

THE CORNSTALK GAZETTE



Folk Federation of New South Wales Inc
Issue 501 April-May 2020



NSW Folk Scene devastated by the Coronavirus!

The Folk Federation of NSW Inc, formed in 1970, is a Statewide body which aims to present, support, encourage and collect folk music, folk dance, folklore and folk activities as they exist in Australia in all their forms. It provides a link for people interested in the folk arts through its affiliations with folk clubs throughout NSW and its counterparts in other States. It bridges all styles and interests to present the folk arts to the widest possible audience.

Committee

President: Pam Merrigan

Vice President: Margaret Walters

Secretary: Pam Davis, secretary@folkfednsw.org.au

Treasurer: Dallas Baxter, treasurer@folkfednsw.org.au

General Members: Terry Clinton, Alex Bishop, Jane Brownlee, Glenys Eddy, Russell Neal

Ex-officio appointments

Bruce Cameron (*Public Officer*),

Mem Sec: Wayne Richmond 9939 8802

Folkmail: Julie Bishop

Cornstalk Editor: Julie Bishop

Wrap Team: Jim & Dallas Baxter

9810 4131 - baxjam@folkfednsw.org.au

Folk Federation of New South Wales Inc
Post Office Box A182
Sydney South NSW 1235
ISSN 0818 7339 ABN 94 115 759 221
folkfednsw.org.au

ADVERTISING SIZES

	Size mm	Members	Not Mem
Full page	210 x 297	\$80	\$120
1/2 page	210 x 146	\$40	\$70
1/4 page	100 x 146	\$25	\$50
1/8 page	100 x 75	\$15	\$35

Advertising artwork required by 5th of each month. Advertisements can be produced by Cornstalk if required. Please contact Wayne for enquiries about advertising (02) 9939 8802

All cheques for advertisements and inserts to be made payable to the Folk Federation of NSW Inc and sent to 'The Treasurer' at the Federation's PO address.

Cornstalk Editors - Julie Bishop 9524 0247 cornstalk@folkfednsw.org.au
Wayne Richmond (layout)

Cornstalk is the official publication of the Folk Federation of NSW. Contributions, news, reviews, poems, photos welcome!

Artwork Specifications. Cornstalk is produced using Adobe InDesign. Artwork should be supplied in one of the following formats: JPEG, TIFF, EPS, PNG or PDF. Artwork MUST be high resolution.

No part of Cornstalk may be reproduced without permission of the publishers. All care but no responsibility taken for omissions or errors.

April - May 2020

In this issue

President's Report	3
Coral Vorbach retires as editor	3
Dates for Your Diary	4
Folk News	8
The Three Audacities	10
Dance News	11
Events cancelled due to Coronavirus	11
Meandering with Meredith	12
Identifying people in Bolton's photos	13
Morris Dancing	14



If your event misses Cornstalk, Julie Bishop 02 9524 0247, julie@folkfednsw.org.au can include it in Folkmail, the weekly email to members. And don't forget that as a member you can put information - and photos - up on folkfednsw.org.au.

**Deadline date for
June-July 2020
15th May, 2020**

CONTRIBUTIONS PLEASE

Please send in your contributions (articles, reviews, event announcements, photos, tunes, opinions, questions etc.), to cornstalk@folkfednsw.org.au

The Folk Federation of NSW - Membership Application Form

Name/s:	Eve ph:	Day ph:
Address:	Mobile:	
	Email:	
Membership Type: (Tick one) <input type="checkbox"/> Individual - \$30 <input type="checkbox"/> Family (<i>more than one in same household</i>) - \$35 <input type="checkbox"/> Affiliate (<i>organisation</i>) - \$40		
Please find enclosed \$ ___ being my subscription for ___ years.		
<input type="checkbox"/> I enclose my cheque/money order payable to: Folk Federation of NSW, or		
<input type="checkbox"/> Please charge my credit card: <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/> 		
Card number: _____ / _____ / _____ / _____		
Name on card: _____		
Signature: _____		
<i>The membership year runs from 1st May to 30th April or from 1st November to 31st October. Allowances are made in your favour for people joining at other times. Send to: PO Box A182, Sydney South NSW 1235</i>		

From the President

Sydney Folk Festival Cancelled

2020 continues to be a very challenging year for our folk communities, first with the recent bush fires and now with the respiratory illness outbreak caused by coronavirus (COVID-19) taking hold here in Australia. In view of this it is with great disappointment that following the recent announcements by the Australian Government regarding the actions and possible time frame required to contain the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19), our FFNSW committee has made the very hard but inevitable decision to cancel this year's Sydney Folk Festival.

This is a decision that has been carefully considered and made all the more difficult as 2020 is the 50th Anniversary of the Folk Federation of NSW and the Festival was to have been the centre piece for those celebrations. The impact of this health crisis will be hard felt across all our folk communities. With containment strategies coming into play we are seeing cancellation after cancellation of folk festivals big and small across the whole country. Our Festivals are the lynchpins of the folk scene. They are the places where our folk communities gather and they provide the stages where our artists share their craft. But it's not just festivals. We need to support our artists, the agents who take on their tours, the venues and all the support crews.

On a happier note, it has been heartening to see how our folk communities have come together in support of those in need following the recent bush fires. Sunday's 8 March Concert for Cobargo held at the Gaelic Club was a delightful and highly successful afternoon of music organised

by Christina Mimmocchi and Pam Davis and, just one of many such events happening up and down the East Coast. I did enjoy the video appearance by Zena Armstrong and Peter Logue to kick things off and the whole afternoon was a diverse mix of artists all kept flowing beautifully by PP Cranney.

"We live in interesting times", a small deviation from a Chinese saying.

Well, there you have it. Not the best of times but let's stay positive and look forward to what's in store post COVID-19. In the meantime, the FFNSW will be looking at ways we can support our folk communities and artists through these uncertain times so if you have any ideas let us know. And, if you can, support artists by buying their music online or cancelled festivals by purchasing their 2020 merch. After all, folk is the life and we're all in this together.

Pam Merrigan



Coral Vorbach retires after 16 years as Cornstalk Editor



It is with the greatest regret that we announce the retirement of the long serving editor of Cornstalk, Coral Vorbach. Coral has faithfully served the folk community of NSW for many years, not only as Cornstalk Editor but also through her leading role in the Yuin Folk Club and the wonderful Cobargo Folk Festival. In all her endeavours she was joined by her partner, Graeme Fryer, who passed away recently. At the recent Concert for Cobargo, we had the opportunity to pay tribute to Coral and Graeme as much loved stalwarts of the Cobargo folk community. At our AGM to be held later this year, the Folk Fed Committee will be nominating Coral Vorbach for Life Membership of the Folk Federation of NSW, which we feel sure will be enthusiastically supported by all.

We are pleased ... and extremely grateful ... to report that Julie Bishop, founding editor of Folkmail, has agreed to step into the breach as Cornstalk editor - an editorial team, really, with Wayne Richmond doing the layout.

Pam Davis
Secretary, Folk Fed

[Note from Julie: Folkmail was Alex Bishop's idea, initially as weekly dates taken from Cornstalk.]

Dates for your diary April-May 2020

April

Thursday 2nd April

Camelot Lounge. **CANCELLED CURTIS ELLER'S AMERICAN CIRCUS (USA)** and **CHAIKA**. Double-bill. A 20-year show business veteran, Eller and his band The American Circus have a devoted international following. Dynamic, highly physical performances and an extensive catalogue of curious phonographic recordings. Banjo rock'n'roll sensation - the iconoclastic musician is a gifted, prolific songwriter whose banjo-driven songs describe a dreamlike vision of American history. + Chaika - the earthiness of folk, dexterity of jazz and craft of classical. Chaika's vast influences create superb genre-blending music that transcends labels. ARIA-nominated, "spine-tingling" (Rhythms), "extraordinary" (Fine Music FM), the Sydney sextet create a multi-faceted kaleidoscope of sounds - a culmination of compositional, arranging and improvising prowess, performed with stunning attention to detail. chaikaband.com. Under-18s must be with an adult. NO BYO. Delicious food available. 19 Marrickville Rd (cnr Railway Pde), Marrickville. 8pm (doors 7pm). Tickets at stickytickets.com.au/n016v, \$27.90.

Friday 3rd April



Illawarra Folk Club. **CANCELLED ALASKA STRING BAND (USA)**. A gifted guitar picking, violin fiddling, dulcimer playing, bass banging, mean banjo jammin' and cheese grater-a-scraping family of five, with sweet angel-like vocals. They weave a colourful image of their home town and state, saying enticingly that America's 49th state's official tourist website must experience huge spikes from online visitors after each 'Z-Family' performance. The Zahasky family began performing internationally in 2006, playing some of America's favourite roots, swing, jazz, pop, original, folk, gospel and Bluegrass. A joyful, talented performance. Diggers Club, Wollongong, 82 Church St. 7.30 - 10.30pm. Tickets available soon. illawarrafolkclub.org.au/events.

Saturday 4th April



Troubadour Central Coast. **CANCELLED COLUMNSANDS (IRELAND)**. Floor spots available. Local and visiting performers welcome. St Luke's Hall, 147-149 Blackwall Rd, Woy Woy. \$7pm. \$20, \$15, Members \$12. Michael Fine 4342-6716, mail.info@troubadour.org.au

The Rhythm Hut. Mini Music Fest: 'Circus Vibes'. Costume competition, circus fun & 4 bands! Curtis Eller's American Circus (USA). Emily-Rose launching 'Waking Old' as a single on all online platforms. Ren Stone's EP launch. Johnny Devilseed & Old Man Rubes + more. 135 Faunce St, Gosford. 7-11.30pm. Tickets: events.humanitix.com.au/circus-vibes-mini-music-festival

Newcastle & Hunter Valley Folk Club. All Stars of the Lakeside Folk Circle Session Group. Uniting Church Hall, 178 Glebe Rd, Merewether. 7.30 - 10.30pm. \$15, \$12, Members \$10. 16 & under, free.

Sunday 5th April

Southern Sydney Folk Club. **CANCELLED COLUMNSANDS (IRELAND)** - a universal storyteller who draws on a long Irish tradition of poetic musicality to weave songs for the world. He has a universal appeal for the songs and stories with which he observes the minute and often humorous details of life. "He's warm, witty, moving and funny" - Steve Barnes, Director Fairbridge Folk Festival. columnsands.com. Shopfront Theatre, 88 Carlton Pde, Carlton. 2pm. \$25, \$20; Members \$20, \$15. School age children, Free. Wally Byrne 0421-017-975

Petersham Bowling Club. **CANCELLED MIKE MCLELLAN**. One of the finest singer-songwriter guitarists Australia has ever produced. He's had three top five singles, recorded ten albums, two of which went gold, had many songs covered internationally, hosted his own ABC TV series for four years, and sold out concerts across Australia. 77 Brighton St. 7-9.45pm. \$31. Bookings at trybooking.com/594551. 9569-4639

Thursday 9th April

James Craig Music Club. **CANCELLED THE FOSSICKERS** - united by a love of inventing creative harmonies and delving into old recordings, digging up forgotten gems. Australian, English and Irish folk, shapenote hymns, gospel songs. The group began about 5 years ago and delight in creating unique arrangements for their repertoire of unaccompanied song. Audiences enjoy the range of voices of these young lasses and the warmth of their distinctive personalities. Ruby Foster, Sophie Moore and Halcyon Foster represent the group while Ruth and Daisy are interstate. On board Tall Ship James Craig moored at Wharf 7 in Pyrmont Bay, behind National Maritime Museum, just along from where Murray St turns into Pirrama Rd. 7.30pm (ship opens, 7). Supper break around 8.30. Beer, wine available for purchase on board. 9pm, general sing-around, usually sea shanties. Ship closes 10pm. \$15, \$10; families \$25. Half the proceeds go to supporting Sydney Heritage Fleet. Nearest light rail station, Pyrmont Bay. Paid parking at Star Casino & Harbourside Parking. Parking may be available along road parallel to Wharf 7. margaretwalters2@gmail.com; 0427-958-788

Saturday 11th April



Django Bar. **MOUSSA DIAKITÉ**, influential guitarist, was part of the golden era of Malian music in the 1970s and '80s, performing with some of Africa's best, incl. Salif Keita, Oumou Sangare, and the Super Rail Band de Bamako. Since migrating to Australia, he has made his mark on the local scene. With exciting 5 piece band Wassado he fuses traditional West African styles with Cuban, blues & jazz into a unique 'Afro-groove'. A dynamic, mesmerising, sophisticated show. "One of the finest guitarists I've ever heard" - Lloyd Bradford Syke. moussamusic.com. <18s must be with an adult. Fully licensed - NO BYO. Delicious food (incl. pizza!). Camelot Lounge, 19 Marrickville Rd (cnr Railway Pde), Marrickville. 9pm (doors 7pm). Tickets \$22.90 at stickytickets.com.au/35791; \$25 at the door.

Tuesday 14th April



Leichhardt Bowling Club. CANCELLED *WHITETOP MOUNTAINEERS (USA)*. From Virginia, Martha Spencer and Jackson Cunningham return to Australia by popular demand. On previous visits the duo stunned and delighted audiences across the country with their performance of American mountain music, song and dance. They are skilled multi-instrumentalists – Jackson on guitar, mandolin, claw hammer banjo, and Martha on fiddle, guitar, banjo, dancing feet! 88-92 Piper St. 7pm. \$31. Bookings at trybooking.com/608564.

Wednesday 15th April

Petersham Bowling Club. CANCELLED *SON (SUSAN O'NEILL)*. County Clare singer-songwriter. With a striking attitude, guitar, harmonica, trumpet and loop-pedal, she delivers a timeless and powerful blend of the old Irish soul with a new edge. 77 Brighton St. 8pm. \$31. Bookings at trybooking.com/601581. 9569 4639, thepbc.org.au

Thursday 16th April

Gaelic Club. CANCELLED *TERI YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS*. Multi-award winning songwriter & itinerant folksinger, calling home anywhere between Tasmania & the horizon – playing here with Anna Talbot (bodhran) & Hamish Stevenson (double bass). Teri writes of place and people, honest stories from her own experience of family, love, nursing, wild places. Fun & hearty music, so the crowd could become a choir at times! "Teri is remarkable, not only for her singing, musicianship & songwriting talent, but for the fact that she actually has something to say. Her songs have wit, poignancy, strong narrative structure, & clear politics without being at all strident or self-serving." Judy Small. "Teri sings with the rare kind of authenticity that has me believing & hanging on every word. Not shiny music, like the radio plays. Hers is music with the grit & spark of life in it, the wisdom of lived experience, the endearing charm of unvarnished honesty, the raw real thing." Scott Cook (Can). teriyoungmusic.com. + **THE BLACK**

THROATED FINCHES – choir associated with Extinction Rebellion movement (support). Pres. by Folk Fed of NSW. facebook.com/events/182191183041250. 1/64 Devonshire St, Surry Hills. 7pm (drs 6.30). \$20, \$15.



Petersham Bowling Club. CANCELLED *THE MAMMALS (USA)*. Dynamic Americana/Folk/Rock band from Woodstock area of upstate New York – fronted by husband-and-wife duo, Mike Merenda and Ruth Ungar, singer-songwriters, story tellers, social and environmental activists, highly respected in the US Folk/Roots scene, having played with Pete Seeger, Arlo Guthrie, Odetta, Crooked Still, many more. They were good friends of Pete, playing with him many times including at his 90th birthday celebration at Madison Square Garden. 77 Brighton St. 8pm. \$31. Bookings at trybooking.com/602813. 9569 4639, thepbc.org.au

Friday 17th April

Duke's Place. CANCELLED Australian Songs in Concert with the **POLESON FAMILY** – 3 generations of members. Bush Music Club, Tritton Hall, Hut 44, Addison Road Centre, 142 Addison Rd, Marrickville. 7.30 for 8pm. \$10, bring contribution for supper. Sandra 9358 4886, bushmusic.org.au.

Illawarra Folk Club. CANCELLED *THE WHITETOP MOUNTAINEERS (USA)* – Martha Spencer & Jackson Cunningham, from Whitetop, VA. Old time country duet singing, up-tempo old time fiddle, clawhammer banjo, bluegrass mandolin & guitar instrumentals. Martha, from a well-known musical family, going back generations, plays fiddle, banjo, guitar, dulcimer, sings, & does high energy Appalachian dancing. Jackson – powerful playing, on guitar, mandolin, claw hammer, plus high lonesome singing. In 2005, when Jackson met Audrey Hash Ham, a Virginia Master Artist in fiddle making who learned from her father, Albert Hash, he began making fiddles under her guidance, some with ornate carvings & inlay, from local Red Spruce & Maple, like Audrey's & Albert's. Diggers Club, Wolongong, 82 Church St. 7.30-10.30pm. illawarrafolkclub.org.au/events.

Murrah Hall. CANCELLED *CHAI-KA*, ARIA-nominated, touring their latest album, 'Arrow'. 2989 Bermagui/Fathra Road. 7-11pm. Come and enjoy the wonderful hospitality of the Murrah Hall crew with curries and refreshments available! \$25. Tickets via facebook.com/events/2256193094686199.

Friday 17th - Sunday 19th April

Acappella Workshops, with TONY BACKHOUSE, tonybackhouse.com - 3 days of Black + Gospel Related Styles. For Beginners and Experienced singers. St John's Anglican Church Hall, 107 Dawson St, Cooks Hill (Newcastle). Enq, Jann Hing, jann@sortedbyjann.com. Bookings and info: stickytickets.com.au/1y674

Saturday 18th April



Humph Hall. CANCELLED *KHRISTIAN MIZZI + ROB BARRATT (UK)* With a warm, enchanting voice and an art for weaving beauty and truth into the words of each song, Khristian reaches the hearts of audiences – with performances called 'captivating'. Poetic lyrics, meandering melodies, articulate and soulful voice, a unique picking style. In 2006 Khristian won the 'Just Guitars' award at Port Fairy Folk Festival, as well as The Best Song for his tune 'Wishing' at The Basin Music Festival. Was Troubadour Artist of the year at Newstead Live! Folk Festival, 2017. The overwhelming response to his songs keeps growing. khristianmizzi.com + Rob Barratt (UK) – Dudley-born and Cornwall-based comic poet, humorist and singer who combines clever word play, verse and song with satire, parody and audience participation. Such important topics as squid, data-driven education, Neanderthal politics, the weather in Scotland, distressed furniture, his relationship with potatoes. But beneath the comedy are serious issues. In recent years Rob has appeared at folk, literature and arts festivals all over the UK, in Ireland and Australia. robbarratt.co.uk. 85 Allambie Rd, Allambie Heights. 7pm. Seating limited, bookings strongly advised:

Loaded Dog (3rd Saturday). **CANCELLED** **THREE AUDACITIES** – work songs, sea shanties. New folk trio: Emma Norton (banjo) – incandescent voice with a huge range, every note aglow with warmth and energy; Dan Kenny too, a distinctive vocal range, and a jazz and blues background, adept and creative on electric and acoustic guitar; plus, singing bass and 50 years older, Margaret Walters' voice adds experience and powerful emotion. Meeting at Redfern Shanty Club 3 years ago, they found many songs in common, and a love of harmony. The name is from a speech by Danton, a French Revolution leader, quoted later by Lenin: "We need audacity, and yet more audacity, and always audacity!"; often shortened to "the three audacities". For the singers, it means "We tell it like it is! We're not out to produce revolutionary socialists – we let the songs speak for themselves". + **CJ SHAW (BLUE MOUNTAINS)**. Dynamic, vibrant singer-songwriter poet raconteur & Primary School teacher, with a swag full of songs and stories – plus wry wit, delicate melodies, intricate finger picking. Living in Timor-Leste, 2014 and 2015, he fronted the band Radio Mojo, with players from Timor, Australia, Philippines, Portugal. In 2015 they released their best-selling album 'Mana Mata Akustik no Unsung History'. In Canberra since 2016, he performs solo & as singer-songwriter with band Betty Slim. facebook.com/tunesinbloom. Back Hall, Annandale Neighbourhood Ctr, 79 Johnston St. Disability access. Supper available, BYO. 7.30 (doors 7pm). \$20, \$18. Contact Sandra. 9358 4886

Sunday 19th April

Pennant Hills Community Centre. **CANCELLED** **Contras** by Bob Dalsemer. Afternoon Dance Workshop with caller Keith Wood. Water, tea, and coffee are available. Afterwards the dancers go across to the Hotel Pennant Hills for dinner together. Main Hall, Yarrara Rd. 2.15-5.15pm. \$5. Keith 0420 913 934, keith-wood.name/danceworkshops.html

Newcastle Fundraiser. All proceeds to Lower Hunter Rural Fire Brigade. Derek Dowding, Fly You Fools, Herding Katz, Black Angus, Millie and the Poor Boys, The Foke, The Leadbellies. A great afternoon of entertainment. The Lass o' Gowrie Hotel, 14 Railway St, Wickham. 12-6pm.

MAY

Saturday 2nd May



Humph Hall. **CANCELLED** **BALMAIN BAROQUE** – celebrating its 25th anniversary. Amanda Muir (soprano), Tony Evers (recorder), Darsha Kumar (cello), Donn Mendoza (harpsichord) – all with a passion for baroque repertoire. Excerpts from baroque operas of Handel and other instrumental pieces – just like a night out in 18th cent. London. Their own harpsichord is essentially 6th member of the band. Since the beginning, Balmain Baroque has had a strong community focus. They perform at baroque pitch & their wind instruments & harpsichord are based on baroque counterparts. The 18th century saw a great outburst of high quality chamber pieces, these are some of the best. balmainbaroque.com. + **NATHAN POWER**. It's been a big year for the Melbourne folk artist, with international appearances, two national tours & almost a hundred shows incl. at Yackandandah Folk Festival, Bendigo Blues, Nimbin Roots, Frankston Waterfront Festival. Borrowing from folk, blues, bluegrass. Nathan's music is dark & rich, combining childhood stories of growing up in Africa with a cynical take on modern life. Think Leonard Cohen meets Lloyd Cole. 2020 sees the launch of his 2nd album, a national tour, more festival dates. nathanpowermusic.com. 85 Allambie Rd, Allambie Hts. 7pm. Bookings advised. Wayne 9939 8802, wayne@humphhall.org

Newcastle & Hunter Valley Folk Club. **THE FROHLICH BROTHERS** supported by **GABRIELLE NEWLAND**. Uniting Church Hall, 178 Glebe Rd, Merewether. 7.30-10.30pm. \$15, \$12, Members \$10. 16 & under, free.

Sunday 3rd May

Cobargo Showground. **CANCELLED** Cobargo Folk Festival & the Yuin Folk Club are thrilled to announce that **LEE KERNAGHAN**, the **SHANE HOWARD TRIO**, **AMI WILLIAMSON**, **THE MAMMALS (NY)** + **THE WOLFE BROTHERS** are headlining Cobargo Unites! – a bushfire benefit concert for Cobargo

& district. + **THE NORTHERN FOLK**, **LUKE O'SHEA & LYN BOWTELL**, **DEN HANRAHAN & THE RUM RUNNERS**, **THE WARRENS**, **THE NEW GRACES**, **GLENYRAE VIRUS & HER FOUR STRINGS**. From 10am. Tickets from \$45! At facebook.com/Yuin-Folk-Club-Cobargo-1488161831505085. Tell your family & friends!

Monday 4th May

Pennant Hills Community Centre. **CANCELLED** Practice for **BMC Heritage Ball (16th May)**. Pennant Hills Dance Workshop, lower, air-conditioned hall, Yarrara Rd. 7.30pm. \$7. Wilma 9489 5594

Thursday 7th May



James Craig Music Club. **KEJAFI** – traditional and original music celebrating the deep Australian and Scottish connection. Sydney-based trio (Ken O'Neill, James Gastineau-Hills, Fiona McVicar) create an exciting and energetic sound with dual fiddles, octave mandolin and moving songs that will have your feet tapping and heartstrings pulled. On board Tall Ship James Craig moored at Wharf 7 in Pyrmont Bay, behind National Maritime Museum, just along from where Murray St turns into Pirrama Rd. 7.30 (ship opens 7pm). Supper break, 8.30. General singaround, 9pm. Ship closes 10pm. \$15, \$10, families \$25. Nearest train station, Pyrmont Bay light rail. Paid parking at Star Casino and Harbourside Parking. There may be parking available along the road parallel to Wharf 7. Check with Sally Ostlund to ensure event is still on - sostlund@shf.org.au, Volunteer, Sydney Heritage Fleet.

Friday 8th May

Duke's Place. **CANCELLED** Australian Songs in Concert with **DINGO'S BREAKFAST**. With decades of performance experience under their belts, they present an electrically eclectic

dialectic selection of Oz music, poetry and yarnspinning, with the accent firmly on comedy. Bush Music Club, Tritton Hall, Hut 44, Addison Road Centre, 142 Addison Rd, Marrickville. 7.30 for 8pm. \$10, bring contribution for supper. Sandra 9358 4886, bushmusic.org.au

Saturday 9th May

Troubadour Central Coast. CANCELLED Troubadour Theme Concert & Community Fund Raiser. St Luke's Hall, 147-149 Blackwall Rd, Woy Woy. 7pm. Michael 4342 6716, mail:info@troubadour.org.au

Monday 11th May

Pennant Hills Community Centre. CANCELLED Practice for BMC Heritage Ball (16th May). Pennant Hills Dance Workshop, lower, air-conditioned hall, Yarrara Rd. 7.30pm. \$7. Wilma 9489 5594

Saturday 16th May



Humph Hall. CANCELLED PENNY DAVIES AND ROGER HOTT. A fire rapidly approaching their Qld property meant they were unable to come to Sydney for scheduled concerts in February last year. However, they are back! For over 30 years Penny Davies and Roger Hott have been writing and singing songs that are truly Australian. Millions of Australians hear and love their songs every week on Ian McNamara's 'Australia All Over' ABC Radio show. They have released 16 albums since debut album, Restless, in 1983 - all feature "trademark clean tight vocals, excellent musicianship and high production values." (Lonnie Martin, Folk Rag). They've been featured artists at many Australian festivals, most recently Woodford, National, & Hlawarra Folk Festivals, the Jondaryan Heritage Festival. restlessmusic.com.au. 85 Allambie Rd, Allambie Hts. 2pm. Seating ltd, bookings advised. Wayne 9939 8802, wayne@humphhall.org

Ku-ring-gai Town Hall. POSTPONED The Bush Music Club's Heritage Ball. Dress up in your favourite fashion from Colonial times and be ready to dance the night away. Music will be provided by our renowned **HERITAGE ENSEMBLE**. 1186 Pacific Hwy, Pymble. Doors open 6.30pm, Grand March starts 7pm - & dance till midnight! To help keep ticket prices down this year we ask you to bring a plate to share for supper. Info about tickets will eventually appear in Folkmail.

Redfern Town Hall. CANCELLED SEDENKA FOLK DANCE GROUP invites you to learn dances from the Balkans & elsewhere, with Lyn Beard. Lyn joined Sedenka in the early '70s. On moving to Brisbane 20 yrs later, she founded Brisinta International Folk Dance Group. An excellent dancer, Lyn has a wonderful enthusiasm & energy in her dancing which is hard to resist. Her extensive teaching experience is evident in how easy, & how much fun, she makes the learning experience. 73 Pitt St. 10am-3.30pm. \$25, FDA members \$20. Enq; Chris 9560 2910

Sunday 17th May

Southern Sydney Folk Club. DINGO'S BREAKFAST (WA) - Roger Montgomery and John Angliss. A wonderful mix of Traditional & Contemporary Australian and Irish Songs, lavishly salted with an edgy slam of Performance Poetry. The Dingos have comprehensively proved that Performance Poetry is not just for breakfasts any more. With Alison Boyd, perhaps with an appearance from our own Peter Phelps. Shopfront Theatre, 88 Carlton Pde, Carlton. 2pm. \$25, \$20 conc., Members \$20, \$15 conc. School age children, Free. Wally 0421 017 975

Pennant Hills Community Centre. CANCELLED English Country Dances. Afternoon Dance Workshop with caller **KEITH WOOD**. Water, tea, and coffee are available. Afterwards the dancers go across to the Hotel Pennant Hills for dinner together. Main Hall. Yarrara Rd. 2.15-5.15pm. \$5. Keith 0420 913 934, keith-wood.name/dance-workshops.html.

Illawarra Folk Club. CANCELLED PENNY DAVIES AND ROGER HOTT. They occupy a unique place in Australian music, spanning the divide between Folk and Country. They've reinvigorated the bush ballad, kept alive the protest song, & have celebrated all that it means to be Australian without a cork hat, lagerphone or phoney accent. "Penny simply has one of the richest voices in Australian folk & country music; add

in the integrity of Roger Hott's gentle delivery, and you have the best harmonies you're likely to hear. Coupled with Roger Hott's compelling acoustic guitar and Rickenbacker 12 string artistry, it's little wonder Penny Davies and Roger Hott, who already have an Australia wide following for their music, are now finding an audience for their songs around the world." - John Broomhall - be a wonderful concert! Diggers Club, Wollongong, 82 Church St. 2-5pm.

Saturday 23rd May

The Loaded Dog. CANCELLED SOLIDARITY CHOIR. Songs for social justice, some in English & some not, at rallies, festivals, protests, picket lines & community events. New singers are always welcome and there are no auditions. Email solidaritychoir@gmail.com. facebook.com/solidarity.choir. +**DEREK DOWDING** - singer, songwriter-agitator, 3-time winner of John Dengate Parody competitions, Gulgong (2017, 2018) and Hlawarra (2020) Folk Festivals. Back Hall, Annandale Neighbourhood Centre, 79 Johnston St. Disability access. Supper available, BYO. 7.30 (doors 7pm). \$20, \$18. Check with Sandra - 9358 4886

Troubadour Central Coast. DINGO'S BREAKFAST (WA). (See 8th and 17th May.) Floor spots avail. Local & visiting performers welcome. St Luke's Hall, 147-149 Blackwall Rd, Woy Woy. \$7pm. \$20, \$15, Members \$12. Michael 4342 6716, mail:info@troubadour.org.au

Saturday 30th May



Humph Hall. CAMERON JONES TRIO. Cameron Jones (Spyglass Gypsies, Gadjo Guitars) is a musician who draws inspiration from the driving rhythms & melodic honesty of the acoustic gypsy jazz guitar. In 2018 Jones recorded The Waterfall Way, his first album under his name, an album that draws repertoire and inspiration from his travels to France and The Netherlands. Journeys to the very heart and soul of the gypsy jazz music. facebook.com/cameron-jonesguitar. 85 Allambie Rd, Allambie Hts. 2pm. Bookings advised. Wayne 9939 8802, wayne@humphhall.org N.B. Event may be streamed 'live'.

Pop-Up @ Binalong

A weekend of traditional Australian general good fun, 28th Feb – 1st March 2020.

It went very well. Participants were very happy with the weekend.

About 70 people turned up. The whole weekend happened in sunshine with light breezes and temperatures in the high 20s and low 30s. Could not ask for better.

There was a good dance component with three workshops throughout Saturday and one on Sunday. Four sets danced on Saturday night. Dance continued on Sunday. The feedback from dancers was positive. The hall has a good floor, it's sprung and solid to dance on. The music provided by David and Kathy Potter was very much appreciated by the dancers.

The musicians also had a good time. Musicians gathered in the Cafe on Queen throughout both days and in the Pub of an evening. The Cafe has a room out the back, separate from the Cafe proper, which holds 20 or so musicians. It has a sense of spaciousness and good light and sits in a garden with some gum trees providing shade. Coffee, cakes, hamburgers, and steak sandwiches were available. The owners of the Cafe on Queen did a brisk trade and we have been invited back. Late on Sunday they were seen kicking back with a cup of tea.

The Binalong Hotel provided a good session space on Friday and Saturday nights. The Pub provided a good meal and seemed happy to have us.

Participants provided donations totalling \$1250 to the bush-fire bucket.

In summary the weekend was: welcoming, low key, relaxed / laid back; gave participants an opportunity to engage and contribute in whatever way they wished; in a rural landscape; inexpensive; much appreciated by participants. – Ray Mulligan, Bush Traditions, bushtraditions.org.

Cornstalk, NFFs, Folk Fed

By Danny Watson

Colleen Burke and Declan Affley came up with the name Cornstalk, however this was a quarterly newsletter. The monthly newsletter continued.

The original newsletters I composed, typed, printed (in my garage on a hand operated Gestetner machine).& distributed by hand & by mail. Complete with typos & spelling mistakes.

Easter 1969 at the 3rd National Folk Festival Brisbane, 'The Moreton Bay Folk Festival' organised by Harry Robertson, I undertook to present the next festival in Sydney. This undertaking was in the face of quite a deal of negative opposition from Mike Eaves & Colin Dryden who then ran the Sydney Folk Song Club (Elizabeth Hotel). I was then running the Maitland & Morpeth Folk Club with the help of some friends including Peter Phelps, Mick Flanagan & Mike McClellan.

I came back and spoke to the organisers of all Sydney's folk venues and had them all nominate a delegate to form a committee. We proceeded to organise the festival with me as the driving force and Chairman. Time was short because we found that Easter 1970 was the date for the official Captain

Cook Bi-Centenary celebrations and all the venues had been reserved by the government. We decided to hold our festival over the Australia Day Weekend January 1970. This meant that we had less than 9 months.

History shows that the festival was an outstanding success in every aspect, in content, public support and was positive for the NSW folk scene. It was decided that the 5th National Festival would be held in Adelaide, We were able to give them considerable financial help, detailed reports from all aspects of our festival and I personally made two trips to Adelaide to assist their committee. My help was appreciated as I received a written thanks in the festival program.

After the completion of the 4th National Folk Festival, 'The Port Jackson Folk Festival', it took some time to finalise all the strands of the Festival. In May 1970 I organised a public meeting (mostly by visiting all the Folk venues and handing out flyers). At this meeting I and our committee presented the results of our festival, I said that our management committee had been harmonious, industrious and that it would be a shame to disband. I said that I felt the NSW Folk scene needed a governing organisation, that the Folk Festival committee should cease and hand our finances and equipment to the new body. Warren Fahey proposed the name the NSW Folk Federation and all present agreed. Bernard Bolan was elected President of the new organisation and an interim committee was formed. I Danny Watson did not stand for President as it was felt that Bernard would be more widely accepted. I was given the title Business Manager which pretty well meant that I carried on doing the same job. I used to go to all the folk venues and sell memberships, \$1.00. By October we had a large membership base and we held our first AGM.

Vale John Todhunter

John Todhunter (Toddy) was a member of the Folk Federation in the early days and served on the committee for a time.

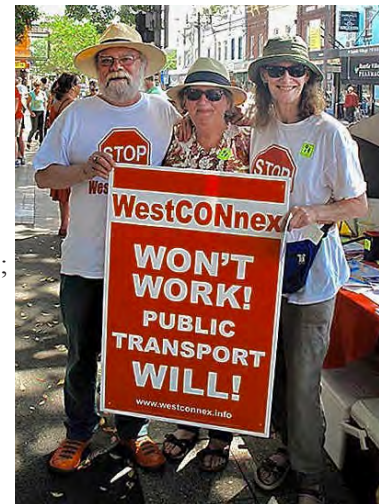
Toddy's long-term friend David Percy advised that Toddy passed away peacefully on 29th January 2020; it was totally unexpected. He was 68.

He is survived by his wife, Michele & daughter Thea.

The funeral & wake were held in Rozelle & Michele asked that no flowers be sent and anyone attending the funeral wear coloured clothes not sombre suits.

Rhonda Mawer (folk singer and club organiser from the northern beaches) wrote of Toddy:

John 'Toddy' Todhunter was a great friend of mine from the folk scene in Sydney in the late '60s and early '70s. A lovely, gentle person who became completely absorbed in the folk scene and whom I met in about 1970. He was never a singer or musician but embraced the Sydney folk scene with enthusiasm. He was always at the Sydney folk clubs such as The Liz (The Elizabeth Hotel), The Edinburgh Castle and of course the Saturday afternoon sessions at Tommy Doyle's pub in Harris Street, Glebe. He was passionate about folk music



and was ever present in the clubs and after parties at various people's houses after closing time. A beautiful, gentle and intelligent person who will be sadly missed by many of us from the heydays of the Sydney folk scene.

From Maureen Cummsuskey (ACT):

I met Toddy, aka John Todhunter in the early '70s. I arrived in Sydney from Hong Kong in 1968 & felt a bit like a fish out of water as I tried to find my feet in a pretty alien environment. In 1970, I went to the Port Jackson Folk Festival which changed my life forever! From there it was a short trip to the Sydney folk scene & clubs such as The Liz, The Town Hall Folk Club, & the Edinburgh Castle, and the amazing Saturday afternoon sessions at Tommy and Joan Doyle's pub in Ultimo.

It was here that I met Toddy and he became a very dear and close friend of mine, as did his good friend of 52 years, Tony Suttor. While Toddy was not a singer or musician he was an absolute stalwart of the Sydney folk scene, always present at the clubs and the parties that followed on once the pub closed. Apart from knocking about together around the Sydney scene, various groups of us would travel to festivals and events in other parts of the State. On one occasion, Toddy took me (very safely) to a Newcastle folk festival on the back of his chunky black motor cycle. On another, a group of us went to Neil Bollingmore's parents' holiday place in the Shoalhaven. I awoke early in the morning to find I was sharing my sleeping bag with a very confused green frog, courtesy of Mr Todhunter who was snickering in a corner.

While I hadn't seen Toddy in a while, I had been enjoying sharing a laugh with him on facebook, and it was a huge shock to hear that he was no longer with us. He was a kind and gentle friend who I know will be sadly missed by his folkie friends and the wider Balmain community.

My condolences to Michele and Thea.

Maureen Cummsuskey

National Folklore Conference 2020

The 15th annual conference will take place again at the National Library of Australia, on Thursday 9th April, 2020. The conference is organised by the Australian Folklore Network and facilitated through the National Library of Australia, the National Folk Festival and the Australian Folklore Research Unit, Curtin University. This year's program:

- A Circle of Folklore – from Children to Adults and Back to the Young
- Safeguarding the Invisible: Children's Folklore as Intangible Cultural Heritage
- Contemporary Revision of an Historic Songbook (The Joy Durst Memorial Songbook)
- Between the Threads: Tales from Australian House Museum Costume
- Perfect Pearls: Australian Pearling Songs
- Delia Murphy, First Lady of Song and the Irish Embassy
- A Factory Lad: The Songs of Colin Dryden
- Creatures from the Deep Past: Stories, Landscapes and History
- Waltzing Matilda - A Forensic History

There will also be the NLA lunchtime concert produced by Rob Willis, as well as a selection of relevant informational materials.

Further details will be announced closer to the event. Attendance is free, though places are limited. Please register to: g.seal@curtin.edu.au.

(W. Benjamin Lindner has recently published 'Waltzing Matilda: Australia's Accidental Anthem. A Forensic History'. Read a review at verandahmusic.blogspot.com – Graham Seal)



The Merry Muse Honours Col Wright

There was a great turnout to pay tribute to Col Wright at the Merry Muse on Sunday 9th Feb - with several people on the blackboard sharing memories of Col. Some of the people making up the audience were long-time friends of Col & Annie when they lived outside Canberra & Laurie MacDonald brought along a poster Col had designed which displayed his own beautiful handwriting. Cassidy's Ceili did a fine set as the feature act then led the audience in singing Wild Mountain Thyme & they did a fantastic rendition of I'll Fly Away for an encore.

Boutique ExCHANGE Conference

Port Fairy Folk Festival is partnering with Folk Alliance International (FAI) to present the first international boutique ExCHANGE conference and performance showcase in Australia in 2020. The event will be a gathering of national and international delegates and comprise speakers and performances by local, regional, national and international artists.

FAI's mission is to serve, strengthen, and engage the global folk music community through preservation, presentation, and promotion.

The FAI folk umbrella represents the broadest international iteration of the genre, encompassing a diverse array of music including Appalachian, Americana, Blues, Bluegrass, Celtic, Cajun, Francophone, Global Roots, Indigenous, Latin, Old-Time, Traditional, Singer-Songwriter, Spoken Word and every imaginable fusion.

FAI was established in 1989 and presents the world's largest folk conferences on an annual basis in January/February. These are presented in North America. It is wonderful that they are presenting this boutique ExCHANGE Conference to connect with our global region, and it is particularly exciting that it is happening in South West Victoria. This is the third boutique ExCHANGE they have presented, previous ones have been in Ireland and Sweden. This will be the largest ExCHANGE they have held as an adjunct to their major event, which is in January in New Orleans in 2020.

Additional partner organisations to date are: City of Greater Geelong; Creative Victoria; Folk Alliance Australia; Geelong Regional Library Corporation; Sounds Australia; Woodford Folk Festival.

Confirmed venues include Geelong Library and Heritage Centre (Conference, showcase and special event venue) and Courthouse Youth Arts (as above, plus songwriters' hub venue). There are also concert venues.

Cornish Mining in India

For the past year Cornish folk band The Rowan Tree (therowanreemusic.com) have been exploring Cornwall's mining history in India as part of an Arts Council funded mixed media project. The band have collaborated with over 60 folk musicians in Cornwall and India to produce an album telling the stories from the mining community at the Kolar Gold Fields (KGF), Southern India. The album was released on Friday 7th February with all profits from sales going to the Cornwall Heritage Trust and the KGF Schools Foundation who provide an education for disadvantaged children at the Kolar Gold Fields.



As part of the project the band have released a mini documentary. You can watch the film here, [youtube.com/watch?v=Lzg2eqYMcDk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lzg2eqYMcDk).

For further information please feel free to contact Laura Garcia, laurafosten@hotmail.co.uk.

Recent Historical Articles

In the past year Sandra Nixon has posted many historical articles on the Bush Music Club Blog using material in BMC archives, here are a few on bush dance and music.

The Music of Strange Bands, by Graham Seal (reprinted from

Verandah Music with permission). bushmusicclub.blogspot.com/2019/04/the-music-of-strange-bands-by-graham.html

The Earliest Bush Bands, by Graham Seal (reprinted from Verandah Music with permission). bushmusicclub.blogspot.com/2019/04/the-earliest-bush-bands-by-graham-seal.html

Bob Bolton Collection - Dance at Abercrombie Caves, April 1982. bushmusicclub.blogspot.com/2019/11/bob-bolton-collection-dance-at.html

Ken Fairey Collection (Bush dance in the 60s). bushmusicclub.blogspot.com/2019/08/ken-fairey-collection.html

From the archives - extracts from Mulga Wire no. 29, February 1982 - The Country Dance by Barbara Gibbons. bushmusicclub.blogspot.com/2019/10/from-archives-extracts-from-mulga-wire.html

From the Archives - The Songs They Sang and the Dance Tunes They Played at the Old Time Bush Dances and other Material, Parts One and Two. bushmusicclub.blogspot.com/2019/09/from-archives-songs-they-sang-and-dance.html

From the '50s to the '70s BMC members gathered together on Workshop nights to learn songs, and on Singabout nights which were fundraising concerts held to make money for printing the next issue of Singabout.

From the Archives - Workshop nights held in the early days for learning and rehearsing songs. bushmusicclub.blogspot.com/2019/11/from-archives-workshop-nights-held-in.html

From the Archives - Singabout Nights in the '50s, '60s and '70s. bushmusicclub.blogspot.com/2019/09/from-archives-singabout-nights-in-50s.html

Sandra Nixon

Hon. Secretary, Archivist and Librarian, Bush Music Club Inc

The Three Audacities



A new folk trio from Sydney, they will be performing work songs and sea shanties at The Loaded Dog, 18th April (check with Sandra as to whether or not it has been cancelled).

Emma Norton (banjo) has an incandescent voice with a huge range, every note aglow with warmth and energy; Dan Kenny also has a distinctive vocal range and, with a background in jazz and blues, he is adept and creative on electric and acoustic guitar; and, singing bass and 50 years older, the voice of Margaret Walters adds the weight of experience and powerful emotion to the trio. They met at the Redfern Shanty Club

three years ago where they discovered they have many songs in common and share a love of harmony.

After their debut performance at Skinkworld, Bundanoon, Dallas de Brabander wrote:

"... these three pack a vocal punch! Masters of the unaccompanied folk song, each one with a style and strength of their own, the three singers blend together in harmonies that send chills up your spine. Interspersed with the unaccompanied songs, were songs supported gently by Dan's subtle guitar and Emma's lovely banjo. We heard solos from each, gorgeous duets from Emma and Dan and songs where all three let loose. The audience at Skinkworld was spellbound and thoroughly entertained by the sheer diversity and beauty of the songs presented, and sang along lustily with rollicking choruses and some well-loved folk songs."

The name? It comes from a speech by Danton, a leader of the French Revolution and quoted later by Lenin: "We need audacity, and yet more audacity, and always audacity!" and it's sometimes abbreviated to "the three audacities". For the singers, the name means "We tell it like it is! We're not out to produce revolutionary socialists - we let the songs speak for themselves". And amongst the songs of injustice and a longing for a better world, you'll find some ripping good yarns and plaintive love songs.

Influences include Ewan MacColl, Pete Seeger, Peggy Seeger, Phil Ochs, Dick Gaughan, Peter Bellamy, Si Kahn, John Warner, Jez Lowe, Hazel Dickens.

dance news

Early Australian Ball Weekend

CANCELLED The Ball Weekend will be held at historic Yarralumla Woolshed in Canberra, 17th-19th April. To switch from the Jafa format for a bit but to still come together in Regency or Victorian dress, enjoy a weekend of dance and music with 19th-century Australian links - real Australian colonial dance. On the Saturday, a ball at one of the A.C.T.'s most wonderful heritage venues, with fabulous music by pianist Sally Taylor and Earthly Delights friends, and dances led for all from lunch till late. If the Duchess of Richmond could hold her famous ball on the eve of the Battle of Waterloo in a stable, we can hold our famous annual mid-April ball in this beautiful heritage Woolshed. On the Sunday, a pot-luck recovery costume picnic (and more dancing and period games!) at a venue to be announced. Aylwen 0409 817 623. John john@earthlydelights.com.au. earthlydelights.com.au/upcoming

2020 Heritage Ball

POSTPONED The BMC's Heritage Ball is a grand occasion. Dress up in your favourite fashion from Colonial times and be ready to dance the night away. Music will be provided by our renowned Heritage Ensemble. It will be held at Kurragai Town Hall, 1186 Pacific Hwy, Pymble, on Saturday 16th May. Doors open at 6.30pm, Grand March starts at 7pm - and dance till midnight! To help keep ticket prices down this year we are asking you to bring a plate to share for supper. There will be practices at Pennant Hills Dance Workshop on two Mondays, 4th and 11th May. Ticket information will appear in Folkmail - and presumably at bushmusic.org.au.

Peter Ellis Dance Books

Denise Hibbs and Richard Ayling have finished two draft books of Peter Ellis which were released at the National Folk Conference and at the Settlers Season during last year's National Folk Festival. Audiences were informed that these books, along with thousands of other tunes, are available for free to be downloaded from Harry Gardner's and Peter Ellis's tribute web page at australianfolkmusic.com.au.

Focus on Folk

5-6pm 1st Saturday



Focus on Folk can now be heard on 2MBS-FM 102.5, DAB radio and both real time and up to one week later on finemusicFM.com.

Sat 4 April - John Milce (all English!)

Sat 2 May - Paul Jackson

Anyone with a CD they would like to add to the library collection for consideration for airplay please forward to:

Focus on Folk, Post Office Box A182, Sydney South 1235.

Events cancelled due to the COVID-19 Coronavirus

Loaded Dog, Alistair Brown (UK) + Chris Maltby, 21 March.

English Country Dance, North Sydney, 21 March.

South Maitland House Concert, Claire Hastings, 22 March. Possibly rescheduled later in year.

Addison Road Singing Session, UFN (Until further notice)

Bush Music Club ALL activities suspended, UFN.

BMC May Ball postponed to later in the year.

Kariong dance workshop & monthly East Gosford Dances, UFN.

Sutherland Shire Bush Dance Group, UFN.

Humph Hall. East of West, 27 March

Solander & Science, 27 March

Troubadour Central Coast, Colum Sands (Ireland), 4 April. All Troubadour live concerts suspended UFN.

Southern Sydney Folk Club, Colum Sands (Ireland), 5 April; & his tour.

The Shack, for April, May, June.

Petersham Bowling Club, Mike McClellan, 5 April

James Craig Music Club, The Fossickers, 9 April

Petersham Bowling Club, SON (Susan O'Neill) (Ire), 15 Apr

Petersham Bowling Club, The Mammals (USA), 16 April

Illawarra Folk Club, Whitetop Mountaineers, 17 Apr, & tour.

Humph Hall. Khristian Mizzi, + Rob Barratt (UK), 18 April

BMC's Pennant Hills Dance Workshops, UFN.

Celtic Folk Sessions (Copmanhurst & South Grafton), UFN.

Earthly Delights dance classes, UFN.

Sydney Playford (Tuesday nights), UFN.

All Sydney Irish Ceili Dance classes, rehearsals, perfs, UFN.

Canberra Contra Club - Tuesday 7 April

VFMC is suspending all dance activity UFN. Also reviewing other events, concerts, meetings. Check VFMC web site.

And these festivals have been cancelled:

2020 Newcastle Fringe - 18-22 March

National Folk Festival - 9-13 April

Early Australian Ball Weekend 2020, Canberra, 17-19 Apr

St Albans Folk Festival, 23-26 April

Northern Beaches Music Festival, 1-3 May

Bundanoon DanceFest, 5-8 June

2020 Peak Festival (Perisher Valley), 11-14 June

50th Top Half Folk Festival, June 2020 - deferred to Jun 2021.

Meandering with Meredith

By Rob Willis

One of the many lessons I have learnt in life is never to presume that people know who or what you are talking about.

This was bought home to me at a festival we held in Forbes NSW in the 1980s when I was telling a very large audience how proud and honoured we were to have John Meredith present. One of the locals came up to me later and said "Rob, who the bloody hell is John Meredith".

When the concept of this magazine [Trad and Now] was put to me I immediately thought that it should not have a first issue without some mention of Meredith. Hopefully there are a lot of readers perusing this article at the moment who are not involved in the 'folk scene' and for those I will give a brief outline of, in my opinion, Australia's greatest collector of folklore.

John was born at Holbrook in 1920 and from an early age became interested in the songs, tunes and poetry of our country. John purchased a very bulky tape recorder and commenced recording the older performers in the 1950s. As a result of this John published prolifically on folkloric and other topics, perhaps his best-known works were "Folk Songs of Australia" volumes 1 and 2. Meredith continued this work throughout the rest of his life.

John Meredith's folkloric and photographic collection is housed in The National Library of Australia. This brief glimpse into the life of this man will hopefully encourage people to investigate his work further.

I was fortunate to be one of a small band of people who became involved with John, assisting with his collecting. My time on the track spanned the years 1984 until he retired in 1994.

So what was it like spending a large amount of time travel-



ling with man who had become a legend in his own lifetime?

John was a very forthright man and yet during all the time we spent on the road we did not have one argument. He had a broad knowledge on many subjects including botany, photography, history, Australian literature, herbalism and others too numerous to mention and yet would impart this knowledge in a very interesting and inspiring way. So often I would return from a lengthy field trip and tell my wife Olya that my head was just about to explode with all the information that Merro had passed on. He was never restrictive or closed about his work and gladly passed on tunes, songs and information from his personal collection. It was very important to John that his work be spread to as wide an audience as possible.

The other important lesson that I learnt during this time was our ongoing relationship with the people we interviewed. We were never short of a bed in a town where Merro had been previously, as the people he had spoken with became friends. They were never just numbers on a Library catalogue. We had musical sessions all over the country with the traditional players and singers, each of us contributing and learning from the other.

Following in John's footsteps I have continued to do this and look forward to the ongoing contact with performers.

John was meticulous and very professional with his work, contacting his informants and making sure they understood what we required. In the days before mobile phones and emails we spent more time in telephone boxes than Clark Kent.

Accommodation was also very interesting in those early days as we were on a very limited budget for fuel and other expenses, which we shared. A tent was the usual format and we would camp in National Parks or on the side of the road. John had a love of the rivers and many a campsite was set up on the banks of the Murray. I think we both ended up with a dose of Ross River virus after camping in a mosquito-infested forest on the river near Swan Hill. In later years we shared on site vans and basic cabins in camping grounds.

The National Library of Australia were, and still are, most supportive with the supply of equipment and allocation of



funds from their limited budget. John and I both agreed however that if we scrimped a bit on each individual journey we might be able to get many more field trips out of the available funding. There was and still is so much to be done.

To be in close contact for long periods of time and often under quite stressful circumstances requires a good rapport between people. John and I both shared a similar sense of humour and a love of music. Many an hour was spent around a campfire yarning and playing the two identical small Busilacchio button accordions we both took with us on trips. I still have memories of learning tunes from him whilst we were camped on the Devils Pinch near Nerriga while searching for stories of Frank the Poet.

Also the morning it was discovered that I had forgotten to pack the food after a freezing night camped near Wilkerboon station near Mt Hope in NSW. There was a photo on the page showing Merro cooking an apple over the fire. We also had some soy milk thank goodness – John was still smiling, I don't know why.

We also would take early morning walks (John was not one to stay in bed) where we would traipse along and my head

would again be filled with his knowledge.

The highlights of my years with John were many and we kept in close contact and shared our excitements until his death in 2001. The inability to make a phone call to seek information or share an enthusiasm is to me the hardest part of his not being here in person.

I called him John during our first meeting and I remember him saying a short time later, "My good mates call me Merro Rob, and I would like you to call me Merro".

Thanks for everything Merro.

Rob Willis wrote this article for the first edition of Trad and Now in Spring 2002 [Reprinted, by permission]. "I feel it is still very relevant because there are many people both within, and without the 'folk scene' who do not know of him and his important work."

The Meredith collection at the National Library of Australia is at amw.org.au/sites/default/files/memory_of_the_world/collecting-australias-folk-culture/john-meredith-folklore-collection-1953-1994.html. The collection is recognised in the UNESCO Memory of the World Program.

Identifying people in Bob Bolton's photo collection



Bob was a musician and professional photographer and Life Member of the Bush Music Club, who started taking photos of Bush Music Club events, Sydney Folk Clubs and Festivals in July 1970, so missed the Sydney National Folk Festival held earlier that year

In 2014 Bob gave his negative collection (1970-2007) to the National Library.

BMC library holds 97 photo albums from 1982 to 2007 when he stopped printing photos. Although albums from 1970 existed, we do not have them and can only assume he lent them to someone at some stage. If anyone knows their whereabouts, please contact me.

The albums will also be given to the National Library as they will assist when the negatives are eventually digitised.

"This collection is vital to the preservation of folklore in Australia."

Rob Willis
National Library of Australia
Oral History & Folklore Collections

BMC members have been helping identify people in the photos, and if any Folk Federation members could help with folk events, I can arrange individual appointments to view the albums at Marrickville now or sometime in the future.

Sandra Nixon

*Hon. Secretary, Archivist & Librarian
Bush Music Club Inc, Founded 1954
GPO Box 433, Sydney 2001
Tritton Hall, Hut 44, Addison Road Community Centre,
142 Addison Road, Marrickville
bushmusic.org.au/
blog.bushmusic.org.au
[youtube.com/channel/UCw8v2tPRJ1LeTvoTKNnbC3w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCw8v2tPRJ1LeTvoTKNnbC3w)
bmcmail1954@gmail.com
[facebook.com/BushMusicClub/](https://www.facebook.com/BushMusicClub/)
[meetup.com/Sydney-Bush-Music-Club-Meetup](https://www.meetup.com/Sydney-Bush-Music-Club-Meetup)*



Ben Hall Festival Carcoar, 30th-31st October 1974

Morris Dancing

By Jennie Widdowson

[Reprinted from Folk Dance Australia's newsletter Footnotes, October 2014]

Morris dancing is a type of English folk dance consisting of rhythmic stepping, skipping and jumping (known as capering). The dances are performed in set formations with figures & choruses. The dancers usually wear bell pads on their shins and distinctive costumes. Implements such as sticks, swords and handkerchiefs may also be wielded by the dancers.

Morris dancing is first mentioned in the 15th century. Early records refer to morris dancing in a court setting and later in the Lord Mayor's Procession in London. By the mid 17th century it was described as a folk dance performed in the parishes and became a dance for the workers. Morris dancers performed at church festivals such as Whitsun and also pagan festivals such as May Day, the solstice and the equinox.

Morris Styles

Today, there are six predominant styles of morris dancing, and different dances or traditions within each style named after their region of origin.

Cotswold dances are from an area mostly in Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire. These dances normally involve handkerchiefs or sticks to accompany the hand movements. Dances are usually for 6 or 8 dancers, but solo and duo dances (known as single or double jigs) also occur.

North West morris is a more military style and often processional. It developed around the mills in the North-West of England in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Border morris comes from the English-Welsh border: a

simpler, looser, more vigorous style, traditionally danced with blackened faces, tattered clothes and sticks.

Longsword dancing is from Yorkshire and south Durham and is performed with long, rigid metal or wooden swords usually by 6 or 8 dancers.

Rapper comes from Northumberland and Co. Durham and is danced with short, flexible sprung steel swords, usually by 5 dancers.



Molly Dancing originated in Cambridgeshire. Traditionally it was danced on Plough Monday. The dances were Feast dances that were danced to collect money during harsh winters. One of the dancers would be dressed as a woman, hence the name.

Music was traditionally provided by either a pipe and tabor,



or a fiddle. These are still used today, but the most common instrument is the melodeon. Accordions and concertinas are also common, and other instruments are sometimes used. Often drums are employed.

The style of dress for a side is referred to as their kit. There is great regional variety shown in kits, from the predominantly white clothing of Cotswold sides to the tattered jackets worn by Border teams. Some common items of clothing are: bell-pads; baldrics; rosettes; waistcoats; tatter-coats; knee-length breeches; wooden clogs; straw hats; top hats, or bowlers; neckerchiefs; armbands.

Morris Dancing in Australia



It is likely that there were morris dancers among the early immigrants and convicts in Australia, and at least one legend of a convict being flogged for dancing on a Sunday is still in circulation. There is also evidence of a morris side (mixed gender) operating in Beaumaris, Melbourne in around 1938. However it was not until the folk revival of the 1970s that a vibrant morris tradition in Australia began to emerge which included all styles of morris.



In 1974 the Perth Morris Men and Plenty Morris in Melbourne were both performing. Two women's sides appeared in 1978: Fair Maids of Perth (North West morris) and Maids of the Mill (Cotswold) in Sydney. In Australia the traditional gender division of Cotswold dances being performed only by men has been challenged by many sides, with Plenty Morris the first mixed group. The National Folk Festival features a number of sides each year to showcase the various styles of morris, along with performances of massed morris dancing and busking.

Canberra Morris

In the 1970s there was a men's side known as the Canberra morris men dancing Cotswold morris and a women's known as the Brindabella morris dancers.

These sides were replaced in the 1980s by Molonglo Mayhem Border Morris which was a mixed side. They performed dances which originated mainly from the Welsh Border counties of Worcestershire, Herefordshire & Shropshire with a few Cotswold dances thrown in for good measure & an occasional Mummings Play. This side packed up their bells in the 1990s.



The Surly Griffins were established in 2012 and are a mixed side. They perform a both traditional and modern Border and Cotswold morris, in a jaunty, relaxed style. Their kit consists of black shirts, breeches and socks, an orange cummerbund, a baldric of lime green and turquoise and a black hat decorated with lime green, turquoise and orange ribbons.

They have danced at the George Harcourt Inn at Ginninderra Village on a number of occasions as well as at local fetes and festivals and the National Folk Festival. They also traditionally dance at daybreak on the top of Mount Ainslie on Mayday to welcome the sun.

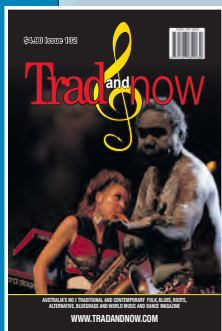
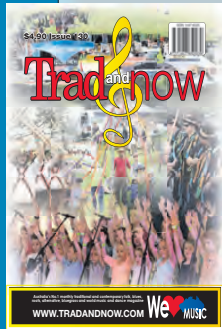
The Surly Griffins practise on alternate Sundays at the Lake Ginninderra Sea Scouts Hall in Belconnen, ACT from 5.30 – 7pm (currently the Sunday before public service payday). They welcome all new dancers and musicians – contact Squire Simon Wall or foreman Imogen Wall via the Surly Griffin Facebook page (facebook.com/SurlyGriffinsMorris), or email surlygriffin@gmail.com.

[Editor's note. Practice details and email address may have changed since 2014. Facebook is current.]

Is there anyone out there who can give us a history, however brief, of Sydney Morris Men, and of Black Joak? And of any other past incarnations of Sydney men's or women's sides?



OUT NOW!



\$4.90 Issue 136

ISSN 1447-6525
9 771447 652039

Trad and Now

AUSTRALIA'S NO.1 TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY FOLK, BLUES, ROOTS, ALTERNATIVE, BLUEGRASS AND WORLD MUSIC AND DANCE MAGAZINE

WWW.TRADANDNOW.COM



**Now 80 Pages on full gloss paper
in a new compact format!**

Available from your local newsagent (distributed by Wrapaway)
See our extensive range of over 2500 Australian traditional and contemporary folk, blues, roots, alternative and world music CDs, DVDs and books at www.tradandnow.com and at Level 2 86-88 Mann St, Gosford 02 4325 7369