

Monaro Musings

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

www.monarofolk.org.au

www.facebook.com/monaro.folk.society



The Prez Says

Hi everyone

First of all, a big thank you to everyone who came along and contributed to our Carnival Day in May. It was great to see people from all of the Society's various sub-groups come together in one place, and some new faces as well, especially at the Kids Dance in the afternoon.

I would particularly like to thank Gabrielle Mackey and Ian Bull for taking the lead in planning and organising the day, and especially Gabrielle for the enormous effort she put in to the logistics and catering. Coming out of Carnival Day, one thing that struck us was how much potential there would be for the Society to grow if we had someone who could take on the role of Publicity Officer for the Society.

As a Committee, we have plenty of ideas for how to lift the Society's profile and advertise its events, but not much time to really make it happen. If you would be interested in making a valuable contribution to the Society in this area, please get in touch.

One early item for the 2025-26 Committee will be to consider whether to hold Carnival Day, and if so where and when. We will keep everyone posted in due course. Speaking of the 2025-26 Committee, our Annual General Meeting is rapidly approaching. It will be held on Friday August 22 - 7.30pm at the Irish Club. Further information can be found elsewhere in this edition of the Musings.

I look forward to seeing you at a Society event soon.

Cheers

David

MFS POSTAL ADDRESS PO BOX 334, MAWSON, ACT 2607

Monaro Carnival Day, Saturday 10 May 2025

It took a bit of fiddling to get a date when the Irish Dancers would be at home, the TiNMugs would be in town and we could get a venue but it all came together ... ☺ ... The MFS has about 190 paid up members, that's a lot ... Most of us would only recognise 30-40 faces as we all exist in our subgroups, enjoying whatever part of the society is our special interest.

I am not totally sure who's inspiration it was, ... but Ian and Gabrielle took the challenge and the committee backed a get together day ... **Carnival**. The aim was to enjoy the day and maybe as an extra benefit, members would get a chance to meet each other, realise just how much we do do and have the confidence to try something new.

The Weston Creek Neighbourhood Centre provided a great venue, a bit daunting when I first walked into the big hall but there was a sunny nook out back for the lunchtime session and, when the dancing got going, the hall was full.

A goodly number of musicians sessioned for a couple of hours out back at the start of the day, the music taken from the Thursday afternoon Settlers Sessions, much of which also features in the TiNMuGs collections.

This was a free event and the free food kept coming. Soup (a very hearty minestrone/vegie soup and a pumpkin soup) for lunch. Then to the hall for a Merry Muse concert. Regulars from the Sunday Merry Muse sessions entertained us. Two local singer/songwriters (Jim Williams and Ian Paulin), the Celtic Choir (did you know that the society has a choir), and a delightful blast from the past with Pat and Arminel Ryan reprising some Shiny Bum favourites. The concert finished with a very professional half a Humbug.

4pm saw the children's dance start. It was more a family dance as some of our dancing stalwarts just a bit past the child age group joined in. It was so much fun. The TiNMuGs provided the music, lots of rhythm, lots of enthusiasm, lots of sound, lots of shouting, lots of laughter.

Pre Covid, TiNMuGs often ran dances aimed at younger people but the numbers dropped off and enthusiasm was lost, maybe there is a path forward. One of the features of the dance was the opportunity for less experienced callers to "have a go". It worked ... The hall was full, smiles everywhere.

Dinner... that staple of Aussie events; the white bread sausage sanger, dripping with basic tomato sauce covered in onions was very evident, but there was soup and pizza as well and yummy stuff full of sugar.

The hour and a half dinner break was more than sufficient and the Bush Dance started 15 minutes early... We were raring to go. The music and callers came from the Monday night Bush Capital Band and friends.

A quick changeover and it was Irish Dancing time, really welcoming, not difficult, expertly run and just fun. The final blast was with the super exciting, amazing to listen to, energetic contra club. Dancing the night away.

The whole evening was a visit back to the glory days when dance halls were full of people of all ages just having a good time having a go at traditional dances from a range of cultures.

So many people helped to make it happen, thank-you thank-you. Everyone who came contributed by just being part of it, thank-you for coming.

The Society runs Dances: Regular Irish, Bush, Contra and Special Themed Dances. The Society promotes music sessions: Settlers and TiNMuGs. The Society sings: Celtic Choir. The Society promotes performers: The Merry Muse.

Moir Holmes



The Tin Mugs



Session



Pat and Arminel Ryan



Celtic Choir



Half Humbug



Irish dance

Bruce Watson Concert, Smith's Alternative, 28 July 2025

It was a cold Canberra July night but it was definitely well worth rugging up and venturing out to hear Bruce Watson, upstairs at Smith's Alternative in Civic. Bruce was ably supported by local band Springtide (Greg Wilson on harp and concertina, Jackie Luke on hammered dulcimer and Rita Woolhouse on cello) who took us through some lively Irish, English and contra tunes, some homage to Bach and *May It Be* (from *Lord of the Rings*, with Jackie on vocals) before they donned leis and Bruce joined them on stage for Greg's *Beautiful Cook Islands* song.



Bruce Watson and Springtide



Bruce Watson

Greg introduced Bruce and someone who could take us all the way from comic to tragic and that's exactly proceeded to do with a series of gentle and whimsical songs. There were songs about the importance of being Bruce in a Britain still in thrall to Monty Python caricatures, epidemiology, the blobfish (the Ugly Creature Preservation Society's favourite animal) and (most hilariously) the Wando Vale annual sheepdog trials (kind of acted out as well as sung). But Bruce didn't shy away from more sombre topics – particularly in *The Golden Bracelet*, *Amazon* and (my favourite) *The Man and the Woman in the Edison Photograph* (about a recording on an old wax cylinder in Hobart in 1903 of an Aboriginal woman, Fanny Cochrane, a friend of Truganini's, with Bruce revealing an interesting family connection in the last verse)

Bruce and Springtide joined forces to round off the gig with an uplifting song reminding us that for every act of terror there are a thousand acts of kindness. A fine way to end the evening before we went out into the cold, our spirits lifted. Good live music still beats watching TV even in a freezing Canberra

Radio 2XX turning 50 in 2026

On 2 July 1976, Malcolm Fraser had been in the Lodge for over 6 months, street marches were banned in Queensland and what was then Canberra's sixth radio station, 2XX, began transmission at 6 am. 2XX's forerunner, Radio ANU, broadcast to the ANU only from 1973 until May 1976. 2XX was a community access and educational station, aiming to inform Canberrans of the activities of the Aboriginal Embassy, the women's refuge and ethnic groups.

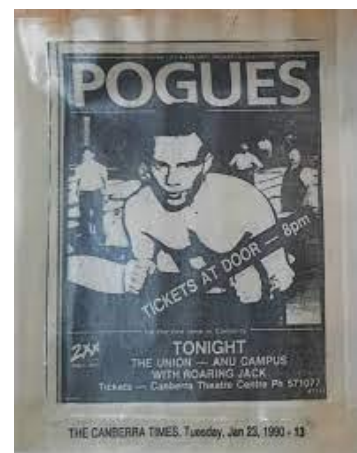
2XX's 50th birthday is coming up in 2026 and there'll be a party or two. Plans include an exhibition at the Canberra Museum and Gallery, a series of radio programs and more. We have been exploring the 2XX audio at the National Film and Sound Archive and there's some fascinating stuff.

- live recordings of the Women Against Rape in War Anzac Day protests in 1981 (with protesters singing the Judy Small song *Lest They Forget*) and the opening of the High Court by Queen Elizabeth II in 1982 ("Welfare Not Fanfare"),
- folk music concerts hosted by 2XX in the 1980s (featuring the likes of Shirley Collins, Peter Bellamy and Cyril Tawney),
- International Women's Day Splash Out festivities at Civic Pool in the 1990s,
- compilation CDs featuring local artists,
- *Rave Review* interviews with film directors like Percy Adlon (*Baghdad Café*, 1987) and David Bradbury (*Nicaragua No Pasaran*, 1984), Canberra theatre legend Ralph Wilson, the Doug Anthony Allstars and Peter Garrett,
- sharp political analysis of Australia's place in the world in *Double Exposure*.

That's just the National Film and Sound Archive material. There's material in the National Library as well and 2XX is identifying suitable old reel-to-reel tapes for digitisation.

Folk has always been a big focus for 2XX. *Lark in the Morning*, still going strong every Sunday morning, is one of the longest-running folk shows in the country. 2XX was a big folk promoter in the 1980s and put on an infamous Pogues concert at the ANU Refectory in 1990.

Shane McGowan had to retire drunk after about three songs but a good time was still had by many (and Spider Stacy didn't too badly when he took over vocal duties).



You may have some memories about your experience with 2XX. *Lark in the Morning* or *Rebel Chorus* (*Wallaby Stew* back in the day) shows you'll never forget? New Year's Eve dances broadcast live? That Pogues concert? Or the Peter Bellamy and Shirley Collins one? Or the day Bert Jansch came to ANU? Tapes of old shows? If so, the history project team would love to hear from you. Please email us at mailing@2xxfm.org.au.



Annual General Meeting

Irish Club, Parkinson St., Weston, Weston Room
Friday 22 August, Registration from 7:15pm
Meeting Commence 7:30pm
Session with Bush Capitol Band 8:30pm

You can re-join at the meeting.
Members are welcomed with a complimentary
soft drink, small beer, or wine
Light refreshments of tea coffee, fruit and cakes
at meetings conclusion.
Please RSVP to secretary@monarofolk.org.au if attending
in person.
Zoom will be available for members, details will be emailed.

Brief Word from the Treasurer

Our reviewer has approved the Monaro Folk Society books for 24-25. A detailed report will be available at the AGM. The society made an operational loss of around \$1900. The major component of this was the committee's decision to hold a free carnival day. The combined loss of our other activities was in the order of \$700. The loss was offset to some extent by interest earned from our reserves, but this interest figure is artificially high in 24-25 as it contains interest paid in 23-24 but not credited during that financial year.

Our single major expense is hall hire. Our weekly hall hire charges have risen by 17% this financial year. The question members need to consider is the extent to which the society is prepared to use existing financial reserves to promote and support our activities.

MFS Group Contacts

Bush Dancing	Mark Simmons 0421 814 718
Contra Dancing	Rob Mahony 6251 1287
English Country Dancing	Colin Towns 0417 020 615
Irish Set Dancing	Christine Briton 0413 168 562
Australian Settlers Music Session	Ray Mulligan 0422 636 442

Tuesday Night Music Group	Julie Szabo 0414 407 658
Merry Muse Folk Club	Eileen Newmarch 0412 127 882
Canberra Celtic Choir	Anna Brown canberracelticchoir1@gmail.com
End of Month Dance Organising Team	Antonella Salpietro 0413 295 004

Monaro Musings is published by, Monaro Folk Society Inc, PO Box 334, Mawson, ACT 2607. Views expressed by the Editor (Declan O'Connell, editor@monarofolk.org.au) and others in Monaro Musings are not necessarily those of the Monaro Folk Society. For general enquiries contact us at info@monarofolk.org.au

Monaro Folk Society, Inc. 2024-25 Committee

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Secretary: Ian Bull - secretary@monarofolk.org.au

Treasurer: Moir Holmes - treasurer@monarofolk.org.au;

Public Officer: Antonella Salpietro - publicofficer@monarofolk.org.au

Committee Members, - Rebecca Tarrant, Rita Turnbull, Colin Towns, Matthew Gibbins, Tina Lynam