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NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN FOLK MUSIC CLUB INCORPORATED

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BLACKBERRY JAM AT MAY BUSH DANCE



Photo by Trevor Vooake

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IS COMING UP ON
SUNDAY 15TH JUNE, COMMENCING AT 2.30PM
See inside for details—page 11**

**PLEASE SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR JULY NEWSLETTER
BY: TO: EDITOR@VFMC.ORG.AU BY FRIDAY 20TH JUNE 2025**

WHAT'S ON AT VICTORIAN FOLK MUSIC CLUB

Session nights: The Club meets **each Tuesday** evening at **Ringwood East Senior Citizens' Hall, Laurence Grove**. Sessions run from 7.30 pm to 9.15 pm. The format varies each week of the month, and visitors are welcome to attend and join in, or just sit and observe if preferred.

Week 1 & 3 **Round Robin:** singing, playing, reciting, yarns, solo, group, etc.

Week 4 **All-In Session:** group playing of set tunes, dance sets, group singing

Week 5 **Theme Night:** workshops, 'Hot Spots' or open stage nights

Admission for **Round Robin** and **All-in Sessions** is \$6 for members, \$7 non-members. Cash at the door or pay by card. Accompanied children no charge.

Concerts: Tuesday of Week 2, featuring top acoustic performers plus floor spots. The concert is from 7.45 to 10pm with a supper break at 8.45pm. Same hall as the sessions. Admission is \$11 members to \$15 others, cash or card at the door or purchase tickets online from Humanitix. Accompanied children no charge.

Dance Events: Family Bush Dance 1st Saturday evening each month except January at Ringwood East Senior Citizen's Hall. Live bands vary and dances called. Admission is \$10 members to \$12. No charge for accompanied children.

More information: See www.vfmc.org.au for further information about sessions, concerts and dances.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1st June	2nd	3rd Club Session Round Robin	4th	5th	6th	7th Family Dance
8th	9th	10th Concert Night Guest Artist/s	11th	12th	13th	14th
15th	16th	17th Club Session Round Robin	18th	19th	20th	21st
22nd	23rd	24th Club Session All in	25th	26th	27th	28th
29th	30th	27th Club Session Themed				



Victorian Folk Music Club

Pleasant and Delightful

With Support Act Niranjana (Paru)

Tuesday 10th June



Celebrating 10 years of making beautiful music
Sometimes quirky, often lively and humorous, at times sublimely
moving, Pleasant and Delightful perform folk music in the traditional
style - a cappella, carols, old timey, instrumentals

Ringwood East Senior Citizen's Hall, Laurence Gve.
7.45 - 10.00pm Admission \$11 to \$15, kids no charge

Cash or card at the door. Or pre-purchase at:

<https://events.humanitix.com/vfmc-june2025-concert>

Spot acts PRE-BOOK at concerts@vfmc.org.au

www.vfmc.org.au / Facebook - Victorian Folk Music Club / 0411.750.462

Presented by The Victorian Folk Music Club inc. reg. no. A2511Y ABN 28 668 156 704



Next concert 8th July - Saoirse

CONCERT NIGHT REVIEW—MAY 2025

Our Emcee for the evening was Bill Butler who began proceedings with Acknowledgement of Country.

SPOT ACTS:

The first entertainer for the night was a popular regular **Ed Robins** who writes and performs his own work. Dave's dilemma tells of a drunken shearer who once saved his own life by sewing up his severely gashed leg with whatever materials he could scrounge in the emergency. Then he sang of an old dilapidated unreliable truck he used to drive in Queensland back in his jackaroo days.



Maggie Somerville sang a song she wrote about her father, a champion whistler, and how he passed on this skill to her. Then accompanied by Maree on the harp, she sang, (in the key of E) her song 'Journey' about longing for and fearing the birth of her second child.,, *Long is the waiting, the anticipating.*

Stephen Whiteside read the opening chapter of his recently published book: *Snow, Fire and Gold*. Stephen has used intensive research to uncover the history of the deserted dwelling—Spargo's Hut—well-known to skiers and visitors to the Mount Hotham area. It's the story of Bill Spargo and Evelyn Piper's lives in the harsh conditions in Australia's high country.



(continued over...)

CONCERT NIGHT REVIEW (CONTINUED)

SUPPORT ACT: Newstead Bush Orchestra

This enthusiastic group of musicians provided a foot tapping half hour of great Aussie tunes and dance music lead by well-known identity Dave Isom. The musicians play traditional music using a variety of instruments including banjo, accordion, whistle, fiddle, flutes and guitar and concentrate on old Anglo-Celtic traditional tunes.



They opened with tunes from Nariel Creek including: *Tickets Please* and *Watermelon Vine*. An old favourite collected by Dr Percy Jones came next: *Springtime it Brings on the Shearing*. The *Orotabo Waltz*, a tribute to a ship which sailed between England and Australia between June 1890 and 1909. Leo encouraged the audience to join him in a song about a felon returning home: Our Jack 's come home today, all white, wan and pale from jail. Then they played a piece written about Williamstown by Dave, *Willy Air*. Then a dance tune picked up at the National Folk Festival collected by Bob McGuinness—*Jacko's First Play on the Hornpipe*. The final song by the bush orchestra was a tribute to our popular folk heroes. A traditional song gathered from various sources over the years. *Farewell Dan and Edward Kelly, Byrne and Steve Hart too*.

MAIN ACT: Geoffrey Graham with Phil Lester

Two great artists, Geoffrey Graham and Phil Lester, combined their talents to bring us a wonderful night's entertainment this month. Geoffrey was raised on a farm near Armidale NSW. From early days, he says he spent his days rounding up cattle during the day and evenings listening to his father reciting Australian poetry in the evenings. This entrenched in him a love of Australian poetry, particularly Banjo Patterson. Phil Lester, guitarist and folk singer, is very well-known in the folk community both as a solo performer along with his partnership with Shona Williams performing at Celtic and Folk Festivals throughout the country.

(continued over...)

*CONCERT NIGHT REVIEW (continued)***Shearers, Strikes and Scabs**

Geoffrey's performance was on a theme of the Australian way of life and was a mixture of tall tales, hilarious yarns, songs and poems. With his trousers, shirt, kerchief at his neck, braces and cap perched on his head, he began. First, some amusing puns about sheep, followed with a yarn about a cantankerous sheep. Sheep raising was not always successful, being dependant of good rainfall, he told us. In 1822 sheep prices were so low that 200,000 sheep were sold to be made into tallow. Jeff sang *Click go the Shears*. By the 1850's sheep flocks were extensive, and the industry was always looking for good shepherds and shearers. A gun shearer could shear up to two hundred sheep a day. It was an extremely tiring job and all the work, including the wool-classing, was done on the property. Jeff sang a song of a farmer's lament about the damage caused by the drought.



Phil played the guitar and sang *Lachlan Tigers*, set to the old tune of *Musselburgh Fair* and then *Flash Jack from Gundagai*, both telling of aspects of life as a shearer, including the gun shearer and the indispensable tar boy. Continuing the theme, Geoffrey recited a Banjo Paterson poem: *Shearing at Castlereagh* published in 1894. His story touched on many subjects, such as the shearer's strike, the harshness of outback life and the monotonous diet. Meals consisted of mutton three times a day, with tea and damper. Geoffrey told of a story by Henry Lawson which depicted the station cook as the person of great authority. Nobody wanted to upset the cook. He then related the yarn of a conman pretending to be a shearer who almost fleeced a community.

Together they performed a modern version of *Waltzing Matilda* to the popular tune of Leonard Coen's *Hallelujah*. And an Elvis type version of *Click Go the Shears*. It was a great performance by Geoffrey and Phil, bringing the Australia of olden days into the forefront today for all of us to reminisce and enjoy.

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped to make the evening run smoothly.

Next month: Pleasant and Delightful. Support: Niranjana.

Report by Bette Martin ; Photos by Trevor Voake



THE DANCE PAGE

Diary dates for June

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1st TSDAV	2nd Scottish	3rd	4th Irish	5th Scottish	6th English (Surrey Hills)	7th
8th	9th Scottish	10th English (Bennetswood)	11th Irish	12th	13th	14th VFMC Dance Jolly Jumbucks
15th Welsh	16th Scottish	17th	18th Irish	19th	20th English (Surrey Hills)	21st Bendigo East Hop
22nd	23rd Scottish	24th English (Bennetswood)	25th Irish	26th	27th	28th
29th TSDAV Contra	30th Scottish	1st July	2nd July Irish	3rd July Scottish	4th July English (Surrey Hills)	5th July VFMC Dance MCD Band

VFMC Family Bush dance at East Ringwood Senior Citizens Hall Laurence Grove, East Ringwood 7:30-10:30 pm contact Bill 0417 300 682

Melbourne Colonial Dancers (MCD) - Wednesdays at Deepdene Uniting Church Hall, rear 958 Burke Road, Deepdene. Contact Denise Hibbs 0493 219 385.

Irish dancing at St. Phillips Church, Hoddle Street, Collingwood 8-10pm. Contact Mary 9435 4435

English Tuesday dancing at Bennettswood Neighbourhood House, 7 Greenwood Street, Burwood 8-10pm. Contact George 9890 5650

English Friday dancing at Church of Christ Hall, 1 The Avenue Surrey Hills 8-10pm. Contact George 9890 5650

Welsh Sunday Church of Christ Hall, 1 The Avenue, Surrey Hills 2-4.30pm. Contact Ian 9878 2414.

Contra Sunday Beckett Hall, 72 Highfield Rd. Canterbury info: 0422-932532

Scottish Monday and Saturday Paton Memorial Hall, Deepdene Uniting Church, 958 Burke Road, Deepdene 8pm. Contact Deepdene.dancers@bigpond.com

Scottish Thursday Taggerty Hall, Maroondah Highway at Taggerty, corner of Thomton Road

7-9pm Contact Di Gaylard 5963 3277 or musicman@virtual.net.au.

Bendigo East Hop Holy Trinity Church Hall Keck St. Flora Hill 8pm inquiries 5442 1153



Victorian Folk Music Club Inc.

Registered No. A2511Y

Family Bush Dance

Saturday, 14th June 2025

(and the first Saturday of every month except January)

7:30-10:30 pm - light supper included (alcohol-free)

Ringwood East Senior Citizens' Hall

Laurence Grove, Ringwood East

Featuring live music with:

The Jolly Jumbucks



Entry: \$10 members, \$12 non-members, Kids free.

Tickets available at the door or online at:

<https://events.humanitix.com/vfmc-june2025-dance>

Phone: Bill 0417 300 682
Email: dance@vfmc.org.au
Website: www.vfmc.org.au



Valé Graeme Higman

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of long-time VFMC member, Graeme Higman.



Many of us first met Graeme at the Tuesday Night sessions at Ringwood East in the old Community Hall. Graeme meticulously collected and copied the music we use for dance gigs to this day and provided copies for any musicians who wished to learn the tunes at the Tuesday nights. His friendly guiding hand in running the sessions for many years was responsible for many of us staying on and learning to play the dance tunes we still use.

Graeme was a familiar face with his collection of squeeze boxes leading the motley groups that played regularly at Gulf Station and his own bush band, Bush Remedy. Graeme contributed to the Club in various official roles, including that of President during 1988-90 and 1991/92, and Treasurer from 1984 to 1987. He was awarded life membership of the Club in 2015.

In later years, Graeme and Cathryn moved to Claretown, near Ballarat. Some VFMC members will have fond memories of afternoons spent playing music, chatting and sharing lunch at their home. Despite dwindling health, Graeme was still getting to festivals with Cathryn's assistance in the last couple of years.



Our condolences go out to Cathryn as well as Graeme's family. Thank you, Graeme, for using your musical skills to create an environment that encouraged many of us into the world of traditional Australian music.

— *The VFMC Committee*

Photos of Graeme (with Cathryn) at Maldon by Trevor Voake

IT IS NOW FOOTY SEASON SO HERE IS A POEM ABOUT AFL BY ONE OF OUR MEMBERS:-

The Saucing Of The Pies

We love to watch the football, and I'm talking AFL.
If you win it's heaven, but if you lose it's hell.
There's Telstra Dome and Princes Park, both awesome, naturally,
But nothing beats the splendour of the mighty MCG.
It's great to see the spinning ball, as through the goals it flies,
But nothing beats the glory of the saucing of the pies.

We take our coats and beanies, and an extra jumper, too.
It's winter-time in Melbourne, and the gales keep blowing through.
We brace ourselves. We ask ourselves, "How bad can it get?"
It's only wind and rain, you know, it's only cold and wet.
And when the tempest passes comes the clearing of the skies,
But it's nothing to the wonder of the saucing of the pies.

When half-time comes we join the queues to get some food that's hot;
A drink, a serve of chips, a hot meat pie will hit the spot.
We join another line in which we find our cash and pay.
The thronging crowd is massive, and it seems to take all day,
But our pulses now are racing, for ahead that moment lies,
That extra special magic of the saucing of the pies.

(continued over...)

THE SAUCING OF THE PIES (continued):

Our chance is now upon us, and we move across the floor
To the mighty saucing station which we footy fans adore;
Four big pumps of bright red sauce, a bench of stainless steel,
There's mustard, too, and vinegar, which also might appeal,
But most of us, we have our pies (and sausage rolls, of course),
And know exactly what we want. And what we want is sauce!

We hold our food beneath the nozzle, press the plunger down,
And watch with satisfaction as the golden crust we drown.
We start off with a bunch of circles, bright and red and neat,
But only when they've joined up can we say the job's complete.
It's a deeply Melbourne feeling. Your heart and soul will rise
In those sombre, sacred moments of the saucing of the pies.

© *Stephen Whiteside 20.06.04*

2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

PLEASE NOTE: The VFMC's 2025 Annual General Meeting will be held in the Ringwood East Senior Citizens Hall, Lawrence Grove, Ringwood East on Sunday, 15th June, commencing at 2.30pm. A formal Notice of Meeting will be issued shortly.

Members are welcome to bring along instruments for a bit of a session or singalong afterwards. Tea & coffee & snacks too...

Vale Clem Parkinson 1929 - 2025



Clem Parkinson — folk singer, songwriter, collector, political activist and satirist, and influential figure in the 20th Century Australian folk revival — passed away at the age of 95 on 25th May 2025. He was a prominent early member of the Victorian Folk Music Club.

He was a prolific writer, and had a strong following and significant influence in Melbourne, particularly in the 1960s/70s.

Like many others of his era, his introduction to folk music was through the New Theatre in the 1960s where he acted in many of their productions. The New Theatre was a key incubator of the Australian folk revival in the second half of the 20th Century, and mounted

the seminal musical play *Reedy River*, in which he acted.

He collected and documented songs from Victorian prisons in the 1960s. He also began writing contemporary songs, very often with a political and satirical flavour, in the same decade. Much of his early involvement in the folk scene was performing with the VFMC's concert parties.

His songs were in the repertoire of many folk singers in the 1960s-1980s, and he had a particularly strong partnership with Lyell Sayer, with whom he co-wrote the legendary *F-111* song. That song, and his *Muddy Old Yarra* song are included in the Joy Durst Memorial Collection.

His songs were also extensively published in a variety of other places, including *Australian Tradition*, *Stringybark* and *Greenhide*, various other newspapers and magazines and on a website of Australian protest songs (<http://unionsong.com>).

Clem appeared on many early Melbourne radio and TV music shows and talent quests such as 3DB's Country Music Show, 3UZ's Radio Auditions and TV's New Faces. He later hosted various folk music shows on Victorian community radio (3CR, 3ZZ).

(continued over...)

VALE: CLEM PARKINSON (continued):

Folk historian Malcom J Turnbull suggests that he was the catalyst for a split in the Victorian folk music scene which led to the creation of the Folk Song & Dance Society of Victoria. This was brought about by his *King Street Bridge Song* attacking Victoria's Bolte Government. The split was between those who believed that folk music should focus on traditional material and those who believed it should encompass contemporary material addressing current issues.

He released two LPs, one with Sayer, through Larrikin Records (1983 & 1985), and had songs on various compilation albums.

He extensively video-recorded a number of folk concerts during the 1960s and 1970s for collection purposes (I understand these have been, or are being catalogued by the VFMC).

The National Library of Australia holds recordings of him singing several songs in the Norm O'Connor Collection, (<https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/catalog/2635377>). It also holds his papers, which he meticulously curated in his final years (<https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/catalog/7339284>). In 2018, I conducted a long-form interview with him about his life and music, which is in the NLA's Oral History and Folklore collection. (<https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/catalog/7894792>)

His songs have historical significance, reflecting social and political issues over time. Many are political, and radical in nature, addressing issues of the day including social justice, the growing consciousness of environmental issues, government and business corruption and strong support of working people and the union movement.

Clem was 95 years old. He was active to the end, still writing political poems and songs in his 90s! He was a very keen square dancer in his later years, and was dancing until a couple of weeks before his death.



- from the cover of LP *2-Up* by Clem Parkinson

- by Bruce Watson

BLUEGRASS MUSIC— QUIZ

(1) What is bluegrass music? (2) Where did its roots come from? (3) How is it different from country music? (4) Where did its name come from? (5) What does bluegrass music feature? (6) Name an Australian bluegrass band.

Answers to last quiz (1) A colloquial term for the violin (2) Style and arch of the bridge (3) 16th century Europe (Italy & France) (4) Yes (5) Fiddlers

JUNE BILLABONG BAND REPORT

Gigs played this past month:

Under The Fern Tree Sat 3rd May

This was the first time we had played at this relatively new community market in Ferntree Gully. This was an outdoor gig & after some initial hiccups with the sound we got started & were well received. The organisers were happy with us & have asked us back to play at their October market.

Thanks to Margie, Beth, Maree, Carol, Rob & Bill.

Upcoming gigs:

“I Like to Move it” – City of Maroondah – May 27th“

“I Like to Move it” – City of Maroondah – June 3rd

Under The Fern Tree - Sat 4th October

Family Bush Dance – Dec 6th 2025-05-21

Gigs in the pipeline:

I’m waiting to hear back from these places:

Arcare – a new facility in Ringwood

Lionsbrae – an old favourite

Donwood – another an old favourite

- by Trevor Voake, Convenor

Photo of May family dance by Trev --



REGULAR FUNCTIONS AT OTHER VENUES CHECK IF ON**Bendigo Folk Club**

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

Bush Dance and Music Club of Bendigo Inc

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

Berwick and District Folk Club

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

Boite World Music Cafe

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

Geelong Folk Music Club

Phil Lester 0401 992 237 or Marie Goldsworthy 0406 610 858.
The club meets on the first Wednesday of most months at the Naval Association, 90 Skene St, Newtown, Vic. 3220.
 geelongfolkmusic@gmail.com
 geelongfolkclub.au

Comhaltas (Collingwood)

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

Gippsland Acoustic Music Club

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

Selby Folk Club

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

Peninsula Folk Club

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

Creswick Folk Club Second Friday, from 7.30 pm at the American Hotel in Creswick; and Fourth Friday, from 7.30 pm at the Old Station in Creswick.

Enquiries: Graeme: 03 5334 5551
www.facebook.com/creswickfolkclub/

Fireside Fiddlers

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

Newport Folk Club

Certain Friday nights at 7.30 pm plus other evenings, e.g. Tues Blues and Sunday 2 pm singalongs etc.
See website for up-to-date calendar.
Music On The Hill (MOTH) Mornington Peninsula First Friday each month. Int. & local artists. <http://musiconthehill.com.au>

THE VICTORIAN FOLK MUSIC CLUB INCORPORATED

INVITES YOU TO JOIN THE CLUB

Members of the VFMC are entitled to -

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

VFMC Postal Address

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

VFMC Website

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

CONTACTS

Secretary

Peter Kernebone
Telephone: 0408 035 147
Email: secretary@vfmc.org.au

Session Co-ordinator

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

Family/Children's Bush Dance

Bill Buttler
Telephone: 0417 300 682
Email: dance@vfmc.org.au

Billabong Band Engagements

Trevor Voake
Telephone: 0427 784 296
Email: billabongband@vfmc.org.au

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

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

Signed

I wish to receive my Newsletter by:

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

Membership Type (please circle)

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

Please post completed form to:

The Secretary
VFMC
PO Box 215
Ringwood East 3135 Victoria

*Family – Parent/s & any children under 18

Name:

Address:

Email

Phone/s: