

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 28, Number 2 – March 2019



Roy Bailey, renowned academic and folksinger, died on 20/11/2018

Photos from Roy's website:
www.roybailey.net

Photos clockwise from left: Roy at his last concert in Sheffield in October 2018 – a rousing celebration of his 83rd birthday; Roy with Pete Seeger – Vancouver 1989; Roy with Ronnie Gilbert – Vancouver 1990; Roy and Tom Paxton at The National Folk Festival, Canberra, 1993. More about Roy below on page 6.

From the President's Soapbox

Although the 2019 NFF is not until the end of April, we have begun planning for our activities there. This year the featured states are ACT and WA, so it is a great opportunity to promote the MFS activities that we undertake all year round. Once again, our promotional marquee will be at the Central Park stage – John Hewat and Rita Turnbull will be there through the festival for the society, and they welcome anyone who can call by for a chat and relax and perhaps give them a break, so please consider helping out if possible. Eileen and Pierre will be running the Evening Muse blackboard and that is proving increasingly popular.

The actual programming has still not been released but at this stage I am aware that the Bush Capital Band has the Heritage Ball on Sunday evening, the Contra Club a number of appearances and the highly popular Bush Traditions sessions will be in full swing. More information on this in the April Musings.

We have begun trialling a new feature on the website. This will depend on their agreement, but we hope to make available the newsletters from other folk societies, so that any of our members travelling can be more aware of activities they can attend in other locations. Currently the Tasmanian Folk Federation newsletter (Drumbeat) is in the members' section so take a look and please give me feedback as to whether you like this idea.

Finally, the responsibility for keeping website content current falls on the relevant subgroup, so if you find material is out of date, feel free to email the appropriate subgroup organiser to remind them that something has been overlooked. Contacts for all these are on the website.

Geoff

Remembering Norm Merrigan - 31.12.1949 - 6.12.2018

What would you do if you were an accordion player of dance and session music in the Irish folk scene, and you were diagnosed with a life-threatening illness? Well, if you were Norm Merrigan, you'd make a decision to give up work and put everything you could into learning about, contributing to, and playing the music. You'd practice for around three hours a day and write tunes in the Irish style. In spite of having to spend time regularly going to hospital for treatment or various surgeries, you'd organise your life in such a way that illness interfered as little as possible with your band, session and festival commitments. You would never spend any unnecessary time talking about being ill.

If you were lucky enough to have a wife like Pam Merrigan, you would have a companion who would be a wholehearted partner in this decision and the life that followed from it.

The results of the choices that Norm and Pam made benefited their lives and musicianship for almost two decades, and flowed on to all of us who were encouraged to play and work with them in the Australian Irish folk scene.

I first met Norm and Pam at the Irish session at the Shamrock Inn at the Waitara Leagues Club in Sydney. I arrived there with a whistle I had only just acquired, and no tunes, and subsequently played in sessions with them for around 12 years.

Norm was one of the most encouraging, humble and generous musicians I have ever met. I admired his playing so much, both for his technical skill and his "feel" for the music. But most of all I loved how easy he was to play with. I never felt, right from the beginning, that I couldn't have a go at playing at least something. He told me that in his case he had persisted with playing, thinking most of the time "I'll never get this!", until one day, after about ten years, it suddenly happened, and he knew he could play. This was so encouraging, because here was an amazing player letting me, a complete beginner, know that I just needed to persist, no matter what.

He was also a good friend, and a funny human being. He had a wonderful disrespect for authority, and a great sense of the ridiculous and of mischief. His affection for his family was lovely to witness: years ago he wrote *The Reel of Twins* for his granddaughters Brianna and Alkira, and last year he was able to make a last trip to England to see his new granddaughter, Ruby.



Photos by Ian Stewart

Norm and Pam were regular concert and dance musicians in their bands Coolfinn Mac and the Coast Ceili Band. When Pam started working as the Artistic Director of the National Folk Festival and she couldn't run the Turning Wave Festival in Yass any more, Norm took over as Director, and as Office Manager I worked closely with him. He could be testy at times, but never minded when I told him not to be grumpy. He had a lot of respect for other people's work and for the artists he chose for the festival. He always spoke of them so warmly, and as valued individuals. On their annual trips to Ireland, he and Pam would choose an Irish artist or artists to perform and run workshops at the festival each year. Their knowledge of the local scene there was invaluable and when I was fortunate enough to stay with them in 2010, during the Willie Clancy festival in County Clare and in Clonakilty in Cork, I saw first-hand the respect in which they were held by the Irish music and dance community, both personally and as musicians.

In early 2018, when the Turning Wave Festival announced that it had to have a break, due to Norm's illness, many of Ireland's and Australia's finest Irish and Bush performers praised Norm (and Pam) for their work on the festival and their contributions to the music in general. Similar tributes flowed in following the announcement of Norm's death in early December 2018.

Norm had lived a lot of life before he started devoting himself to music full time. At his funeral many people from his past life talked about him with admiration and fondness. We were told that one of the things he was proudest of was making the rank of Warrant Officer in the air force. Others spoke of his time running his business consultancy, and of his previous long involvement in the folk scene, which included collecting tunes.

His funeral was sad, special, and very characteristic. All his family were able to be there: Pam, and their sons Chris and Tom; his daughters-in-law, Rosie and Ellen; and his grandchildren Brianna, Alkira and Ruby. The environmentally sustainable coffin that he had helped design was there at the front, with a picture of his beloved Castagnari accordion printed onto it. Friends and family shared stories about Norm and his life, and after each person spoke, his musician friends played sets of Irish tunes. The wake was, according to his wishes, a big session, with his accordion and his tweed cap sitting in the centre.

Norm always greeted me by saying: "hello, mate!" Well, Norm, music mate and mentor, I look forward to hearing you say that again at the big session in the sky!

Darri Adamson

Dancing About

Shearers' Ball Come all ye to the Shearers' Ball at 8pm on **Saturday 30th March**. This year it will be held at the Canberra Baptist Church Hall, 11 Currie Cres, Kingston. Music by Paverty Bush Band, Canberra's premium bush band! Use this occasion to celebrate a birthday, anniversary or just celebrate the fact that it's Saturday. Dress like a shearer or a landlord or lady or just wear something comfortable. We advise the use of soft soled shoes. Entry is \$19 for adults, \$17 for group entry and concessions, \$14 for MFS members, \$9 for students (18 and over), all under 18s free. Just \$1 for a bottomless cup for tea, coffee, cordial and cool water. Please bring a plate of supper to share.



2nd Saturday Dance Prepare to dance your feet off with our second Saturday of the month dance on the 9th March, at All Saints from 7pm to 10.30pm. Live music by the Bush Capital Band.

Just \$10 for MFS members, and \$1 for a cup of all the drinks you want (water, cordial, tea, coffee, etc). Please bring a contribution to the shared supper.

All dances taught by our expert callers, Colin, Peter and Mark, and called, so no experience needed and no partner necessary, but do bring them if you have.

If you're new to dancing you are welcome to come along.

Hints: please wear smooth, soft soled shoes so you can glide along the floor.

Please don't wear perfume or aftershave as you will be very close to people and the scent can be overpowering.

Dancers' Dance The first of this year's Dancers' Dances will be held on Saturday March 23rd at All Saints from **7.00 pm** to 10:30pm. The dances are aimed at **experienced** dancers only. They may be difficult or they may be easier but with no walk throughs and little calling. Expect Irish, Scottish, Contra, Bush, Bavarian, English Country, with a possible guest caller from Newcastle area.

Just \$10 for MFS members, and \$1 for a cup and all the drinks you want (water, cordial, tea, coffee, etc). Please bring a contribution to the shared supper.

Do bring friends **if** they are experienced dancers.

Live music by the Bush Capital Band.



Monday Workshops Every Monday in March except for the public holiday on the 11th. All Saints at 8.00 pm.



Dance and have fun with live music. Beginners and intermediate dancers attend these workshops as they are tailored to teach. Experienced dancers also attend to help out and to enjoy the dancing and the live music.

Not a dancer, but can play an instrument? - then come along too, and join the band - no charge for musicians.

Dancers - it's just \$6 for MFS members, \$8 for non-members and the second night is free. Contributions for supper are welcome but not essential. Contact person is Mark Simmons 0421 814 718



Contra is on 1st and 3rd Tuesdays from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm at North Canberra Baptist Church Hall, 17 Condamine Street, Turner with live music from Contraband. Entry is \$6 for MFS members and \$8 for others, 2nd time free.

No need to bring a partner but please bring some friends to share the fun. Dance to the invigorating music of our own ContraBand.

Contact person is Linda Aunela 0437 350 254, if emailing please put "Contra" in the subject line - lindaaunela@yahoo.com.au

English Country Dancing.... is on 2nd and 4th Tuesdays from 7:30 to 9:30 pm at North Canberra Baptist Church Hall, 17 Condamine Street, Turner. This is a wonderful opportunity to improve your dancing technique and learn more steps. Please bring some friends to share the fun. Entry is \$7 for MFS members and \$9 for others.

Contact person is Colin Towns 0417 020 615



Irish Set Dancing.... On every Wednesday in March.

Come along from **7:30pm to 9:30pm**, North Canberra Baptist Church Hall, 17 Condamine Street, Turner and cost \$8 for MFS members and \$9 for others. The first TWO classes for new starters are FREE. Beginner's refresher classes are also free and start 30 minutes before the regular class, but are run on **request only**. To make a request, please contact Christine 0413 168 562 or isdcanberra@gmail.com

ContraPop... On every Friday.



ContraPop is a new way to enjoy dancing to your favourite music! Join us as we attempt dances from popular folk-dance genres to the latest and greatest pop & dance tracks. Friday nights 6.00 – 8.00 pm at Turner Scout Hall, 5 Masson Street. The hall has a children's play area, so parents are most welcome. \$8 standard and \$6 concession. Look for "ContraPop" on Facebook!



Music, Music, Music

Australian Settler's Music Sessions have moved in both time and place. The new venue is the lovely Beyond Q Bookshop at 11, Brierley Street, Weston (it's towards the back of the Arcade) and the new time is 4.30 to 6.30 pm on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month. Contact is Ray Mulligan on 62474725.



The **Tuesday Night Music Group** (beginner to intermediate), which happens on almost every Tuesday of the year, meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month from 7.30 to 10.00 pm at the Irish Club in Parkinson Street, Weston. Some members arrive earlier and have a meal at the Club Bistro. On other Tuesdays the group meets at various members' homes. Please contact one of the organisers, Julie on 62823523 or Robert on 62919135, for more information.

The Ukecafe does Irish Day on Sunday 10th March from 2.00 to 4.00 pm at the Beyond Q Bookshop, Weston Arcade, 11 Brierley Street, Weston

Come along for a STRUM & a SING... a COFFEE & a COOKIE... 16 excellent Irishy tunes, words and chords up on the big screen, Professional(ish) Band upfront, in a lovely Cafe, with some lovely people.



Ed's note: The Ukecafe isn't exclusively for ukuleles. You are most welcome to join in if you play a different instrument. If you really like lots of music in your day you can pop over to the Irish Club, about half a kilometre away from Beyond Q, after the Ukecafe and enjoy the Merry Muse from 4.00 to 7.00 pm, Details on page x,

Out and About



Ed's note: I booked for this one as soon as I found out about it, mainly because Ralph McTell – one of my all-time favourites – is on the programme and because it's ages since I've been up that way.. Lots of other good stuff as well – have a look at the website www.bmff.org.au, Shouldn't be too cold up there at this time of the year and those mountains really are beautiful.

Good times at the Traditional Irish Heritage Weekend at Crookwell – 15th to 17th February

Crookwell is great country for growing potatoes and on the third weekend in February it was the place to hear, play and dance to great traditional Irish music at the second Traditional Irish heritage weekend.

The popular concert filled the RSL on Saturday night, whilst a ceilidh with Bill and Margaret Winnett featured at the new location in the spacious main pavilion of the Crookwell Show grounds.



Dancing was to music provided by Jimmy Malarkey and friends and as the main dancing drew to a close more musicians congregated, playing long into the night. A second wave of musicians followed after the main concert and informal dancing continued with the never tiring and energetic Winnetts.

Sessions were also in the pavilion on Friday night and throughout Saturday, dance workshop and plenty of space for camping at the show ground, a comfortable walk to shops, pubs and cafes on the main street. Saturday also featured the nearby (10 km or so away) Laggan markets and famous pig races which were lots of fun.

If you missed it come next year when it will be even better!

Words and photos from David Hunter

Vale Roy Bailey, academic and folk singer, 20th October 1935 – 20th November 2018

Roy was born in London and ended his days in Sheffield, He was an influential academic in the field of Sociology and worked in various Universities and Polytechnics around Britain as well as having a second career performing at concerts and folk festivals around the world.

His early gigs were in a skiffle band in pubs and clubs in the Portsmouth/Southampton area in the early 60s but he soon found his voice in folk music as a popular expression of political and social dissent. He was influenced by singers as diverse as Ewan McColl and Bob Dylan. In 1964 he teamed up with Leon Rosselson, a prolific writer of songs of incisive social comment. As the folk revival continued he became a star attraction and in the 1970s his fame had spread to mainland Europe. During the 1980s he became more widely known in North America and was a regular performer at the Vancouver folk festival and later went further afield to include touring Australian folk festivals and clubs, becoming a regular at the National Folk Festival in Canberra where he was always a part of the Union concert.

My own special memories of Roy are from the final late night Monday (extending into early Tuesday morning) events at the Troubadour venue which was one of the most popular venues at the National for many years. Martin Pearson and Roy were the mainstays but were joined by others, sometimes the Fagans, particularly James and Nancy, and there was wonderful singing and playing, friendly banter between the protagonists, and Martin's famous readings of schoolboy howlers adding to the mix! It was often freezing cold but that didn't stop the crowd from gathering because it was such a good place to be with the fantastic music and the warm feeling of comradeship. I miss it!

Tina Lynam

Note: There is a fine obituary for Roy which covers both his careers and from which I gained much of the above information, at the following link: www.theguardian.com/music/2018/nov/20/roy-bailey-obituary

Presented by
**Monaro Folk
Society Inc.**



Merry Muse – Sunday March 10th from 4.00 pm to 7.00 pm
Canberra Irish Club, 6 Parkinson Street, Weston

Admission: \$3 for MFS Members, Concessions, Blackboard Performers and \$5 for Others

Please note that the Irish Club has asked that regular attendees also join the Irish Club

Sunday 10 March Blackboard plus feature act New York Public Library

This is a fun afternoon for those wanting to share their love of music and play, sing or recite in an inviting and friendly atmosphere. Put your name on the blackboard to perform, or just get along and listen to some great music.



Feature Act **NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY** is a Sydney based band who've been together for a lot longer than they care to think about. Their music ranges from hard driving bluegrass rhythms to soft acoustic rock to gentle ballads, all performed in striking three and four part harmonies and Irish music – notably Whiskey in the Jar, about a drunk who robs people, and Riley's Daughter, about a man who seduces an innkeeper's daughter, then kills the innkeeper. Expect a lot of good music, good harmonies, good humour and good fun. They don't come down the highway too often, so try not to miss it. The New York Public Library are: John Flanagan (vocals, mandolin, tenor guitar), Warren Boyd (vocals, banjo, guitar), Isabelle Fogarty (vocals, double bass, ukulele) and Alan Smart (Guitar and not much else). Come along and find out where they got their name and what John does for a day job. All will be revealed.

Sunday 14th April - Blackboard plus feature act Turnip Sundae

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

Enquiries ph Eileen 0412 127 882 or email eileennew23(at)gmail(dot)com

Regular Events (In alphabetical order)

Beyond Q Bookshop Old Time American music jam sessions, Weston Arcade, 11 Brierly St, Weston - alternate Wednesdays on the weeks that King O'Malley's Old Time American music session is NOT on. 4.00-6.00 pm. Contact: Donna Vaughan 6258 9845.

Canberra Scottish Fiddlers - A group for anyone with an interest in traditional Scottish fiddle music. Players with any level of experience are welcome to join. For more information, see our website www.scottishfiddlers.com/Canberra /or contact markjenner@grapevine.com.au

Canberra Shanty Club meets fortnightly on Mondays at 7.00 pm at the Old Canberra Inn,

Earthy Delights Historic Costume Balls – 3rd Saturday each month. St John's Church Hall, Constitution Ave, Reid. Also dance classes at ANU, Jane Austen Festival and other events. Contact: Aylwen Garden 6281 1098

English traditional music sessions, Pot Belly, 5/26 Weedon Close, Belconnen - alternate Sundays, 3.00-5.00 pm. Contact: Donna Vaughan 6258 9845, Jackie Luke 0417 679 139.

Folk Dance Canberra offers international folk dancing for fun and fitness. www.folkdancecanberra.org.au gives full details or contact Lesley Rose on 6286 6401

Hoskinstown Acoustic Kitchen Jam in the Hoskinstown Memorial Hall (old time American, bluegrass, folk) - 1st Thursday each month, 7.00-9.30 pm. Contact: Diane Cross 0402 644 450.

Jammalong – 2nd Saturday of every month come rain or shine at the Enid Lyons Park pergola, between Questacon and Lake Burley Griffin. 12.00 noon until everyone's had enough. Bring a chair and food and drink if you intend to stay for long.

King O'Malley's Old Time American music jam session, 131 City Walk Civic – alternate Tuesdays on the weeks that Beyond Q Bookshop Old Time American jam session is NOT on, 7.00-10.00 pm . Contact: Donna Vaughan 6258 9845.

Murrumbateman Acoustic Music Club - last Sunday each month, Back to 6.00 pm start now Winter is over. Murrumbateman Hotel Function Room. Contact: Wal Brewer – wal.brewer@gmail.com

Queanbeyan Bush Poets - 4th Thursday each month, 7.00 pm at the Queanbeyan Library. Contact: Laurie McDonald 6253 9856,

Shape Note Singing (aka Sacred Harp) - most Wednesdays 7.00-9.00 pm, at Ainslie Church of Christ hall, corner of Limestone Avenue and Grimes Street, Ainslie. Contact Dianne Porter for dates: email porter.32@bigpond.com or facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Canberrashapenote/>

Surly Griffin Morris practices fortnightly on Sundays from 5.30 to 7.00 pm at the Lake Ginninderra Sea Scouts Hall in Belconnen and performs at fetes and festivals and other occasions. Contact Simon Wall on 0404 859 404 or see facebook Surly Griffin Morris.

Monaro Musings is the newsletter of, and published by, Monaro Folk Society Inc, PO Box 482 Civic Square ACT 2608. Contact Editor by email as below. The Editor reserves the right not to publish any copy or advertisements that are considered libellous, misleading or discriminatory. All care will be taken but no responsibility will be accepted for omissions or errors. Views expressed by the Editor and others in *Monaro Musings* are not necessarily those of the Monaro Folk Society.

Advertising: Ads will rarely be placed in the body of the magazine, Please supply advertising as a paper insert.(about 110 copies required at present) and electronically. Cost of inserting flyer (to be supplied by advertiser) A5 \$30, A4 \$50. Member discount 50%. If supplied, an electronic version can also accompany the newsletter for members who receive it by email.

Contributions for the *Musings*: Contributions, including advertising requests, should be sent preferably to the Editor's email address in the list below to reach the Editor early in the month. To permit proofing, printing and mail out to reach members before the end of the month, the deadline for copy is normally the 20th of the month preceding publication. Submissions are preferred in Word .doc & .docx / plaintext / JPEG / PNG format. All material must be identified as original work, or copyright clearance provided. In the case of photos or images, copyright normally inheres in the photographer or creator, not the owner of the camera, photo or image.

Monaro Folk Society, Inc. 2017-18 Committee

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Membership: Christine Gifford - membership@monarofolk.org.au; Merry Muse Coordinator: Vacant; Merry Muse PA Coordinator: Pierre Sibilant; Merry Muse Subcommittee Chair: Vacant; Acting *Monaro Musings* Editor: Tina Lynam - editor@monarofolk.org.au; Bookkeeper: Linda Aunela – payments@monarofolk.org.au; Web Manager: Neil Glassford - webmaster@monarofolk.org.au

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