne but he is equally at ease singing any of the host of tunes from his immense storehouse – Drovers Dream, Botany Bay, Gundagai, Aussie Barbeque His passion for Australiana also runs to poetry, particularly from the likes of Dorothy McKellar (My Country), Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson, although reciting poetry in public is something he would prefer not to do. His current challenge is Eric Bogles song, And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda, which he will soon add to his repertoire of songs.

It is easy to see where Bert’s allegiances lie, and whilst he recognises the need to be contemporary in outlook, he often regrets that early Australian tunes and songs have lost so much ground in the club. ‘Australian tunes used to be the majority by a huge margin, but now they are very much in the minority’, laments Bert but then he consoles himself with, ‘but fortunately much has

BERT GIBSON - PROFILE *CONTINUED*

been collected and recorded and so it will be available for future generations to enjoy’.

Something of his resilience and his duty to perform was seen at the 2008-09 Nariel Festival when he took a tumble and spent the ensuing night in hospital, but this didn’t stop him from performing the next day at the New Years Day concert – black eye, massive swelling, cracked cheek-bone and abrasions, but not the slightest hint of depressed spirits whatsoever.

Bert was a member of that hallmark meeting on 26th June, 1959, but it was not until some time after that time that ambition saw him serve the club in the capacity of Club President, a position which he held for a creditable term of 10 years.

Another big high-light for Bert was when he was made (the third) Life Member of the Victorian Folk Music Club to join the exalted company of Wendy Lowenstein and Shirley Andrews.

‘I didn’t expect that, but to achieve a Life Membership alongside Wendy and Shirley makes me feel quite humble indeed’, admits Bert.

We can conclude from this overview of Bert, that he is an esteemed club member and a very devoted club member who has played major roles over a very long period of time in the progressing of both the VFMC, and also the folk movement in general. He has seen many changes and has achieved numerous personal milestones along the way, all of which he can be very proud.

One could add that he is one of the ‘old school’ and a person known for calling a spade a spade. One could also add that he is known as a man who has an opinion on most issues, and arguably displays sufficient verbal response to inject life into any social gathering.

Congratulations, Bert. Well done!

Stan Alexander



From Left: Bert Gibson, Ian White, Roderick Hampton (Standing) and John Miller at Corryong. The ABC have made a film of the 1971 Festival which will be shown on "The Big Country," Thursday July 1.

GAY CHARMERS 50TH ANNIVERSARY AT KERANG

*There was music on the Murray,
There was dance and joyous song,
And people came from parts afar,
To join the happy throng.*

*There was music on the Murray,
Camaraderie and cheers,
As we joined in celebration,
For the 'Charmers fifty years.*

There may not have been much spare water in the nearby Murray River but there was certainly plenty of music and celebration around Kerang on the weekend of 14 & 15 June, when the Gay Charmers celebrated their 50th Anniversary of supplying top dance music and entertainment to the public. What an enviable and remarkable achievement. It is hard to imagine any dance band still being in consistent demand after half a century of producing the musical goods to dances and other functions - but the Gay Charmers are such a band.

In addition to qualifying for its 50th Anniversary, it was something of an added bonus that the band also received the local Gannawara Shire Council Community Group of the Year Award.

Predictably, the celebration was a big affair with many leading names of the music world in attendance, some from interstate. It was well organised, too, with pre-publicity information detailing such things as accommodation, meal availability, and train time tables for those who elected to travel by rail. And the weekend's activities ran punctually to time, but being dance band oriented with timing such a prime importance, who would have thought that it could be otherwise.

Before the Swallows Parade (remember them?) gave the band its initial thrust into the limelight in 1959, original members Stuart Simms (piano, violin) and Ron McFarlane (banjo) both played ukuleles, as matter of fact Ron still plays with a ukulele tuning on his banjo.

Garnet Robinson (accordion) was also one of the original 1959 band members until work commitments intruded leaving the spot vacant for Morrie Gierisch (accordion). Mary Curtis (accordion) joined around the same time. In Gay Charmer parlance, both Morrie and Mary are the youngsters of the team, neither joining until the mid 1970's. The other original member, Roy Simms (drums), Stuart's brother, was tragically killed in a road accident in 1991.

In all, the band has had only eight regular members in fifty years.



Stuart Simms, Ron McFarlane, Morrie Gierisch and Garnet Robinson prepare to cut the Anniversary cake

GAY CHARMERS 50TH ANNIVERSARY AT KERANG - CONTINUED

The Saturday morning was devoted to a big jam session and warm-up in the Kerang Down Town Motor Inn. This lasted until midday after which the band and supporters moved to the Sir John Gorton library where a large presentation of CD's and printed matter was made to the library. This presentation included CD's and recordings by the Gay Charmers, Emu Creek, The Wedderburn Old Timers, Nariel, and the VFMC, whilst the written material included such important additional music publications as the Collectors Choice, the Nariel book, The Baulch Brothers, Ma Seal, and Ebb Wren. Short speeches were made by Stuart Simms, Peter Ellis and Rob Willis (National Library of Australia) and the material was officially received by Mr Keith den Houting, Shire Mayor. It will be made available to the public on a loan basis.

Immediately following the presentation the occasion was confirmed by way of a demonstration dance in the library foyer where the Gay Charmers urged dancers through a set of Alberts – a quite unique experience for the library.

The scene then returned to the Motor Inn for an impromptu concert which proved to be a wonderful afternoon of entertainment, and which attracted a large audience.

Performers included Tom Walsh, Bob Ballantine, Garnet Robinson and Marg, and Dave de Hugard who showed by example how *The Rabbit Trapper* should be played and sung, after which Barry Cadzow recited a humorous poem connected with man's best friends – dogs.



Playing space was at a premium at the Lake Charm hall. Photo courtesy of Olya Willis

GAY CHARMERS 50TH ANNIVERSARY AT KERANG - CONTINUED

Bradley Barker and Robert Vaughan gave items on the accordions (button and piano) followed by Bert Gibson who sang *My Old Black Billy* and *Fields of Athenry* accompanied by Peter Ellis on the harmonica. Harry Gardner brought along his puppets to entertain us with his presentation of the *Waltzing Matilda* story, and band members from The Rubber Band, Emu Creek, Mundy's, Nariel Creek and The Manypennys were all involved in items. Welsh choir singer, Wayne Blandford, applied his talents to the song *Shearing in the Bar*, and Eric Robinson played some Russian tunes on his 5-row accordion. The other group that delighted were Tasmanians, Stuart Graham and Julie Edwards, on the button accordion and keyboard.

The display of photos and newspaper clippings on the walls at the different venues attracted plenty of interest and showed many different aspects of the band. Among the material were photos taken on inland Australian trips which showed the band setup for a mock gig at the historic Burke and Wills 'Dig Tree' near Innamincka, and again whilst perched on the crest of the huge sand dune known as 'Big Red' in Central Australia. It is not recorded just how many CD's their 'CD's for Sale' signage attracted, but it is good to see that the Australian light-hearted spirit is alive and well.

There were the surprises, too, like Morrie Gierisch's other talent of sketching. This was evident in the black and white sketches that adorned the dancehall walls, some of which depicted his earlier shearing days.

Another interesting and unusual feature of the Saturday night dance in the Kerang Memorial Hall was the display of Gay Charmers band-dress which was hung at intervals all around the dancehall. 'We began with body shirts initially, but then progressed to conventional dress shirts when body shirts became no longer appropriate' offered Ron McFarlane with a smile, leaving me to work that one out.

Over 50 years many stories about the band members have accumulated and some of these got a fair airing; like the member who collided with a horse whilst cycling home in the dark from a gig many years ago, and those of playing the wrong tunes at the wrong time. There were stories of members inadvertently leaving essential items at home when going to a gig – this one was again involuntarily re-enacted on the Saturday morning of the celebration when one member left home for Kerang without his suit. No names, of course.

Two bus loads of visitors participated in the bus tour of Lake Charm and surrounds. We knew this was to go to be something special as soon as our tour guides (Rose & Stuart Simms) referred to Kerang as the 'Kakadu area of Victoria', and we were not disappointed. This 'must do' experience entertained until lunch time with a host of facts and stories about the area. We learned about local wildlife, lunettes, of natural and cultivated saltbush, the water status, of specially designed fences that do not impede the progress of migratory turtles, the former WWII Catalina base at Lake Boga, and of former local identity Sir John Gorton (ex-PM) and some of his misdemeanours.

GAY CHARMERS 50TH ANNIVERSARY AT KERANG - CONTINUED

The salt situation, too, was witnessed first-hand - from being a huge agricultural problem in some areas to when it was packed into 20Kg bags at salt factories and ready to be shipped to customers (with an element of good riddance, no doubt).

Then, after a hearty barbeque, it was back to the core activity of music and dance. This time it was at the Lake Charm hall, where the Gay Charmers first signalled their ambitions 50 years ago.

Not that the hall is overly small, but the dancing was certainly cosy, and musicians not only encroached onto the dance floor, but took up most of the side ante room as well. Among the dancers were many locals - some of whom spent their courting years being serenaded to by the strains of the Gay Charmers.

A feature of the weekend was that all the three dances were played to by 'massed bands' which meant that any budding musician could join in and play with the celebrated Gay Charmers, but they needed to be quick as the privilege of playing with the Gay Charmers was eagerly sought after by the hordes of musicians in attendance. The dances were MC'd by Peter Ellis.

For those who could afford the extra time to take in the Sunday night, the final function was a regular dance at the Barham Memorial Club. Barham is some 17 kilometres from Kerang and on the NSW side of the Murray River. This was a more formal occasion and rounded the celebrations off in a good fashion. Interestingly, for tuning reasons, the music at this dance was played in the keys of C and F, which was an agreeable experience for many musicians.



Mary Curtis, Ron McFarlane, Stuart Simms, Garnet Robinson and Morrie Gierisch about to get the set of Alberts underway at the library

GAY CHARMERS 50TH ANNIVERSARY AT KERANG - CONTINUED

By this time it was time to take a pace backwards, take a deep breathe and recap the wonderful weekend of celebration - a most memorable occasion.

Many have grown up with the belief that time progressed at a slower pace in the country but this was one occasion when it definitely went far too fast.

Upon reflection one might ask what makes a band so outstanding: is it the type and quality of the music played, does it have something to do with having a good team spirit, or the degree of friendliness and accessibility of its members, or perhaps the valued support that the band members receive from their womenfolk. It would seem that there is no easy answer here because the Gay Charmers possess all of these qualities.

Other VFMC members sighted enjoying themselves included Don who was espied paying particular attention to the old-time dance tunes, Jane who hardly missed a dance, and Graeme and Catherine who alternated between playing their instruments and dancing.

Other highlights included the copious amounts of food that kept appearing at each venue, and the bath towels with a beautifully embroidered picture of the Gay Charmers. These were brought down from Queensland for the occasion and were presented as prizes for some dances (lucky spot, Monte Carlo).

Be sure to mark your diaries with the date of the next Gay Charmers 50th Anniversary Celebration event – a dance to be held at:-

Harcourt (Vic) on Sunday 18 October, 2009.

Lunch 12.00 pm and dancing till?
Melways map 44, F9

For further details contact Jo White on Ph 03 9390 1385, or jocelyn3@tpg.com.au

Stan Alexander

Thanks Stan for the excellent story and photos



Harry relates the Waltzing Matilda story with the help of the jumbuk, the squatter and the three policemen.

FIFTY YEARS OF THE AUSTRALIAN TRADITION

In this 50th anniversary year of the Victorian Folk Music Club Inc, we are pleased to bring you a selection of excerpts from past publications.

The history of Australian Tradition (the magazine / newsletter) is not well documented beyond Wendy Lowenstein's "Farewell" editorial in the "Final" issue of December 1975 (reprinted here on page 35). As far as I have been able to ascertain, the original magazine, edited by Wendy, ran continuously from 1963 to 1975. It was a quarterly publication, around 30 pages, printed on the imperial measure equivalent of the current page size.

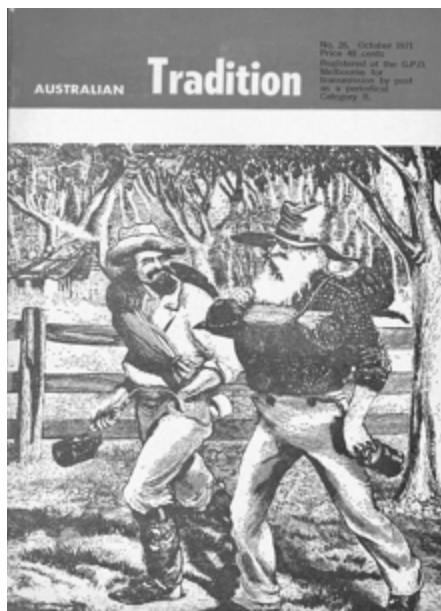
The original magazine included a wealth of material, including songs (with sheet music for the tune), dance tunes, dance instructions, poems, yarns and stories and extended scholarly essays on collecting folk lore. The Farewell edition included an index of every issue from 1963 to 1974, and it is staggering just how much material was covered. The Club does still have boxes of copies of a handful of issues, and Club Members are welcome to browse and take samples from our stock at any of the Ringwood Folk Tuesday night functions.

One name stands out throughout this period - the editor, Wendy Lowenstein. Wendy's own article (reprinted here on page 19) shows how deeply involved she was in collecting folk music, and we have also reprinted (page 25) a sample of her work. We owe her a debt of gratitude for the sheer effort she put in over such a long period. Senior Club members will recognise many other names in the articles we have been able to reprint. However, we have hardly scratched the surface of the archival material.

After the "big" quarterly magazine ceased production, the Tradition did continue as a shorter newsletter. When I took over as editor around 1991, the Tradition was being printed by a roneo process, and the editors were the Gibbs from Shepparton. Shortly after, we moved to a computer-based typesetting approach, which has continued to the present day. I edited the newsletter for around eight years, then it was picked up successively by Katy Cottrill, Brian Venten and Dave O'Brien. Over this time, we expanded the size somewhat, and occasionally printed sheet-music and photos, although not to the level of the original magazine.

Of the period between 1975 and 1990, I know very little. Given time for research, we may be able to find some more detail and bring it to you in a later issue.

... Bill Buttler



PORT PHILLIP FOLK FESTIVAL, 1968**BY SHIRLEY ANDREWS**

The Port Phillip Folk Festival was successful in establishing itself as a truly national Festival this year. It had always been the intention of the group of people who initiated these Festivals that they should eventually be national in character and not just Victorian festivals. When deciding on a name, we had deliberately avoided adopting a name such as "Australian Folk Festival," as it was felt that such grandiose titles are too often used for quite minor functions. However, it was thought that one of the advantages of the name finally chosen was the fact that there are companion titles suitable for use when similar festivals are held in other states', e.g., Pork Jackson (Sydney), Moreton Bay (Brisbane) etc.

The level of interstate participation so far indicates that our hopes of launching a series of national Festivals were well founded. A committee has been operating in Brisbane since June of last year, and did a very good job in publicising the Port Phillip Festival in that state, and in raising money to assist Queenslanders to travel to the Festival. Some 20 enthusiastic people travelled the thousand miles to Melbourne by train, plane and car. A smaller committee was active in Adelaide, and helped to get a group here.

The second Festival managed to be just that much bigger and better than the first Festival, without losing the friendly, but stimulating, atmosphere which characterised that first Festival. Interstate participants had made a special plea for the Festival to be held during a three-day holiday week-end.

This posed considerable difficulties - the only suitable week-end common to all states being the Australia Day week-end. This follows close on the heels of the Christmas holiday break when most business activity comes to a dead stop, and the city folks head for the beach and the hills. Handling the last-minute arrangements for the Festival during this period proved complicated and frustrating.

Once the Festival week-end arrived the advantages of having the three days and the wonderful response from interstate did much to compensate the organisers for these last minute difficulties. Despite considerable communication problems due to the postal strike, interstate participants and visitors arrived in considerable numbers from New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and ACT. One visitor came all the way from New Zealand.

A fair amount of contact had been maintained between the Port Phillip committee and Sydney singers, including participation in the Sydney Folk Festival held last October. This resulted in more than 50 people coming from Sydney for our Festival as well as groups from Newcastle and Canberra. It is this interstate participation which has given the Port Phillip Folk Festivals their special character.

Another good feature of the 1968 Festival was the level of audience participation. The sloping lecture theatres of the Pharmacy College provided much better settings for workshops and talks than had been expected.

PORT PHILLIP FOLK FESTIVAL, 1968 *CONTINUED*

Although fairly large, it proved to be possible for speakers and performers to establish a relaxed and intimate atmosphere in these theatres. The audiences responded with enthusiasm to this. In general, the Pharmacy College proved to be a good setting for the Festival, although another smaller hall for the sessions involving dancing would have been useful.

The academic side of the Festival was strengthened this year with contributions from Professor Russell Ward, Dr. David Dufty, Dr. Edgar Waters, Dr. Ian Turner, Mr. Weston Bate and Mr. Ian Jones. This was well supported by the presence of most of the local collectors of folklore and related material. Bill Wannan, Alan Marshall, Norm O'Connor, Hugh Anderson, Bob Michell, Wendy Lowenstein and others who have been active in this field for some time, were also present. They were able to enjoy some lively arguments, as folklorists and collectors are by no means in agreement about many aspects of folklore.

There was also some small success in integrating the academic side with the performing side of folk music with the use of live performers to illustrate some talks as well as some very effective use of taped material. Probably from the point of view of the enjoyment of the audience, workshops in which the commentary and the singing and playing have been planned as a unified whole are the most successful. An outstanding example of this was the workshop conducted by Glen Foster on American Country Music. Other good ones were Industrial Songs of England (Mark Gregory); Negro Music (Margret Roadknight) and Sea Shanties (Danny

Spooner); Folk Song and Ballad (Russell Ward); The English and American Background to Australian Folk Song (Edgar Waters). In fact, all sessions conducted in this "workshop" manner seemed very successful.

The main interest of the singers and musicians attending the Festival seemed to be in obtaining an audience to perform to, and this presented a considerable difficulty to the organisers, as it was very difficult to fit in everyone. Some singers who we had hoped to include in workshops did not know the songs that speakers needed and the need for variety and a well-balanced programme meant that some singers were inevitably omitted from concerts when they were well qualified to appear otherwise.

The Come-all-ye or continuous concert was a partial and very popular solution to the problem; but the audiences tended to vary very much, depending on the time of day, so that very capable singers sang to minute audiences on Saturday morning, whilst the non-appearance of many scheduled singers meant that all the singers who did turn up to other sessions with better audiences had two or more goes, despite the fact that others had been omitted. However, the programme organisers consoled themselves that they had done their best, having included over two hundred performers in all.

There were far too many performers to mention even a fraction of them by name; but mention should be made of very popular groups like the Monaro Boys and The Galahs, who travelled from New South Wales; and the Skillet Lickers from

PORT PHILLIP FOLK FESTIVAL, 1968 *CONTINUED*

Adelaide; Mike McLellend's group from Sydney, and the Hayes Brothers.

Unfortunately, some of the performers themselves put too much stress on participation in the evening concerts. We had hoped to include more performers, particularly those from interstate, in workshops; but, as these had often been worked out well in advance, this was not possible. Although the concerts were popular, it is doubtful whether the formal concert in a large hall is really the best way to present authentic folk music. Perhaps future Festivals will come up with some solutions for these problems.

In line with our policy of making these Folk Festivals national affairs, the committee suggested to the Queensland people present at the Festival that perhaps Brisbane could organise a Festival in 1969. It is intended that there should be one of the larger Port Phillip Festivals every second year, and that in the alternate year, Festivals should be held in other states with also a small festival or similar function in Melbourne to keep the continuity of the Port Phillip organisation.

After some initial hesitation, the Brisbane folk have taken up the challenge with enthusiasm. They have thrown themselves into the preliminary organising work and have already announced that their Festival will be held during Easter, 1969 (April 4th-7th), and that the venue is likely to be the University at St. Lucia. This should be an ideal setting for a Festival, being on the bank of the river in much more romantic surroundings than anything Melbourne can muster.

The Port Phillip Festival Committee will be assisting with a financial guarantee, publicity, etc., and hopes to raise money to assist performers to travel to the Brisbane Festival. We would like to see a mass exodus of performers to Brisbane next Easter, and to help this worthy cause, we are very keen to hear from people who would be willing to work on the Port Phillip Festival Committee or one of its sub-committees during 1968-69. The committee for the 1968 Festival is as follows:

Chairman: Norman O'Connor; **Secretary:** Jane Durst; **Treasurer:** Don Hall;

Organiser: Shirley Andrews; **Convenors**

of Sub-Committees: Programme: Wendy

Lowenstein; Publicity: Jan Richardson;

Management: Merle Lamb; Accommodation:

Pat O'Connor. **Committee:** Minute

Secretary: Penny Maxwell. Jim Buchanan,

Bert Cameron, Don Carless. Brent *Davey*,

Gwenda Davey, Gary Field. **Artist:** Vane

Lindsay.

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Folk Lore Society of Victoria

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Victorian Folk Music Club
 Secretary: Mrs. Lorna Cameron.
 Correspondence for both societies
 to—
 76 Hedderwick Street,
 Essendon.



Pete and Toshi Seeger

PETE SEEGER

Pete Seeger was here recently for a few days. Four years older than when we last saw him and a bit thinner on top; a little less gay, he still retains his old magic, his artistic skill, and his human warmth and sympathy. A few days before he had been singing to 100,000 people in Central Park at the Vietnam Mobilisation Rally.

One of Pete Seeger's most noticeable qualities is his real interest in the people he meets, and in their folk music. He showed this in a practical way when he showed a very good film of Australian folk singer Duke Tritton, made by his wife Toshi during their last visit, at the Palais Theatre concert in Melbourne. He followed this up by presenting a copy to the local folk with the suggestion that copies be made for each state. He said that Tritton, a former shearer, "was a real folk singer."

Then he added to this very kind gesture by giving *Tradition* a handsome donation, much encouragement, and a number of really practical suggestions.

Comparisons are unavoidable. One friend, a former great Seeger fan, who has grown older and a bit cynical in the last four years, said rather sourly: "How was Pete, optimistic as ever?" I don't think that Seeger is an optimist in this sense. He has serious things to say; he is a bit more serious; old favourites are more heavily interspersed with his own songs - songs that question and comment, that strive to enlarge human sympathy, stir the imagination, to remove mental blinkers, bring home issues like war and peace, songs like "The Big Muddy" which has been banned from telly in the U.S. I think that in his quite unique way, he tries to make people see, and being a singer and a musician, he does it through his songs. If he were just an optimist he'd sing a different sort of song. W.L.

COLLECTING ORAL TRADITION IN AUSTRALIA TODAY ... TRENDS AND PROBLEMS

BY WENDY LOWENSTEIN

Collecting folk lore sounds simple until you go into the field, and then you realise just how little you know about it and how many ways there are of approaching the discipline.

In Australia all field work so far has been done by untrained amateurs working almost completely at their own expense and in their spare time. And yet much splendid work has been done mainly in the field of song collecting.

It is interesting to study how this special interest in song came about, considering the vast range of folk lore that exists.

The reason for the Australian emphasis on song, rather than story, lies in the history of our folk movement. Although Bill Wannan's book "The Australian" was the first sign of the folk revival, it was Reedy River, the amazingly successful Australian musical which really inspired the setting up of the folk lore societies and bush music clubs.

The movement was radical, and yet defensive. The play was written by Dick Diamond, secretary of Actor's Equity and presented by New Theatre then Australia's most radical amateur theatre, and it put forward the revolutionary (i.e. unfashionable) idea that Australia had a significant or worthwhile folk culture of its own. It seemed to us, that by reaching back into our past, by rediscovering and popularising our own musical heritage that we could strike a blow for our national independence, and help defeat the takeover of our cultural scene by "canned" American pop music which was not relevant to Australian life, and which was at that time

the dominant form of popular music in our community.

Folk music was our main interest, because it was in the field of song that the foreign cultural invasion was most noticeable. There being little profit in the other aspects of folk lore, there was no threat of a takeover. So the main emphasis of field collecting which started up at that time was on the collection and preservation and popularisation of songs, and we can say with considerable pride that in this aim the movement succeeded quite brilliantly.

Australian songs are now an accepted part of every child's heritage thanks to the pioneer revivalists, the Folk Music and Bush Music Clubs, to Teachers' Colleges and the semi professional singers in folk clubs who include Australian songs in their repertoire as a matter of course. There have even been full time professional groups like the Colonials earning high fees performing Australian material, and there is now a coffee house style folk club in Melbourne which is all Australian.

But the emphasis on song, has also had its negative aspects, and in fact I think it is partly responsible for the dearth of collectors working in the field today.

Speaking to the Folk Lore Society of Victoria some years ago, Edgar Waters said that Australia had inherited only the fag end of a folk song tradition. It could hardly be otherwise, he added, because when our country was growing up, folk song in Britain was falling into a state of dilapidation, the industrial revolution

COLLECTING ORAL TRADITION IN AUSTRALIA TODAY *CONTINUED*

having drastically disrupted the society which had nurtured the tradition.

And since our inheritance was so slender there was not a large body of song left to collect when we came along with our tape recorders. And as we were primarily looking for songs, when they began to peter out, interest in field work waned too.

Yet there is ample room for the widest variety of interests in fields like yarns, poems, dances, and dance tunes, industrial lore, children's rhymes, bawdy stories, urban legends, children's and adult's games, riddles, smart sayings, gambling, weather beliefs and such forms of mini folk lore as the verses the newsboy or sanitary man leaves at Christmas, epitaphs, etc.

It seems to me that it is time for a new orientation, and field workers should now seriously begin to collect these other aspects of our tradition. Some songs will no doubt turn up to delight the collector, but it seems unlikely that any present day field worker will uncover the rich hoard of songs that stand to the credit of people like John Meredith, Norm and Pat O'Connor, Maryjean Officer and Ron Edwards. This however is not anything to *worry* about.

It is time for specialisation, too. Shot gun tours, like the one we made round Australia have much value, but are important mainly as a survey. A study of the experience of overseas folk lore workers like Kenneth Goldstein who spent a year in one tiny Scottish village show the value of intensive work in one area. Likewise, Ian Jones, working in the Kelly country of N.W. Victoria over a period of years reaped a rich reward in his splendid story of the Republic of N.W. Victoria.

In the same way there are opportunities for specialisation within one social grouping or industry. The changing folk lore and oral traditions of migrant groups would make a fascinating study, whilst the development of local dialects like Barossa Deutsch-the distinctive local patois of the German settlers in S.A. has not been recorded as far as I know.

Speaking to a meeting of the Victorian Folk Music Club recently, Associate Professor Ian Turner, a co-founder of the Folk Lore Society of Victoria said that whatever folk lore collectors think they are doing, they are in fact collecting the raw material of history. I don't altogether agree.

Folk lore is one of the main forms for expressing human emotion throughout history, and its study helps us to understand man's creative activities, to interpret man to man. (1) It is a study in its own right.

Yet although we are not a sort of field serviceman for academics there is no reason why we should not serve more than one discipline. Indeed there is every reason why we should be as useful as possible, specially considering just how little field work is done in allied fields in Australia.

I believe in fact that the collector has an obligation to posterity to employ a vacuum cleaner approach retaining on tape all the conversations, including preliminary discussions on the personal history of the informant, local history and reminiscence. In doing so an immense amount of material will be retained which is peripheral to folk lore but which may be of extreme importance to the social historian, student of language, sociologist writer, etc. and which, should you pass it over, may never

COLLECTING ORAL TRADITION IN AUSTRALIA TODAY *CONTINUED*

be recorded again. As far as the folklorist is concerned this is very often also the best way to get a thoroughly spontaneous performance, and is usually better than asking the informant to repeat a formerly told tale.

Right now, many Australian historians, librarians, etc. tend to undervalue oral evidence, but overseas oral history is now a study in its own right and when this also becomes the case in Australia the oral material I am discussing will be highly valued, if it can be made easily accessible.

Because it must be admitted that the tape recorder whilst an indispensable tool for a collector does bring its problems. It is expensive to buy and to operate and tapes are difficult to store. It is even more difficult to make the material accessible to people who are able to use it.

There are several schools of thought about how to regard tape recordings, and how much trouble to take them over. Ron Edwards who has probably spent more time in the field than any other Australian, regards the recorder as a notebook, uses a small cheap National for ease and convenience and transcribes the material the minute he gets home from a trip. Thereafter he regards the tape as of scant importance; and retains it for reference only. At the other end of the scale is someone like Norm O'Connor who pays immense attention to tape quality and has made very fine tape recordings indeed.

I myself, believe that it is good to get the best tape recordings possible under the circumstances, but experience has taught me that perfection is for people who operated close to home and are able to

return to the same informant again and again, or who have very sophisticated equipment. Even with every other advantage, I find background noise, traffic, children crying, fans running, and even bulldozers operating are part and parcel of the collecting situation and often wonder whether Ron's way would not save an immense amount of work for which very often, we see little return.

In the field it is seldom possible to achieve a recording suitable for making pressings at the first try. The tape recorder is an immensely efficient two dimensional notebook and I myself find that time spent on achieving perfect recordings can be better employed gathering more material.

There are also several schools of thought about the ultimate fate of the recorded material among librarians and archivists. One theory is that the contents should be typed out and the tapes wiped, preserving only musical material and a small sample of the speech and style of each informant.

I believe that this is the method of expediency, and think that the tapes should be preserved even if the material is also transcribed, which is desirable. So that the material should be easily accessible the contents of the tapes should be listed in some detail and an annotated list of informants compiled giving relevant background information. Songs, poems, etc. should be indexed, preferably by first lines, and where relevant references should be made to individuals, towns and districts, and to other special subject areas.

All this needs to be done, whether the material is to be transcribed or not. Such a comprehensive index also obviates the need

COLLECTING ORAL TRADITION IN AUSTRALIA TODAY *CONTINUED*

for time wasting sequential editing or indeed editing of any sort. In fact editing may not only be time wasting but positively dangerous, involving a subjective process of selection, which may destroy potentially valuable material, even though that value may not be apparent to the editor, or to anyone else at that particular time.

When I returned from our round Australia trip, and was gloomily surveying a great pile of tapes I discussed the best method of treating them with a distinguished fellow librarian at the Latrobe Library who had recently returned from the United States where she studied the treatment of tape recorded material in libraries.

I mentioned that I would have to edit my tapes and she surprised me by asking "What for?" She then pointed out that it was common for beginners to want to edit out bits where they felt they had asked silly questions, or had not showed up to their own best advantage. "They soon get rid of that idea," she remarked "Life's too short, and it's the material that counts, not the way you want yourself to show up on it. A good index is what you need!"

I'm glad I met her. That one short conversation was more helpful to me than any other advice I've had.

For those who are going to collect in the field I would recommend Kenneth Goldstein's "A Guide to Field Workers in Folklore" (Folklore Associates, Hatboro Pennsylvania). Another useful reference is A. L. Lloyd's article in Tradition No. 22. In addition it is extremely useful to study articles on Oral History in overseas periodicals which are usually available in University libraries; specially for a

discussion on tape handling, indexing, etc. However, it is important to read a cross section of these as there are various schools of thought here too.

It is sad that today, when there is more scholarly interest in capturing the oral tradition than ever before and more opportunities for financial support for the collector, there are fewer people active in the field than there were 15 years ago.

My collection of about 150 hours of tape recordings of Australian folk lore and social history has now been listed in detail, and deposited in the Latrobe Library Melbourne. There is also an alphabetical index of informants with biographical and other relevant details. Additional catalogue entries will also be made for towns, and individuals mentioned, etc.

The catalogue consisting of 30 foolscap pages of single spaced typescript was a major effort, and everyone having anything to do with it is extremely glad to see it finished. My thanks to The Victorian Folk Music Club who subsidized the work to the tune of \$200, to Jess Dunnadge who helped with the typing, and to the Latrobe Librarian, Miss Patricia Reynolds who has been unfailingly helpful. The State Library has presented the Folk Music Club with a copy of the Index for their Library, so anyone who is interested can consult it. The collection of course is not finite. I intend to go on adding to it indefinitely.

... *Wendy Lowenstein.*

NINE MILES FROM GUNDAGAI

Reprinted from *Singabout*, Vol. 2, No. 4, May, 1958

The musical score is written on four staves in G major and 2/4 time. The melody is simple and folk-like. Chords are indicated by letters C, F, and G7 above the notes. The lyrics are written below the notes.

I'm used to punch-ing bull-ock teams a- cross the hills and plains, I've
 teamed out-back these for-ty years in blaz-ing drought and rains, I've
 lived a heap of trou-ble down with-out a bloom-ing lie, But I
 can't for-get what hap-pened me nine miles from Gun-da- gai .

'Twas getting dark, the team got bogged, the axle snapped in two,
 I lost my matches and my pipe—ah, what was I to do!
 The rain came on, 'twas bitter cold and hungry too was I —
 And the dog sat in the tucker-box nine miles from Gundagai.

Some blokes I know have stacks of luck no matter how they fall,
 But there was I, lor luvva duck, no blessed luck at all;
 I couldn't make a pot of tea nor get my trousers dry,
 And the dog sat in the tucker-box nine miles from Gundagai.

I can forgive the blinking team, I can forgive the rain:
 I can forgive the dark and cold and go through it again:
 I can forgive my rotten luck, but hang me till I die —
 I can't forgive that blooming dog nine miles from Gundagai.






Collector's

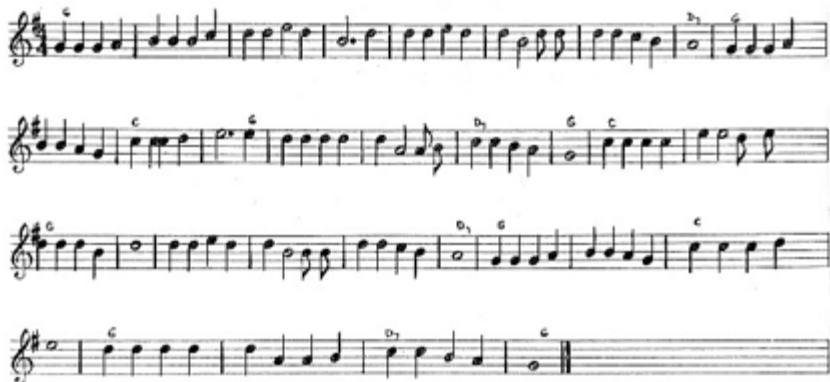
TWO SONGS ABOUT

THE BUYER ON OUR RUN

Words: Anon.

Music: Fai Hockley

Collected: Wendy and Werner Lowenstein — Madura, 1969.



Out across the Nullarbor, where roos and rabbits roam,
 Just ninety miles from Eucla, there's a place that I call home,
 I was very happy there, beneath the blazing sun,
 Till I became acquainted with the buyer on our run.

Give you an example of the silly things he'd do,
 Waited back to see him, on the day that he came through,
 Pairing rabbits by the string, but I guess he didn't see,
 Cause the silly so and so ran right over me.

Now, I am just a trapper, trapping for a crust,
 Fighting for survival in the biting wind and dust,
 And if these troubles aren't enough there is another one:
 I can't divulge his name, but he's the buyer on our run.

I'll tell you that it's real good fun, to set two hundred traps,
 To know that you'll get ninety or a hundred pair, perhaps;
 To find when you come home at night, from the dust and heat,
 That he's forgot your order and you're out of bread and meat.

Now if you plan on travelling, and across the plains you go,
 Take a tip from me, I'm the guy that ought to know,
 Plan your trip ahead my friend, be sure you plan it right,
 So that you pass Madura in the middle of the night.

Chances are he'll be there, to have himself a whirl,
 Has a taste for grape juice, has a taste for girls,
 Avoid him like the plague, my friend; he is the devil's son,
 You don't know trouble till you've met the buyer on our run.

See Inside Back Cover.

Choice

T RABBITS

THE RABBIT TRAPPER'S SONG

Collected by Wendy Lowenstein and Dave de Hugard
from Basil Cosgrove, Armidale, N.S.W.



Oh, my traps are all a-jangle, at an easy swinging tangle,
I'm setting in a circle keeping round a fringe of trees;
Although I'm mud and gory spattered, and my clobber's torn and tattered
I'm as carefree as the bunnies till they fall for one of these.

Oh, I'm under no man's orders and I recognise no borders,
There's a welcome everywhere for me and my old dungarees;
I'm a (1) rabbit trapper, and a canny bunny snapper,
And I (whistle) through the bushland, though I'm wet up to the knees (3).

While you guys are courting tabbies, I'm out among the rabbies,
I can hear them bucking, squealing, oh, a dozen traps ahead,
And again while you are flirting (2) at the last trap I am certain
To be bagging up my bunnies, keeping tally as I tread.

So Ginger make the railway early, there's a shy and dinkum girlie
Lets me juggle (4) with the cream cans as she write cheques out for me.

Notes: Basil Cosgrove, who is in his sixties, works and has lived most of his life in the New England District of N.S.W., where he works as a ring-barker. Basil has an immense repertoire of songs, some very old. (Tradition No. 23, Page 31). 2 He said that the words for this song were written by a lady and published in 'The Women's Weekly' about "50 years ago." He adds that "we put a tune to it."

I found this song specially interesting because it is, as far as I know, only the second one collected from oral tradition which celebrates the life of the rabbit trapper. It was recorded at a party with Ian White, Tom Rummery, Dave de Hugard and others, at Armidale, N.S.W.

Dave later recorded it again, and a few of the more doubtful words were clarified. The words are a trifle garbled, but it is quite easy to add a word here and there, to arrive at a singable version.

1. Sometimes "spurting." 2. Sounded like "snowpole" or "smokehole".
3. "Whistle" is my addition.

Sometimes Basil sang a different line, first part unclear, and second part concluding "to my trapper melody."

4. Sometimes "she juggles."

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Photo: Glen O'Malley

Margret Roadknight, Sue Lee Archer and Merle Lamb sing for Women's Lib at International Women's Day demonstration, City Square, Melbourne, March, 1972.

**Journal of Victorian Folk Music Club
& Folk Lore Society of Victoria.**

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FOLK REVIVAL - THE STORY OF THE VICTORIAN FOLK MUSIC CLUB AND FOLK LORE SOCIETY

Once an organisation has been going for a few years the old originals are often surprised to hear newer members make remarks that show they aren't aware of lots of club history that "everyone knows."

So we are throwing open our columns to people who have memories, experiences and facets of club history tucked away which will surely be interesting to present day members. It won't be a history in the formal sense, but a page or sometimes two, devoted to Folk Music Club and Folk Lore Society happenings, both past and present. To start off Shirley Andrews and Wendy Lowenstein combine to give an idea how the folk music movement started in Victoria, whilst President Geoff Upson will give a few recent reminiscences later on.

The meeting which launched the Folk Lore Society of Victoria was held in mid 1955, and the Victorian Folk Music Club started on June 26th, 1959, but their origins go much further back than that.

The immediate post war years in Australia saw real stirrings of interest in Australia's national culture, not only in the high culture, but in popular and folk culture, in Australian writing and publishing, in art, and in folk lore music.

Of course this new revival of interest depended heavily on the work of pioneers like Banjo Paterson who, in 1905, published his "Old Bush Songs, consisting of recitations and the words of songs he had noted down from traditional singers and reciters, and in the thirties, Dr. Percy Jones, Choirmaster of St. Patrick's Cathedral, who made a collection of the words and music of

bush songs. A little later, Vance Palmer, who unfortunately couldn't sing, learnt a number of old bush songs, and composer Margaret Sutherland "worked" on these. They were published by Allans as Old Australian Bush Ballads, but like the Jones collection they did not become widely known until the 50's, when some of them were used in Reedy River.

When Burl Ives, the American folk singer, toured Australia in the early 1950's he sang some of the Percy Jones collection, and his Australian recordings issued shortly after, became widely known, but it is not true to say that he "discovered" songs, although more than one old bush singer has said that Click Go the Shears was "brought in" by Burl Ives.

As far back as 1951 two events took place which must be considered the first stirrings in the revival here. One was the setting up of the Unity Singers, a choir of about 25 voices, under the leadership of Mr. J. Sutton Crow, a leading Melbourne Methodist choir leader. This group, later to become the Austral Singers, specialised in peace songs and Australian folk songs arranged for four parts. Members of this group still connected with the folk movement are Bert Cameron, Shirley Cameron and Werner Lowenstein.

In 1951 also, Ron Edwards and John Manifold produced their first folder of broadsides, "The Bandicoot Ballads 1-4," which are now a rare and expensive collectors' item.

This, then was the beginning. It was left to Melbourne playwright, Dick Diamond, a long time member of Melbourne New

THE STORY OF THE VICTORIAN FOLK MUSIC CLUB *CONTINUED*

Theatre and Secretary of Actors' Equity, to bring together traditional songs, yarns, stories in his Australian musical play, *Reedy River*, set at the time of the 1891 Shearers' strike. This warm, unpretentious play, was an immediate success, being presented by New Theatre groups in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, in 1953. A whole host of little known Australian songs were presented to delighted audiences. Indeed in these days when Australian songs are, and have been for years, a normal part of every child's background, it is hard to imagine the enthusiasm of audiences when they were presented with Australian folk songs, a commodity which any one at all would have assured you did not exist!

Another link with our clubs was the appearance of dancers from Unity Dance Group, later the Association of Australian Dancers in *Reedy River*. Rae Dowdle and Shirley Andrews were members of this group, and the dance medley, *The Old Bush Barn*, was specially created for the occasion.

Also in 1953, the first edition of **The Australian**, by Bill Wannan, appeared being the first, and outstandingly successful venture of the newly formed Australasian Book Society. The existence of this society was significant to the folk movement, not only for their publications, but because it was in its office that the first moves were made by Ian Turner and Wendy Lowenstein to form the Folk Lore Society; the stamps, leaflets, envelopes and meeting room being paid for by the ABS.

Ian Turner, now Associate Professor of History at Monash, spoke at the first meeting, and also drafted the Constitution, and Norm O'Connor was in the chair.

Wendy became the first Secretary, Alan Marshall, Honorary President, Norm, Vice-President (and de facto President), Tom Harris, Treasurer, and Harry Pearce was a Committee Member.

The Sydney production of *Reedy River* featured the first bush band complete with lagerphone, bush bass, etc., and this has come to be considered a real "traditional" bush musical group (although in fact John Manifold points out in **The Violin, The Banjo and The Bones**, these instruments were not found in the bush band, which more commonly consisted of a violin, banjo and bones, but have more in common with the ships' foo-foo band).

The Bushwhackers Band was started by Frank Nickels in 1955 and appeared with great success in the second production of *Reedy River*. This band owed quite a bit to Frank's contacts with John Meredith and other members of the Sydney Bushwhackers Band. Another factor important to later developments was that Joy Durst had been involved with the Sydney Bushwhackers and the Bush Music Club and when she and Claude moved to Melbourne they soon joined the local band.

During the next few years the Bushwhackers, then the Billabong Band, concentrated on learning and performing Australian songs.

During the 1956 Olympic Games individuals from these groups and from the Folklore Society of Victoria organised a Woolshed Dance for overseas visitors.

THE STORY OF THE VICTORIAN FOLK MUSIC CLUB *CONTINUED*

The Billabong Band came into contact with many people who were keen to learn the songs and they built up a mailing list of these interested supporters. By late 1958, the following paragraph appeared in Singabout, the magazine published by the Sydney Bush Music Club -

"AT LAST! SINGABOUT NIGHTS IN MELBOURNE."

As a result of the success of these Singabouts run by the band, a group of supporters grew up from whom the Bush Music Club was formed.

First Secretary was Keith Watson; some successors were Robin Bailey, Bert Gibson, Shirley Hick (Cameron), Lorna Cameron and Frank Pitt. First President was Margaret Downing, followed by Frank Nickels, Bill Sayers and Shirley Andrews.

During the intervening years The Folk Lore Society had not been idle. In fact Norm and Pat O'Connor, along with Maryjean Officer, now of the Folk Lore Council of Australia, spent several exceptionally fruitful years collecting songs, poems and stories, and from 1957-63 collected from Simon McDonald, Captain Hartley Watson, Tom Newbound, Mrs. Catherine Peatey and Dick Evans, to name but a few. From this collecting period stem many songs which the Folk Music Club sings today - Billy Brink, Cockies of Bungaree, etc.


In 1963 the Gumsuckers' Gazette (formerly a mere newsletter) appeared as a monthly printed magazine complete with songs.

A year later the name was changed to Australian Tradition, and the present Tradition evolved.

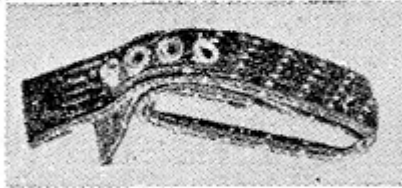
We hope that this necessarily brief account of the genesis of our two societies will spark off a few reminiscences. Over to members and friends.

Shirley Andrews and Wendy Lowenstein

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THE STORY OF THE CATALPA BY SUE BUNTING

During the 1860s and 1870s the old whaling days were in a steady decline and the New Bedford and Nantucket ships found that it was not profitable to make the long, arduous run to the Southern Pacific. It was during this period that an American whaleship set out on a voyage that was to be the sensation of two countries. Only folklorists and those interested in Australia's history in detail seem to know about this event today but it caused a huge stir of excitement in the colony of Western Australia.

It involved an Irish revolutionist and author of some repute, John Boyle O'Reilly, and six of his comrades, and the American whaleship, the "Catalpa."

John O'Reilly was apprenticed to a newspaper office and then enlisted in the 10th Hussars stationed at Drogheda in 1863 as a trooper. He was a member of the Fenian Society and enlisted in the British Army to attract Irish soldiers to the revolutionary movement. He was a great favourite of the regiment because of his happy-go-lucky attitude, but he was responsible for most of the grumbings in the Irish garrisons. Eventually he was arrested for this and in 1866 was court-martialled at Dublin. After a long trial he was sentenced to death but this was later commuted to twenty years' penal service. For a year he was in several prisons in England and then he was sent to Western Australia with other Fenians. He was held in the Bunbury convict settlement, one of the inlets used by whalers for bay-whaling carried out with boats from the shore as compared with sperm-whaling in the deep seas. At this date the penal settlement was the only one left in Australia.

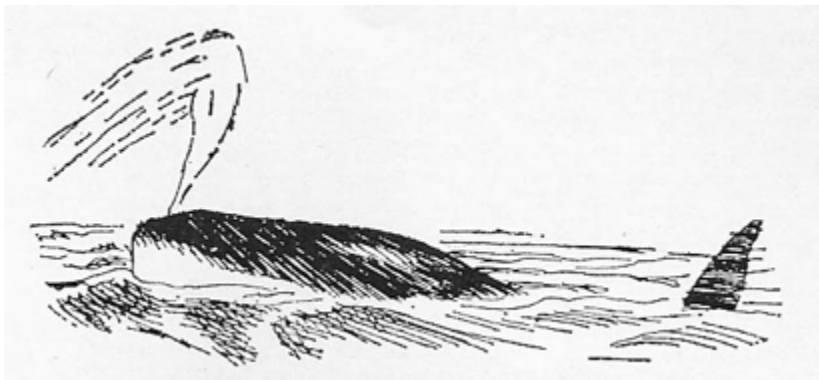
O'Reilly was made a "constable to aid the officers of the settlement" because of his good conduct, and he had contact with the whalers. In 1869 he escaped. He was for the bush but was advised by a parish priest not to take this course. This parish priest put O'Reilly in contact with the captain of a whale ship. Things went wrong and the whale ship left O'Reilly stranded. For five days he lay concealed in the dunes around Geographe Bay and then came the "Gazelle," a whaling barque out of New Bedford, and picked him up.

O'Reilly was several months on this ship and dedicated a book of poems entitled **Songs From the Southern Seas** to Captain Gifford, her commander. He eventually reached Liverpool, set out for the United States as an ordinary emigrant and spent the rest of his time there as an editor of an important newspaper.

One of his comrades, Hassett, escaped from Bunbury in 1869 but was recaptured. The prisoners though, managed to get appeals away to their friends in Ireland and America and eventually it was determined to rescue them. John Devoy, a well-known character in America, formed a committee to work out ways and means. O'Reilly suggested that a whaling vessel should be used as it would not attract much attention cruising in the Australian waters.

The plan was very costly. Twenty-five thousand dollars at least were expended in the enterprise and an American whaleship, the Catalpa, was chartered for the long cruise. The leader of the expedition was Captain George Anthony, picked by one Hathaway. This Hathaway was then captain of the night police force of New Bedford.

THE STORY OF THE CATALPA *CONTINUED*



The Catalpa was refitted for whaling as if for a normal voyage. Apart from Captain Anthony, only one man of the crew knew of the real purpose of the voyage.

John Devoy, then editor of the **New York Herald**, gave final instructions to Captain Anthony:

"You will cruise until fall, about six months in the North Atlantic. Then *you are to put in at Fayal, ship home any oil which you may have taken*, and sail at once for Australia, where we expect you to arrive early in the spring of 1876. You are to go to Bunbury, on the west coast, and there communications will be opened up with you from our Australian agent."

John Breslin and Thomas Desmond had the work of making the arrangements in Australia for the escape. They sailed from San Francisco in September, 1875, and arrived in Fremantle under the names of Mr. Jones and Mr. Collins. They made themselves familiar with the penal settlement and Mr. Jones especially was very popular with the residents because of his charm and his supposed wealth. He was even shown over the gaol and quickly

established communication with the six he had come to rescue.

The Catalpa got several whales on her way out and assisted a disabled ship in mid Atlantic. On the way they met a barque, the Platina, of New Bedford, who wanted to know why the Catalpa was sailing these latitudes. As already stated in the beginning, the whaling of American ships was on the decline in these waters. They also met a Liverpool ship bound for New Zealand. Captain Anthony boarded her and in the course of conversation discovered her captain had once sailed a convict ship, the Hougoumont, to Australia and had in fact, carried O'Reilly.

At last the Catalpa came to Bunbury. The captain presented Anthony with a detailed map and charts of the Western Australian coast line.

At last the Catalpa came to Bunbury. The captain communicated with Breslin and the final plans were made in a hotel. Breslin and Anthony sailed together as passengers in the coastal steamer the Georgette and actually received information about the inshore soundings near Fremantle from the skipper of the Georgette.

THE STORY OF THE CATALPA CONTINUED

Breslin and Desmond arranged for traps and ponies to bring the prisoners through the bush from Fremantle to Rockingham, 23 miles north of the town.

It was not difficult for the men to escape from gaol, for, being political prisoners they worked outside during the day. One was, in fact, painting a house near the gaol. Captain Anthony was waiting for them at Rockingham with a fully-manned whale-boat drawn high up on the sand. After the mad dash through the bush, the beach was reached. Anthony's men, who still did not know what was going on, thought they were being attacked at first when the prisoners came rushing on the boat.

At this moment a squad of mounted police appeared half a mile from the beach and the sea was rising. When the boat was launched the Catalpa could not see the small boat over the waves. The men pulled for a whole day but made little headway in the rough sea. Captain Anthony knew the Catalpa would go further out as night drew in. They spent the night in the same position, in an over-crowded boat very near to Fremantle. When the sun rose the Catalpa was seen to be close in towards land. A sail was set in the boat with all haste. It would be certain that Fremantle would send out soldiers. As a matter of fact, an hour after sunrise the Georgette, well armed with "bold warriors," was steaming out from her port. Unknown to Captain Anthony, a guard boat was already alongside the Catalpa. The police in the guard boat had not seen Anthony's boat but noticing that the Catalpa suddenly shifted course they tried to intercept, but the Catalpa out manoeuvred them, cut them off and rescued the prisoners who stood at the rail.

The story spread like wildfire through Fremantle and crowds had gathered on the shore to watch. The Georgette arrived and fired a shot under the stern of the Catalpa and when this went unheeded, another across her bows. However Captain Anthony hoisted the Stars and Stripes. The Catalpa was overtaken off Rottneest Island and the captain of the Georgette ordered her to hand over the prisoners. Failure to do this in 15 minutes would be a signal for opening fire. The crew of the Catalpa seem to have taken this as a joke but they were still prepared for a fight and were armed with rifles, harpoons and whale lances. Captain Anthony pointed to the flag and shouted, "This ship is on the high seas. If you fire on me you are firing on the American: flag." The Catalpa was then outside the three-mile limit and traditional rights were observed.

A discontented Georgette returned to Fremantle where all business had been stopped for the day. To add to official annoyance the public cheered the success of the Catalpa. It was their gala day!

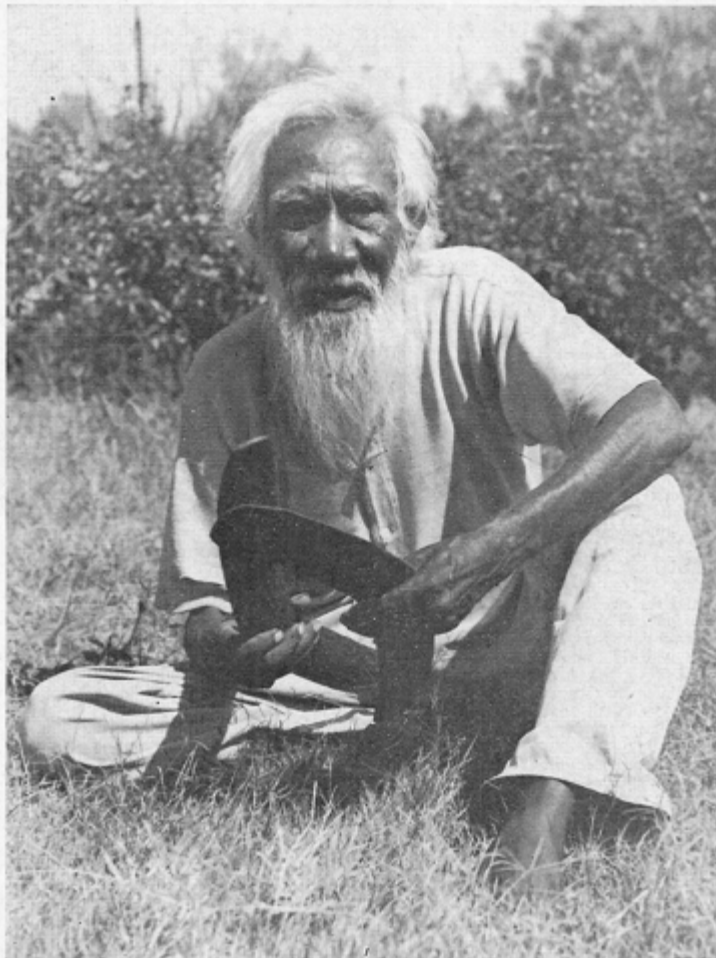
The Catalpa sailed for New Bedford and was cheered by crowds on the wharves. The irate Governor of Western Australia, Sir William Robinson, sent an official notification to New Bedford demanding the return of the Fenians. But the Chief of Police at New Bedford was the same Hathaway who was responsible for the sailing instructions of the Catalpa. Needless to say nothing was ever done about returning the prisoners, much to the Governor's chagrin.

In a later issue I'll discuss the various versions of the song about the Catalpa.

AUSTRALIAN

Tradition

No. 37, December, 1975
Price \$1.50
Registered at the G.P.O.
Melbourne for
transmission by post
as a periodical
Category B.



Paddy Djaigwn of Broome in Western Australia, a noted songwriter and tradition bearer of the local Aboriginal community, uses the boomerangs as music sticks.

FINAL ISSUE
INDEX 1963-1974

THE LAST EDITORIAL

Dear Friends,

What do you say when you give up something that has been a big part of your life for fifteen years? (How can I manage without printers' deadlines and editorial crises?)

It was in 1961 that I first took an editorial hand in Gumsuckers' Gazette and now it's 1976*. Gumsucker's was a roneoed club bulletin then, issued by the Folk Lore Society of Victoria and like all young things it was full of excitement and enthusiasm, it was opinionated and very often ill informed! And now I'm writing the last editorial.

The Australian folk revival has been the greatest success story in the resurgence of Australian culture over the last twenty years. When Ian Turner and I started the Folk Lore Society of Victoria in 1955 I knew only three Australian songs. The Wild Colonial Boy, Waltzing Matilda and Botany Bay. That was all! And most people with pretensions to culture thought that Australia had no folk song tradition at all! Today even the most ignorant know better. We've educated 'em. Australian songs are now part of every school child's cultural luggage.

Young Australian songwriters today can write in the Australian idiom - sensitive and lovely songs like Bob Hudson's "Girls in our Town" - without self consciously trying to develop an Australian idiom, because they've grown up with our folk song tradition around them. And who did that? We did!

Not just Tradition of course, but people like John Meredith, and Edgar Waters, like Jim Buchanan and Shirley Andrews, like Alan Scott and his brother Bill, people like Ron Edwards and Maryjean Officer, like Bob Michell and Rose Sayers, people like Norm and Pat O'Connor, people like me and you! People in the Sydney Bush Music Club, and the Victorian Folk Music Club which has so loyally kept on keeping Tradition on, even when it was the cause of constant fighting and argument, not to mention financial strain.

But the person who has possibly done most to keep Tradition alive is Ted Thompson our printer. Ted played "Thommo" in the first performance of Reedy River in Melbourne. Perhaps he has put up with our erratic editorial habits with extreme good humour for old time's sake, because his bill was so small that he couldn't have made any money out of the job!

Looking back we can say with considerable surprise "Well, we certainly had an effect, and it's been marvellous fun too!"

Tradition as a periodical is closing down. It's become too big a strain. and the need has passed! However the Victorian Folk Music Club will continue to publish Australian folk material. One obvious project is a "Best of Tradition" songbook. Shirley Andrews is also working on a history of the Australian Folk revival. If you would like us to keep you informed, write to Shirley, Box 2025S G.P.O. Melbourne 3001. (Back issues of Tradition are available, and are detailed on the back cover.)

To all those readers who've stayed with us till the end, and specially to those who've been with us since the beginning, thank you very much indeed for your support and friendship. I've had a lot of pleasure from Tradition and got to know so many good people through the mail. People like Mr Wat Fielder of Albury who has written so many encouraging letters over many years, people like Pete Seeger, people who kept on subscribing, and even people who meant to subscribe and never got around to it!

Thank you for writing us all those letters, and if you didn't always get an answer I'm really sorry, but pity the poor editors. At the

peak I often wrote forty Tradition letters a month!

Scholars of the future who want to date events by dates in Tradition should beware. We often came out six months' after the date on our cover which means we advertised things in our pages which hadn't happened on the date we appear to have appeared! But our motto has been "We always appear on time, no matter how late we are!"

Wendy Lowenstein Editor

Australian Tradition

Tradition Index

Australian Tradition & Gumsuckers' Gazette INDEX 1963-74

Abbreviations: Gumsuckers' Gazette (G.G.), Notes (N), Poems (P), Songs (S), Yarns (Y).

Our publishing history: Gumsuckers' Gazette 1960-62., 1963

Australian Tradition 1964 1965-75

General Index: Songs .
Informants Collectors

Indexer: Mavis Michell
with the assistance of
Wendy Lowenstein
and
Shirley Andrews

THEYDE UGANDA

Collected by Warren Fahey. Tune: There's Nae Luck About the Hoose.

A (3 Times)

B

Folk Dancing is probably not the correct term for the traditional dances performed in Australia but it's become the accepted term. It is really encouraging to see that Folk Dance and FolkSong have been accepted as one and are being enjoyed by the same people . . . as it should be! I intend to outline old dances that were danced by our forefathers in the hope of increasing this enjoyment. I'll also try to keep the steps simple!

THEYDE UGANDA

A popular Scottish Country Dance. I collected this particular version from Mrs. Mary Hynes, of Hazelbrook, N.S.W. There have been several other variants collected in Australia.

Formation — In sets of eight. Four men and four women.

○ ○ ○ ○ women
X X X X men

Steps: Running.

Bars — 1-8 first man leads the women down the outside of the men's line and then back to their place. (16 runs).

← ← ←
top ○ ○ ○ ○ bottom
X X X X
→ → →

— 1-8 first woman runs down the outside of the women's line and then back to her place, followed by all the men. (16 runs).

— 9-16 first couple link right arms and spin round in centre for four steps, then link left arms with the next person in your own line and spin in their place for four steps, link right arm with your partner again, and so on, right down the length of the set.

When the first couple have reached the end of the set all couples face each other and take two steps forward (towards each other) and two steps back. Then the set is ready to commence again with the second couple as leaders.

Note: A similar version is published in Community Dance Manual No. 1 (EFDSS) under the name of Thady You Gander or the Irish Trot. The Sydney

Gazette No. 11, May 15, 1803, mentions the Irish Trot as having been danced at a Sydney wedding. — **Ed.**



THADY, YOU GANDER

The dance, Thady You Gander or The Irish Trot, was included in the last Tradition (Page 14). I said I had been unable to find the meaning of the first name. Jacko Kevins, well known as a fine player of dance music, particularly Irish music, has come to light with it. Jacko says that Thady is an Irish name so that the title is apparently somewhat an uncomplimentary remark addressed to some character of that name. Gander has its usual meaning as the husband of Mrs. Goose, traditionally represented as being rather silly.

This dance seemed to be known all over Great Britain, but as it was listed under its other title, Irish Trot, in the 1st edition of the English Dancing Master, published in 1650 by John Playford, it may have come originally from Ireland.

Reprinted from Australian Tradition No. 31
March 1973

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THE SPANISH MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER

Sung by Tom Newbound, of Rutherglen, and Mrs. Montgomery, his sister.
Collected by the Folk Lore Society of Victoria, 1960, and published on
Wattle Record, "Australian Traditional Singers and Musicians in Victoria."



MAN: Tell me one thing tell me truly, Tell me why you scorn me
so, Tell me why when asked a question, you will always answer no,
No sir, no sir, no sir, no sir, no sir, no.

WOMAN: No sir, no sir, no sir, No sir, no sir, no sir, no.



1959-1990

APRIL, 1990

australian
TRADITION

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NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN FOLK MUSIC CLUB INCORPORATED

REGULAR CLUB FUNCTIONS

RINGWOOD COLONIAL BUSH DANCE: 1st Saturday, 7th April, 8 p.m., at Ringwood Uniting Church Hall, Cnr. Station Street and Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood. Melways 49 H9. Music - "Digeri".

SINGABOUT FOLK CLUB: Mondays, 2nd, 9th, 23rd and 30th April, 8 p.m., ALPHINGTON ANGLERS' HALL, Cnr. Clarke and Rathmines Streets, Fairfield (near Fairfield Station). Melways 30 K10. Led by Dave Brannigan. Guest Artist for 23rd April: Therese and Roger.

EAST RINGWOOD FOLK CLUB: Tuesdays, 3rd, 10th and 24th April (24th is the Dance Night), 7.45 p.m., EAST RINGWOOD COMMUNITY HALL (enter from Knaith Road, off Dublin Road). Melways 50 B8.

CONCERT PARTY: Practice and Rehearsal Nights. Thursdays, 5th and 19th April. SURREY HILLS UNITING CHURCH HALL, Cnr. Valonia Avenue and Canterbury Road. Melways 46 J11. Contacts: Dancing - Ann Pritchard-Boyle, (03) 434 1631, or for Concerts - Steven Bullock, (03) 762 1389.

COMMITTEE MEETING: Thursday, 12th March, 8 p.m., SECRETARY'S HOME, 5 EDWARD COURT, IVANHOE. Melways 31 C7.

RINGWOOD COLONIAL BUSH DANCE: 1st Saturday, 5th May, 8 p.m., RINGWOOD UNITING CHURCH HALL, Cnr. Station Street and Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood. Melways 49 H9.

The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or the V.F.M.C.

Last page of April 1990 issue:

April, 1990

4.

Australian Tradition

planned each month. Should you be visiting our Nation's Capital, please contact Bob McKay, 12 Hovea Street, O'Connor, (062) 57 2696. We are rather envious of Canberra Folk Club's dance program line-up for 1990 - they are planning to learn approximately 100 dances over nine nights throughout the year, on the first Saturday of each month, March to November at St. John's Church Hall, Reid. Contact: John Garden - (062) 81 2371 (After Hours).

WEDDERBURN OLDTIMERS: The next Multiple Sclerosis Ball will be held on Friday, 20th April, 1990, at Maranoa Hall, Corner of Monash Street and Station Place, Sunshine (Melway 40 J1).

RECIPE FOR USING GREEN TOMATOES: For those whose tomatoes have fruited but refuse to ripen, the following recipe originated in a Victorian country publication circa 1908. Mrs. H. Lewis submitted "Green Tomato Chutney": 4 lbs (about 2 kg) green tomatoes, 4 lbs apples peeled and cored, 1 large onion, 2 lbs sugar, 12 cloves garlic, chopped fine, 1 lb raisins, 3 oz (75-80gm) ground ginger, 2 tablespoons curry powder, 6 tablespoons salt, 0.5 teaspoon cayenne, 3 pints (about 1.75 litres) vinegar. Boil all together until soft, about 1 hour.

* * WOOLSHED BALL: 26th MAY. SEE YOU THERE! * *

CONTACTS

V.F.M.C. POSTAL ADDRESS: G.P.O. Box 2025S, Melbourne, Vic., 3001.

SECRETARY: Mrs. Elma Gardner, 5 Edward Court, Ivanhoe, Vic., 3079. Telephone: (03) 497 1628.

NEWSLETTER EDITORS: Mr. & Mrs. David Gibbs, P.O. Box 1696, Shepparton, Vic., 3630. Telephone (6 to 9 p.m. only) (058) 26 7218.

CONCERT PARTY ENGAGEMENTS: Mr. Steven Bullock, (03) 762 1389, or Ms. Ann Pritchard-Boyle, (03) 434 1621.

SINGABOUT FOLK CLUB: Mrs. Betty Davis, (03) 478 9656.

EAST RINGWOOD FOLK CLUB: Mr. Graeme Higman, (03) 890 6890.

RINGWOOD COLONIAL BUSH DANCE: Mrs. Jane Bullock, (03) 762 1389.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR ANY EDITION OF THE NEWSLETTER MUST BE LODGED WITH THE EDITORS BY 10th DAY OF PREVIOUS MONTH (NEXT WORKING DAY IF 10th FALLS ON WEEKEND OR PUBLIC HOLIDAY). LATE COPY CANNOT BE INCLUDED.

The Editors reserve the right to alter or not publish submissions.

ALLAN AND ELMA GARDNER - THANKS

Allan and Elma became active in the Victorian Folk Music Club in the 1970's at a time when the geographical centre of the Club's activities was much closer to Melbourne than now, but also with a distant meeting in Ringwood.

At that time, regular functions were held in Armidale, Carlton, Fairfield, Royal Park, Ringwood, and Toorak with Singabouts in both Armidale and Ringwood on the same evening! Large crowds were attracted to concerts in the Fitzroy Gardens and the Melbourne Town Hall; Allan remembers wistfully the queues of attendees in line down Collins Street.

Also festivals were arranged or supported in Melbourne and nearby country towns. But foremost in everyone's mind was the twice yearly festival at Nariel Creek which was called "Narieland" in one issue of the Club newsletter, because Nariel represented the most concentrated collecting of traditional Australian dances and tunes by Club members.

Allan and Elma's names first appeared in the Newsletter, August 1976, as being elected to the committee, Elma then being listed both as Assistant Secretary (Geoff Coles, Secretary) and then as the full Secretary, both in the same issue!! This was a forerunner of the role which Elma was to play over the next 23 years.

Centred around the Gardners, has been production of the Club publications, namely, The Joy Durst Memorial Australian Song Collection, Shirley Andrews Take Your Partners (first edition), Music for Colonial Dancing (booklet, cassettes, and CD), Peter Ellis's Collectors

Choice (volumes 1-3), and Harry McQueen's 60 Years of Music (cassettes). Much of the content of these publications, Elma typed herself, including the printed music for Joy Durst's volume on a special typewriter. Elma also showed herself meticulous in the Club's best interest by the correct acknowledgment of copyright and negotiation of royalties, which is unusual in the folk movement where copyright is frequently ignored.

Without doubt however, the most visible role of the Gardners has been in the Woolshed Balls, begun for the Club's 20th Anniversary celebrations in 1979. Allan and Elma, handsomely attired in period costume, have welcomed attendees in the Central Hall, Brunswick, after several days of preparation in ironing table cloths, erecting decorations, setting out the publications table, etc., only to follow it up by staying at the hall until 2:00 or 3:00 am, cleaning up.

Not so visible has been the production and mailing of this Newsletter, together with the garage storage of some 60 boxes of the Club publications and their consistent marketing. Profits from the sales have created a very healthy reserve of funds from which one might hope that further publications will be produced.

In 1982 Elma was elected a Life member of the Club. In 1986 Allan became Vice-President and was elected a Life Member a few years later. In 1997, Allan and Elma were jointly honoured by the Graham Squance Award "in recognition of their sustained contribution to the presentation and promotion of the Australian Folk Tradition".

ALLAN AND ELMA GARDNER - THANKS *CONTINUED*

On the personal level Elma could always be relied on to know the right person to contact and provide the appropriate telephone number. Allan could always be relied on to refresh us by making supper at Folk Club meetings, and, more importantly in the folk sense, to keep alive the tradition of reading Australian poetry. Both Allan and Elma have tried to spot new talent and to encourage it. The word 'dedicated' sums up the Gardners, most aptly.

Bert Gibson, a founding member of the Club, has been closely associated with the Gardners throughout their era of service and says with feeling "Allan and Elma Gardner have done a marvellous job in helping the club forward!"

... *Harry Gardner*

Reprinted from Australian Tradition
August 1999

FOR SALE — N.S.W.

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SHEARING IN THE BAR

Attached is something you may like for the newsletter. The recitation is from an old friend of my family's, the late Jack Carr (he was also the writer of the Eucy Cutter's Spree).

I put John Meredith and Rob Willis in contact with Jack not long before he died, and they recorded the Eucy Cutter's Spree and Shearing In The Bar for the National Library in 1987. I had earlier collected the Eucy Cutter's Spree from Jack about 1980 and again a few years later. I'm presently consolidating a version out of the early transcription with that of Merro's. Merro was quite taken with it and he and Rob also collected Shearing In The Bar (totally different to Duke Tritton's) which I hadn't heard before. Merro actually asked for a copy of them not long before he died, don't know if he went any further with them.

Jack was a little vague or rambling with Shearing In The Bar, so I did a cut and paste of the transcription trying to get it into some sort of sequence. The Moulamein section is a deviation in the middle of it all, but I like it. However I guess overall it is a bit long for reciting and perhaps readers might like to trim out the few repetitions and come up with a more concise version. I'll leave that to you,

... *Peter Ellis*

(See next pages)

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August 2001

SHEARING IN THE BAR - BY JACK CARR

Called into the bar there was a bit of a "do" on - I said what's going on here? As the publican he shouted me a beer.
It was the Shearers' wind-up at the end of their last run
And the way they were shearing you'd reckon the season had just begun. Shearers, shearers
everywhere you couldn't move for wool You should have been there to watch them
shear and listen to them bull.

They'd huddle up in the corner bashing each other's ears. You cannot hear the music for
the whirring of the shears. The Ryans and the Burnses, the Evanses were there too,
All shearing along in harmony never even had a 'blue'.
No black eyes, no broken noses, no bruise, no torn off skin. They never had to call the
boys to bring the tarpot in.

They must have shore ten thousand just like the barman said.
They shore more sheep in this flamin' pub than they do in any shed. North or south or east
or west you will find it's the same; As soon as they start drinking mate they gunny's
put to shame.

They shore them from the Murray right down to Murphy's Creek; They weren't even
worried about the thirty-five hour week. Then they went to Moulamein, they shore to
Castlemaine.
They turned around and then they shore them all the way back again.

There was confusion at the station up there at Moulamein; When the cook got full he let
the fridge run out of kerosene. They found him on the sofa, he was laid out like a log.
When they opened up the old fridge door he'd got it full of grog.

He's hung the meat up in the bag underneath the trees;
Amongst all the blowflies, he thought that they were bees.
I've driven two hundred miles to rouse, he said I could eat a flaming horse. The cook
blurted, I'll have to disappoint you there ain't no second course.

Just wait until tomorrow I'll give you all a treat;
I'll get some more kerosene and I'll get some more fresh meat. So we went out to the
Mulga and shot a big wild pig.
It was black and white like a Friesian cow and almost half as big.

They had bacon for their breakfast and pork for tea and dinner; Instead of getting fatter
they were all getting thinner. Just to keep them happy then they brought along his
daughter. But when she made the flamin' tea she made it with bore water.
The cook said he's gunna go, somebody called him a so-and-so

Now as you now these shearers mate they're just a little crude
I can't tell you what they called the cook but you can guess that it was rude. They used to
say "Who called the cook a bastard?"; We'd say "Who called the bastard a cook?"
The cook, well he got upset and went to see the boss
He said, where the hell do they think they are? down at the Southern Cross?
I saw them travel near and far
One night I even saw me mates shearing in the bar
Arms outstretched and backs bent low, back and forth the shearers go
It was the night of the shearers wind-up at the end of their last run
And the way that they were shearing you'd reckon the season had just begun There was
Hairy, there was Leo, the Gunny was there as well. With a glass of beer in front of
them they were all cheering away like hell.

And the more they drank the harder they shored, the wool was stacked up higher. If they
shored all those sheep that night they're a flamin' lot of liars. They must have shored
two thousand or it was like the barman said. They shored more sheep in this pub mate
than they do in any shed.

North or south, or east or west, you'll find it's the same;
As soon as they start drinking the gun is put to shame. When it was all over they were all a
lot of wrecks.
The publican he shored the best, he shored them of their cheques

Now come on Bruce and Harry I think we'd better go;
Now this flamin' publican he's got all our dough. Go and get Maloney and get our cook
Froggy Fred.
We'd better head back to New South Wales and start another shed.

But if you want your sheep shored mate and you want `em done real well, Eaglehawk is the
place to come to the bar of the Camp Hotel. Now think of the poor publican when he
got up next day, He had to get some help to sweep the wool and the bull away.

Shearers don't go click any more they just go whirr
And it's here in the bar the Camp Hotel you'll get a bit of a stir. As for your sheep, mate;
whether you live near or far
Just bring them down to Eaglehawk, we'll shear them in the bar.

*Gunny is the Gun Shearer --- the top shearer
Compare with Ringer, the fastest shearer*

Collected by Peter Ellis-thanks Peter!

SIX GENERATIONS OF MUSICAL TRADITION CELEBRATE 39 YEARS OF FESTIVAL SUCCESS

The Black and White (Nariel) Festival was held from 26 December 2001 to 2 January 2002 in unusually cool and pleasant weather with dances indoors at the Cudgewa Mechanics Institute Hall, and outdoors at the Festival Ground and the Corryong Creek (formerly Colac Colac) Caravan Park. The Nariel Band comprising Brenda, Ian and Ray Simpson, and Andrew and Keith Klippel, together with friends, led the dancing at several functions and it was good to see a potential Junior Band with the cousins Declan, Clancy, Rebecca and Tessa Simpson leading some of the dances.

A group of music teachers from Corryong performed their own arrangements of English and European folk music at the New Year's Day concert at the Festival ground.

Penny Jeffs, the granddaughter of the Festival's founder, Conrad Albert Klippel, now deceased, provided the following notes on the history.

The first folk festival in Australia was established in 1963 by the late Con Klippel in the Nariel Valley, North East Victoria.

It all began when two music collectors from the Folklore Society of Victoria, namely, Maryjean Officer and Norm O'Connor were travelling from Omeo to Nariel and were directed to the home of Beat and Con Klippel.

The Klippel family's unique style of folk, old time dance music and country hospitality captivated the collectors. During the course of their meeting, Con suggested and then organised a dance on New Years

Eve in 1962. The dance was a hit so Con later instigated Australia's first Folk Festival in February 1963. Con had an inherited musical talent that he loved to share. Con's grandfather emigrated from Germany to Australia in the early 1800's with his flutina, accordion style instrument in hand.

After a most successful dance Con had decided to make it an annual event which brought much pleasure to family and friends. Con organised extensive publicity, wrote articles to major newspapers across Australia, developed promotional posters and flyers and was clearly a publicity man before his time.

Con rallied the Nariel Valley musicians including his brother George Klippel, son Keith Klippel, cousin in-law Charlie Ordish and nearby neighbours Sid Simpson and a few good mates who shared Con's vision for a grand music festival.

There was plenty of practice on the veranda of Con and Beat's home with the music echoing down the Nariel Valley. A new music sensation was born. Con had initiated the Nariel Creek Black and White Folk Festival. The Black and White symbolised the understanding and joining of all races and people through music. The festival is held at the site of an old Corroboree ground, which was considered very appropriate to Con.

A committee was formed and a stage was built which Con and Beat decorated with a black and white mini picket fence. 100's of Black and White balloons were inflated and tied up in nets for release at the strike of

SIX GENERATIONS OF MUSICAL TRADITION *CONTINUED*

midnight on New Years Eve when Con and his old time dance band would play Auld Lang Sync while wife Beat would give the old cow bell a real work out.

The Black and White Junior dance band was also initiated by Con where children from a very young age dressed in black and white checked dresses, shirts and bow ties learnt to play Con Klippel's traditional music. Con developed a number system for accordion keys for the children to make learning easy and fun. The family members and friends of the Nariel Valley soon developed friendships with musical talents from all over Australia where jam sessions and new tunes were learnt and practised every New Year.

The ABC broadcast a television documentary in the late 1960's, articles and books have been written, a record was produced in the early 70's and Con's music has been archived in the Canberra National Library.

Today, Con's only son Keith Klippel aged 63, is the last surviving member of Con Klippel's original dance band. Keith continues to play the traditional Klippel way and many of the great dances that were taught by his mother Beat, also live on. Uncle Ev's Barn Dance believed to be over 100 years old is played and danced throughout Australia and in the Folk music circuit.

For the first time in 39 years the festival has taken a new direction and will be organised by a committee which are not related to the Klippel family or music style. Keith's music buddy and former committee president

Neville Simpson passed away last year and is sadly missed.

The festival was never intended to be profit driven as the music was to be made accessible to people from all walks of life. It's not a hippy festival, it's a festival for everyone with many professional people joining in the festivities every year from as far as Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. They grow a beard, relax and seem to have a great time whilst camping along the banks of the Nariel Creek Festival grounds and Colac Colac Caravan Park.

"Mum would invite all sorts of people back to the family homestead after the dances and offer home baked goodies whilst Con would continue playing his music into the early hours of the morning", Keith said.

Con and Beat were both highly dedicated to music, family and friendships. An industrious couple, they built their own home in 1931 with their bare hands by milling their own timber, constructing the windows, pathways and furnishings. A power pole at the front of the home was a prominent feature in the late 1960's. It was painted with the words, Home of Old Time Dance Music and Song.

39 years have passed and the family ties are not as strong as they used to be and the family property is on the market. "It's a bit sad but I guess you can't hold back progress. I just hope the new entrepreneurs share the passion and love for the area and the traditional Nariel Creek music style. There are many new tunes being introduced with talks of a new CD but I hope the old ones aren't left out because it's the music style

SIX GENERATIONS OF MUSICAL TRADITION *CONTINUED*

which has made our festival unique" Keith Klippel said.

My wife Roma and I have met a lot of interesting people over the years and often attend the National Folk Festival in Canberra. Our children Penny and Jason will always remain closest musicians but seemed tuned to what Con believed in most. Con was renowned for a famous quote, "My greatest joy in life is making people happy"

"When my first grandchild was born I composed a musical piece with sound advice for the future. Gabrielle seems to have some natural musical ability and all I hope is that it brings her as much happiness as it has the rest of the family," Keith said

Penny Jeffs 02 6071-2853 or 0438 712 853.

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January 2003

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NARIEL CREEK FOLK FESTIVAL Celebrates 40th Anniversary

The Nariel Creek Folk Festival approaches its 40th anniversary this year (2002), being the longest running festival in Australia. There will be four traditional dances in the Nariel style at the Cudgewa Hall including an evening of 'Dancing on the Green' at the Nariel Creek Recreation Reserve. Music for the dances will once again be provided by the Nariel Band. In addition, there will be the traditional picnic day on New Years Day where new and proven talent are provided with the opportunity to take the stage. This is always a very entertaining day.

A NEW CD by the Nariel Band will be launched at this years festival. The CD is titled 'tickets Please' and records 50 tunes arranged in traditional dance sets. This CD is a must have for connoisseurs and beginners in traditional Australian dance and music. Copies will be available at the festival.

Most people attending the festival set up camp at the Nariel Creek recreation reserve, about 8 kms south west of Corryong via Colac Colac. Supplies, motel and hotel accommodation are available at nearby Corryong. A caravan park is located near the reserve at Colac Colac.

For further information please contact Ian Simpson (02) 6077 1273 or Jamie Molloy on (02) 6076 2432 or by email on molloyj@corryongcec.net.au

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2009 - 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 with a different artist each month. 3rd Friday each month 8-11pm under the Grandstand, Queen Elizabeth Oval, Bendigo.

Berwick and District Folk Club

Edward Nass / Christine Trimnell, 03 9702 1223 / 0418 535 264
 badfolk@optusnet.com.au
 Supporting local artists and includes a Featured artist (guest).
 3rd Friday February to December
 The Old Cheese Factory, 34
 Homestead Road, Berwick Vic. 3806
 www.badfolk.org.au

Boite World Music Cafe

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

Geelong Folk Music Club

Adam Burke, 0409 409 960
 hexed@primus.com.au OR: Peter
 Fogarty, 03 5229 7887
 Concert Series - throughout the year, featuring quality acts from around the country and overseas. Sessions - every Thursday at the Bayview Hotel, Mercer Street, Geelong. OpenMic - walk-up performance events every month or so at the Clarendon Hotel
 www.geelongfolkmusicclub.com

Gippsland Acoustic Music Club

Brian Strating, 03 5174 5680
 strating.brian.b@edumail.vic.gov.au
 OR: Lyndal Chambers, 03 5174 5680
 Local musicians and concert opportunities.
 1st Sunday @ 745pm
 Tyers Hall, Taralgon
 www.musicclub.org

Melbourne Folk Club

Every Saturday 3 till 6 pm \$12 / \$8
 Grandview Hotel
 47 Pearson Street, Brunswick West
 Jeanette Gillespie, 03 5473 4201 or
 0414 732 667
 gillespie.jeanette.f@edumail.vic.gov.au

Ranges Folk Club

Andrew Jackson, 03 9778 9494 or 0402 473 897, mail@drfolk.com.au
 Monthly blackboard, guest and feature artist, last Friday of month
 Burinja Cultural Centre 351 Glenfern Rd
 Upwey Vic - Melway map ref : 75 B12
 www.drfolk.com.au

Selby Folk Club

David Miller, 03 9751 1218
 miller@a1.com.au
 1st Friday @ 8.00pm, Selby Community House, Minok Reserve

Peninsula Folk Club

President Evan Webb 0439 456 544
 1st Sunday of the month Shakespeares Bar, Young St, Frankston. 7:30-10:30pm (Jam session from about 6.30).
 We mainly feature Folk/Irish/Trad Aussie Bush/Bluegrass & Country...
 Visitors can usually get a stage spot, but best to call to make sure Admission: Members \$4/Non-members \$6

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- Student \$14
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- Pensioner Family \$18

Country:

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- Family \$18

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**PLEASE SEND YOUR
CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE
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BY FRIDAY, 24 JULY 2009.**

*The Editor reserves the right to alter
or to not publish material.*