

Monaro Musings

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

www.monarofolk.org.au

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The Prez Says

Hi everyone

Thank you to everyone who attended the Society's AGM on 21 August, either in person or online. It was a really good opportunity to catch up with members from across the Society, both before and after the meeting itself, and hear more about what has been going on in each of our sub-groups.

The formal part of the evening ran smoothly, and all members of the current committee renominated and were re-elected for 2026-7. Thank you to all committee members for agreeing to continue, and a special thanks to Moir Holmes for taking care of a lot of the organisational aspects of the night. The Society continues to be in a very healthy position, financially and otherwise, and I continue to be delighted by the diversity of our activities and by the enthusiasm of every one who takes part in them.

Moir indicated at the meeting that she is planning to step down as the Society's Treasurer after another 6 months - ie in early 2026. The treasurer role is a critical behind the scenes one for keeping the society's affairs in order, and the Society cannot function properly without it. If you think you might be in a position to get involved in helping the Society in this way or know of anyone else who might be able to do so, please get in touch with Moir or I asap. Moir has done a great job in recent years of improving the documentation of the Society's accounts and will be able to provide extensive assistance with a handover.

In terms of upcoming activities, we are looking forward to both the Celtic Choir, and a dance display group, performing on Stage 88 at Floriade over the next couple of weeks. The Choir is on at 10.45-11.15 on Sunday 4 October, with the dance display group performing on Sunday 11 October at 3-3.30pm. If you would like to be involved in the latter, please get in touch with Ian Bull. We also have our annual Irish Set Dance weekend happening at Hall on 9-11 October as well.

MFS POSTAL ADDRESS PO BOX 334, MAWSON, ACT 2607

The Merry Muse has a packed program for the rest of the year, including at the Majors Creek Festival in October, and our regular music and dance workshops continue though to the end of November as well. It won't be long now until our thoughts turn to another season of Dancing in the Park ...

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

Cheers

David

Know Your Dance Callers: Beryl Pedvin

Curious to know what makes dance callers tick? Alison Goodman asked a few questions.

I began calling in about 1976. At that time Mick Fogarty was one of only 2 or 3 regular callers in Canberra. He ran a workshop to find helpers. Judy Baker (formerly Rowsell) and I were two of the participants and we both took to calling with gusto.

In those early years the monthly dances at the Yarralumla Woolshed and (in winter) the Albert Hall were regularly packed to the rafters with 300+ dancers bouncing and galloping together.

I was a keen dancer before taking on calling. The joy of watching a hall full of new and old friends smiling and laughing together is equally great. Seeing a couple or indeed a hall full of sets get into synch with each other and learn to flow through a dance is a real thrill.



Dancing in front of Albert Hall. Picture courtesy of *The Canberra Times*/ACM.

I have worked with many terrific bands and great musicians over the years. It's dangerous to list people and risk leaving out someone special, and I have forgotten many names, however I have deep and fond memories of Bob McInnes and Mike Heaney who led String Fiddle Tradition and Reel Tradition respectively for many of the monthly dances through the 70s and 80s. Terry McGee and Gillian Alcock were also stalwarts of the music scene then, with Terry leading many sessions for beginner whistle players.

I've had the privilege of calling dances in many venues over the years – mostly the Woolshed and Albert Hall of course, but also at church halls and woolsheds around the ACT & NSW, plus a few 'posh' places. With Bob McInnes and Mike Heaney, we ran a series of dances in the Balmain Town Hall and once even in Sydney Town Hall in conjunction with some of the Sydney folkies – that was impressive!

I recall spending one occasion perched on the side of a sheep pen at Tharwa, while the band were inside the pen and the dancers on the slightly larger floor of the woolshed. The Town Hall at Braidwood is upstairs over the Council offices – a lovely setting, but on that occasion the crowd was predominantly ladies until the pub across the road closed and the blokes decided to join in. Tharwa Village Hall is another venue I remember with great fondness. It's a privilege to bring the old dances back to old halls where they would have been danced by generations long-gone.

I joined the Monaro Folk Society (then the Monaro Folk Music Society) in 1974 and was part of the organising committee when we hosted the 10th National Folk Festival in 1976. We had two sets of PA then and made the ground-breaking decision to run two streams of workshops each day. Fast forward to the fabulous multi-venue event that is the NFF now! When the decision was made to locate the Festival permanently in Canberra one of the deciding factors was existence of the very large sprung floor in the Coorong building – formerly the home of basketball in the ACT. What a lovely dance floor it is, and I treasure the memory of many dances there during the Festivals of the 90s and 2000s.

My favourite dances are the Scottish and Irish jigs and reels. Many years ago, someone came up to compliment the band after a dance, saying 'even wooden legs would have to dance to that music!'. I agree, and even now when my knees have lost their bounce and I would be out of breath after one time through a Virginia Reel I still love the lilt and melodies of the old favourite tunes.

Beryl Pedvin (as told to Alison Goodman)

Bush Capital Band

Throughout the last year the Bush Capital Band has been busy presenting the ongoing Monday night dance workshops at North Canberra Baptist Church, as well as other MFS-sponsored community events.

In September last year we presented a well-attended dance in honour of Diana Powell following her passing, who - along with her late husband Daryl - were pioneers of the folk dance industry in the Canberra region.

The Monday night dances seem to be growing in popularity and it's pleasing to see more young people joining in lately.



Bush Capital Band on a Monday night

The band consists of around 12 regular musicians, with various people taking the lead with a variety of instruments. The dancers appreciate having live music as much as we enjoy playing to a live audience!

The dances are conducted by our regular legendary callers Mark, Peter and Colin, and more recently Alison. The caller chooses dances according to how many people are on the dancefloor, and the band selects music that hopefully is appropriate for that particular dance.

Lately we've been hampered by the absence of an abnormal number of people due to illness (including me), but I trust that things will soon be back to normal as we look forward to another year participating in this most rewarding activity.

David Wardle

Settlers Sessions



Settlers at the Irish Club

Ray Mulligan leads a session of traditional players most Thursday afternoons in the Irish Club Weston. The music is from the Bush Traditions, Australian Traditional Tune Archive. Primarily dance music in sets but includes some modern compositions in the traditional style: welcoming, enjoyable. Sometimes we even get an audience.

Moir Holmes

Tuesday Night Music Group (TiNMuGs)

The Tuesday Night Music Group (TiNMuGs for short) saw another very successful and enjoyable year of music making. This group of intrepid musician meets every Tuesday, come rain or shine, based at the Canberra Irish Club but also occasionally meeting at someone's house or LDK Tuggeranong. Numbers have been steadily growing, with new members being referred by word of mouth and also by enquiries from the MFS Website.



A few of the regulars at TiNMuGs



The room is humming on a Tuesday night

While sessions are fun, playing for special events is particularly enjoyable and the growing reputation of the TiNMuGs has seen us invited back year after year for regular events such as Spiral, Probus and other clubs and the annual harvest bush dance at Guys Cross Olive Farm.

The TiNMuGs welcomes a wide range of instruments, which at times has included a hollow log bush bass, a hurdy gurdy and even a banjo! The group provides a welcoming environment for all skill levels; enjoyable sessions in which beginners can progress and experienced players can learn a new instrument while being supported by a good number of more experienced players. The pace is moderate, although a few brisk sets may occasionally be thrown in.

Maurice Layne

Treasurer's Report for 2025-2026

TOTAL INCOME	\$51546.74	ASSETS	\$48052.90
TOTAL EXPENSES	-\$43911.42	LIABILITIES	-\$576.00

The society purchased equipment during the year.

Vonyx VSA500-BP 12'' Portable PA speaker with Wireless Microphone	For Bush Dance Group
Merry Muse lights 200W LED DMX stage	For Merry Muse
Wireless in ear Monitor	For Merry Muse
Light controller: OBEY- Chauvet DJ Obey 40	For Merry Muse
2 x Light stand: Heavy Duty Stage light stand	For Merry Muse
Light Cables + Light DMX terminator	For Merry Muse
4 x Lights: Beamz BT270 LED Flat Parcan	For Merry Muse

Financially we are in a strong position.

The society supports *Trad and Now*. The society supports individual members by including their activities at local festivals in our general public liability cover. The society supports local bands by including their "gigs" in our public liability cover, in return for a small contribution to the cost of that cover.

My thanks to all the subgroup organisers who keep marvellous records and are able to "pick up my errors" and help keep the books in order. My thanks to our membership secretary Shirley Jorritsma. Membership organisation requires a major time commitment particularly in the middle of the year. The society is grateful for Shirley's efforts.

My thanks to our reviewer Graham McDonald.

Why is there such a large surplus compared to 24-25.

Public Liability, approximately \$1200 was paid in the 24-25 financial year, this included the prepayment of 25-26. No payment was made during 25-26, Public Liability will be paid in the 26-27 financial year. Web services in 24-25 were approximately \$1280, no web services paid for in 25-26. We did not run a Carnival Day in the 25-26 financial year, approximately \$1200 saved over 24-25. Membership brought in approximately \$400 more than previously. There were no *Musings* costs, approximately \$400 saved. There were no subscriptions, approximately \$450 saved. Administration costs were lower, approximately \$200.00 saved. Contra, EOMDOT and Merry Muse made significant profits, total \$3000. In the 24-25 year several workshop groups made losses and the total surplus for all workshops was in the order of \$500. So, subgroups brought in \$2500 more than 24-25.

Moir Holmes

Vale Peter Kennedy

Our long-time dancing friend Peter Kennedy sadly passed away on Monday 17 August, after a long illness, aged 81. He was a very keen dancer with the Monaro Folk Society, and especially with the Irish Set Dancing Group. Peter travelled to Ireland each year to learn the latest sets, before heading off to Europe on his motorbike for an extended European summer holiday. He always made sure he got back just in time to for the annual October Irish Set Dancing weekends. He played state level squash in the 1980s, and teamed up with his son Finian in the 1990's



Peter Kennedy

Celebrating Numeralla's 50th

To mark Numeralla Folk Festival's 50th Anniversary, you are invited to submit a memory of Numeralla on a square of scrap cotton fabric (not stretchy please). The pieces will be joined together to create a banner to mark this amazing achievement.

Choose a piece about the size of your hand span. Your memory can be printed, dyed, stitched, drawn, painted ... whatever medium best suits you. Please leave some space around the edges for a seam allowance.

Please post your finished piece to: Libby Gleeson, 1130 Warrigal Range Road, Brogo NSW 2550. Pieces need to arrive by the end of November 2026 to allow for assembly in time for the festival in January.



Celebrating folk music on Community Radio 2XXFM

At **Smith's Alternative** on **Friday 13 November, at 7.30pm**, join us in celebrating 50 years of folk music on Community Radio 2XXFM at this special benefit concert. Starting the evening will be **The Shiny Bum Singers** who will get us laughing and cringing with their satirical take on office life in the public service. The **Springtide** trio will then entertain us with their wide-ranging and beautiful collection of songs and tunes on harp and accordion, hammered dulcimer, bouzouki and cello. Then proud Wiradjuri singer **Johnny Huckle** will lead us into the beauty and hope and inspiration of his songwriting. Wrapping up the evening's program will be Canberra band **The Scam** with a mix of their own personal and political songs.

All this while supporting Community Radio 2XXFM that has been bringing you folk music on radio for 50 years. Worth celebrating! (Tickets \$20, \$15 concession)

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*	Email: canberracelticchoir1@gmail.com
End of Month Dance Organising Team*	Antonella Salpietro 0413 295 004
Scottish Country Fiddlers	Mark Jenner 0456 132 473 (canberrascottishfiddlers@gmail.com)

* MFS sub-group

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. 2026-27 Committee

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

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

Public Officer: Gabrielle Mackey - publicofficer@monarofolk.org.au

Committee Members: Rebecca Tarrant, Rita Turnbull, Colin Towns, Tina Lynam