

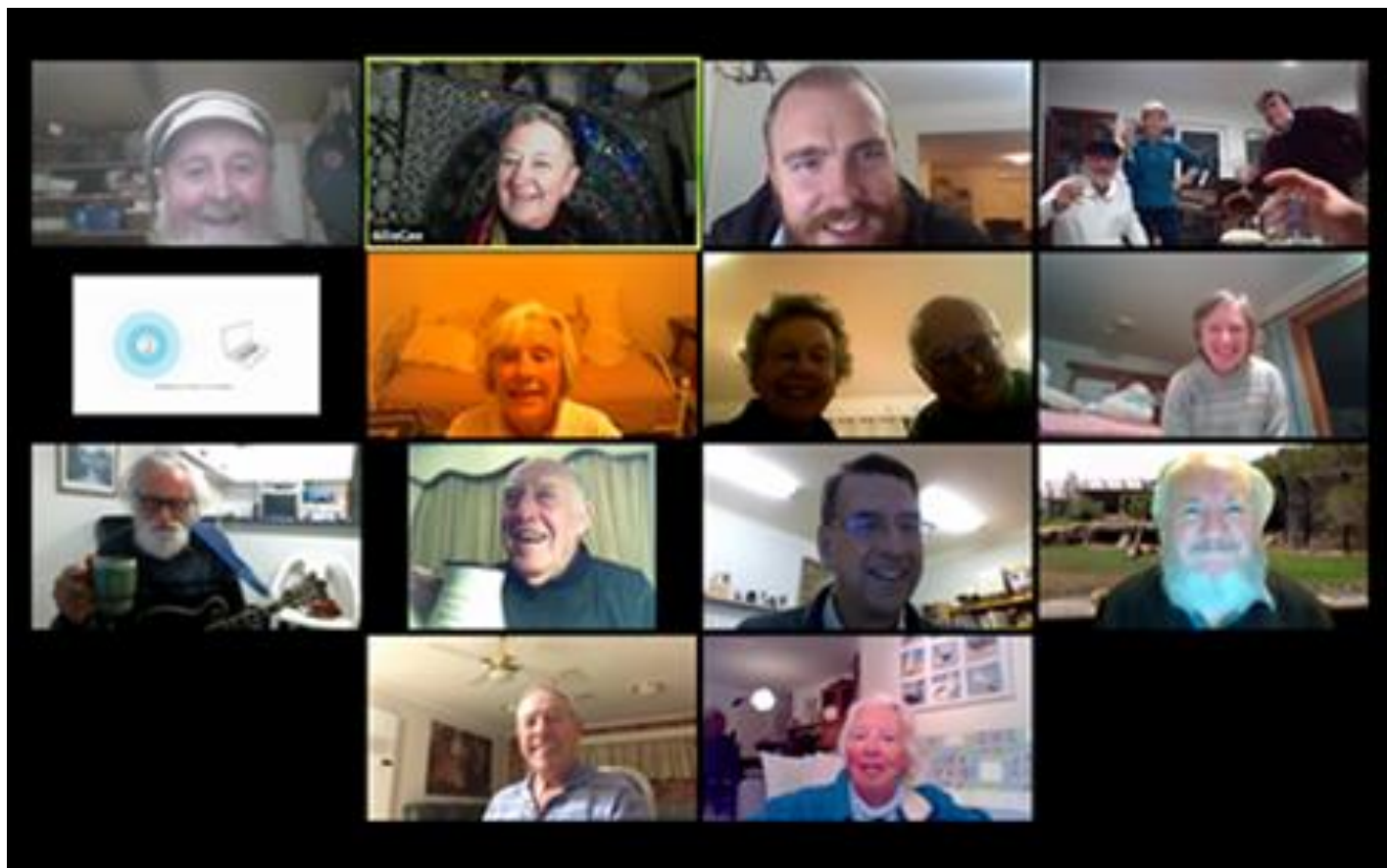
Monaro Musings



The Newsletter of the Monaro Folk Society Inc., Reg No A 00208

Visit MFS at the website www.monarofolk.org.au and/or www.facebook.com/monaro.folk.society

***Monaro Musings*, Volume 29, Number 3 –July 2020**



This has to be a first – an MFS Socially Distanced Zoom Bush Dance Workshop! Looks as if everyone is having fun.
See two articles on pages 3-4 (Screenshot by Geoff Kell)

From the President's Soapbox

At last we can again meet, eat, drink and share good company! Our musicians are beginning to get together in small groups to resume sessions. Group dancing, however, will still be an issue for a while yet: not just in terms of legal spatial requirements, but many of our members, particularly those in higher risk groups, will be reluctant to have close physical contact.

Our society is not just about carrying on fixed traditions: it is also about the social connections that have been made over the years between members and the pleasure of having social contact, so a think tank has been working on restoring this situation and developing some options to carry us through. Please read the article below about our inaugural BDG workshop using online technology to bring dancers and musicians in contact again and consider attending the next get together, if only to chat with some people you have missed seeing since March. My thanks go to Alison, Anne, Christine, Peter Foster, Dave, and Peter Stringfellow for putting their time into making it all happen.

A major difficulty we do have is communication with all of you as members: the only avenues open to us are via email, the website and the Musings newsletter. With the Musings moving to a quarterly edition, there will be an even longer time lag, so we will be even more dependent on electronic methods to let you know what is happening. So, it becomes important that you ensure that your mail programs will permit you to at least see that an email has arrived from us – THEN you can throw it in the trash, but at least keep that amount of initial control. Some mail clients automatically direct anything sent through Mailchimp into Junk or Promotions folders that you never look at: but it appears that once an email has been moved into your Inbox, subsequent emails should go there. So please search to check and facilitate this. To send emails to large groups of people, they have to be in small batches, with a lot of attendant problems. With Mailchimp, it can be done in one hit: this is the reason I have used it to send the last few Soapbox articles, and I find it an excellent option. But not much use if you don't even know a message has arrived.

You should all have received Notice of the General Meeting scheduled for Monday 29th June, which is inserted below. We need to have a quorum at the actual meeting, however you can nominate a proxy to vote on your behalf on the motion. If so, you need to fill in the form and email to the Secretary, at least 24 hours before the scheduled meeting. Information is on the [Attendance Register](#) and on the website.

Last but certainly not least, with Tina finally able to step down as Editor of the Monaro Musings, this is her final edition, and I welcome Keith to his new role. Tina is an archetypal stalwart folkie with a strong social conscience: she has extensive knowledge of the wider folk scene, both historically and today and believes that we are carrying on traditions that are important for society, as well as individuals. You are doubtless aware that she also hosts a radio program on 2XX in the wee hours of the morning when you are probably still in bed. She has therefore worked hard at putting out the newsletter on a monthly basis for your benefit.

Unless you have done this job yourself, I am sure you would underestimate the work and time Tina has put into producing not just the content, but in tailoring it to fit within layout restrictions to produce the printed paper copy. I thank her for being wonderful to work with, and pay tribute to her dedication in carrying out the Editor's often thankless tasks for so many years now. A toast to you, Tina!

Geoff

President MFS is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

MFS GM followed by BDG Dance Workshop Time: Mon 29th June 7.00 PM

[To join Zoom meeting – Click this Link](#)

[Or phone this number](#) (for audio only): 02 8015 6011

Meeting ID: 919 8485 2475 Password: 625312

From the incoming editor



When I recently signed up with the MFS, it was not even remotely in my mind that I would be editing the Bulletin. However, Geoff and Tina are very persistent and persuasive.

The committee has decided that the newsletter will move to three-monthly from now on. The change in timing will not affect a lot of the current content. Please keep coming with the photos and reports of past activities and previews of those to come. Hopefully also, the new timing will allow us to add more 'think pieces', reviews and other items of general interest that do not duplicate information people get by other means.

Contributions or ideas for topics will always be welcome. I know that writing articles is not everybody's thing and it is not the only way to make a contribution to the newsletter. Some of the best articles are often accounts of a conversation on a topic of interest and I will be more than happy to meet and write something up afterwards for publication (always, of course, subject to agreement from the participant(s)).

The next edition of the newsletter, and my first, will come out in August. I have been out of the folk scene for a very long time and the gap will give me time to talk to people from the range of groups and interests that make up the MFS and start to get up to speed. Tina is a hard act to follow but I am looking forward to the challenge of putting together an interesting publication and improving my own knowledge of music and dance in the process.

I can be contacted via the editor's email editor@monarofolk.org.au or by mobile on 0428 803 814.

Keith

Are You Ready to Kick It Up Again?

Bush Dance Group Zoom Workshop! *By Alison Goodman*

Our much-loved normal activities such as Bush dancing can't return in the foreseeable future unless miracles happen. We are all missing the company of each other, the warm hugs and catch-up chats as we meet. However all things, including this Society, must adapt or sink and die, and some amazing developments have been happening behind the scenes to enable people to reconnect again.

The "Back To The Future" group is taking the lead from other successful online groups using ZOOM to introduce to you the Society's latest stablemate "Bush Dance Group Zoom Workshop".

On a day/date coming soon you will be able to connect online with a core group of dance instructors and musicians for a couple of hours. You will be able to see each other again. Be able to "shake a tail feather" and have a good laugh. If you find yourself lacking a partner, it doesn't matter - invent a partner.

Follow the basic dance instructions and dance around the kitchen/lounge freely expressing how you feel. You can become the "Best dancer in the room" and not worry that you missed a call.



Ladies' ballroom hold



Men's ballroom hold



Promenade hold

Noodling around: BTTF fearless leader Alison demonstrating some dance holds with her partner



There will be a chance of some discussions with others online. ... and just hearing the wonderful live music produced by the band members will lift your spirits.

It won't be a perfect first session as we are ALL in this learning curve. There will be some basic zoom instructions for you included in the official zoom meeting notice TBA.

It will be a "click" and we will be together again.

Please note: All images above chosen by Geoff so please don't blame Alison if you don't like any of them.

So click on this link NOW: btff@monarofolk.org.au and contact us to make sure you don't miss out on further information. Look forward to seeing you.

Zoom Workshop #1 Shaking our tail feathers at the Bush Dance Group

UPDATE!!! Hundreds of people flocked to Monday's Premiere event ... The Bush Dance Group Zoom Workshop. All thought it was brilliant. Many suggested a case of champagne should be authorised by committee for the hardworking BTTF group on a job well done. It took a mammoth effort for the host - our dear President- to keep it all in order. There were "rooms" crowded with dancers and band members all champing at the bit waiting their turn to be let loose in the "Main Ballroom".

There were the usual photo opportunities on the red carpet, welcomes and some chat, then after a rundown of Zoom protocol information the big moment arrived. Our dance caller for the evening Peter Foster warmed us up with a well-known Maxina. Demonstration couple, Christine and Roger, took us through the steps. The Band (apparently isolated in the MAD Room) struck up the tune and we were off ... other musicians joined in from their own homes and apparently made quite an impression on their neighbours.

A new kitchen dance, (The Kitchen Square) was devised by Peter especially for the workshop. This catered for single dancers although it could be danced by couples if participants had enough room in their dance spaces at home. Calls for requests saw the "Troika" being the final dance and a fantastic way to finish up the evening's activities.

It was agreed by all to have been a great success. Our host, Geoff, closed the evening reminding us to make it known far and wide that everyone is welcome to join us at 8.00pm on coming Monday evenings: Zoom details for the next one are on the [Website](#) so be there!

Alison Goodman - BTTF

The Anniversary Gala Ball at the Albert Hall just managed to happen before everything shut down for the Coronavirus

Dear Bush Dancers,



Thankyou to those who attended the special Anniversary Gala Ball on Saturday night, 7th March 2020. It was a very special occasion for marking both the commencement of the Monaro Folk Society's (MFS) 50th Anniversary, and our 30th Wedding Anniversary.

Who would have guessed that the Anniversary Gala Ball would be one of the last major bush dances before the pandemic lockdown.

We would like to thank the MFS President (Geoff Kell) and the Committee for supporting and promoting this dance at the Albert Hall.

Also thankyou to our interstate and local friends in Canberra who joined us for this special occasion.

Special thanks go to:

1. MC, Mark Simmons - For coordinating the evening and ensuring it ran smoothly.
2. Callers – Peter Foster, Mark Simmons and Jeanette Mill. Sadly Colin Towns was not able to join us due to illness.
3. Band – All volunteers who spent a lot of time practicing some new and difficult pieces of music specially for the evening. Thanks goes to both of the band masters – Bob Hodgson and Dave Wardle. A special thanks also goes to Dave Wardle for organizing the music as well as the practice sessions. The music mixer also did a wonderful job. The quality of the music during the evening was excellent.



4. Photographer, Allen Bills, who took so much time and effort to “capture the moment” (see photographs in this article); and
5. Helpers who assisted to set up in the morning and assisted with refreshments. A special thankyou goes to Barbara and Michael Phillips who spent all evening greeting guests with a smile at the entrance. Another special thankyou goes to both Linda Aunela and Ian Bruce who spent about four hours greeting guests for the New Vogue dance during the day.
6. An extra big thankyou goes to all of the dancers who took a lot of time and effort to familiarize themselves with the dances prior to the event. All this work made the dancing flow smoothly and enabled us to get through a very full program (with an additional 2 dances added in at the end).



What a night!!! We are sure that everyone had a great and enjoyable time (we certainly did). Truly... great... fun....

The evening was very mild considering it was early March which made the dancing all the more enjoyable. The Albert Hall is the best one in Canberra and we were very lucky to have been able to access it (thanks to the Monaro Folk Society – an organization that we have had the great pleasure to belong to for over 20 years). The Monaro Folk Society set us on our initial path to dancing, something that will make us forever grateful.

Thank you everyone for making this a very special and memorable dance for the start of the MFS 50th Anniversary and our 30th Wedding Anniversary.

Stay safe and well and we hope to see you all on the dance floor again very soon.

Best wishes, Roni and Adrian Giacobetti

And Now the Historical Stuff

Good Old Days

It's the people that you remember. The MFS committee meetings at Simon Kravis's house over soup and excellent bread, the old dance committee with folk like Kevin Frawley in charge and bigger than the main committee. Here is a picture from the 1991 Colonial Ball recovery picnic in Commonwealth Park. Kevin always made sure there was champagne left over from the ball for the picnic, and there was always a big Esky of leftover food. And music and dancing of course.



And here is a collage showing some of the people at the first dance for this millennium, Kevin on the left:



MFS End of Millennium Dance 31Dec'99

It was not just the end of a decade, and not just the end of a century, but we were one of the very few generations to ever see the end (and beginning) of a millennium. What an incredible and historic time it was to be alive! There were prophecies of the world coming to an end via the Y2K bug or biblical prophecy fulfillment rushing to a climax. There were parties to end all parties being planned.

We, Barbara & Lance, thought, "what would we like to do most on this unique occasion?" And the answer was clear - Bush Dance! The MFS Dance Committee agreed and the first in the current series of New Year's Eve dances was born. There had been previous free outdoor events, but this was the first indoor New Year's Eve dance ever run by the Monaro Folk Society.

It was a courageous decision, because there was enormous competition with all kinds of fantastic events being planned for that special night. There were some naysayers. When I (Lance) sent the publicity for our "end of the millenium dance" to the "canb.general" newsgroup as we did back then, I received a reply telling me that there are two "n"s in millennium. Fair enough I corrected that only to be told that it was not the end of the millennium. I'm glad I didn't wait for the pedants' party a year later, ours was great!

Some of our fondest memories are of the people in the Bush Dancers display group.



The Bush Dancers
at Lanyon 21 April 2002



We, Barbara and Lance, created The Bush Dancers display group, with lots of help from lots of people and lots of ideas.

The massed displays organised by Wongawilli, the "Australian Pioneer Dancers & Musicians" were a key inspiration. We enjoyed dancing in the massed display, and particularly liked the idea of printed dance instructions so that people could come together and perform, in costume, and with minimal rehearsal for dancers or musicians, even when there were long gaps between performances for them. Another inspiration was the Great Paddle Steamer Race in Mildura. A quadrille of keen dancers dressed up and performed on the decks of a paddle steamer and we learned that performing could also be the basis for a great social occasion.



We were also involved in Daryl & Di's dance classes where we learned the value of accessibility and good numbers, 70 or more participants being the norm at that time.

We workshopped the display group ideas in our garage, and knocked a dance program into shape. Daryl and Di Powell were key contributors to these workshops with their ideas and knowledge, and an excellent balanced dance program emerged. The display group went from strength to strength, and became well known by event organisers, so much so that we had to decline many offers of bookings to avoid over-committing our performers. Even so, we had 100 performances in our first 4 years in addition to many rehearsals and celebrations, and 260 performances over 12 years.

Here is one final photo from our final performance at the Belconnen Arts Centre Dance Kaleidoscope on Sunday 31 August 2014:



The group's success was the culmination of outstanding efforts by the music coordinators mainly Daryl Powell, Bob Hodgson, Ray Mulligan and Ian Bull, all the musicians, dancers, and helpers, and sustained care, consideration and communication between all members of the Bush Dancers "family".

They certainly were the good old days.

But wait there's more. Why not have a look at canberradance.org for lots of full size photos and videos of those times.

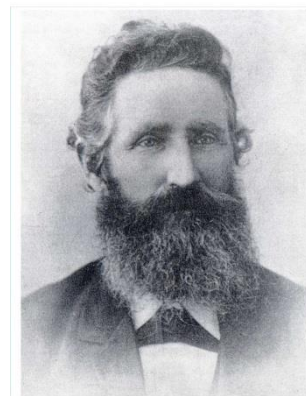
Barbara and Lance Court

May 2020

Tale of a Pioneer: Pete West wrote this lovely piece after reading Dame Mary Durack's book, *Kings in Grass Castles*, about the pioneering days of her forebears.

Patrick (Patsy) Durack (March 1834 – 20 January 1898) was a pastoral pioneer in northern and Western Australia. His family were struggling tenant farmers from Magherareagh near Scarriff in County Clare, Ireland who moved from Ireland to New South Wales in 1853.

By 1877 the Duracks had built up a herd of about 30,000 head of cattle at Coopers Creek in Queensland. Patsy and his brother Michael trekked across the north of the continent from Thylungra on Coopers Creek in Queensland which they left in 1879 along with 7250 breeding cattle and 200 horses to Argyle Downs and Ivanhoe Station in the Kimberley region of Western Australia where they arrived in 1882. This is the longest droving of cattle ever recorded - a 4,800-kilometre (3,000 mile) journey that took three years.



Though never published in his lifetime as far as we know, Patrick Durack had been a writer of bush ballads, like his contemporary Adam Lindsay Gordon 1833-1870, and like 'Breaker' Morant 1864-1902, Lawson and Paterson. Sadly, after his death a large volume of his bush poetry was destroyed by his son Jeremiah known as Dermot.

Dermot Durack became a Professor of Mathematics, and after living some years in Australia removed to Ireland whence he wrote "Part of me belongs to the Australian bush and I still cry sometimes over Banjo Patterson's (sic) 'Man From Snowy River' as I did when you were here in '36, but I doubt I will go back now. Ireland holds me and will claim my bones."

In Dermot Durack's own words:- "It did not strike us that Father spoke with a brogue, but I suppose he did as you will see that he sometimes spelt with one. ... Did you not realise that all Irishmen are poets at heart and that most of them, even I, have a go at it some time? I had a number of poor old Father's efforts, but I burnt them some time ago. I understood the bush jingles that were so much a part of our lives in those times were rather scorned by your generation. I did not want them laughed at. His metre was not always the best no doubt, but to me they carried the unmistakable rattle of bridle and spurs that I always associate with him, and like him they are full of good, homely sentiment, sadness and humour and reflect a real love of the bush life he lived. Lawson, Patterson (sic) and Ogilvie did much the same thing better, but they came somewhat later."

Patsy's grand-daughter Mary who chronicled her family's story in *Kings In Grass Castles* was moved to comment:- "It is a pity that my Uncle (Dermot) burned his father's verses, for the snippets that have come into my hands indicate that (Grandfather Patsy) had a ready flair for rhyme. Before the era of the more famous balladists, rhyming had become the fashion of the bush and there was a wealth of folk-song among these Irish and Scottish Australians with their singing hearts and dancing feet. Fiddles, accordions, mouth-organs, flutes and gum-leaf bands accompanied the topical jingles with familiar tunes and sometimes original airs that were never set down. Grandfather's verses had titles like 'The Stockman's Sweetheart', 'When Duncan Rode the Winner' and 'The Duffer's Luck'.

By the time Mary wrote *Kings In Grass Castles* in 1959 this is the only complete poem by Patsy Durack that could be found. And I reckon it's good stuff. It's 'The Drover's Song' and as Mary notes it was "no doubt inspired by his first, ill-fated expedition in 1862 from Goulburn to the Barcoo

The Drover's Song - Patsy Durack, 1834-1898

Cheerily sings the drover
With his stock so fat and sleek,
Up to the border and over
His fortune for to seek.

Merrily sings the drover,
For with luck upon his side,
There'll be Mitchell grass and clover
And creeks ten miles wide.

Dismally sings the drover
For himself and his luck fell out.
But still he rides on like a lover
Into the arms of drought.

Mournfully sings the drover
As his stock die one by one,
Wild dogs and eagles hover
And bones turn white in the sun.

Wearily sighs the drover
As he lies him down on the plain,
To sleep with his swag for a cover
Til the grass springs green again.

Eerily wails the drover
When the drought wind sweeps the sky
And men say 'Hear the plover!'
As he moves the ghost mob by.

Ed's note: If the rest of Patsy Durack's poems were as good as that one I think he could have been up there with some of the others mentioned. How sad that his son chose to burn them, even though his own words suggest that the poems were so evocative of his father's life and times.

The Founders' Ball 2013

In Canberra's Centenary Year there was a dance programme called Kick Up Your Heels which presented dances appropriate to each decade of Canberra's history. MFS had two members – John Carroll and Colin Towns - on the organizing body for all the events in the series and was also responsible for running two of the dances – a Shearers' Ball in March at the Yarralumla Woolshed and a Founders' Ball in September at the Albert Hall. A working group of nine people was set up to organize these dances. Both were very successful and in fact were sold out. Here are some photos (all by Hannah Wardrobe) and some excerpts from contribution sent by some of the dancers who attended the Founders' Ball:

“Of course the Ball commenced with the Grand March, not too long, not too short, which enabled the dancers to form up for the Colonials Quadrille. The programme was thoughtfully prepared with couples dances, fun dances, mixer dances and traditional dances such as Sir Roger de Coverley. It was what I would call a very ‘social and inclusive’ programme – most of the dances simple enough for people to dance and yet be able to converse with their partners or indeed to assist others who were relatively new to the scene. Everyone could have a ball!!

Supper was held in the ballroom rather than the supper room and it certainly allowed people to move around and socialize whilst they enjoyed the appetising and top quality food on offer. There was something for everyone from the smoked salmon and dill on pikelets, vegetarian kebabs, prawns on skewers, chicken, petit fours and fruit platters.

The rest of the Ball went in a whirl of lovely dances such as the Veleta Waltz, Maxina and Tangoette together with the more upbeat La Galopade, Salty Dog Rag, Highland Reel and The Tempest. The Waltz Country Dance was a fitting way to farewell other dancers before all joining in for Auld Lang Syne.

A huge ‘thank you’ to the organisers of this wonderful event!”

Margaret Winnett



At left: Members of the Working Group

Left to Right: Jenny Wardrobe, Bruce Lemin, Sandy Martens, John Hewat, Tina Lynam, Mark Simmons, Antonella Salpietro Members not present: Jo Purcell, Declan O'Connell.



“The Founders' Ball was a wonderful night of fun and dancing. From the moment I stepped into the Albert Hall I knew that I was in for a treat. The room looked great and full of costumed people all milling around and engaged in conversation. Many had dressed for the period of the founding of Canberra and this added to the interest and excitement which was quite evident. I was pleased to see many familiar faces although I had forgotten many of their names. The balls are a good time to catch up with old acquaintances made at the National, Bundanoon or one of the other many folk festivals on offer now. Many I could see enjoyed the opportunity to dress up a bit and enter into the spirit of the night.

The band was great and under the leadership of Bob McInnes kept us on our feet all night. The programme of dances was made up of a number of couples dances fitting for the early 1900s period and some good old colonial set dances that most people were familiar with.

Some of the couples dances provided a challenge to some, like the Charleston and Salty Dog Rag, but obviously a lot of fun for those who had practiced well. The familiar dances generally meant that the walk throughs could be kept to a minimum and we could get on with the dancing.

My thanks to all who played a role, big or otherwise, in the presentation of the Founders' Ball. Congratulations. I had a ball :)

Bill Probert

Another Ed's note: Many thanks to the few who contributed to this issue but I didn't get a great response for my planned retrospective. Therefore, instead of your stories you're going to get mine, seventy whole years of it!

Memories of a Sporadic Folkie - Approximately 1950 to 2020

I'm not sure if the songs we sang around the piano when I was a small girl were actually folk songs but if not they were certainly close. Most of them came from a wonderful book – *The Daily Express Community Song Book* – full of gems from the past. It included all the lyrics and music arranged for piano. The songs were mostly British but some were American. One I remember well is *Widcombe Fair* (pronounce widdycoom) from Devon with its great chorus full of West Country names "Wi' Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer. Peter Gurney, Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawk, Old Uncle Tom Coble and All". Others were *Old John Braddelum* (A counting song), *Loch Lomond*, *The Camptown Races*, *The Old Folks At Home*, *Beautiful Dreamer* (As you see Stephen Foster is well represented), *Cockles and Mussels*, *Greensleeves* and many more. There was even a section on rounds – good for learning to sing in harmony. They were happy times for me.

When I was 10 my dad bought me a little second-hand Hohner 24-bass piano accordion with a nice tone. It has come to play quite a big part in my later life. I already played the piano so it wasn't too hard to play it though I have to admit to never quite mastering the button side – even with only 24 of them. I frequently marvel at how the virtuoso players, such as Baz Cooper and Peter Foster, to name a couple, manage to get their fingers around 120 buttons.

A bit later I was off to boarding school, not so happy for me initially. Singing lessons there featured other folk songs such as *Strawberry Fair*, *Danny Boy*, *Marching Through Georgia* (A Confederate song from the American Civil War), *The Minstrel Boy* (An Irish patriotic song from the late 18th Century by Thomas Moore) and so on. Much as I loved singing I never joined the school choir – I'm not sure why. In fact I've never joined a choir at any time in my life. Back home at 16 I did however join The Godalming Operatic Society to perform in the chorus of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Gondoliers*. Godalming is where I grew up – quite a small town - and I'm not sure why it actually had an operatic society but it was very popular and presented a G and S operetta every year on the stage of the local Town Hall and in a much larger nearby town which obviously didn't boast its own operatic society! It wasn't folk but it satisfied my need to sing and was immense fun.

Next stop Uni – at Southampton in the South of England in the early sixties. My time there coincided with the great Folk Revival which was happening in all the Western countries of the world. Folk Clubs were springing up all over the place and every Uni had one. Ours was quite low key, no booked acts, more of a 'Come All Ye' but we did have one very special performer - Roy Bailey was on the academic staff and, with his wife Val, often sang there. He later became a renowned folk singer and frequently came to the NFF here. Many will remember him as part of the early Tuesday morning gig at the Troubadour at the very end of the National with Martin Pearson, Nancy Kerr and James Fagan, amongst others, singing together, chatting and joking. It was often very cold but there was usually a full house of bodies wrapped in blankets. It used to be one of my favourite times of the whole Festival.



Roy Bailey in 2018 aged 83

After Uni came marriage (to someone who was absolutely not a folkie and who thought that married couples should do everything together), then babies, work, moving to Australia, school canteen and the P and C, more work and so on. The accordion rested silently in a wardrobe. I used to listen to 2XX from just about when it first existed and picked up *Lark in the Morning* – the first folk programme to air on the station. It was probably there that I first heard of the Society, then known as the Monaro Folk Music Society (MFMS) and found out that it ran bush dances at the Yarralumla Woolshed. We attended one as a family and all had a good time but for some reason never went to another one. In the early eighties I made it, with a friend, to see a Holly Near concert at the ANU Arts Centre. – it was great. Not too much later I saw Ronnie Gilbert, formerly of the Weavers, in concert with Judy Small which was amazing – together they sang Judy's song 'Mothers, Daughters, Wives'. In the late eighties I went to see Ralph McTell, with the non-folkie husband in tow. He actually enjoyed it but it didn't convert him!

Eventually in 1992, when the babies had become young men and graduated from Uni, it was time to leave and start to lead my own life. Conveniently about two weeks later, the National Folk Festival was to happen at ANU, organized that year by MFMS - a good opportunity for me to really get into folk music after 27 years. I was determined to do this properly, not just attend in the daytime. I parked my Econovan near the Coombs Building, where I happened to work at the time, with a mattress, a sleeping bag and a hot water bottle in the back and stayed for the duration. I had a wonderful time! Nearly thirty years on it's hard to remember details but I was bowled over by a concert which Fred Small and Judy Small did together, called No Relations and another with three harpists playing – such beautiful sounds. One of the players was Andy Rigby. Late at night I sat by campfires singing along with performers and punters alike and enjoying every minute of it. Attending this festival probably set me on the path of serious festival-going which has continued to this day. Since 1992 I think I have only missed one National – that was when I decided to go to the Blues and Roots festival at Byron Bay instead.

By now the accordion had emerged from its long rest and I went to a weekend of accordion workshops at Bob Mackay's place at Burra. Most of the participants played melodeons or concertinas, much more difficult than the piano accordion. I'm quite sure that I was the least accomplished player there but I still had a good time. However, apart from the music there was work to be done. Bob had a huge water tank sitting at the bottom of a hill which needed to be moved to its resting place on a platform well up the hill. With an extensive net made of rope underneath the tank, another rope round a tree way up the hill with someone down at the bottom pulling on it, a circle of musicians lifting and hauling the job got done. I think Bob must have fed us all for the whole weekend – I recall a great meal of barbecued fish - but I think we had earned our keep.

I joined the MFMS at some point and went to my first Merry Muse in September. The main act that evening was none other than Roy Bailey who was by then much more famous than when he sang at the Southampton University Folk Club, 30 years earlier.

In October way down the highway near Wagga, was the Uranquinty Folk Festival, at which I started on a new musical path. I was introduced to members of one of Canberra's Morris Dancing sides – Molonglo Mayhem Border Morris - who happened to need some more people in their band. So I joined and have stayed with it ever since, except for the few years between the demise of Molonglo Mayhem and the birth of the Surly Griffins (who are just about to start practicing again after a few months break courtesy of Covid-19). I can't count the number of gigs there have been over the years - at festivals from Jamberoo to Woodford, at school fetes, birthday parties, a few 'English' events, and even as a surprise act at a convention of Morris (as in cars) lovers. Nor can I count the good times I've had being in the Morris band for, on and off, over 25 years.



Some of the Surly Griffins at the George Harcourt Morris (as in cars) lovers.

Strangely, I've never been back to the Uranquinty festival. I did set out once and cooked the engine of my van on the way. Maybe that felt like an omen, or maybe it was the long drive that deterred me. In alphabetical order, so as not to suggest any preferences, Bulli, Cobargo, Jamberoo, Kangaroo Valley, Major's Creek, Numeralla, and Yass have all been frequent destinations over the years. I've been to Woodford twice – it's huge and has a character all of its own. Last year I went to the Blue Mountains for the first time, principally to see Ralph McTell but found lots of other good acts. The weather was terrible but it didn't seem to matter and I hope to go there again one day. Years ago I went to Port Fairy and didn't like it at all – it didn't seem to have any soul, and no chairs in the main venues – how stupid is that? Everything stopped at 11 pm and you had to leave the totally fenced in grounds – no hanging out with friends or performers, no sessions, no fun. How lucky we are here to have so many wonderful festivals within a reasonable distance where you can relax, listen, play, sing, dance or whatever all day and much of the night if you want to.

I could write a lot more but I won't because by now you're probably wishing I'd stop. To conclude I'll just say that I hope that everyone reading this has had as much joy, gained as many friends, listened to or played as much music, and sung as many choruses as I have whilst being part of the folk scene.

Tina

And Looking Forward

Presented by
**Monaro Folk
Society Inc.**



<http://www.monarofolk.org.au/music/merry-muse-folk-club/>

Enquiries ph Eileen 0412 127 882 or email [eileennew23\(at\)gmail\(dot\)com](mailto:eileennew23(at)gmail(dot)com)

The Canberra Irish Club has recently reopened but it is still working on its arrangements for hosting functions so there is unlikely to be a Merry Muse until August 9th. If plans change you will be notified via MFS-announce.

Live at Last

This isn't exactly about the future but it relates to it because the Artist's Shed in Fyshwick is now alive and kicking and on Sunday (21st June) it hosted an exceptional concert with Grace Notes, supported by Dan McFeeley with Fred Pilcher also on the bill. The three ladies of Grace Notes have lovely voices made for harmonising together. Carmel, Debbie and Therese gave us happy songs, sad songs, and thought-provoking songs. Some were a capella, some with drum, some with guitar, some with both and sometimes Dan played along. Some songs were written by members of the group, others were familiar and singing along was encouraged.

Dan McFeeley is a delightful man and writes very good songs, often funny but sometimes serious. He plays guitar, ukelele and harmonica – and other things as well for all I know. On Sunday he performed his own material, which is always witty, with Fred supporting at times. We were well entertained.

We were also well fed with a superior barbeque on offer from the Bohemian Coffee and Wine Bar. There were yummy roast vegetables available as well as onions and salad. Hot and cold drinks, including alcoholic ones, can also be purchased. The Bohemian also has a selection of sweet offerings.

Apart from anything else it was so good to be around real people. The urge to hug is hard to resist, especially when you haven't seen friends for months, but social distancing is still in place and everyone was very well-behaved. Big thanks to Annette Selwood for organising the performance, to Margaret Hadfield, the owner of the gallery (oh, did I forget to mention the gallery? An added bonus for the audience to browse in before or after shows or in the break) and Frank for the refreshments.

See below for what's coming up soon.. In fact very soon because when you receive this by email the first gig will be on this evening and if you get it by snail mail I'm afraid you will have already missed it. But don't lose heart – there will be more music for you regularly at the Shed.

Just in case you can't read the phone numbers they are as follows: Annette – 0412 101 543; Frank – 0417 607 506; The Artist's Shed – 0418 237 766 + www.artistsshed.com.au and you'll find it at 88 Wollongong Street, Fyshwick. You can pay at the door but please book because of the limits on numbers at venues. Tina

	
Saturday Night Groovin' at the Shed	
27 June from 5-8pm	
	Guitar Case Troubadours
\$20 at the door	
Guitar Case Troubadours play originals and covers with intimate country folk ballads one minute and powerful blues the next.	
Frank 0407 607 506 Annette 0412 101 543 88 Wollongong St, Fyshwick 2609 0418 237 766 • artistsshed.com.au	Support act What The F'n'G 
	

	
Sunday Arvo Chillin' at the Shed	
Sunday 5 July from 2-5pm	
	The Johnny Reynolds Band
\$10 at the door	
The Johnny Reynolds Band is a local funk, blues, atmospheric rock band that play a mix of original songs and classic covers.	
Frank 0407 607 506 Annette 0412 101 543 88 Wollongong St, Fyshwick 2609 0418 237 766 • artistsshed.com.au	Support act Dan Fernandes Singer/songwriter 
	