

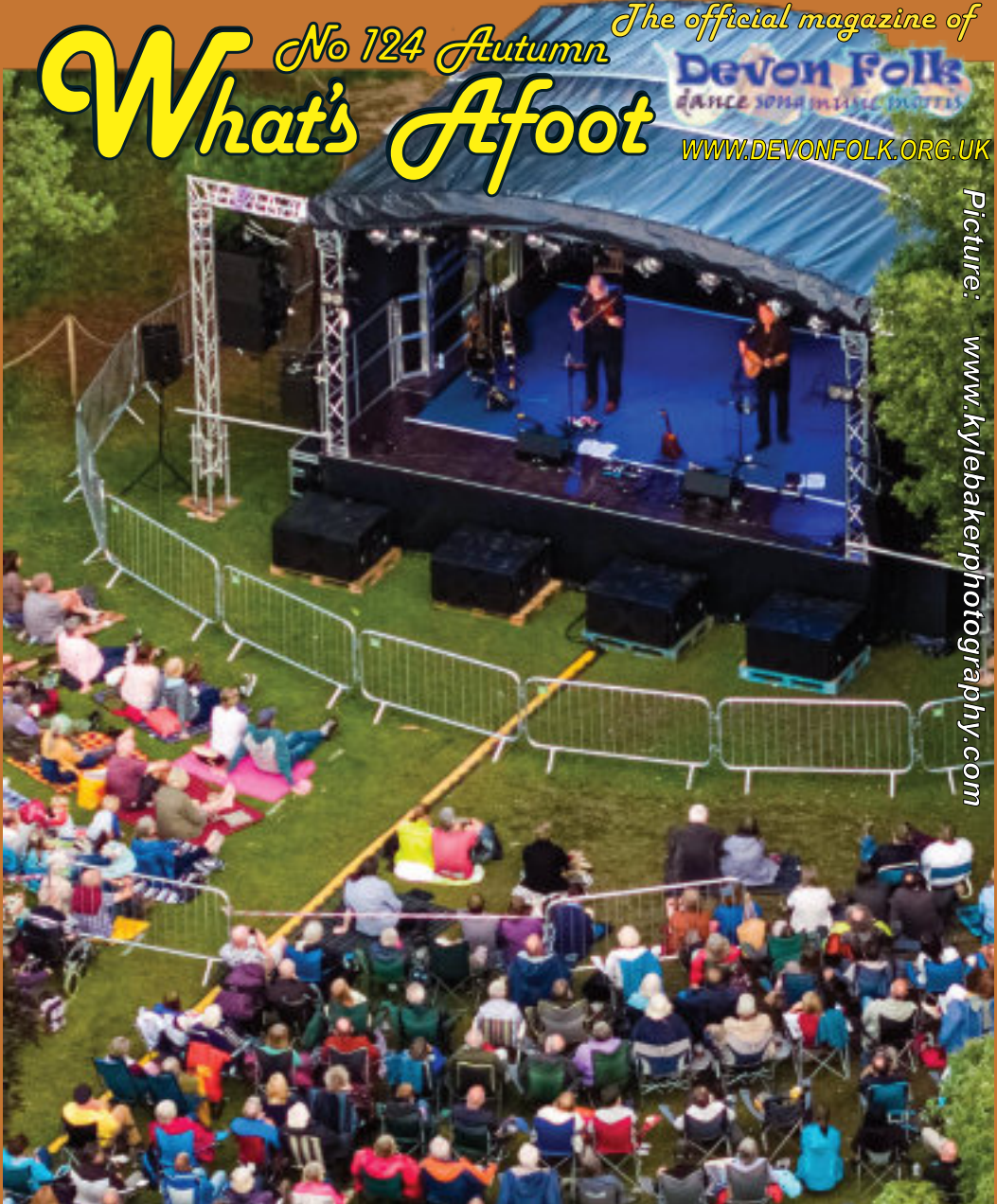
What's Afoot

No 124 Autumn

The official magazine of

Devon Folk
FOLK MUSIC SOCIETY

WWW.DEVONFOLK.ORG.UK



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Rates

Full page £30 (portrait)

Half page £18 (landscape)

Quarter page £12 (portrait)

*Eighth page £6
(landscape)

(*min. 3 issues)

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Subscription/distribution

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Annual subscription £6

Individual copies £1 + SAE

Bulk orders – please
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Cheques to 'Devon Folk'
for

adverts & subscriptions

Electronic payment: please

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www.devonfolk.org.uk

Printed by:

ABC Services
of Tavistock

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Here's hoping for better days

WE ARE providing listings in good faith but there is a possibility that some events may be cancelled.' My words in the last issue of What's Afoot before lockdown proved to be a masterpiece of understatement. Back then we all hoped that there would be just a few months of inconvenience rather than a full-scale disaster that would last for the best part of two years. Now there would seem to be light at the end of the tunnel and hopefully it is not one of the false dawns we suffered during the past 18 months when restrictions were lifted only to be brought back almost immediately. Folk clubs are cautiously starting to reopen, we have seen some successful festivals and even dance clubs are looking at starting again. Jeremy Child gives his views on safely running ceilidhs on page 13. Sadly, I have to repeat my advice from the previous editorial: do check with venues before setting out as everything may be subject to change. Stay safe. *John Foxen*

NEXT COPY DEADLINE: November 20th 2021

What's Afoot is published four times a year by Devon Folk, covering April-June, July-September, October-December and January-March. To ensure readers get maximum benefit from listings that start on the first of the first month, we aim to start distributing in the middle of the month before. This means final copy dates for articles and adverts are: Feb 20th (April-June), May 20th (July-September), August 20th (October-December) and November 20th (January-March). The Editor and Devon Folk accept no liability for content of copy from advertisers. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Editor and Devon Folk. We will always consider items for publication but reserve the right to edit them where necessary. Any material offered for consideration that needs to be returned to the sender should be accompanied by a prepaid, addressed envelope.

Festival fends off ‘the plague’

At one point, Covid threatened to overrun Sidmouth but St George and Sid Vale Community Productions were on hand to deal with the ‘dragon’ (right). The festival wasn’t what we’re used to but at least it went ahead. We asked regular festival-goers for their impressions of 2021’s limited Sidmouth week



RUTH LEWIS of Honiton, a member of Sidmouth Steppers and Sid Vale Community Productions, has attended every year since 1979.

SOME say this year’s festival was Sidmouth but not as we know it. Well, it was Sidmouth as I knew it – 40 years ago. And it was lovely.

When I first started going, there were far fewer ticketed events. There was far more on the streets, far more impromptu, and I found that this year.

Just because this year’s festival was smaller it seemed friendlier. I can only speak for myself but I absolutely loved it. It was how I remember it all those years ago. We did a couple of street theatre performances of St George and the Covid with Sid Vale Community Productions and it was nice to catch up with people and just talk instead of saying: “Oh no, I’ve got to dash off somewhere.”

We went to a couple of afternoon concerts in the Blackmore gardens. It was nice to go in and take your own seats. It was so informal rather than being in the big Ham marquee with a thousand people. At one concert it was pouring with rain but you dress up accordingly. When events were held

at the Knowle Arena, it was open air and you would sit there in your waterproofs with an umbrella. I personally would like it to stay small and friendly but it will probably grow again.

CHRISTIAN MAYNE, a member of Plymouth Morris and Anglo concertina player, has been going to Sidmouth since 2005

I REALLY go for the sessions and usually you set up somewhere like the Bedford Hotel and every evening you see the same faces. This year there were lots of people missing, I suppose because there was no camping. Most of the people I saw were the Devon crowd. I guess they could come up for the day and travel home.

It was tricky to find a good session. There wasn’t much happening at the Bedford. Usually you’d set up in there at 2pm and it wouldn’t stop until midnight or beyond. I met my wife there back in 2007 and we would hang out in the Bedford until two in the morning. It was always crazy busy and there was always something happening. We’ve got small children now so those

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Sidmouth



What you expect at a typical Sidmouth festival: Show of Hands, Seth Lakeman, Jim Causley and morris men popping up everywhere.

Pictures: Kyle Baker www.kylebakerphotography.com

Sidmouth

days have stopped but this year we decided to camp at Salcombe Regis and make it a family holiday. I managed to get out for two nights and they were good although it was a long way to walk back to Salcombe Regis after a few beers.

On one night I rolled in at 2am. The next morning I saw Eliza Carthy in town and had to go up and apologise to her profusely because all I remember is bending her ear in the Bedford and her graciously accepting it. I don't remember much about it or what I said to but I do remember I was very, very drunk. The Bedford was very busy that night.

My other night out ended up with lots of playing at bus stops and playing on beaches.

One thing that doesn't change about Sidmouth week is the weather.

Plymouth Morris were performing outside the yacht club on Saturday at 11am. We danced for a quarter of an hour then the rain came – apocalyptic rain! So I didn't make the second spot because I hid in someone's flat and dried off. You could wring my clothes out. I couldn't have been wetter if I'd stood in the shower for 10 minutes.

It was still a good week. These things always are if you go with the right attitude.

COLIN ANDREWS, former editor of What's Afoot, has run themed singarounds at Sidmouth since 2003.

ALTHOUGH the brave decision was made in April by the organisers to hold a limited Sidmouth Festival in 2021, I received confirmation only in late in July that the Themed Singaround could go ahead in the Royal Glen Hotel as usual.

Thankfully, the back-up plan for outdoor sessions on the rugby field camp site was not needed. However, it left very little time to prepare for a limit of 20 people indoor, or 25 on the patio.

Come the first session on Sunday, we had 12 singers, fewer than in a normal year but it was very good to see live many regulars we hadn't seen for two years, or only on our fortnightly Zoom singarounds. More attended on other days, with nearly a full attendance on the patio on a sunny Wednesday and a full house indoors on the Friday, and the usual friendly atmosphere was

recreated. The hosting duties were ably taken over by Des and Maggie Redwood – the providers of the Zoom sessions facility– on the two days my wife Sonja and I were not able to get there, due to other commitments or traffic chaos.

The Sidmouth week, even on a smaller scale, was very much appreciated, with a great atmosphere and many of the fringe events taking place more or less as normal

CALLUM MACKELLAR of Exeter has been going to the festival since he was a babe in arms and grew up with Stream of Sound and Shooting Roots young people's workshops. Now 25, he was a Shooting Roots tutor at this year's festival.

WE DIDN'T know how many 12 to 17-year-olds would turn up for our workshops and as we were walking down for our first day, I said that to get 10 this year would be good. As it was, we had 24 and this crept up to 28.

Obviously, we had to take Covid rules into consideration when we planned the activities. In selecting a dance to teach, we didn't want people to be next to each other or face to face so we

tried to make sure there was distancing. We were fortunate in that our venue was an open sided marquee so we had excellent ventilation which gave us a little more leeway. This meant that we were able to teach songs and tunes and we also had craft activities and theatre so we still managed to get a lot in.

As for the festival, in terms of the venues and layout, it was quite different: no big Ham marquee, no Bulverton and a lot of the venues in the town weren't in use. But it still felt very much like Sidmouth. There was this sense of lots of people coming home.

The highlight for me was seeing Talisk at Blackmore Gardens. There was a lawn area and you brought a blanket or a chair. It started off with everyone sitting. Gradually, the area around us filled with more and more people dancing. It was a real Sidmouth moment to see Talisk energeise a crowd like that.



Normally a seagull might snaffle your ice cream. But in festival week... www.KyleBakerphotography.com

Sidmouth



Mariners Away, Jim Causley and Bill Murray at Blackmore

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South Zeal gives folk a fayre deal

Two big events on the Dartmoor calendar that had been hit by lockdown joined forces to bring the good times back

THE Dartmoor Folk Festival returned to its roots this year by holding both the Step Dance and Broom Dance competitions as part of South Zeal's Zale Fayre (which had moved to our weekend, for this year only), writes *Mark Bazeley*.

It had always been traditional for the step dance competition in particular to be held as part of a "Village Sports" or "Fayre", so the combination of these two local events on the recreation ground seemed perfect.

Last year we went "Virtual" to allow people from all over the country to take part via Zoom but this year we decided to go "Local" and enjoy the

fact that we could have a competition with a real audience. All the competitions were well attended and fiercely fought for. The adult Step winner was Matt Norman and junior Step dance winner was Evelyn Hansell.

The Broom dance competition was won by Matilda Parker-Groom.

The weekend continued with fantastic music and dancing from local performers. After 18 months of lockdown it was great to see and hear live music again. As a member of the Dartmoor Pixie Band, I found having the chance to play together again after such a long gap was a lot of fun – particularly trying to remember the tunes.

There were big smiles all round and we're all looking forward to playing together more now that things are starting to return to normal.

There was also a lively music session in the Kings Arms and the "Third Monday Folk Music Sessions" at the pub are now back.



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UP ON OLD DARTYMOOR



Above: Tinners Morris take the knee – or so it seems. Left: The Dartmoor Pixie Band strikes up after the long lockdown break and, below, youngsters dance to the Pixies – and it's proper country dancing, too!



Sea songs can soothe the soul

Shanties are usually more boisterous than comforting. But festival worker GILLIAN LEMAR-COLLINGS, who has just suffered a family loss, found solace in maritime ballads

I'VE been part of the team organising this Festival since it started in 2018 but stepped back this year due to family caring commitments. My mum passed away on the Friday morning before the Festival so I was feeling fragile. However, I was privileged to be there with no responsibilities other than to experience the weekend. There were some performances I really wanted to see but for the rest of the time I just wandered where my feet and ears took me. The weather was incredibly kind and unlike the second festival in 2019, which had an easterly wind with horizontal rain, the sun shone and the main risk was lack of sunscreen.

When I walked into Teignmouth, open air performances were in full flow. I weaved through the crowd to the sea front, waving to my friends the Old Gaffers from Kingsbridge and catching a verse or two from Acappella Moonshine.

A quick stop at the Festival stall in the Pavilions gave me my performer's wrist band and I was instantly drafted as cover for comfort breaks. After a "hello" to the Severn Whalers, I headed for the Blue Anchor and LocTup Together. On the way I met Mariners Away and had a long hug with Bill Murray.

My destination was St Michael's Church, where CASK would be singing. Steve and Kathryn of CASK are my husband and daughter, garbed as pirate and mermaid (as featured in *What's Afoot No 123*). The acoustics in the church are incredible and I was so proud of Kathryn as her voice filled the space singing *The Sea*, a Charles Causley poem set to music by Felix Clement of The Captain's Beard. There are times when music wrings your heartstrings, and their duet on *Crossing The Bar* was too much for me.



Two types of shanty crew: LocTup Together, above, and, below, the festival's committee: Bob Freshwater, Ian Mitchell, Gillian Lemar-Collings, Julian Eason and Kevin Booker



On leaving the church I was enfolded by the Exmouth Shanty Men, who hugged me, held me and prayed with me until I was back on an even keel. Then they sang and I just enjoyed.

MY AFTERNOON was spent in the church with the 5 Men Not Called Matt (who are not five and not all men). The audience was small but very appreciative; at one point performers and audience all introduced themselves by name. The 5MNCM said they would have sung without any audience as the acoustics were so good. Could they please take the church home to Milton Keynes?

My evening venue was the Yacht Club. With the

Teign Shanty Festival

sound of the sea through the open windows, the superb PA provided by Squaddy and Monkey and three performances I knew would be good, this was where I wanted to be. I love Baldrick's Plan from Penzance, and could listen to them for hours. Then the deep, rich, vocals of LocTup Together rolled through the room. During *Icy Acres* my mind was released from the everyday. After bickering their way gently through the set, they concluded with an impromptu quartet with JD and Andy from The Longest Johns.

Ex-submariner and shanty star, Tom Lewis, a man of incredible knowledge and talent, wound up the evening. One of his compositions embodies what I love about shanty singing: "Find the key and harmony and join us in the song."

After all the scheduled performances the artists had all been invited to the Riviera hall. The beer was good, the balcony excellent. But when they found the auditorium, there was no stopping them. The music just flowed. These are the best times, when you are with a group of people who have a shared love and a shared repertoire.

A number of shanty folk seemed a bit bleary eyed on Sunday but that didn't stop the music. As I ambled through the town I enjoyed songs from the Harry Browns of Bristol, SteepHolmers from Weston-Super-Mare, the Barnacle Buoys, All at Sea and Sloop Groggy Dogs (luckily I had earlier caught the typo of Sloop Doggy Groggs in the programme). Kathryn was singing at the Yacht Club as well, and I particularly enjoyed her renditions of *The Doom Bar* by Toby Lobb of the Fishermen's Friends, and *Matthew Sound* by Grant Baynham of QuickSilver. Then there was another opportunity to hear Tom Lewis, and find out the origin of the phrase "Bully in the Alley".

I regret missing Dick Stephen's workshop



Sea legends: Tom Lewis and mermaid Kathryn Collings

"harmonise with Henry", which featured singing along to the drone of the famous vacuum cleaner. I also missed The Captain's Beard rocking the Shipwrights Inn.

After the Yacht Club, I went around the docks to see the tall ship Johanna Lucretia, which had sailed in on Friday and was welcoming visitors, before heading for the Farewell at the New Quay Inn.

For those who don't know Teignmouth the New Quay Inn is on the Back Beach, facing west towards Dartmoor. Either side are two quays, and everywhere was crowded with people listening and singing. In a session started and finished by the Back Beach Boyz, each shanty crew sang

one or two songs. The atmosphere was fabulous. But the loudest applause, I think, was not for a singer but for my daughter Kathryn's boyfriend, Dan. She's confined to a wheelchair which would have stuck in the sand, so he carried her on to the beach in her mermaid costume, supported her while she sang then carried her back to her chair. One comment was: "You've caught a live one there, mate."

AN OFT-REPEATED comment was how wonderful it was to be singing together again, and how much people had missed doing so. I am privileged to be part of the Shanty community, and the support and love shared over the weekend means the world to me. The festival brought people together in community, whether it was singers, organisers, volunteers, visitors and the locals. What a fantastic weekend.

We went to the Point on Monday to sing farewell to the Johanna Lucretia as she sailed into the sunset, followed by a few tipples at the Ship Inn and a number of shanty men stripping to their scanties and jumping in the river. A proper traditional ending to a shanty festival.

Pictures: Steve Collings

Jeremy Child

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What steps do we take next?

Dance clubs have been cruelly hit by the Covid crisis. Folk clubs could at least offer their members singarounds on Zoom and musicians could hold virtual concerts or give internet tuition. But there is no satisfactory online equivalent for dancers. Although restrictions were lifted in August, some clubs decided to cancel activities they had planned for September. Some others are watching and waiting before restarting. Here, JEREMY CHILD, caller and ceilidh organiser, weighs up the pros and cons – and the potential risks – of resuming his ceilidhs.

HAVING lost a season and a half of Ceilidhs to Covid, I am now faced with the decision as to whether or not to go ahead with the 2021/22 Exeter ceilidh Season.

Two weeks ago it was easy but now infection rates are rising and Devon is an “enhanced response area” (the consequences of which are not entirely clear). General advice is to meet others outside, and to continue to wear face coverings when indoors in public places.

My view is that we cannot run away for ever, and that as long as our actions do not put significant, unavoidable risk onto other people then it's OK. As a result I will wear a mask in the supermarket and on public transport (because some people have no choice but to go there) but if I went to a sports event I would not (because people have a choice as to whether or not to go there). If I'm meeting people indoors, I will say that I'm happy to wear a mask but they don't have to. Usually masks get abandoned quite quickly.

So on to ceilidhs. To my mind there are three questions:

- Is it irresponsible to put one on? If not then
- What precautions/restrictions will I take or impose?
- Will anyone turn up?

Is it irresponsible to put one on?

AS FAR as those attending are concerned, no. There are personal risks involved in going to any public

event nowadays (as there always have been). People have a choice as to whether they attend or not and by choosing to come they are accepting that risk.

As far as the wider world goes, is holding such an event likely to significantly worsen the local Covid rate? OK, so no one knows but the Government says we can when it has previously been quite draconian in its restrictions. This in itself is an indication that holding such an event is acceptable.

As a comparison, Boardmasters (a music festival in Newquay) led to around 4,700 cases out of the 50,000 who attended. That's a per 100,000 rate of around 9,400 – way in excess of current averages.

I'VE also looked at the available data (behind every headline number there is always a deeper picture). Devon's case rate per 100,000 currently sits at 389. Higher than the UK average of 299 but not horrendously so. It went up (as expected) after “Freedom day” but is now coming back down.

Most of the cases are in the young, again what we would expect after unfettered socialising became allowed again. In Exeter (as of 26 August), 50 per cent of cases were in the age range 15-29 and less than 10 per cent in 60+.

So yes, as things stand I will still be going ahead.

What precautions/restrictions will I take or impose?

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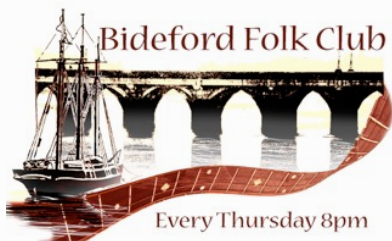
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Social Dance

doing. I want to keep restrictions as low as possible so as not to detract from the experience. Masks will not be required (although of course people can choose to wear them).

Nor will hand sanitiser be provided (I went to a dance which had this and it proved so disruptive everyone gave up after a while).

Consultation with the venue has brought up little in the way of requirements from them, mostly about wiping down surface afterwards. This of course means they will have been wiped down before we get there.

The kitchen is open to us but I have not yet decided whether to provide hot drinks. Frankly, any excuse not to wash up 50 cups and saucers works for me.

Things I will do are:

- Restrict entry to those who are double jabbed or have a recent negative test.
- Arrange taking payment by card.
- Obviously, anyone with symptoms will be asked to stay away.

Will anyone turn up?

I HAVE no idea – I hope so. I believe the desire is out there, it's just if people are willing to venture out again.

And finally...

I DO find myself wondering why I'm worrying about all this. It would be so much easier just to wait. I make no money from Exeter ceilidhs – all I get is hassle and washing up.

I do it because it is good for people to dance, and I want to give back to the community that has given me so much.

As I write this there are over three weeks to go. At the moment, the plan is to go ahead, but with the ever fluid Covid situation (as in politics) three weeks is a long time.

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SALCOMBE LIVE

OCTOBER 1-3

DEVON'S newest festival got off to a splendid start in 2019 but was killed off by Covid last year. Now it has come bouncing back with an exciting line-up that sees Kathryn Roberts and Sean Lakeman headlining.

Their show at Salcombe's Holy Trinity Church on Sunday rounds off the festival. Tickets are £17 each but all other acts at the festival are free.

These include the exciting Devon-based acts folk Jacob and Drinkwater (Friday, 6.30pm at the King's Arms) and the Harbottle and Jonas Trio (Sunday 1pm at the Fortescue Inn).

The 50-plus shows across the town also include rock and comedy acts and even a touch of bluegrass from Penzance.

For more information about the artists and venues, visit <https://salcombe-live.co.uk/> or check out the festival's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/SalcombeLive/>



Free music: Jacob and Drinkwater and the Harbottle and Jonas Trio



BERE FERRERS APPLE DAY

SATURDAY 2 OCTOBER

IF THERE'S cider splashing about you can be sure that morris men will be close at hand. That's certainly the case at the Bere Ferrers Apple Day when Dartmoor Border Morris will be performing. Festivities at Bere Ferrers church hall, Station Road run from 2pm until 5pm. In addition to the morris there will be advice on all things apple – from growing apple trees to turning apple wood, and crushing apples and juicing them – and as much apple cake/pie/chutney as you could possibly eat.



Autumn Gold

A MAYFLOWER GARLAND 400

PLYMOUTH OCTOBER 9-10

2020 should have been a huge year for Plymouth with all the events planned to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower to the New World. Covid crushed the celebrations. But a year on, this anniversary is being marked with a weekend that also points out that last year would have seen the 90th birthday of the late Cyril Tawney.

The event takes its title from the album Cyril recorded in 1970 as his tribute to the 350th anniversary of the Mayflower's voyage. Cyril wasn't born in Plymouth but it is there he based himself when he left the Navy and became a professional folksinger. The album's final track, *The Oggie Man*, is sung by countless people – many of whom may not realise the ballad is set in Plymouth (see *What's Afoot 120* for Bill Murray's history of the song).

Cyril, who died in Exeter in 2005, had a huge impact on folk music in the West Country and the weekend, presented by Plymouth Folk Roots and Wren Music, will feature performers who were actually mentored by Cyril, sang and played with him in his folk club at Devonport Guildhall.

On Saturday and Sunday, concerts and workshops will be held at Stoke Damerel Church and parish centre in Paradise Road, PL1 5QL. Saturday offers a choir workshop for Cyril's songs with Paul Wilson of Wren Music. There are two talks about Cyril Tawney and a session will feature a selection of his naval songs. You can sing out at two informal sessions and there's also a chance to hear Children's Sea Shanties.

Daytime events are free but tickets are needed for the evening concert, In the Wake of the Mayflower, sea songs that travelled the Atlantic in both directions. This will feature Suthering, Wren Music and Jim Causley.



On Sunday, Stoke Damerel bell ringers will ring a specially composed “touch” (a piece of change ringing) dedicated to Cyril. This will be followed by a history walk with music, covering the singer's haunts. This event is free but will be limited to 50 people.

After the walk, there will be a Devonport Folk Session in the Function Room of the Stoke Inn, 43 Devonport Road, PL3 4DL running from 2pm to 5pm.

The church hosts the final concert, Leaving Plymouth's Shore – Local South-West Songs at 7.45pm (doors open at 7pm). There will be local singers and even a folk cabaret spot from Plymouth Morris. The headline act is Shep Woolley.

Full details of the artists and the programme are on www.facebook.com/plymouthfolkroots Please check for last-minute programme changes.

RHEINGANS SISTERS

OCTOBER 17

THE highly talented singers and multi-instrumentalists, the Rheingans Sisters, are giving a concert in Devon courtesy of Topham Folk Club. Rowan is a member of Lady Maisery while Anna works as a fiddle player in Toulouse and is an expert in southern French folk music. Expect a highly varied evening as the sisters have also studied Norwegian and Swedish fiddle styles. You might even get an Indian sound if Rowan brings her amazing bansitar, the banjo-sitar made by her father. Tickets for the concert at Matthews Hall are available from singers' nights at the club, Matthews Hall café or on-line through <https://www.wegotickets.com/event/520665>



Autumn Gold



Wren Musicians: Jenny Read, Jon Dyer, Hannah Cumming and Paul Wilson will be at the festival.

WREN FESTIVAL **OKEHAMPTON OCTOBER 22-24**

WREN Music Folk Festival returns to Okehampton town centre this October featuring concerts, music workshops and dances, plus events specifically for families. There will be homemade food using local and responsibly sourced ingredients and bars with local ales, too.

Hosted by Wren Music's professional musicians, the weekend celebrates great folk music from the UK and around the world.

The festival features international singer and songwriter Lucky Moyo, Scott Gardiner, an award-winning singer of traditional Scottish folk songs and melodeon and accordion players Mel and Kat Biggs. You will also come across local folk

favourites, morris dancers and sessions with Wren musicians.

As well as appearing in concert, the featured artists will lead workshops – and you might even find yourself sitting with them at dinner. At this festival audience and artists create one community. It's a special thing to be a part of and lifelong friends have been made here.

Wren works with all people across Devon all year round. The festival events will have something for everyone to get you enjoying, as well as making, music.

Weekend tickets are available with discounts for under 18s, families and groups. Volunteers are invited for stewarding, catering and more.

For more information and tickets visit wrenmusic.co.uk/whats-on

SHOW OF HANDS IN CONCERT

BEEHIVE HONITON
TUESDAY OCTOBER 26
EXMOUTH PAVILION
DECEMBER 3, 4

DEVON'S supergroup, comprising Steve Knightley, Phil Beer, Miranda Sykes and Cormac Byrne, will be getting together at Honiton's community arts centre to perform their greatest hits from the past 25 years and to push their new single, *The Best One Yet*. Tickets and more details of the gig from <https://beehivehoniton.co.uk/> They are touring the country but will return to Devon in December for two nights at the Exmouth Pavilion: Friday December 3 and Saturday December 4. Tickets and gig details from <https://www.ledleisure.co.uk/exmouth-pavilion>



Autumn Gold



Picture: Ian Atherton

HAUNTING HORSE: Bessy, the ghostly Grey Mare, making her first reappearance at Sticklepath in 2017. The picture shows her with the ghost of Tom Pearse (portrayed by a certain local singer whose new CD is reviewed on page 40)

STICKLEPATH GREY MARE

FRIDAY OCTOBER 29

A NEW tradition dating all the way to 2017. For Halloween, children are invited to hunt round this Dartmoor village for Tom Pearse's ghostly, ghostly Grey Mare from the song *Widcombe Fair*. They are guided on their way by the spirits of the unfortunate mare's riders – Jan Stewer and co. There is a Tom Pearse buried at Sticklepath and the village stoutly defends its claim to to be the real birthplace of the song, not *Widcombe*.

The tradition lapsed last year, as organiser Derek Moore tells us: "Well, 'er came by last year – ev'n if we wuz stuck with all that ther' lock down, backalong.

"It is the way of traditions that nothing should get in their way but we had to be sensible. Bessy the Grey Mare processed around the village last Halloween with just a couple of friends. Even then, she was surprised and pleased when Cogs and Wheels Morris came out to dance for her under the street lights. She made her annual visit to old Tom Pearse's grave, and sang the song.

"There were no children seeking her and getting treats from householders, and no ghostly riders to show the way. There was no play or singing in the pubs – but there will be this year.

"One difference, Bessy has chosen to revisit the village on the nearest Friday to Halloween in the future. Still with the promise of good luck and good will, and still with rousing choruses after the children have gone safely home. Musicians and followers welcome to join the search from the Village Hall at 6pm on October 29 or in the pubs from 8pm."

For more details of this event, please contact: derekmoore60@hotmail.com

Spinach for Norman.

For ceilidhs, weddings and any social occasion we offer the unique and exhilarating sound of a string band.

Workshops and coaching also available.

Contact
Ben van Weede. 07970 151059
ben@vanweede.com

MUGDOCK

Scottish Ceilidh

&

Country Dance Band

01643 707294

Autumn Gold

SETH LAKEMAN

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 2,

PLYMOUTH

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 3,

EXETER

IT'S 15 years since Seth Lakeman released Freedom Fields, the album that established him as a major folk star. He is celebrating this anniversary with a tour of the country that will feature classic songs from the collection and fortunately there are two chances to see him in Devon.

On Tuesday 5th he is appearing at the Minster Church of St Andrew in Plymouth and on the Wednesday at Exeter Cathedral.

Tickets are available from songkick.com



Picture: Kyle Baker

MARTIN SIMPSON

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 14,

TOPSHAM

TOPSHAM Folk Club rounds off this year's superb series of concerts by bringing us Martin Simpson.

Martin is a guitarist's guitarist who plays dazzling arrangements in a spectacular range of styles and open tunings. But he is also a fine singer and songwriter. We must all



Picture: Geoff Hodgkinson

BURNING TAR BARRELS

NOVEMBER 5 AND 13

AFTER Covid extinguished last year's scorching celebrations, there will be fire aplenty in Ottery St Mary and Hatherleigh this year.

As the picture shows, the event at Ottery St Mary on Friday November 5 is not for the faint-hearted as blazing tar barrels are thrown about, as this picture shows.

The organisers point out that this event is not

suitable for small children, animals or those with limited mobility.

You can find more at www.tarbarrels.co.uk

On Saturday November 13, Hatherleigh has its annual carnival which is kicked off at dawn by a hardy group dragging three blazing tar barrels through the town on a sledge.

The day continues with a fine carnival with lots of live music and in the evening. More details hatherleighcarnival.co.uk.

be grateful that as a young man, he didn't take the late Derek Brimstone's advice: "Martin, don't waste your life being a folksinger like me – stay in Scunthorpe and get a good job in the chemical works."

The concert venue is Matthews Hall, Fore Street, Topsham, EX3 0HF. Tickets at £18 are available from www.topshamfolkclub.org



What's On Where

THE latest listings appear in the following section. We try to keep up to date but events can be subject to change due to all sorts of factors at the best of times and there is still the possibility of Covid restrictions being reintroduced. Do check before setting off, either by ringing the organisers or going to the venue's website.

If no contact details have been provided, an excellent reference point is the flaxey-green website www.flaxey-green.co.uk

Contact details for clubs, bands and callers and diary dates for regular and specific events are now being coordinated by Trevor Paul. Any information sent to

diary@devonfolk.org.uk or trevor@flaxey-green.co.uk will be shared between Devon Folk publications (What's Afoot and website) and the flaxey-green website.

The details in this section are believed to be correct at the time of compilation. The editor cannot accept responsibility for changes by club organisers or because of unforeseen events.

Our Devon Folk website www.devonfolk.org.uk has the latest updates that we have been given. We ask that organisers notify us immediately of any changes to contact details for clubs etc.

WILLAND FOLK DANCE CLUB

SATURDAY DANCES

Willand Village Hall

October 9 th	Ray Goodswen and Pendragon
November 13 th	Sarah Bazeley and The Dartmoor Pixie Band
December 18 th	Ivan Aitken and Kelly's Eye
December 31 st	Robert Blackborrow and Pair of Shears

Admission £8.00 Bring & share supper Raffle
Contact: Zena Roberts 01884 253546 www.willandfolkdanceclub.co.uk

Club Nights 2nd & 4th Thursdays 8.00 – 10.30pm in the Village Hall
Members £3.50 / Non-members £4.00 – See Diary Dates for more information
Contact Marilyn Broom 01404 47200 or Zena Roberts 01884 253546

Regular Events

MONDAY MONTHLY

SESSION Plymouth, Dolphin (2nd)
SESSION (Last) Crooked Spire
Inn, The Square, Ermington
PL21 9LP.

TUESDAY WEEKLY

SONG Matthews Hall, 38 High
Street, Topsham, EX3 0HF

DANCE Exmouth Isca Scottish
Dancers, Sept-May. East
Budleigh Church Hall 7.30pm.
Mr & Mrs V J Tyler,
01395 276913

DANCE Launceston FDC (Not
July, Aug). St John Ambulance
Hall. Rosemary 01566 774491.

DANCE Plymouth, Country
DANCE, Plymouth. (Sept-May).
Trinity URC Hall. Jacqui Joint,
07866 980752

TUESDAY FORTNIGHTLY

MUSIC/SONG Totnes, Bay Horse
(1st, 3rd) 8.30 pm

TUESDAY MONTHLY

SONG Coleford, New Inn (last)
01363 84914

SONG Sandford, Lamb Inn (1st)
Paul & Hazel 01363 776275

SESSION Chipshop (nr Tavistock)
Copper Penny Inn (4th) email
inquiries mitilmusic@gmail.com
SONG Gidsong First Tuesday (or
first Wednesday) Gidleigh
Village Hall. see

[www.gidleighvillagehall.co.uk/
diary.html](http://www.gidleighvillagehall.co.uk/diary.html) for details

WEDNESDAY MONTHLY

SONG Kingsteignton, Acoustic
Warehouse, Passage House Inn,

(1st) 7.30 pm. Nigel 07989
180091

SONG Pennymoor Singaround,
Third Wednesday 7.30pm but
venue subject to change. Please
contact Jon Shapley
jon_shapley@hotmail.com or
ring at 01363 83740 or to
confirm venue.

SONG Stoke Cannon Inn, Nr
Exeter – (4th) Paul and Alison
07709324836

SONG Lymphstone, Redwing Inn.
(4th) 01395 225075

THURSDAY WEEKLY

SONG Bideford FSC, Joiners
Arms. John Purser
01237 424286

DANCE Tavistock FDC, Town Hall
(Not July, Aug). Margaret Holt,
07866 980752

THURSDAY FORTNIGHTLY

DANCE Willand FDC at VH. (2nd,
4th) Zena Roberts 01884 253546

MUSIC Willand Club Band at
VH. (1st, 3rd) Mary Marker
01626 854141

THURSDAY MONTHLY

Pennymoor Singaround noon-
3pm Jon 01363 83740

jon_shapley@hotmail.com

SONG Teignmouth FSC,
Oystercatcher Cafe (last)
MUSIC South Brent, Pack Horse
Inn (3rd)

SESSION Exmouth, Bicton Inn
(3rd) 01395 272589. Hosted by
Becky Brooks

FOLK CLUB NIGHT Exmouth,
Bicton Inn (4th) 01395 272589
Hosted by Derek Brooks

FRIDAY MONTHLY

SONG Brixham FSC, The Trawler
Pub, 66 North Boundary Road,
Brixham, TQ5 8LA. (1st).
Contact Mark Harrod
mnharrod@yahoo.co.uk

SONG Exeter Folk & Acoustic
Club Victoria Tennis Club (last).
Peter Cornelius 01392 210983.
See diary for guests on other
Fridays

SUNDAY MONTHLY

SONG Exmouth folk Club
GWRSA Railway Club 3-5 Royal
Avenue, Exmouth EX8 1EN. (4th)
7pm Chris Austin 07812 688432
MUSIC Pennymoor Half Moon
Inn, Cheriton Fitzpaine. (last)
Lunchtime. Jon Shapley 01363
83740

MUSIC Plymouth, Dolphin. (1st)
1.30 pm.

SONG Folk on the Moor.
Ivybridge, The Exchange 1-3
Fore Street, Ivybridge PL21 9AB
Not Aug 7.45pm. Anton Horwich
01822 853620

CLUBS - DAY UNSPECIFIED

These listings are believed to be
correct at the time of going to
press. They do not include open
mic sessions at pubs. More at
www.devonfolk.org.uk run in
association with [http://
www.flaxey-green.co.uk/](http://www.flaxey-green.co.uk/)

Specific Events

OCTOBER

SUNDAY 3RD

CONCERT Exeter Phoenix,
Gandy Street, EX4 3LS. Spiers
and Boden

WEDNESDAY 6TH

CONCERT Exeter Phoenix, EX4
3LS. Sam Carter

THURSDAY 7TH

CONCERT Exeter Phoenix,
Gandy Street, EX4 3LS.
Laura Veirs

SATURDAY 9TH

DANCE Willand Folk Dance
Club, Willand Village Hall,
Gables Road, Devon EX15 2PL.
8pm. Ray Goodswen and
Pendragon

DANCE D'Accord's French
Music and Dance St James
Church Hall, Mount Pleasant,
Exeter EX4 AH.

MONDAY 11TH

CONCERT Exeter Phoenix,

Gandy Street, EX4 3LS. Grace
Petrie

THURSDAY 14TH

DANCE Willand Folk Dance
Club. Willand Village Hall,
Gables Road, Devon EX15 2PL.
Ted Farmer & Pair of Shears

FRIDAY 15TH

CONCERT Lustleigh Village Hall,
TQ13 9TD. Narthen
CONCERT Beehive Arts Centre,
Dowell Street, Honiton, EX14

Specific Events

1LZ. India Electric Company
CONCERT Exeter Phoenix,
Gandy Street, EX4 3LS.
Noble Jacks

SATURDAY 16TH

CONCERT Beehive Arts Centre,
Dowell Street, Honiton,
EX14 1LZ.

Chris White & Julie Matthews

SUNDAY 17TH

CONCERT Topsham Folk Song
Club. Mathews Hall, Fore
Street, EX3 0HF.

Rheingans Sisters

CONCERT Ashburton Arts
Centre, West Street, TQ13 7DT.
Midnight Skyracer

TUESDAY 26TH

CONCERT Beehive Arts Centre,
Dowell Street, Honiton, EX14
1LZ. Show of Hands – The Best
One Yet

THURSDAY 28TH

DANCE Willand Folk Dance
Club. Willand Village Hall,
Gables Road, Devon EX15 2PL.
Aileen Wills & The More The
Merrier

SONG Bideford Folk Song Club.
Dartmoor's Rich Heritage in
Music and Song with Moor
Music and Bill Murray

FRIDAY 29TH

CONCERT The Barrel House,
59a High Street, Totnes, Devon
TQ9 5PB. Three Daft Monkeys
CONCERT Pavilions Teignmouth
The Den Crescent, TQ14 8BG.
Jamie Smith's Mabon

SATURDAY 30TH

DANCE Exeter Ceilidhs. The
Kenn Centre, Exeter Road,
Kennford, EX6 7UE. Pigs Might
Fly

CONCERT Pavilions Teignmouth
The Den Crescent, TQ14 8BG.
The Tannahill Weavers

NOVEMBER

TUESDAY 2ND

CONCERT Minster Church of
St Andrew, Royal Parade,
Plymouth PL1 2AD.
Seth Lakeman Freedom Fields
15th Anniversary Tour

WEDNESDAY 3RD

CONCERT Exeter Cathedral, The
Cloisters, Exeter, EX1 1HS.
Seth Lakeman Freedom Fields
15th Anniversary Tour.

FRIDAY 5TH

CONCERT The Barrel House,
59a High Street, Totnes,
Devon TQ9 5PB.
Harbottle & Jonas Trio

THURSDAY 11TH

DANCE Willand Folk Dance
Club. Willand Village Hall,
Gables Road, Devon EX15 2PL.
Ray Goodswen & Jeroka

FRIDAY 12TH

CONCERT The Beehive Arts
Centre, Dowell Street,
Honiton, EX14 1LZ. Police Dog
Hogan

SATURDAY 13TH

DANCE D'Accord's French
Music and Dance St James
Church Hall, Mount Pleasant,
Exeter EX4 7AH.

DANCE Willand Folk Dance
Club, Willand Village Hall,
Gables Road, Cullompton,
EX15 2PL. 8pm.

Sarah Bazeley and The
Dartmoor Pixie Band

CONCERT The Flavel,
Flavel Place, Dartmouth, TQ6
9ND. Music of Cat Stevens

SUNDAY 14TH

SONG Topsham Folk Song Club.
Mathews Hall, Fore Street, EX3
0HF. Martin Simpson

MONDAY 15TH

CONCERT Exeter Phoenix,
Gandy Street, EX4 3LS. Rowan
Rheingans - Dispatches on the
Red Dress

TUESDAY 16TH

CONCERT Exeter Phoenix,
Gandy Street, EX4 3LS. Daoiri
Farrell

WEDNESDAY 17TH

CONCERT Brixham Theatre,
New Road, TQ5 8TA.
Gigspanner Big Band

FRIDAY 19TH

CONCERT The Barrel House,
59a High Street, Totnes, TQ9
5PB. Sheelanagig

SATURDAY 20TH

CONCERT Exeter Phoenix,
Gandy Street, EX4 3LS.
Ferocious Dog

WEDNESDAY 24TH

CONCERT Plymouth Pavilions
Arena, Millbay Road, PL1 3LF.
Levellers

CONCERT Exeter Phoenix,
Gandy Street, EX4 3LS. Jackie
Oates and John Spiers

THURSDAY 25TH

DANCE Willand Folk Dance
Club. Willand Village Hall,
Gables Road, EX15 2PL. Ted
Farmer & Brian Graham

SATURDAY 27TH

DANCE Exeter Ceilidhs. The
Kenn Centre, Exeter Road,
Kennford, EX6 7UE. Spinach For
Norman

DECEMBER

WEDNESDAY 1ST

CONCERT Exeter Phoenix,
Gandy Street, EX4 3LS. Chris
Wood

FRIDAY 3RD

CONCERT Exmouth Pavilion
Esplanade, EX8 2AZ. Show of
Hands The Best One Yet
CONCERT Calstock Arts, The
Old Chapel, Sand Lane, PL18
9QX. Sam Sweeney Band.
With Jack Rutter, Ben Nicholls
and Louis Campbell.

SATURDAY 4TH

CONCERT Exmouth Pavilion
Esplanade, EX8 2AZ. Show of
Hands The Best One Yet

THURSDAY 9TH

DANCE Willand Folk Dance
Club. Willand Village Hall,
Gables Road, EX15 2PL. Simon
Maplesden and Chris Toyne

SATURDAY 11TH

DANCE D'Accord's French
Music and Dance St James
Church Hall, Mount Pleasant,
Exeter EX4 7AH.

TUESDAY 14TH

CONCERT The Barrel House,
59a High Street, Totnes, TQ9
5PB. The Magic Lantern
Support: Hearing Aid Beige

Specific Events

SATURDAY 18TH

DANCE Willand Folk Dance Club, Willand Village Hall, Gables Road, EX15 2PL. 8pm
Ivan Aitken & Kelly's Eye

SUNDAY 19TH

CONCERT The Watermark, Erme Court, Leonards Road, Ivybridge PL21 0SZ.
Mad Dog Mcrea

FRIDAY 31ST

DANCE Willand Folk Dance Club, Willand VH, Gables Road, EX15 2PL. 8pm Robert Blackborow & Pair of Shears

Clubs and Sessions

FOLK song clubs (FC) and sessions (SE) are sometimes forced to change venue at short notice due to change in management at a pub. Please check if in doubt. See www.devonfolk.org.uk or <http://www.flaxey-green.co.uk> for updates.

BIDEFORD

Bideford Folk Club Thursday: Joiners Arms - John Purser 01237 424286 or email bidefolk@gmail.com
Website: <https://bidefordfolkclub.com/>

BODMIN

Friday: The Old Library, 10 Lower Bore Street, Bodmin, PL31 2JX (at the top of Fore Street)

www.bodminfolk.co.uk
CHIPSHOP (NR. TAVISTOCK)

4th Tuesday – 8pm Copper Penny Inn, PL19 8NT (01822 833288, 07725 579718)
mitilmusic@gmail.com

COLEFORD

Last Tuesday: 8pm The New Inn Coleford, Crediton EX17 5BZ Tel: Dave 01363 84914

CULLOMPTON

Alternate Thursday: Crediton West Gallery Quire. Sonja Andrews 01363 877216

3rd Friday and 5th Sunday: South West Shape Note Singing, Cullompton Steve 07976 605692 or Martin 07721 451406

EXETER

Last Friday: Exeter Folk & Acoustic Music Club Victoria Park Tennis Club, St Leonards Peter Cornelius 01392 210983
Also guest nights <http://www.exeterfolkclub.org/>

EXMOUTH

4th Sunday: 7pm. GWRSA Railway Club 3-5 Royal Avenue, Exmouth EX8 1EN. Chris Austin 07812 688432

3rd Thursday 8.30pm Bicton Inn Folk session 01395 272589.
Becky Brooks

4th Thursday 8.30pm Bicton Inn Folk club night 01395 272589.

Derek Brooks

GIDLEIGH

1st Tuesday (or 1st Wednesday) 8pm. Gidsong, Gidleigh Village Hall. Check Village Hall diary www.gidleighvillagehall.co.uk/diary.html for announcements.

LEE MILL

Sunday: Folk on the Moor 7.45pm The Exchange, 1 Fore Street, Ivybridge, PL21 9AB. Anton Horwich, 4, The Green, Milton Combe, Yelverton, 01822 853620

IPPLEPEN

4th Tuesday: Shape Note singing Methodist Church, East Street, Ipplepen, TQ12 5SX
jeremyjamesdonaldson@gmail.com

KINGSTEIGNTON

1st Wednesday: 7.30pm Acoustic Warehouse, Music & Performance Club, Estuary Courtyard, Passage House Inn. Nigel 07989 180091

LYMPSTONE

4th Wednesday Lymptone Folk, Roots and Acoustic, Redwing Inn. Church Rd, Lymptone, Exmouth EX8 5JT. (4th) 01395 225075/07741409265

PENNYMOOR

Some venues of regular events organised by Pennymoor Singaround members were not confirmed as we went to press. Where no venue is given, please

contact the named member.
3rd Wednesday. Pennymoor Singaround. 7.30pm Contact Jon Shapley 01363 83740.

Last Sunday Music session Contact Clare Penny 01884 860023

4th Wednesday, Stoke Canon Inn, EX5 4AR, 8.30pm Paul and Alison 07709 324836

1st Thursday: Pennymoor Singaround Jon 01363 83740

SANDFORD

3rd Thursday: Lamb Inn (1st) Paul & Hazel 01363 776275

SCORITON

4th Sunday: 7.30pm. Tradesman's Arms Sue & Simon Williams, Scorriton Farmhouse, Scorriton.

SOUTH BRENT

3rd Thursday: Pack Horse Inn, 8pm. Mixed session.

TEIGNMOUTH

Last Thursday: Teignmouth Folk hopes to restart at Oystercatcher Cafe, Northumberland Place. Martyn Hillstead, 01626 778071. Please check with Flaxey-green.co.uk

TOPSHAM

Tuesdays: Song at Matthews Hall, 38 High Street, Topsham, EX3 0HF

TOTNES

2nd Thursday: Folk Song Club. Dartmouth Inn. Steve & Anne Gill, 01803 290427.

1st & 3rd Tuesday. Music and Song session (English) The Bay Horse.

WILLAND

Alt Thurs. Willand Club Band Workshop, Willand Chapel, Gables Road.

Mary Marker 01626 854141

Morris and Display

Ritual & Display Groups
(F: Morris Federation, R: Morris Ring, Open Morris member) Day indicates regular practice night/dance out night

Alive & Kicking (F)

Appalachian. Jo Wright
01392 462531

Angletwitch (F)

Elizabeth Wozniak
01271 325425

Beltane (F)

Border, Harriet White.
harrietcewhite@yahoo.co.uk

Bideford Phoenix Morris (F)

Frances Hall, 01409 281877

Blackawton Morris (F)

Chris Janman, 01803 712362

Black Bess (F)

Jayne Thomas 01626 366844
blackbessborder@gmail.com

Borderline (F)

bag@borderlinemorris.org

Bovey Tracey Mummers (R)

Rod Wilkins 01803 812581

Bradninch Millers Morris (F)

Duncan Harrington
01884 855270

Cat's Eye Border (F)

Catseyebag@aol.com
www.catseyemorris.co.uk

Cogs & Wheels (F)

Donna Tombs
dtombs65@gmail.com (Thurs)

Dartmoor Border (F)

Mark Tregaskis 01752 299700

Dartington Morris Men (R)

Martin Jones
bagman@dartingtonmorrismen.org.uk (Fri)

Exeter Morris Men (R)

Mike Painter,
01392 660444. (Thurs)
mikepainter25@gmail.com

Exmoor Border Morris (F)

Marlene Cann,
marlenecann61@yahoo.co.uk
(Wed)

Firestone

(Appalachian & Irish). Email
info@firestonedance.co.uk

Glory of the West Morris (F)

Carol Mantell, 01647 252740
(Wed)

Great Western Morris Men (F)

Mike Boston
bagman@greatwestern.org.uk
(Mon)

Green Willow Clog (F)

Jacqueline 07748 121093

Grimspound Border Morris (F)

Lee Merry, lmerry@live.co.uk

Harberton Navy (F)

JanCulf@harbertondevon.co.uk

Heather & Gorse (F)

Maggie Anderson
mag2anderson@yahoo.co.uk

Ilfracombe Red Petticoats (F)

Linda Corcoran,
lindacorcoran@btopenworld.com

Isambard Gasket Rats (F)

Debs : 01626 770238
bag@isambardsgasketrats.co.uk

Kings Arms Pace Egg &

Mummers

Dave Denford, The Cottage,
Ramsley, SouthZeal, EX10 2LD

Lodestone Border (F)

lodestonemorris@hotmail.co.uk

Lyme Morris

www.facebook.com/LymeMorris

Newton Bushel Morris (F)

Rod Shute, 01803 403153
teresa@newtonbushelmorris.uk

Old Town Twelves

Alison Chapman, 07541 385463

Otter Morris

bag.otter.morris@gmail.com

Plymouth Maids (O)

Sue Hawes, 01752 345054
plymouthmaids@hotmail.com

Plymouth Morris

bagman@plymouthmorris.uk
www.plymouthmorris.uk

Raddon Hill Clog Morris (F)

Barry Lewis 01395 443408

Rough Diamonds Appalachian

01460 220607

Shuffle The Deck (F)

Appalachian.
Kathy Houlihan 01752 893335 or
07719652885

Sidmouth Steppers NW Morris (F)

cath.nettleton@gmail.com

Sidmouth Traditional Mummers

Henry Piper, 01404 811491
henry.piper@zoom.co.uk

Tinners Morris Men (F)

andrew@frangleton.co.uk

Trigg Morris Men (R)

Roger Hancock, 01208 73907

Tudor Dance Group

Elizabeth Thurgood,
01404 812185.

Winkleigh Morris (F)

Angela Haines, 01837 83219
angelahaines48@outlook.com
(Tues)

Wreckers Border (F)

wreckers.bag@gmail.com,
Thursdays.

PLEASE HELP US TO KEEP THE LISTINGS AS UP TO DATE AS POSSIBLE. IF YOU RUN A CLUB, A SESSION OR A MORRIS SIDE, EMAIL ANY CHANGES OF VENUE, DATES OR CONTACTS TO TREVORPAUL@FLAXEY-GREEN.CO.UK NEWS ITEMS ABOUT YOUR SIDE, CLUB OR MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE SENT TO DEVONFOLKEDITOR@GMAIL.COM

Bands and Callers

IMPORTANT NOTE TO DANCE ORGANISERS, BANDS AND CALLERS: This list is over a year old but we hope it is reasonably reliable although bands may have broken up and callers retired during the covid lockdown. The names in bold are correct as they are advertising in this issue of *What's Afoot*. To ensure our list is as accurate as possible, we are asking bands and callers to verify their details for future editions, either by emailing devonfolkeditor@gmail.com or writing to John Foxen at 129 Tamar Avenue, Tavistock, PL19 9HZ. It's a bit of a pain but it's better than bands missing gigs because their details are not up to date or ceilidh organisers wasting time trying to contact people who are no longer in the business. If we do not hear from you, we will assume you want to be removed from the listings so that you are not bothered by unwanted calls. The deadline for the next issue, covering January to March is November 20. Deadlines for forthcoming issues are February 20, May 20, August 20 then back to November 20. And yes, we are asking you to verify your details every three months. We haven't the staff to chase you for up-to-date details for this free service.

BANDS and callers in bold have an advert in this edition.

*** EFDSS affiliated.**

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Babelfish 07971 148531

Banned From Moor 01364 631401

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Chris.toyne@btinternet.com

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Dartmoor Pixie Band* 01837

840775

David Mashford 01752 822010

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More The Merrier 01626 854141

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Paddy's Whiskers* 01803 520798

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Reel Thing 01460 240671

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Tinners 01736 787951

Up The Creek 01548 531525

Walter Shortage & Hosepipe Band

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Winkeilidh Band 01363 877216

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Sarah Bazeley 01837 840775

Robert Blackborow 01278 691370

John Blackburn 01237 476632

Mike Boston 07789714498

Adrian Brayley 07791703009

Linda Breeze 01363 77618

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Ray Hamer-Moss 01769 560708

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Beryl Jukes 01209 712357

Graham Knight 01823 401271

Rosie Longhurst 01566 785233

Simon Maplesden 01884 33571

Mary Marker 01626 854141

Richard Mason 07900 588713

Barry Moule 01288 361625

Eileen Nightingale 07811 367966

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sanchobramble@hotmail.com

BEDS, HERTS, CAMBS

Unicorn, Simon Bailes,
unicornmagazine@hotmail.co.uk

NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

English Folk Dance & Song Society
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info@efdss.orgwww.efdss.org

THE MORRIS FEDERATION

A new secretary is to be elected at the annual
general meeting. www.morrisfed.org.uk

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jon_melville@yahoo.co.uk
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REOPENING

Friday 29 th October	Open Club Night
Friday 26 th November	Open Club Night
Friday 17 th December	Christmas Special Open Club Night

*ADVANCE NOTICE – FEBRUARY 27th 2022 – PAUL DOWNES & PHIL BEER
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For more information contact
The Cornelius Family – exeterfolkclub@outlook.com - Tel. 01392 210983

Pennymoor Singaround

Song and Music Sessions - 3rd Wednesday 7.30pm
1st Thursday – 12 noon

For the venues – contact Jon Shapley

Music Session - last Sunday 12 noon

For the venue – contact Clare Penny – 01884860023

Visit Facebook: Pennymoor Singaround

To confirm updated venues or contact:

Biddy Mallabone: 01271 373305

biddy.mallabone@outlook.com

Jon Shapley: 01363 83740 – jon_shapley@hotmail.com

Also run by Pennymoor members:

The Lamb, Sandford, Nr. Crediton – 1st Tuesday 8.00pm

Contact: Hazel or Paul 01363 776275

The New Inn, Coleford – Last Tuesday 8.00pm

Contact: Dave 01363 84914

Stoke Canon Inn, Nr Exeter - 4th Wednesday – 8.30pm

Paul and Alison 07709324836

Music is moving

There have been a few changes during lockdown. Here's what we know so far

AFTER more than 40 years at the Cruwys Arms in Pennymoor, the singaround has moved on due to a change of landlord, writes Hazel Underwood. Amazing how a tradition built up over so many years can just suddenly disappear.

The Cruwys is the local pub for Clare Penny, one of our founder members, who has played and sung there since before the singaround became a monthly event in the 1970s. Our brilliant MC and stalwart member for many years, Len Christopher, was also the landlord there at one time so the pub has always been a special place for us where we felt very welcome.

So where next? Alongside our popular Zoom session, we have also been meeting since July in various pubs chosen for their outdoor space or the amount of space and ventilation offered inside. In addition, we added a monthly lunchtime session after requests from members.

Our annual Jan Stewer night at Puddington, where Jim Causley read the stories by Jan (the pseudonym of AJ Coles) in Devonshire dialect, was held in a large marquee and was really well attended this year, raising several hundred pounds for the village playground.

The pub sessions have also been successful and it's been wonderful to be able to sing those choruses again together. However, the venues are a bit too far from our original home so we may be moving again soon. Please contact us for current venues via our phone contacts or Facebook page (see the advert on page 27).

Monthly sessions also continue in mid Devon run by Pennymoor members (see listings for details).

Fair Exchange

FOLK on Moor is swapping its old home, the Westward Inn at Lee Mill for The Exchange pub on Fore Street in Ivybridge.

Club organiser, Anton Horwich said: "We looked at a number of potential venues and The Exchange stood out for a number of reasons: firstly it is an established music venue, with a function room that can seat around 100, ideal for our busier guest nights; secondly, it is well located, easily

accessed from the A38 and with plenty of near-by free parking available on a Sunday night; thirdly, the landlord is enthusiastic, himself a musician and sound engineer and 'understands' music; and last (but not least), it has an excellent selection of beers. We hope to be up and running there early in October – guest artistes/dates to be announced shortly."

Exmouth on track

EXMOUTH Folk Club is now holding its sessions on the fourth Sunday of the month at the GWRSA Railway Club, next to the Leisure Centre and near the railway station. Real ales are served and there is parking and level access. The next meeting is on October 24. For more information, call Chris Austin 07812 688432.

Topsham goes live

TOPSHAM Folk Club held its first live singers' night for 18 months on Tuesday September 7. The club has been running a successful series of Zoom evenings throughout lockdown, striving to keep a very local feel to the online sessions.

The live session in the airy upstairs room at Matthews Hall featured regulars from the virtual sessions and a small, faithful audience.

Topsham reports that songs and tunes ranged from traditional through 20th century favourites from many genres to self-penned compositions, "all sung/played by three-dimensional people complete with legs and feet".

However, Topsham's Folkvid virtual sessions are to run once a month on October 26 and November 30.

As we went to press, Topsham was preparing to host Fay Hield at Matthews Hall in the first big concert of their winter series (the Rheingans Sisters and Martin Simpson are lined up as guests).

To prepare for the big event, the club ran socially distanced concerts at Matthews Hall featuring Paul Downes, Si Barron and Chris Hoban. The concerts were well attended but as one organiser pointed out, they were free. The test comes when the public have to pay to see

again

someone. The Topsham team have worked very hard to keep folk music going during lockdown and we hope to see the club flourish.

Gidsong gets going

ONE of Dartmoor's best kept secrets is Gidsong, which meets once a month at Gidleigh Village Hall, bringing in a huge variety of talent for its open evenings. Singer Bill Murray and raconteur Tich Scott hosted the first evening since lockdown on Tuesday September 7 and attracted attracted some 40 people, including Jim Causley. The next meeting is on Tuesday October 5. For future dates see www.gidleighvillagehall.co.uk/diary.html

Farewell Shammick

THE Covid crisis and health problems have forced Tom and Barbara Brown to call time on Shammick Acoustic, their splendid Combe Martin club at the Pack o' Cards. Barbara writes: "We'll try to have a get-together when the C-19 problems are over, but otherwise, that is the end of a wonderful 18 years of Shammick Acoustic. Thanks to all of you who have supported us over the years, and to Chris and Debbie Batchelor at the Pack o' Cards, who have been such brilliant hosts over the past 11 years. But it's not the end of the music - keep playing, singing and listening!"

Our thanks to Barbara and Tom for their years of hard work. This leaves a vacuum in their corner of North Devon and we hope that some younger souls will pick up the baton and keep music live and lively.

Country gathering

A NEW acoustic music session, Country meets Folk, has been started at the Crooked Spire pub, in Ermington, near Ivybridge. It's aimed at dedicated singers and musicians with an interest in country/Americana with a fusion of folk styles and will meet on the first Monday of the month. Entry is free. Contact Keith Nicholls on 0781 7037 936 or email keithnick@hotmail.com for more details.

KEEP us up to date with what your club is doing. Send your news items to devonfolkeditor@gmail.com or write to John Foxen, 129 Tamar Avenue, Tavistock, PL19 9HZ

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2nd Thursday in the Month 8.00pm

*14th October
Singers' & Musicians' Night
11th November
Singers' & Musicians Night*

*9th December
Singers' Night
with Traditional Carols*

For more information phone
Steve & Anne Gill
01803 290427
or Andy Clarke 01803 732312

‘I gave up my job to start my own music business – then we went into lockdown’

Fiddler Becki Driscoll talks to John Foxen

COME lockdown, like everybody else we went from having very full diaries to very empty ones,” says Becki Driscoll. “I had just left my job to set up my own business doing music workshops right at the start of the pandemic so the timing was a bit interesting.”

“Interesting” is an understatement. Lockdown hit all professional musicians hard but violinists Becki and her partner Nick Wyke, also had two children, then aged three and seven, to support. “We had to think on our feet and adapt to survive,” says Becki. “I couldn’t get any self-employed help because of my previous employment so I was faced with no income at all.”

Bideford-based Becki and Nick have been professional musicians for 20 years and have built up an excellent reputation for their fiddle duets, their arrangements of traditional tunes and their own tunes and songs. Nick is also a fine guitarist. They have released four CDs. The last, *Cold Light*, was highly praised by *What’s Afoot* but Becki says she had almost forgotten it.

“We released that in the autumn of 2019 and we had gigs lined up in spring of 2020 to promote it but... I’d almost forgotten we had that album out. We ought to remind people it’s there but it now seems very far away.”

Their immediate problem in lockdown was survival. Fortunately, as well as being performing musicians, they had also been heavily involved with teaching. Becki was a tutor at Devon’s community music charity Wren for 15 years. “I switched to working online,” she says. “Nick and I have always done a big chunk of teaching. I set up a Zoom folk ensemble and started doing a lot of online fiddle tuition and Nick was doing similar stuff. We didn’t really have time to think about it because we were home-schooling our oldest son.

“One of us was on home school and looking after the toddler while the other was in front of the

computer trying to earn. Then we’d swap. We did our front room sessions and the odd online gig and survived.”

Their sessions started at 9pm. “We couldn’t do things together until the kids were in bed. As we couldn’t guarantee the youngest one would be asleep before nine. There were moments when at a quarter to nine I was saying, ‘I don’t think he’s going to go to sleep. What are we going to do?’

“There were one or two occasions when one of us had to leave and go upstairs to check but they were pretty good on the whole.”

RATHER than running concerts, Becki and Nick tried to create actual sessions with musicians encouraged to join in with them at home. “We realised we were lucky that as two musicians we could play together and wanted to share that,” says Becki. “We never anticipated doing it weekly for well over a year. We did take Christmas off and the odd day here and there but otherwise we did it almost every single Wednesday. We weren’t playing our polished repertoire and took requests for tunes we hadn’t played for ages. It kept us on our toes. We developed a new repertoire and have toyed with the idea of putting it into an album but when we can find time to do that I don’t know.”

Some musicians used lockdown profitably. For example, Jim Causley recorded two albums, *Cyprus Well II* and *Devonshire Roses* (reviewed on page 40). “We did get a bit envious when we saw some of these people who were getting time to be creative,” says Becki. “Nick’s been doing quite a bit of recording for Jim. Jim’s been sending him files and Nick’s been sending him fiddle parts. He’s appeared on a couple of Jim’s albums.”

Nick has also been active on his own account, recording and mixing a Lockdown EP at home that features ballads pertinent to these strange times. *The Social Distancing Waltz* looks at the problem

Surviving The Pandemic



Picture: Kyle Baker www.kylebakerphotography.com

Back in the real world: Nick Wyke and Becki Driscoll on the Blackmore stage at Sidmouth this year

of meeting a new love when the Covid rules mean you can't get close to anyone. There is also a sprightly *Lockdown Hornpipe* on which he duets with Becki. Check out the EP at <https://nickwykemusic.bandcamp.com/album/lockdown>

He has also produced (in four-part harmony) the stirring shanty, *No Birds In The Air, No Fish In The Sea* (look for it on YouTube) which was picked up by *Extinction Rebellion* and should be sung everywhere to push home the message that we need to preserve the planet. Look for scores and mp3s at <https://nickwykemusic.bandcamp.com/album/no-birds-in-the-air-learning>

As restrictions lifted, they managed to play in front of real audiences. Says Becki: "We played at Sidmouth and ended up on TV. They happened to be doing a little feature while we were doing our gig so we got our eight seconds of fame. We've also done some weddings as so many people are getting married now they can."

I mention seeing Becki some four years ago bringing her youngest child to a very posh gig at Coombe Trenchard, the country house estate that advertises "exclusive Dartmoor weddings". It was a splendid affair with the guests being entertained with falconry, morris dancing and music provided by Becki and Nick. "We'd left the older one," says Becki, "and took the baby. I was feeding him then handing him to someone else, playing the violin for a bit then taking him back again."

The children are one reason Nick and Becki are not keen to fill their diary with hundreds of live

gigs – apart from the disappointment of the early months of lockdown when they saw bookings cancelled, rescheduled then cancelled again.

Becki explains: "Driving miles all over the country is unsustainable in terms of the environmental impact. And childcare is complicated for us in terms of going off for weekends. We are limited as to how many favours we can ask.

"Also, through lockdown we were able to do things with the kids at the weekend rather than tearing off here and there and leaving them with one relative or another. It's not that we're not going to be doing any gigs – we will be – but we haven't been in a rush to book things in as it's not really practical for us at the moment."

NICK is working on video and photographic projects while Becki is keen to develop her business, *RootNotes*, a community music organisation. "I have an adult group kids and family groups and then I'll be doing a music group for under fives, all using folk music as a starting point. Nick and I are running the fiddle weekend at Halsway Manor and I've been doing quite a lot of private fiddle tuition."

They are keeping up their front-room sessions but on a monthly basis on Wednesdays. Currently Facebook Live sessions are set for October 13, November 17 and December 15.

You can find details of Nicki's classes at <https://www.rootnotes.org.uk>

The Knitting Reel

Becki Driscoll



THIS twisting little tune comes with the *What's Afoot* recommendation: "If you're a fiddler looking to spice up a session, you'd be hard-pressed to do better than to get your bow round The Knitting Reel."

It comes from the CD *Cold Light* by Nick and Becki Driscoll, which was reviewed in issue 122. Becki, who wrote the tune and dedicated it to anyone who can knit more than a lumpy square, kindly contributed it to the magazine.

There are no chords given because there are a number of ways it can be harmonised. On *Cold Light*, Nick opens with a staccato series of chords

on the fiddle before Becki joins in. A guitarist or bouzouki player could get the same effect. Or you could play it as a solo piece on flute or fiddle.

Bar three may take a little effort to get right with the two sets of triplets threatening to change the time signature before the two quavers pull it back to 4/4 but its well worth the work.

Nick and Becki have produced a tune book, *Flying Fishes and Other Tunes*, which features their compositions from *Cold Light* and their other albums.

We recommend you check out their shop at www.englishfiddle.com



Why folk songs are not set in stone

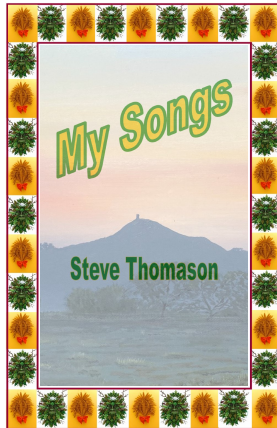
Our Devon song comes from a newly published book of the compositions of Steve Thomason, a popular performer on the Devon folk scene before his untimely death last year. DEREK MOORE tells why he loves this song but felt he had to change it to sing it

TO be given a song that becomes a bit of an anthem is such a privilege, but to be granted the permission to adopt and adapt a song by Steve Thomason was just wonderful. Steve always sang *Men Of Stone* as a ballad but when we sing it with Tinner's Morris, we roar it out proudly with a rousing chorus.

We in Devon didn't know that Steve, who died last October, was ill and this adds to our sense of loss and pain. He was a regular at singarounds here until he relocated back to Derbyshire to be close to family. I was always a very grateful MC and was reassured whenever Steve came to the Devonshire Inn, Sticklepath, because I knew he would give a great performance, usually of his own penned songs. His deep voice and guitar playing were matched by his generosity of spirit; as he encouraged others and contributed sensitively.

Some months before he died, Steve heard me sing his *Men Of Stone* in the Devvy. He knew that I had learnt it, and that we had converted it from a solo ballad into a rousing chorus for Tinner's Morris. Steve had written songs rich in geographical connection and folklore. Some were from his life journeys through Derbyshire or North Wales, but he also gave us some very special songs for Dartmoor.

Men Of Stone is about our tin mining but it also gives the pride to those who worked there, lived there and to those who now dance Morris there. We sing it in memory of so many, but specifically for Steve. As Mick Ryan put it: "The singers that we love will be singing once again, when we sing the songs they sang..."



Only a couple of months before Steve died, we discussed other Dartmoor songs he had written. With great grace he suggested that he not only bent some of the stories he had collected, but also allowed the songs to change over time. He generously gave me permission to amend bits to suit my own experience of Dartmoor. So, *Grey Whether Circle* can be clearer about the involvement of the Sun God Belus and *Dartmoor Rivers* can include a verse on the other rivers he and I hadn't explored as much.

Steve wrote to me last August: "As you'll know, I don't actually consider you can 'own' a song, except for the time you're actually singing it, and to 'own' it properly then, of course, you need to change it if the version you first heard doesn't quite fit 'your' version. I constantly change songs myself as I sing them: I do try to pronounce Ockment correctly these days, for example, but rarely sing the song as it doesn't mean much to anyone up here."

NOW 41 of Steve's songs have been published in a book, and he shared his versions on <https://soundcloud.com/sthomason-1>, which gives more than a taster of the quality of his singing. It is so important to keep these songs and Steve's memory alive. It is clear that Steve was a wonderful performer and a great songwriter, with a commitment to the oral folk tradition and pub singing. A great friend to many, and sadly missed.

● **The book *My Songs* by Steve Thomason, edited by Colin Andrews, costs £8 plus postage and packing. Order it from <http://www.bonnygreen.uk/books.html>**

A Devon Song

Men of Stone

By Steve Thomason

Melody

We were mi - ners we were tin - ners —

we were men of stone and we

worked to reap our har - vest from —

Dart - moor's weath - ered bones.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of four staves of music. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat, with a chord symbol 'F' above the first measure. The lyrics 'We were mi - ners we were tin - ners —' are written below the notes. The second staff continues the melody with lyrics 'we were men of stone and we'. The third staff has a chord symbol 'F' above the first measure and lyrics 'worked to reap our har - vest from —'. The fourth staff has chord symbols 'Eb', 'Bb', and 'F' above the first, second, and third measures respectively, with lyrics 'Dart - moor's weath - ered bones.'.

The tune for the verse is same as for the chorus

Chorus
We were miners; we were tanners; we were men
of stone
And we worked to reap our harvest from
Dartmoor's weathered bones.

In ages past before the days when Romans ruled
the land
Before the Saxon warriors fell to William's
Norman hand
Before the noble Brutus ever founded Totnes town
The tin miners of Dartmoor were the finest ever
found.

We started out by streaming as the earth gave up
its store
Reaping the rich harvest in the wild streams on
the Moor.
But soon the streams were all played out, not
meeting the demand
So with hammer and our own strength then we
crushed the rocks by hand

When stamping mills came to our aid with leats we
scored the Moor
To bring to them the water to crush the rocks and ore.
And then it's to the blowing house for smelting it
must go
While water drove bellows to feed the fire below.

For centuries we worked the Moor, the Dartmoor
men of stone,
Delving deep into its skin and answering to none.
We had our own laws and our courts we kept the
Moor alive.
The Moor was filled with workers then like bees all
in one hive.

But all those days have passed now and the Moor
it stands so still.
No miners tramp the open wastes, no sound of
stamping mill.
But as the mist falls gently, ghosts rise up from
the peat
You can hear the sounds of blowing house close by
the rushing leat.



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John Foxen

devonfolkeditor@gmail.com

DEVON FOLK are very sorry that Brian and Sheila Chappell have stepped down from the committee after serving for many years, Brian as Hon Treasurer and Sheila as Secretary, and latterly Membership Secretary. They have both contributed so much to Devon Folk during their time on the committee and will be greatly missed. Brian said he joined the committee because he wanted to put something back into the folk scene that had given him so much pleasure over the years. He has certainly given a great deal back to and we are very grateful to him and Sheila. This means there are now vacancies on the committee. A nomination form is printed here and applications are welcome from those in every area of folk and from all parts of Devon. Full committee meetings are usually held at Ide near Exeter four times a year on a Saturday morning in addition to the business meeting after the annual general meeting, usually in March.

DEVON FOLK COMMITTEE NOMINATION FORM

Nominee

Proposed by

Seconded by

I, the undersigned, am willing to stand for election to the Devon Folk Committee.

Name

Address

Telephone

Email

Please return this form to:

Anne Gill, Maleth, 11 Cleveland Road, Torquay, TQ2 5BD.

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I wish to pay by bank transfer (details
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receive What's Afoot by email and pay for
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Picture: Martin Smith

Pudsey and pals: The bear who cares with a splendid array of morris sides back in November 2019

Bear bows out for a second year

FOR six years the Pudsey Day meeting in Tavistock in November was a key date in South-west morris diaries. Sides from all over Devon – and even Cornwall and Dorset – would gather in Tavi to perform in Bedford Square and round the Pannier Market and encourage the public to put their hands in their pockets to help Children In Need.

The event not only raised money for a good cause but gives sides a chance to catch up with each other before settling down for the winter.

Sadly, covid put paid to Pudsey and his pals' antics last year. Even worse, this year for the second time, the event organised by Dartmoor Border Morris, has been cancelled.

Covid restrictions might have been lifted but as

Kath Tregaskis, wife of squire Mark (affectionately known as Treggie) explained: "The organisation of it starts in January with booking the town square, then months of emailing sides. With everything being so unpredictable this year Treggie didn't want to risk it."

Here's hoping the bear and his band of dancers will bounce back on the streets of Tavistock in November 2022.

PS: If you want to cheer on the Pudsey Day organisers, Dartmoor Border Morris, they will be performing on Boxing Day at the Royal Oak, Meavy from noon and at the Buckland Abbey Wassail and Mummings play on Sunday January, 2 starting around 2pm.

Plymouth plan to celebrate their 50 plus one

PLYMOUTH Morris (Formerly Plymouth Morris Men) turned 50 last year but plans for a big celebration had to be cancelled due to covid (like so many other events).

On Saturday October 9 the side will be holding a smaller 51st anniversary bash. There are unconfirmed rumours that respected

Plymouth musician Greg Yates has devised a special dance for the occasion to an accordion-driven version of the Jimi Hendrix song 51st Anniversary.

Details of the birthday bash can be found on the side's new website – plymouthmorris.uk – or email bagman@plymouthmorris.uk



www.kylebakerphotography.com

Dancers lighten up

HERE'S Beltane's new look, as shown off at Sidmouth Folk week. After years of being the dark side of Dartmoor, the dancers decided that their traditional black face make-up might offend.

The side said: "We still disguise and honour our predecessors with our dances, but we use mercurial colours of nature to hide our faces, rather than the black of soot."

We understand that Isambard's Gasket Rats will no longer be using any colour on their faces. We hope to show off their new look in the next issue of What's Afoot.



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DEVONSHIRE ROSES

JIM CAUSLEY

IT GIVES me great pleasure to be able to review the second of Jim Causley's trilogy of recordings that celebrate the rich traditional songs of Devon. On this CD he is accompanied by two of my favourite musicians, Matt Norman and Nick Wyke. Mariners Away, together with Jim's mum Jo and his dad Ross, join in with the vocals and choruses to produce a lovely background party sound.

Jim's homegrown natural and soft Devonshire accent and dialect are as much an essential part of this recording as the words and tunes of the songs that he sings. It is well known that he has a passion for his county and does all he can to maintain the heritage and the dialect and accent of each area.

His performance is inimitable and yet I know that one of Jim's main motivations in producing these CDs has been to encourage other people to learn and perform the songs in their own style, throughout Devon and beyond.

For example, his subtle skillfulness and humour has turned the pompous, worthless anthem, *Glorious Devon* into a song for singing and flag-waving. There has never been a better rendition. It is a shame Jim's usual live concert introduction to Sir Harry Boulton's song has not been included.

Many of the traditions associated with Devon are referred to in the 20 songs on this CD. The first track is *The Bell Ringing*. The legends of Childe the Hunter and Lady Howard's Coach have been included and there are songs associated with the sea faring history of the county.

Not surprisingly, several of the songs selected come from the Baring Gould Collection. My

favourite track is *The Blue Flame/Queen of Hearts* and I wonder if Joan Baez knew that the song that she sang in the Sixties, originated from dear ole Dartmoor? The chilling *Blackingstone Ravens* was in fact written by Baring Gould himself in the traditional style of many of the songs that he collected.

Our county's famous local beverage is represented by A.J. Coles's *What About A Little Drop Of Cider?* The composer is better known as the entertainer and writer Jan Stewer who also composed *Out Stepped Mother And Me*. On both tracks Jim has chosen to speed up the choruses, which adds bounce and decreases the drag of a long chorus that can occur when the audience are unsure of the words.

The inclusion of *The Exeter Carol* provides a contrast to the other tracks on the CD. Jim is a versatile performer who is always looking for challenges to extend the scope of his performance and not to simply discard alternative options without consideration.

Tavistock Goozey Fair, another well known song with an unforgettable chorus, is one that I remember as a favourite of the old singers who lived 'pon Ole Dartmoor when I was a youngster. The real identity of C John Trythall who wrote this great song remains a mystery.

It is fitting that the final track should be *Widecombe Fair*. It is after all, the most famous of all the Devonshire songs and this recording brings pleasure to my ears. Jim and I have sung it together on many occasions at local fairs and to listen to the audience laughing and joining in with the chorus adds joy to our lives.

Devonshire Roses was released in January this year and I realise that you may already have a copy. The third CD of the trilogy, which is titled *Devonia*, will feature no fewer than 40 tracks. It includes some very interesting and seldom heard songs that well deserve to be heard. It is to be released later this year so look out for it. After all you really need to have the full collection.

Bill Murray

COME NOBLES AND HEROES

MOSSY CHRISTIAN

One Row Records ORRCD 002

IT IS always very encouraging to come across a young person with a passionate interest in local folk traditions. Mossy Christian comes from Lincolnshire and his debut CD features many songs and tunes researched and collected in his home county. He is a talented musician, playing melodeon, anglo concertina and fiddle, and an accomplished singer.

The opening instrumental track (*Market Rasen*)

Reviews

Feast and Louth Quickstep, from the Joshua Gibbons manuscript of the early nineteenth century) really made me want to listen to the rest of the tracks, which include several traditional songs.

Mossy's singing is straightforward and unaffected by any attempt, as with some performers, to create a 'traditional' sound – whatever that is – yet he manages to instil expression and drama into his songs as appropriate to the topic.

There are some interesting variations of familiar songs such as *The Young Sailor (Cut Down In His Prime)* and *William Taylor* as well as ballads I had not heard before, including *The Red Barn Murder* and *Lincoln Races*. All are good but if I had to choose a favourite song it would be *The Way Through The Woods*, a Rudyard Kipling poem set to music by Peter Bellamy.

The CD ends as it began in a jolly, foot-tapping way with a ditty and tune, *Dan Leno*, about the celebrated music hall performer, complete with full chorus and accompanied by a band of fine musicians and percussive clog stepping. Brilliant!

Colin Andrews

FROM DARKNESS COMES LIGHT

MEL BIGGS – TCCD2103

www.melbiggsmusic.co.uk

FROM the cover I thought this CD would be self-penned songs in the pop style but how wrong can one be? I was correct with the self-penned tunes: with the exception of two traditional pieces, *Mounthills* and *The Colliford Jig*, the rest were composed and arranged by Mel Biggs.

Mel plays diatonic accordions to a very high level indeed but in the notes, there is no mention of their makers. Her guest musicians are her sister Kat Biggs on piano accordion, Jon Loomes on guitar and cittern, Bridget Slater on fiddle and Dave Squirrell on mandolin and octave mandola.

I found it difficult to single out any track and felt most had a meandering quality that kept me guessing as to what was going to happen next. To me, the style of tunes written by Steve Turner and Helethe whole album has a "French" feel to it, rather like a Torpy of the band The Eel Grinders. Helena's *Attingham Waltz* is now played everywhere, so keep writing Mel!

Lovely playing throughout, interesting with some lovely touches. I enjoyed it.

Steve Gill

● *Mel Biggs and her sister Kat, a musician and dancer with Wreckers Border Morris, will be performing at the Wren Festival on October 22-24.*

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David Mark Robins

Singer who turned the old Exeter Folk Song Club into a 'traditional only' venue

IFIRST saw David in 1963 in The Left Bank, a trendy coffee bar above an equally trendy record shop in Paris Street, Exeter, *writes Bill Crawford*. Wandering in on a Friday evening, there I found a crowd of people, some with guitars, attempting to run a folk evening. David was one of them.

He was singing songs such as *Deep Blue Sea*, *Dark As A Dungeon Way Down In The Mine* and other American type stuff. Like so many others, he had become interested in skiffle in the 1950s and taught himself to play guitar.

A change in his musical tastes was not long in coming, perhaps because of the influence of singers such as Cyril Tawney, John Steele and Lewis Johns, who regularly came up from Plymouth to visit the club. In 1964, David was a co-founder of the Exeter Folk Song Club at The Jolly Porter, St David's, and a major driver in the move to it becoming one of the earliest 'Traditional only' clubs in the country a few years later.

Once in the Jolly Porter, David would sing unaccompanied songs such as *The Bells of Rhymney*, popularised by Pete Seeger. After a year or two it was decided to make it a traditional club (after Paul Simon appeared there for £6 the Tuesday before his first British Television appearance on Ready Steady Go). The change was largely due to David, who envisaged a club with any sort of "traditional" entertainment. I remember the decision sent ripples around the country as the Exeter club had a good reputation nationally.

David was born on June 13, 1943, to Barbara and Dennis of Exeter. He went to Exeter School and met Tony Rose, who would later join him as a founder member of the Exeter Folk Club. David took a teacher training place at Goldsmith College, London but returned after one year.

He teamed up with the late Ken Penny as unaccompanied duo The Journeymen, which soon became a trio with the addition of Ged Higson. They quickly established a name for themselves in the West Country and featured on Westward television's Sing Inn, a folk programme hosted by Cyril Tawney.

During this time, David worked for the EFDSS under the regional manager Bill Rutter and was involved in staging the Sidmouth Folk Festival and hosting events at the newly established Halsway



Manor in Somerset. I recall one such event where we visited Ruth Tongue, the folklore collector and author, at her home in Crowcombe.

In 1966 he married Janet Arscott. They had two children but divorced a few years later. In 1972 he married Barbara. They had two children.

David left the EFDSS and became a delivery driver for Boots Farm sales. Visiting folk artists would often do Barnstaple on Monday, Exeter on Tuesday and Plymouth on Wednesday and David would provide accommodation, take them on a tour of Devon in his delivery lorry during the day then drive them to that night's venue.

In 1972, he transferred to Yeovil and became a leading figure in the local folk scene. Not long after he moved to Yorkshire, and became equally involved in the Beverley folk scene.

He then became assistant manager of a turkey farm. Folk music took a back seat when he became involved with Bridlington Road Runners.

Sadly, in 2003 he suffered a debilitating stroke. He worked in a voluntary capacity for the local tourist board for a while following his recovery but never regained his singing ability.

David's interest in folk music was rekindled around 2008 and he became a regular attendee at Whitby and other festivals. Following a 50th anniversary reunion weekend at Halsway Manor and subsequent annual traditional song weekends there, he once again started singing, and the look of joy on his face when held a gathering in song will live with me for the rest of my life.

He died suddenly and peacefully on March 30, 2021 at The James Cook Hospital, Middlesbrough, following a heart attack

Ivor Hyde

Accordion player and repairer

IVOR HYDE, who was well known throughout the West Country for his accordion playing and his restoration work on them, has died at the age of 94 on August 13.

He was born in Cricket St Thomas and was given his first instrument when he was about six years old, a six-key melodeon bought for him by an aunt. By 1939, aged 13, he had moved on to the piano accordion and started playing in public with the Courtney's band who organised dancing lessons. The band played mostly Old Tyme with some quicksteps and foxtrots.

The war proved a busy time for him, playing at dances held in aid of the war effort. For Friday and Saturday night gigs he was paid ten shillings, a decent amount of money then. Ivor moved to a band called the Melody Makers. One of the members, Bill Hansford, was a taxi driver, a useful occupation during the war when petrol was rationed because he had access to fuel and managed to take the band to their dances in his taxi. However, on one occasion when the taxi wasn't available, the band travelled in a hearse.

Ivor remembers Bill saying: "People were dying to ride in this."

During National Service with the Royal Signals, Ivor did a fair bit of playing in East Africa and Palestine.

After the Army, he married Jean in 1953 and joined United Dairies and their Diploma Dance Band, which was named after the butter produced at Wilts United Dairies at Chard Junction.

With the Diploma Band Ivor played a lot of Old Time dances such as lancers, scottisches and quadrilles. But with another group he also played for square dances in village halls. Then he played for ballroom dances in local hotels, but returned to folk music in the Seventies. He was joined in the band by his daughter Anne. His sons would join him occasionally but Ivor admitted in an interview with folklore recorder Bob Patten that folk music wasn't really their scene. With the folk band, Ivor would play all over the South-west.

He had been repairing instruments since he was about 14 or 15. He told Bob Patten: "I knew the principle of tuning reeds. Back in those days if a note went wrong, you had to fix it yourself."

Although he had been "dabbling with it" for years, Ivor didn't become a professional repairer until about 1976. He soon became renowned as an

expert on all matters concerning the accordion. On one occasion he was brought in to repair four accordions that were attached to a fairground organ on a low-loader.

Nigel Sture writes: Ivor was a lovely man, a highly skilled accordion tuner and repairer, a real lifeline for all accordionists, melodeon and concertina players throughout the West Country and beyond.

Many years ago, before I started repairing concertinas myself, I took a Jefferies concertina to him for an overhaul. Ivor showed me around his workshop, and played his Shand Morino button accordion for me. He did a fine job on my concertina, and I ended up buying some PA speakers from him, which I still use to this day, and a new melodeon as well.

When I started doing concertina repairs, we used to refer customers to each other. If I had enquiries for accordion repairs, I referred them to Ivor, and he would do the same for me with concertinas. We would always have a catch up at Sidmouth Festival, and other times by phone.

Ivor was still working three days a week into his nineties. He was a very accomplished dance band musician, and his work was his life's passion. He will be sorely missed by so many.

Roger Pannell

Shantyman with The Old Gaffers



A FOUNDER member of the Old Gaffers shanty crew of South Hams, Roger Pannell, died at the age of 78 on Monday September 6. Friend and fellow Old Gaffer Kevin Sessions described him as a singer with a fantastic musical ear, a wonderful gift for harmonies and a fabulous voice. He will be particularly remembered for his solos on *Lowlands* and *Santiana*.

"The best things I can say about him," said Kevin, "is that he was one of nature's good guys. If he couldn't do you a good turn, he wouldn't do you a bad one. He will be sorely missed."

Roger, who lived in Kingsbridge with his partner Carol, was an avid sailor and also sang in local choirs.

Despite shielding since the outbreak of Covid because he suffered from leukaemia, Roger somehow picked up the virus and despite being put on a ventilator, died in Derriford Hospital.

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