

No 131 July-September

What's Afoot

The official
magazine of

Devon Folks
dance song music Morris



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FRIDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER 2023

PHIL BEER

Folk at the Flavel are delighted to welcome Phil Beer for his second solo visit. Best known for being part of, with Steve Knightley, the legendary Show of Hands, Phil is a gifted multi-instrumentalist and vocalist. With a professional career of over 36 years, Phil has a great deal of material to draw on for his solo appearances, which are an eclectic mix of traditional tunes, covers of Springsteen or The Hollies, together with his own compositions and songs from his contemporaries. Phil's renowned solo performances have proved hugely popular, and the Folk at the Flavel audience will have a truly memorable evening. *"A Phil Beer gig is one spent in the company of a master musician and consummate performer." Spiral Earth*

SATURDAY 7TH OCTOBER 2023 AT 7:30

JIM CAUSLEY

Multi award winning singer-songwriter, musician and proud Devonian Jim Causley has been nominated no less than six times for a BBC Radio 2 Folk Award. Since the release of his debut album, *Fruits of the Earth* in 2005, Causley's voice and persona have helped him become one of the most well-loved and respected figures of today's contemporary roots and folk scene. Jim, who has cooperated with, amongst many, Show of Hands and Kate Rusby, has a busy touring schedule and has fifteen acclaimed albums to his name. Jim was described as *"Spearheading the West Country folk revival"* by *The Guardian*,

FRIDAY 3RD NOVEMBER 2023

MARTIN SIMPSON

One of the greats of the folk world, renowned guitarist Martin Simpson will be making his fifth visit to the Flavel. Equally at home playing English traditional and American folk and blues and his own compositions, he is consistently named as one of the very finest acoustic and slide guitar players, and a fine banjo-picker to boot. Martin has collaborated with a dazzling array of people from across the musical spectrum. In recent years, he has been a linchpin in the award-winning band Full English. He has released 21 solos albums over his career and in his most recent has included tracks inspired by his visits to the Dartmouth area. Martin has been recognised many times at the Radio 2 Folk Awards including twice winning best musician. *"Simpson has become a fine interpreter of traditional and other songs, as well as a notable writer of his own." The Times*

What's Afoot 131 July-Sept 2023

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PRICE RISE WARNING

OH THE hard times of old England, goes the song, and in England – and elsewhere – these are very hard times. You will by now have guessed the next line I will come up with. Yes, the price of What's Afoot is going to have to rise. We have kept it as low as possible for some time now. The core team of just four people who produce and distribute What's Afoot do so on a voluntary basis and try to keep expenses as low as possible. But printing and postal costs have risen and if we are to achieve our goal of promoting folk music, song and dance in the county then we have to raise the cover price. No decision has yet been made by the Devon Folk committee but it is probable that we will have to charge £2 an issue from now on. With the price rise looming, you may feel an urge to panic-buy and stockpile as many issues as possible at the old price. That may work with toilet rolls but not with What's Afoot which is far too shiny. However, I would ask you to grit your teeth and pay the new price and help to keep folk music alive and well in Devon.

John Foxen, Editor

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Mad Dog Mike calls time on pub game

The lead singer of punk folk band Mad Dog Mcrea explains why he's retiring as the manager of a popular music venue

IT'S BEEN six years since Mike Mathieson drove into Shaugh Prior to buy a boat trailer. "I never did get that boat trailer," he says. "Instead, I ended up getting a pub."

This sounds the sort of crazy story you might hear from Mike when he's on stage, fronting the band Mad Dog Mcrea but like all the best stories it's true. Mike, who has done all sorts of jobs in his time from gardening to working with boats, was in the Dartmoor village on a fruitless quest for the trailer.

He was turning his car round in the car park of the White Thorn Inn which was unoccupied and in a bit of a sorry state at the time, when he realised it had potential to become the sort of pub that would suit his temperament: a good place for music as well as good drink.

The lease was up for grabs so he bought it. Although he had worked in plenty of pubs on and off, he had no experience of running one and admits he went into the trade almost blind. For the past six years it has been a "rollercoaster ride" while he transformed the pub. It became a hot spot for musicians and dancers, the sort of pub where you wouldn't be surprised to see a famous musician casually taking part in a jam session, or, as our front cover picture shows, a morris maiden like young Debbie helping herself behind the bar.

But now the rollercoaster ride has come to an end. The lease is up and Mike is not renewing it, choosing to concentrate on music now that his band seems to be really taking off. "We're all coming into our 50s," he says, "So I suppose it's time to give music a really good go."

The pub has become so popular in the folk music world that Mike has ended up having two "farewell parties". The first was in May when morris sides Beltane and Dartmoor

came to pay tribute to their favourite dance venue. The wild night ended with Beltane performing Haccombe with blazing torches. Mike was given the place of honour, standing in the middle of the dance, holding a torch.

"Those torches are real," said one spectator, "you can feel the heat as they go past."

Mike survived the experience with not so much as a singed eyebrow and says it was a real privilege to take centre stage. And fortunately the pub did not go up in flames although it was shaken to its foundations by the wild night of singing and music that followed. Jim Causley, who turned up just to watch, was called upon to deliver a song first to the audience in the street and was later seen enthusiastically joining in the frantic jam session that went on until the early hours of the morning.

THE second farewell took place as What's Afoot was going to press, so we can't say for sure that the pub is still standing. For the weekend of June 16 to 18, Mike planned a musical extravaganza, featuring, among others, the shanty group, The Old Time Sailors. "There are 17 of them and they're all Eastern European," he says. "They're almost like a cabaret, dressing up as pirates and the like."

Mike has always been able to attract good musicians to the White Thorn because of his contacts. "That's been the unique selling point of the pub," he says. "I've had some big bands in like Beans On Toast [the Essex based act] and Dan Donnelly from The Levellers. It's all a matter of having the contacts."

It took a lot of work to get the pub up and running again. "It was decrepit and overgrown – a bit Hammer House of Horrors. The landlord knew that and he gave us three



YOU'RE FIRED! At the first of his leaving parties, Mike of Mad Dog Mcrea (left) is put in the hot seat for Beltane Border Morris's fire dance, Hacombe

months rent-free while we did it up. We had a very successful three years and then the pandemic hit. Mind you, that had it's upside. Being stuck in a pub that's closed is like dying and going to heaven.

"But after the pandemic, people's drinking habits changed. And there has been a problem with taxis." Shaugh Prior is only 10 miles from Plymouth but, says Mike, drivers are unwilling to come out that way after closing time, especially in the winter.

"The price of booze has gone through the roof. You can't make your money on that alone which is why all the gastropubs are springing up. That's not what I want to do."

During the summer festival season, his band is out playing at least three nights a week which hasn't left Mike much time and energy for working on the pub. Now he says he wants to concentrate on one thing and do it well.

Mike was born in Donegal, a county famous for such musicians as Clannad, Altan, Goats Don't Shave, Rory Gallagher and the legendary Packie Byrne. His roots lie in

traditional music although Mad Dog Mcrea has moved in many directions from heavily Pogues-influenced punk folk to even a bit of jazz and funk.

Mike's father, a Scot, was in the Navy which led to the family moving to Plymouth when Mike was 15. He has been back to Ireland, where his family are mainly fisher folk, and tried the fishing life but has always gravitated back to Plymouth even though his music has taken him far and wide.

"I once went to Holland for three days and ended up staying for a year," he says.

MAD Dog Mcrea was formed in the Nineties and was reasonably successful. "We got into the Scandinavian circuit for three years, travelling all around just playing Irish bars. We were getting up to Lapland, Norway – Estonia even. That was a good way of honing our sound. Then at the end of it I said to the guy who booked all the gigs, 'Get us somewhere warm because we've spent three years in Scandinavia'. He got us this job in Thailand –

Folk Band

six months in an Irish pub in Phuket. That's what got us really tight as we were playing six nights a week, three hours a night and when we came back, the band started getting a bit of momentum. It was only after this that we started taking ourselves seriously.

"What turned the band around was adding a drummer. Suddenly the festivals became interesting."

Festivals are where the band excels. Fan Pete Coxon who was at Plymouth's Freedom Fields festival in May said: "Mad Dog Mcree were the last band of the evening. There had been good artists before them but it was a concert atmosphere. They came on and suddenly it became a party. Everyone was going up and down.

"The only problem is that you have to watch out that your feet don't get stamped on by over-enthusiastic dancers."

The line-up of the band has changed a lot over the years but the core members have always been Mike and whistle player Dan Crimp. "Everyone has contributed something different to the mix," says Mike, "which is

why we've moved in so many directions. It's also the reason we've never been signed to a major record company – and why we don't want to be signed up. We don't want to be pigeonholed.

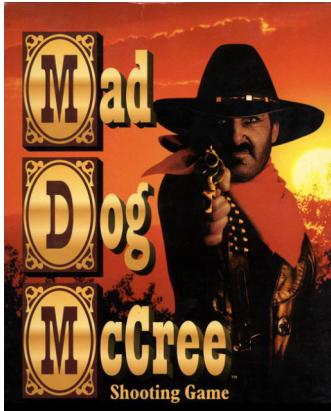
"It's been a long evolution – or devolution sometimes. Since I've had the pub, the band hasn't moved forward much. Now I want to do one thing and do it well.

"We've been writing songs and once the summer and the festival season is over we'll get into a studio and record a new album. We haven't recorded anything for three years."

With more time on his hands, Mike might even get round to buying that boat trailer he went looking for six years ago.

John Foxen

IF YOU haven't yet experienced Mad Dog Mcree, see them at **Morwellham Quay on July 8; Strawberry Fields, Lifton, July 14; Lyme Regis, August 25; Bodmin Sea View Farm Shop, August 26; Newton Abbot, the Jolly Farmer, September 15; Holsworthy AFC September 16.**



Will the genuine Mad Dog Mcree please stand up?



SO HOW did the band get the name Mad Dog Mcree? "Do you want the interesting version or the truthful one?" asks Mike. "On stage we always tell different versions such as how my grandpappy went out to America for the Gold Rush and busked his way across the Wild West with a gun in his banjo case.

"But I would say the truthful one is the more interesting version. When we first started, we used to meet at Plymouth University where a couple of the guys were

studying. And we always used to meet up by an old arcade game machine, a shoot-'em-up cowboy game called Mad Dog Mcree. We'd meet there to find somewhere to rehearse or go and have a jam.

"For ages we were trying to find a decent name for the band then suddenly we thought: Mad Dog Mcree! But for copyright reasons we had to change the name just a little."

The arcade game ended up in Boot Hill long ago but at least the legend of Mad Dog lives on in the band.



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This picture was in the previous issue of What's Afoot so why are we using it again? Well, it turns out Rhia from Boss Morris is from Dartmoor



WE'D like to boast that the secret ingredient that makes Boss Morris so successful (an appearance on the Brit Awards is not to be sniffed at) is that they have a Dartmoor lass in their line-up, *writes John Foxen*.

Only after the previous issue of What's Afoot went to press did we discover that the picture chosen to illustrate the article comparing Boss to Devon's dark dancers Beltane, is of a woman from our county.

Back in the Eighties, Rhia Davenport's parents ran the Devonshire Arms in Sticklepath (the pub where Derek Moore runs a fine singaround on the first Sunday of the month). So Rhia, who now lives in Stroud where Boss are based, grew up with country dancing – and, of course, the broom dance.

Boss's rise to fame means that their email backlog is huge and by the time Rhia saw our message asking for details of the side and replied, it was too late for that issue. When we did talk, she was delighted to hear that Beltane's squire Ant Veal had been very complimentary about Boss.

She knew Beltane and responded in kind. "We love them! We did see them at Sidmouth. They are so fun to watch, and a great gang. We also really love their bold music. Beltane are such a good example of how morris can appeal

to younger people and really encompass that moody, darker side of the folk scene that so many people are enjoying at the moment.

"They have a very different energy and identity to us. When we started out, we tended to go a bit darker with our looks and costume but we have lightened up and found our own style outside of border or Cotswold.

"Most of what we do is really traditional. We are true to the dances." Boss have certainly kept their roots. Although the side has found fame dancing to indie music, you can often find them dancing to a traditional tune played on a single fiddle – although the fiddler might be wearing a beast's head.

RHIA adds: "We sometimes mess about with things rejigging the dances to modern tracks. We danced with Hot Chip at Glastonbury. That was fun. But the Brits was a lot more high pressure. We had to rehearse so much more."

Her Devon upbringing made sure that traditional music and dance was in her soul: "My parents had the Devonshire Inn in Sticklepath until 1989 so I was there until I was five. Then we moved down the road. I went to South Tawton primary school where the PE lessons were often morris dancing and I grew up with the Dartmoor folk festival – and of



course we did the kids' broom dance. So I had morris in me but things moved on. I went to university in Bristol, worked in North Devon near Ilfracombe for a while then moved to Stroud.

"I'd been friends with Alex Merry [founder of Boss] for a number of years. She'd been dancing with the Belles of London City for a number of years then she moved back to Stroud and she wanted to set up a side.

"I'd always loved morris dancing but I'd never seen myself doing it and it becoming such a complete takeover of my life. [*Editor's warning: beware, this is what happens when the morris bug bites.*]


"It's about nine years ago we set up Boss Morris. When we started, we really struggled to find an identity. We started off being a bit menacing, the costumes were a bit frightening. We'd do our face paints to be a little scary.


"But as time went on we realised the costumes didn't represent how much fun we were having. We all decided we wanted to

smile a bit more and stop being so grumpy. We just lightened up a bit. It wasn't anything we did consciously."

This is where Boss differs from Beltane where the iron rule is: "No smiling. Remember it's grim and dangerous up on Dartmoor." But as was mentioned in our previous article: make a close study of the video of Beltane's The Cross Tree, which was voted TradFolk Magazine's dance of the year, and you'll catch one of the Beltane lassies with a smile. It's fleeting but it's there.


Both Boss and Beltane certainly appeal to young people. Rhia has two children aged nine and six and they are also big fans of morris dancing. She hopes they will take up the baton when they get a bit older. Rhia promises that she will return to Devon when her children have grown up a bit and they will live on Dartmoor. So there is a possibility that we might eventually see her dancing for Beltane – but she would have to lose that lovely smile, which would be a pity.

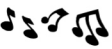




FOLK ON THE MOOR

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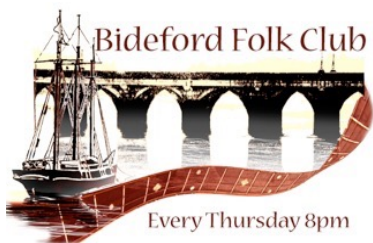


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Morris Matters

We get by with a little help from our friends

MORRIS sides are usually on the lookout for musicians but a particularly desperate plea has come to us from Lyme Morris. They are in real need because they turned up at the Joint Morris Day of Dance in Exeter with only a drummer.

Fortunately, Beltane, who were organising the event on Saturday April 22, have more than enough musicians in their ranks and lent them the redoubtable Jayne Boswell.

Jayne is not only a splendid fiddler and woodwind player but she has more connections in Devon folk music than you can shake a morris stick at. Musicians from



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other sides who were down to dance with Lyme were sent lists of tunes and told to help out. So thanks to the fellowship of the morris, Lyme got through the day.

The Cotswold side was based in Upper Lyme in Devon but moved into Lyme Regis and has also become a mixed side. Your editor was one of Boswell's Volunteers who played for them in Exeter and found them clean, reasonably well behaved and quite sober (mind you, this was the first dance spot of the day). If you fancy helping them out, contact Pete Morton at petemorton@googlemail.com.

Let's hope they are up to strength by July 15 when they are running their day of dance on Lyme seafont.

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The boys are back in town



FESTIVAL favourites The Fisherman's Friends make a welcome return this year in one of two pre-festival concerts aimed at Devonians. The stars of stage and screen (two films now) will be performing at the Ham Marquee at 7.30pm on Thursday August 3, before the festival kicks off in earnest.

The boys from Port Isaac are hugely popular but if you book now at the festival website (sidmouthfolkfestival.co.uk/pre-festival-specials) then you have a chance to see them before folk fans from all over the country stream into Sidmouth.

There is even a discount for local residents.

The other pre-festival concert features the wonderful Barbara Dickson (see facing page).

As usual, the festival features our local heroes such as Show of Hands, Seth Lakeman, and Jim Causley. And as usual The Sidmouth Folk Festival line-up is a little overwhelming as one glance at the advert in this issue proves. Fortunately, the festival team have produced a condensed guide to the main acts of the various days.

Of course, everyone has a different definition

of the real highlight of the day (there is such a glorious variety of trends and traditions in folk music) so this can only be a rough guide until you get your own copy of the festival programme to pore over.

Friday 4th August

Barbara Dickson with Nick Holland
(Pre-Festival Matinee Special)
Banter; Topette!!; Kathryn Tickell & the Darkening; Mrs Midnights; The Linda Game Band.

Saturday 5th August

Le Vent du Nord; Blackbeard's Tea Party; McCusker McGoldrick Doyle; Leveret (10th Anniversary Jukebox); Tashi Lhunpo Monks; The Undoing of Polly Button; Banter; Halsway Young Folk; Avtar Indian Dance; Sidmouth Town Band; Brown Boots Boogie Band; Playford Ball.

Sunday 6th August

Show of Hands with Miranda Sykes; Grace Petrie; Lady Maisery; Whapweasel; John Gasson Jig Competition; Sidmouth Horse Trials; From Pub to Pulpit; Samia Malik; Will Finn & Rosie Calvert;

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From the West End to the West Country

IT WILL be a treat to see Barbara Dickson returning to her roots with an acoustic performance with Nick Holland on Friday August 4 at 3pm, writes *John Foxen*. This pre-festival concert is at the Ham Marquee.

I first saw her at the Bothy Folk Club in Southport back in 1974 and was blown away by the power and quality of her voice. Her first song, *The Burning of Auchindoon*, stunned the room into silence followed by huge applause. "I'm sorry if that was a bit loud," she said. "I was just testing the acoustics of the room." She was certainly loud but not strident. It was glorious controlled power.

The club was excited because Barbara had been signed up to provide the music for a new play in Liverpool, just down the road. There were hopes she would become a regular at the Sunday night club.

Alas for folk clubs. Willy Russell's *John, Paul, George, Ringo ... and Bert* became a monster hit and led Barbara into the world of musicals. Success in the pop world followed and folk club appearances became rarer.

But she is true to her roots and as well as musical numbers, she still sings folk songs. She is making her farewell tour next year so see her while you can.

Chris Hoban & Sidmouth Town Band – 1918
The Untold Stories of the Great War; Ellie Gowers; Jennie Higgins.

Monday 7th August

The Unthanks; Skerryvore; Breabach; John Tams; Token Women; Sara Grey; Harp & A Monkey; The Brothers Gillespie; Bearded Dragons; Rattlebox; English Fiddle Ensemble; Maddie Morris; John Dipper; Lizzie Hardingham

Tuesday 8th August

Saltlines (Gigspanner Big Band with Saltpath author Raynor Winn); Talisk; Eliza Carthy Trio; Vri; Brighde Chaimbeul, Ross Ainslie, Steven Byrnes; New Callers Showcase; Lewis Wood's Footwork; Steve Turner; Frankie Archer; George Sansome & Matt Quinn.

Wednesday 9th August

Lindisfarne; Peat & Diesel; Paul Sartin Tribute Concert; Reg Meuross & Cohen Braithwaite

Kilcoyne – Stolen from God; Iona Lane; Dominic Hooper; Relentless; Vicki Swan & Jonny Dyer; Crows; The Canny Band; Flowers & Frolics; Brazen Thieves.

Thursday 10th August

Cara Dillon; Seth Lakeman Band; Maddy Prior & the Forgotten Lands; Angeline Morrison; Martin Carthy in Conversation with Jon Wilks; Cerys Hafana; Shooting Roots Showcase; Family Ceilidh with The Seaside Stompers; Reg Meuross; The Folk Detectives (Matthew Crampton & Paul Hutchinson); Shovel Dance Collective.

Friday 11th August

The Young'uns; The Magpie Arc; Flo Perlin; Exmouth Shanty Men; Grand Workshop Showcase; Celebration Contra with The English Contra Dance Band; Celebration Bal with Oscina; Jackie Oates & Jon Wilks.

And, of course the amazing torchlight procession to the sea.

Rising stars get new showcase

THERE'S a new opportunity for young performers to spread their wings at this year's Children's Festival at Sidmouth: the Star Stage. Singers, musicians, dancers and bands will have the chance to display their talents in Peacock Lawn.

Sidmouth is a prestigious showcase so the organisers, Little Seeds Music, have put some strict rules in place. Performers will be expected to perform for a maximum of 20 minutes and be able to get smartly on and off stage with no dithering, Instruments should be tuned before going on stage.

Performers are expected to treat this opportunity in a professional manner and should give careful consideration to how they present themselves visually and in terms of introductions of performance items.

Does it sound a lot to ask of young people? Too much, some might say, having seen so many adults at folk clubs who can't reach this standard. But I have confidence in the ability of

the rising generation. Back in 2008 my wife and I were at the Leigh Folk Festival in Essex and at an open session were delighted by the performance of a youngster called Toby Shaer.

He would have been 12 or 13 at the time and was charming, courteous and confident but not at all cocky on stage. He was also a brilliant flute and whistle player. We predicted big things for him and were very pleased when he went on to play with Sam Kelly and the Lost Boys among others.

I can't believe that the youngsters of Devon are less talented than those of Essex. After all the county has produced the three Lakeman lads and Jim Causley plus Bob Cann's dynasty.

So I hope that a lot of our young people will apply for a spot on the Star Stage and show the festival just how talented and worthy of the event they are.

You can find more details and an entry form at www.littleseedsmusic.co.uk/sidmouth23

Good luck!

Exeter Folk & Acoustic Music Club

Victoria Park Tennis Club, Lyndhurst Road, St Leonards, Exeter,
EX2 4NX – 8.00pm

----- NO JULY CLUB NIGHT (SUMMER BREAK) -----

Friday 25 th August	Open Club Night
Friday 22 nd Sept	Concert Night: Annie Winter & Paul Downes
Friday 29 th Sept	Open Club Night
Saturday 14 th Oct	Concert Night: Geoff Lakeman & Rob Murch

For more information contact
The Cornelius Family – exeterfolkclub@outlook.com - Tel. 01392 210983

Free and easy folk for these hard times

IF YOU'RE a bit strapped for cash, as so many of us are, and can afford only a ticket or twosome is still plenty of free entertainment on offer. On Thursday evening, for example, in the Market Square from 7.30pm to 9.30pm you can watch the Sidmouth Steppers Great Western Morris, Sidmouth Traditional Mummers and Mrs Midnight's. Well, those are the sides listed as What's Afoot to press but other morris sides and entertainers are likely to turn up.

On Sunday morning, morris sides from all over the county and beyond will be strutting their stuff along the seafront. In addition you will find plenty of buskers playing everything from fiddles to hammered dulcimers and street organs. Buskers will be there all week while the morris dancers will be confined to spots around the town.

At 1.30pm on Sunday the Sidmouth Horse Trials will be held. Hobby horses, 'osses and all sorts of fabulous beasts gather at Port Royal at the eastern end of the promenade to compete for the Aardman Trophy. Expect plenty of hijinks. A couple of years ago the trophy was won not by a horse but by a seagull.

Colin and Sonia Andrews will be running their regular singaround at the Royal Glen from 2.30pm to 4.30pm every day from Sunday. As usual there will be a different theme each day. If you are one of those singers who likes to live on their wits and turn up at a themed singaround unprepared then drag something out of your repertoire that fits then look away now.

For those who like to have a song at the ready, the themes will be: Sunday: Hard Times. Monday: In Good Humour. Tuesday: True Or False. Wednesday: In Foreign Parts. Thursday: Heavens Above. Friday: All At Sea.

Sidmouth Acoustic Folk Club



3rd MONDAY each month 7.30pm

OPEN PERFORMERS NIGHTS*

17 July, 18 Sept & 16 Oct

*£2 Entrance Fee

THE BLUE BALL

Stevens Cross, Sidford EX10 9QL

Contact Jan on 07850163241 or email
janet.strapp@outlook.com

Totnes Folk Club

Dartmouth Inn, The Plains
Totnes, TQ9 5EL



2nd Thursday in the Month – 8pm

No Folk Club in August

For more information contact

Andy: ndclarke6@gmail.com

Anne: anne.m.gill@icloud.com

Visit our Facebook page or contact

Steve & Anne Gill

01803 290427

or Andy Clarke 01803 732312

Festival Round-up

DARTMOOR FOLK FESTIVAL

11th, 12th & 13th August

BOB Cann's festival in South Zeal took a hammering in the lockdown years but is edging its way back. You know that things are on the up when the website advertises not only a new Friday night ceilidh but also a proper toilet block on its campsite.

Not surprisingly, Fridays's ceilidh has the Dartmoor Pixie Band with caller Sarah Bazeley. Saturday's ceilidh band is Oxford Nags with caller Jane Thomas.

Friday night's concert features Sykes Martin – Miranda Sykes from Show Of Hands and Hannah Martin from Edgelarks (pictured) – and Jim Causley.

Artists lined up for Saturday are Rura, Magpie Lane, Jack Rutter, Keith Donnelly and Sara Grey. On Sunday you can see



local heroes Harbottle & Jonas, Geoff Lakeman & Rob Murch and shanty group Mariners Away.

As usual there will be the stepdancing and broom dance competitions and

workshops, morris dancing from Cogs & Wheels and Tinners Morris and the regular assortment of interesting stalls.

For more details, see dartmoorfolkfestival.org.uk



CORNWALL FOLK FESTIVAL

25th - 28th August

IT'S good to see that this festival in Wadebridge has found room for artists from Devon: Seth Lakeman, Windjammer and Rob Murch and Geoff Lakeman (although Geoff might argue that he's a Cornishman who just happens to live in Devon).

The headliners on Friday are the Gigspanner Big Band (pictured left).

The festival is a real feast for fiddle fans because as well as Seth and Peter Knight you can see the Kinnaris Quintet from Glasgow, featuring three very fine violinists.

There will be plenty of street entertainment from singers, musicians and morris dancers.

For more details see cornwallfolkfestival.com.

WE WOULD recommend Beautiful Days in Bicton on 18-20 August but The Levellers' Festival has sold out already.

Festival Round-up

WIDECOMBE FAIR

Tuesday 12th September

9am until late

THIS is a proper old established country fair – famed in song – with plenty of folk music thrown in along with ferret racing, pony club displays and hay bale tossing. And of course there will be Uncle Tom Cobley and his grey mare (but please don't ask if seven of you can get up on her back).

There used to be an old radio show called Country Meets Folk. This is more Folk meets country when folkies from the town who have

only ever sung about ploughing can meet real singing farmers such as the amazing Tich Scott.

There will be live music performances all day in the main marquee and also at the Ruggestone Inn just down the road.

Artists had not been confirmed as we went to press but expect to see Jim Causley, Bill Murray and Banned From The Moor and probably Geoff Lakeman and Rob Murch. There will also be dancing from Beltane and Dartmoor border morris sides.

For details, see www.widecombefair.com

TEIGN MARITIME AND SHANTY FESTIVAL

8-10th September

After taking a year out, the festival comes storming back this year with some 50 sets of shanty singers from all over the UK performing in Teignmouth and Shaldon over the weekend. Added to that, the tall ship the Pelican will be moored in Teignmouth Harbour, bringing a touch of the age of sail.

There is a huge range of free entertainment but Friday night features a paid-for concert with the renowned shanty group Kimber's Men (right), the Captain's Beard and Loc Tup Together at Teignmouth Pavilions.

In 2021 the festival raised £3,000 for charity. This year there will be collections for the RNLI, Rowcroft Hospice, Teign Heritage Centre and the Alice Cross Centre.

For more information see www.teignshantyfestival.co.uk



THERE'S SOME GREAT ENTERTAINMENT BUT WHAT'S THE EDITOR'S PICK?

THIS is putting my head on the line but there is one act I will be travelling a fair distance to see this year: John Conolly

That's because a lot of people claim to write folk songs. Well, they might write songs in the traditional style but do they become real songs of the people? One that has sunk into the tradition so much that many do not realise it's not traditional is *Fiddler's Green* by Mr Conolly.

Almost as bad as not knowing he wrote it is knowing him only for that song when he

has written such classics as *Ranters Wharf*, *Mister Punch And Judy Man* and *Send Me A Postcard*.

John is based in Grimsby but is making a rare appearance in Devon on Thursday September 21 at Bideford Folk Club at the Joiners Arms, EX30 2DR.

Those who have experienced John in concert and know his amazing songs and warm personality will not want to miss this event. Those who have seen him will know why I am so enthusiastic about him.

What's On

THE latest listings appear in the following section. We try to keep up to date but events can be subject to change. Also, some clubs close during the holiday seasons. Do check before setting off, either by ringing organisers, going to the venue's website or consulting our new website, www.devonfolkdirectory.org.

Listings are free for Devon Folk members and for subscribers and advertisers in What's Afoot.

ONE person can be the contact for multiple listings at no extra cost.

Now the Flaxey-Green website has ended after more than two decades, the Directory provides an alternative for all kinds of folk

activity in the county. We are pleased that Trevor Paul, the former Flaxey-Green webmaster, is helping to run the directory and the new Devon Folk website.

Coming events should be sent to devonfolkwebmaster@gmail.com or devonfolkeditor@gmail.com

If you submit an entry for the listings, it is your responsibility to ensure that details are up to date and that we are informed of any changes.

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.

We look forward to welcoming you to

Brixham Folk Club

We meet at 7.30pm on the 1st Friday of every month at
The Edge, Bolton Street
Brixham, TQ5 9DH

Singers, musicians of all levels welcome, along with anyone who loves folk music and just wants to join us.

Contact Mark & Jo on mnharrod@yahoo.co.uk with any queries

Song and Music

Clubs and sessions are sometimes forced to change venue at short notice. Not all operate during the holiday seasons. Please check. See also www.devonfolk.org for updates.

AWLISCOMBE NR HONITON

2nd Wednesday 8pm.
Jurassic Folk Honiton Inn,
Awliscombe, EX14 3PJ.
01404 549903/ 01404 43429

BIDEFORD

Thursday. Bideford Folk Club, Joiners Arms - John Purser 01237 424286 or email bidefolk@gmail.com

BISHOPSTEIGNTON

Wednesday 7.30pm. Red Rock Brewery, John Morey 07791 054773. www.oldworkshop.org.

BODMIN

Friday: St Petroc's Parish Centre, Priory Rd, PL31 2DP. www.bodminfolk.co.uk

BRIXHAM

4th Monday 8pm. The Birdcage, New Road. TQ5 8LT
1st Friday 7.30pm. Brixham Folk Cub. The Edge, Bolton Street, Brixham TQ5 9DH

BUCKLAND MONACHORUM

2nd Sunday 7.30pm. The Drake Manor Inn, The Village, PL20 7NA

1st Wednesday 8.30pm.

The Drake Manor Inn, The Village, Buckland Monachorum, PL20 7NA

COLEFORD

Last Tuesday 8pm. The New Inn. Dave 01363 84914

CHERITON FITZPAINE

Last Sunday, noon. Half Moon. Inn Clare Penny 01884 860023

CHIPSHOP

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

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

South West Shape Note Singing, Cullompton Steve 07976 605692

DARTINGTON

Last Monday: 7pm New Lion Brewery, Meadowbrook, TQ9 6JD. Mark Jefferys markjefferys7@gmail.com

DENBURY

Thursday (weekly) 8.30pm. Denbury Folk. Union Inn, The Green, Denbury, Newton Abbot TQ12 6DQ. Mostly song, in a sing-around style but occasional tunes, stories and poems. Tel 01803 812537

ERMINGTON

Last Monday: 8pm Crooked Spire Inn, The Square, PL21 9LP. Acoustic music session "Country meets Folk".

EXETER

Last Wednesday: 7.30pm Cornish and Devonian music Session (and some tunes from elsewhere). The Mount Radford, 73-75 Magdalen Rd, Exeter EX2 4TA

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

EXMOUTH

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

1st Thursday 7.45pm Bicton Inn Folk session 01395 272589

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

FENITON

First Tuesdays (except August). Mixed folk session,

tunes and songs. The Nog Inn, EX14 3BT 7.30pm facebook.com/TaleValleyFolkSessions

FROGMORE

Alternate Wednesdays 8pm The Globe Inn, Frogmore, TQ7 2NR. Nigel & Sarah 01548 531525

IPPLEPEN

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

KINGSTEIGNTON

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

LYMPSTONE

4th Wednesday 8pm. Lymptone Folk, Roots and Acoustic, Redwing Inn. Church Rd, EX8 5JT. 01395 225075/07741409265

MARLDON

3rd Friday 7pm. Ye Olde Smokey House, Vicarage Road, Marldon, TQ3 1NN. Folk Plus Acoustic Music Club. Paul 07894 961010

MILTON COMBE

Fortnightly Tuesday 7.30pm. American Roots song and tune session. The Who'd Have Thought It Inn, PL20 6HP martinr.54@virgin.net

MORCHARD BISHOP

1st Thursday 12 noon, The London Inn, EX17 6NW. Jon 0136383740

PLYMOUTH

1st and 3rd Tuesday 8.30pm. The Artillery Arms. Mixed song and instrument session Marilyn Cowan 01752 309983

ST DOMINICK

2nd Saturday 7.30pm. Who'd Have Thought It Inn, PL12 6TG Sylvia Watts 01579 382711 sylvwatts@aol.com

SANDFORD

1st Tuesday 8pm Lamb Inn Paul & Hazel 01363 776275

Song and Music

3rd Wednesday 7.30pm

Lamb Inn Jon Shapley
0136383740 jon_@shapley@hotmail.com

SCORRITON

4th Sunday 7.30 pm.

Tradesman's Arms Sue & Simon Williams, Scorriton Farmhouse.

SIDMOUTH

3rd Monday 7.30pm.

Sidmouth Acoustic Folk Club Blue Ball Inn, Stevens Cross, Sidford EX10 9QL Hugh 01395 514618

SOUTH BRENT

3rd Thursday 8pm Pack

Horse Inn. Mixed session. mickbramich@gmail.com

SOUTH ZEAL

3rd Monday music session

Kings Arms email markbazeleymobile@gmail.com

STICKLEPATH

1st Sunday 8pm. Devonshire Inn. Derek Moore 01837 840316

STOKE CANON

4th Wednesday 8.30pm.

Stoke Canon Inn. Paul and Alison 07709324836

TALATON

3rd Sunday 12pm-3pm (not

August) Mostly English session. The Talaton Inn, EX5 2RQ. facebook.com/TaleValleyFolkSessions jon@devonstrings.co.uk

TEIGNMOUTH

1st Monday 8pm.

Teignmouth Folk Club, The Brass, 3 Hollands Rd, TQ14 8SR. Martyn Hillstead, 01626 778071.

TOPSHAM

1st Monday 7.30pm. Mainly

English instrumental session at The Bridge Inn, Topsham EX3 0OQ

Tuesday singers' night

7.45pm at The Globe, Fore Street, Topsham EX3 0HR.

Monthly Concerts. Matthews Hall, Fore Street, EX3 0HF (see advert on back page)

TOTNES

2nd Thursday: Folk Song

Club. Dartmouth Inn. Steve & Anne Gill, 01803 290427.

1st & 3rd Tuesday 8pm. Bay

Horse. Music and Song session (English)

2nd & 4th Tuesday 8pm. Bay

Horse. Music session (Irish)

WILLAND

Alternate Thursday Willand

Club Band Workshop.

Willand Chapel, Gables Rd.

Mary Marker 01626 854141

WHIDDON DOWN

1st Tuesday (or 1st

Wednesday) 8pm. Whidsong.

Whiddon Down Village Hall,

EX20 2TQ. Email

dartmoorbill@yahoo.com

WOTTER

Sunday 7.45 pm. Folk on The

Moor. The Moorland Hotel in

Wotter, PL7 5HP (telephone

01752 839228). Anton

Horwich, 4, The Green,

Milton Combe, Yelverton,

01822 853620

Social Dance

BIDEFORD

Bideford Country Dance

Club, Northam Hall, Fore St, Northam, EX39 1AN.

Fridays 8pm. Tel: 01237 476632.

Bideford Folk Dance Club,

Northam Hall, Fore St,

Northam, Bideford EX39 1AN.

Weekly from last Wednesday

in September to first in May

Tel: 01237 423554.

BRIDPORT

Bridport Folk Dance Club,

W1 Hall, North Street, DT6

3NW. Monday except

Holidays. 7.15pm. Gwenda

or Mike. 01308 863552.

CHARD

Chard Folk Dance Club,

Combe St Nicholas Village

Hall TA20 3NY. Fortnightly

Thursday 7.30pm. Hilary &

Bill Durrant 01460 61996

DARTINGTON

Dartington Folk Dance Club,

Dartington Village Hall. 8pm

Fridays. Tel: 01822 852442.

EXMOUTH

Exmouth Isca Scottish

Dancers, East Budleigh

Village Hall, Wynard Road,

EX9 7DU. Wednesdays 10am.

Mr & Mrs VJ Tyler 01395

276913

Exmouth Playford Club, East

Budleigh Church Hall,

Budleigh Salterton. 2nd

Sunday. 2.30pm. Mr & Mrs

VJ Tyler 01395 276913

GITTISHAM

Gittisham Folk Dance Club,

Gittisham Village Hall, EX14

3AF Wednesdays. 8pm

Tel: Rosemary 01395

515403.

LAUNCESTON

Launceston Folk Dance Club,

St John Ambulance Hall.

Tues 8pm. Not July and

August. Rosemary 01566

774491.

NEWTON ABBOT

Newton Abbot Irish Set

Dance, Jolly Farmer, TQ12

2RB. Weekly Wednesdays.

Tel: 01626204350.

SIDFORD

Sidford Folk Dance Club,

Sidford Social Hall, Byes Lane

EX10 9QX. Tuesdays 8pm

September to May.

Tel: 01395 514161

or 01395 568336.

SOUTH HAMS

South Hams Folk Dance

Club, West Charleton Village

Hall TQ7 2AG Weds 7.45pm

September to April.

Social Dance

Philip 01548 561415.

TAVISTOCK

Tavistock Folk Dance Club,
Parish Centre PL19 8AU or
Methodist Church Hall PL19

8DX. Fortnightly, Thursdays
2pm to 4pm. Not June to
August. Tel: 01822 855858.

WILLAND

Willand Folk Dance Club,

Willand Village Hall, Gables
Road, EX15 2PL. 2nd and 4th
Thursdays 8pm.
Tel: 01844 253546
or 01404 47200.

Events

JULY

SATURDAY 1

Willand Folk Dance Club.
Caller: Victoria Yeomans
Band: Keeping Thyme
Willand Village Hall, Gables
Road, EX15 2PL

The Lost Sound: Dartmoor
Folk Choir Village Hall,
Malborough TQ7 3BX

SATURDAY 8

Mad Dog McCrea, ,
Morwellham Quay,
Tavistock PL19 8JL

SUNDAY 9

Paul Downes, Folk on the
Moor, Moorland Hotel,
Wotter, PL7 5HP

WEDNESDAY 5

Gittisham Folk Dance Club.
Caller: Simon Maplesden
Band: Chris Toyne. Gittisham
Village Hall, EX14 3AF

Gigspanner Big Band, The
Watermark, Erme Court,
Leonards Road, Ivybridge
PL21 0SZ

FRIDAY 7

**Gigspanner Trio + Knight &
Spiers Beehive Arts Centre,**
Dowell Street, Honiton EX14
1LZ

WEDNESDAY 12

Gittisham Folk Dance Club.
Caller: TBA, Band: Ian and
Margaret Gittisham Village
Hall, EX14 3AF

THURSDAY 13

**Veronica Sbergia & Max de
Bernhardi,** Otterton Mill, nr
Budleigh Salterton EX9 7HG
Lil Jim The Coffee Cellar, 22
The Quay, Exeter, EX2 4AP

SUNDAY 16

Mother's Ruin Ye Olde Cider

Bar, 99 East Street, Newton
Abbot.

WEDNESDAY 19

Gittisham Folk Dance Club.
Band: Fresh Aire Gittisham
Village Hall, EX14 3AF
Phil Beer Trio Teignmouth
Pavillions The Den Crescent,
Teignmouth, TQ14 8BG

FRIDAY 21

Kingsbridge Live Music:
Carousel Regal Club, Church
Street, TQ7 1DD

SATURDAY 22

The Lost Sound: Dartmoor
Folk Choir Matthews Hall,
Fore Street, Topsham
EX3 0HF

SUNDAY 23

Melrose Quartet. Topsham
Folk Club Mathews Hall, Fore
Street, Topsham,
EX3 0HF

Mediva: A Dance to the
Music of Time Great Hall,
Dartington Estate, TQ9 6EL

Mike Silver. Folk on the
Moor, Moorland Hotel,
Wotter, Plymouth PL7 5HP

THURSDAY 27

**Brooks Williams & Aaron
Catlow,** Otterton Mill, nr
Budleigh Salterton EX9 7HG

Jim Causley. St Pancras
Church, Widecombe in the
Moor

Fireside Folk 1 Private
Garden, Great Hall,
Dartington Estate, TQ9 6EL

FRIDAY 28

Music/Bar/None, Great Hall,
Dartington Estate, TQ9 6EL

AUGUST

FRIDAY 4 TO FRIDAY 11

Sidmouth Folk Festival

FRIDAY 11 TO SUNDAY 13

Dartmoor Folk Festival,
South Zeal

THURSDAY 17

Ajay Srivastav Otterton Mill,
nr Budleigh Salterton EX9 7HG

FRIDAY 18 - SUNDAY 20

20th Anniversary Beautiful
Days Festival, Escot Park,
Ottery St Mary EX11 1LU

SATURDAY 26

Seth Lakeman with Benji
Kirkpatrick and Alex Hart.
Quad Theatre, Marjon Arts
Centre, Derriford Road,
Plymouth PL6 8BH

WEDNESDAY 30

Mississippi Macdonald.
Otterton Mill, nr Budleigh
Salterton EX9 7HG

SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY 1

Geoff Lakeman & Rob Murch
Calstock Arts, The Old
Chapel, Sand Lane, Calstock
PL18 9QX

SATURDAY 2

Willand Folk Dance Club.
Caller: Jane Thomas Band:
Chris Jewell & Nick Wyke
Willand Village Hall, Gables
Road, EX15 2PL

Tannahill Weavers Otterton
Mill, nr Budleigh Salterton
EX9 7HG

SUNDAY 3

The Old Gaffers
Folk on the Moor, Moorland
Hotel, Wotter, PL7 5HP

FRIDAY 8

Phil Beer The Flavel, Flavel
Place, Dartmouth, TQ6 9ND

SATURDAY 9

D'Accord's French Music and
Dance. St James Church Hall,

Events

Mount Pleasant, Exeter
EX4 7AH

SUNDAY 10

The Simon & Garfunkel

Story Exeter Corn Exchange,
George St, EX1 1BU

SUNDAY 17

Meridianum Calstock Arts,
The Old Chapel, Sand Lane,
Calstock PL18 9QX

WEDNESDAY 20

**Samia Malik with
Sukhdeep Dhanjal**

Livermead House Hotel,
Torbay Road,
Torquay TQ2 6QJ

THURSDAY 21

John Conolly Bideford Folk
Song Club, The Joiners Arms,
Market Place, EX30 2DR

FRIDAY 22

**Exeter Folk and Acoustic
Music Club** Annie Winter &
Paul Downes. Victoria Park
Tennis Club, Lyndhurst Road,
St Leonards, EX2 4NX

SATURDAY 23

Phil Beer The Watermark,
Erme Court, Leonards Road,
Ivybridge PL21 0SZ

SUNDAY 24

Blowzabella

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

Over the Moon,

Folk on the Moor,
Moorland Hotel,
Wotter, PL7 5HP

Morris and Display Teams

**(F - Morris Federation, R
Morris Ring, Open Morris)**

Day: regular meeting

ALIVE & KICKING (F)

Appalachian. Jo Wright
01392 462531

BELTANE (F)

Border, Harriet White.
harrietcewhite@yahoo.co.uk
Bideford Phoenix Morris (F)
Carolyn Bennion, 01237
473798

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

CATSEY MORRIS (F)

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

COGS & WHEELS (F)

Donna Tombs
dtombs65@gmail.com (Thurs)

DARTMOOR BORDER

(F)

Mark Tregaskis

01752 299700

treggie@blueyonder.co.uk

Wednesdays

dartmoorbordermorris.com

**DARTINGTON MORRIS
MEN (R)**

Martin Jones,
bag@dartingtonmorris.uk
Dartingtonmorris.uk (Fri)

EXETER MORRIS (R)

Chris Burhousec.
burhouse@btinternet.com,
01395 277719 Thurs.

FIRESTONE

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

GLORY OF THE WEST

MORRIS (F)

Pat Langman 07813625871
gloryofthewest@gmail.com

(Wed)

GREAT WESTERN MORRIS (F)

bagman@greatwestern.org.
uk (Thur)

GREEN WILLOW CLOG (F)

Jacqueline 07748 121093

GRIMSPOUND BORDER

MORRIS (F)

Lee Merry, 8, Waterside,

Bovey Tracey, TQ139SX

lmerry@live.co.uk

HARBERTON NAVY (F)

David Beavis

davidbeavis@tiscali.co.uk

ILFRACOMBE RED

PETTICOATS (F)

Linda Corcoran,
lindacorcoran@bopenworld

.com

ISAMBARD GASKET RATS (F)

bag@isambardsgasketrats.

co.uk

LODESTONE BORDER (F)

lodestonemorris@
hotmail.co.uk (Thurs)

LYME MORRIS

www.facebook.com/
LymeMorris

**MAJIDAH TRIBAL BELLY
DANCE**

majidah925@gmail.com

NEWTON BUSHEL MORRIS (F)

Rod Shute, 01803 403153
rod@newtonbushelmorris.uk

OLD TOWN TWELVES

Alison Chapman, 07541

385463

OTTER MORRIS

bag.otter.morris@gmail.com

PLYMOUTH CLOG (O)

plymouthclog@outlook.com

PLYMOUTH MORRIS

bagman@plymouthmorris.

uk www.plymouthmorris.uk

RADDON HILL CLOG

MORRIS (F)

Triss Cummings 01626 376173

ROUGH DIAMONDS

APPALACHIAN

01460 220607

SHUFFLE THE DECK (F)

Appalachian.

Kathy Houlihan 01752

893335 or 07719 652885

SIDMOUTH STEPPERS NW

MORRIS (F)

cath.nettleton@gmail.com

SIDMOUTH TRADITIONAL

MUMMERS

Henry Piper,

01404 811491

henry.piper@zoom.co.uk

Morris and Display Teams

TINNERS MORRIS

MEN (F)

andrew@frangleton.co.uk

TRIGG MORRIS MEN (R)

Roger Hancock,
01208 73907

TUDOR DANCE GROUP

Mrs Elizabeth Thurgood,
01404 812185
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September 2nd Jane Thomas with Chris Jewell & Nick Wyke

October 7th Robert Blackborow with Petronella

Admission as from September £10.00 - Tea & Biscuits - Raffle
Contact: Zena Roberts 01884 253546 www.willandfolkdanceclub.co.uk

Club Nights 2nd & 4th Thursdays 8.00 – 10.30pm in the Village Hall
As from September
Members £4.00 / Non-members £4.50 – See Diary Dates for more information
Contact Marilyn Broom 01404 47200 or Zena Roberts 01884 253546

Making a knight of it



ST GEORGE'S Day was celebrated in proper style at the King's Arms in South Zeal when the local mummers rolled out their time-honoured play.

After dancing from Tinnors Morris and Cogs and Wheels, our patron saint battled for England against dark and dirty knights.

Although it's still very traditional, the play has evolved over the years. One innovation, for which the older actors are very grateful, is a convenient bed on the set (see picture below) for them to fall onto for their death scenes. It gives a welcome respite to old bones.

The evening ended with a fine singalong in the pub.

*If you'd like to learn more about the mumming tradition, Colin Andrews is bringing out a book, *Devon Mumming Past & Present*. See his website www.bonnygreen.uk for details.*

*And if your local mummers group or morris side is bringing out a play for the winter season or planning a wassail event then do let *What's Afoot* know in plenty of time for the next edition which will cover October to December. Information should be sent to devonfolkeditor@gmail.com by August 20.*



Club goes for glitter and cake to celebrate centenary



GLEAMING chandeliers, spotlights and bunting around the stage set the tone for the Launceston Folk Dance Club's Centenary dance in the town hall – albeit three years late.

The scene was completed with celebration cakes, a bumper raffle and memorabilia courtesy of Jim and Anna Reade adding the final touches. With Sarah Bazley and the Dartmoor Pixie Band leading the dancing a fun evening was enjoyed by all – including those fairly new to folk dancing.

The bring and share supper was, as usual, excellent – again a new venture for those new

to folkdancing as well as dancing to a live band with dancers from elsewhere.

The club were grateful for the grant made by the Launceston Rotary club three years ago which enabled the dance to go ahead in these difficult times. We understand that Launceston is one of the few clubs that still holds these dances in large venues – and we are only a small club.

Now we are looking forward to our autumn dance on October 28 with A Pair of Shears and Jane Thomas calling. We hope to see you there. *Ann Foster*

LAUNCESTON FOLK DANCE CLUB 2023

Tuesday Club Nights
8.00 – 10.00 pm (Not July & August)
St. Johns Ambulance Hall

Autumn Dance
Launceston Town Hall
PL15 7AR

Saturday 28th October 2023
8.00 – 11.00 pm
Caller Jane Thomas

Band – A Pair of Shears
Bring and share supper

For further information ring
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Monday 7th August
Singers' and Musicians' Open Night

Monday 4th September
Singers' and Musicians' Open Night

Further details from
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01626 778071/07904037812
martynggh@aol.com

The pros and cons of contra dancing

I AM an avid contra fan. Like many, I came to contra when ceilidh started to get a bit repetitive. Cumberland Square Eight anyone? What, again? The beauty, cleverness and infinite variety of the choreography, the effortlessness when it all flows, losing yourself in the dance, the sublime music... I could go on and on.

Some years ago I ran a regular contra session in Exeter. It went for several years but like so many folk dance things it withered and died. The more numbers went down the less people wanted to come and the inevitable happened.

This disappointed me. As with all things folk dance related, I wanted to share my love of it with as many people as possible. So when Exeter Ceilidhs became well established I saw an opportunity. After the covid doldrums we were back to attendances in the 80s, many of whom were regulars and would easily cope with some basic contra.

If I was going to do this I wanted it to go really well, so I decided to break one of my rules (local bands) and asked Gareth and Linda (aka English Contra Dance Band) if they would be willing to come – and they were. Brilliant. That would pull experienced dancers in which would help the evening go well.

So who was going to call? I was undecided for some time, there are so many good callers out there. Secretly, however, I knew it was going to be me. I love working with ECDB, I'm good at teaching contra to newbies, and the dancers know and trust me.

Plus there have to be some perks of running a ceilidh series for five years.

The dance was advertised as a “contra ceilidh” – designed to encourage people to come rather than put them off. I've never really

been sure what a contra ceilidh is, but in my head it was a contra unless they can't cope, in which case it becomes a ceilidh.

Come the evening, it's 10 minutes to start time and there's hardly anyone there. Ceilidh dancers are not known for their ability to turn up at the start of an event, but I would have expected more than we had. Was it all going to be a massive flop? Had too many been put off by the “warning” that the dance would be a little more complicated than normal?

Fortunately not. They came in ones and twos

and threes and fours until we had 80 people – fantastic. I started off with a circle dance to warm everyone up, then straight into the first contra.

I had a plan that involved starting with simple moves (Dosido and swing, Ladies Chain) and “obvious” progressions (Circle Left 3/4, balance the ring, pass through to a new neighbour).

After that, each succeeding dance had one or two new things in it but nothing too complicated. I hoped this would be OK for the newbies to cope with yet interesting enough for the experienced dancers.

They say no plan survives first contact with the enemy,

but (perhaps surprisingly) I mostly stuck with my original set list. Where I did change it, I skipped out a dance to go on to something more complicated instead.

Best of all, the dancers loved it. See <https://youtu.be/-ARGx3LTG88> for more details.

So, 80 people dancing their socks off and having a whale of a time. “What next?” you ask.

Vertical Expression, Saturday October 28, I reply.

Put it in your diary.

NEW DANCERS START HERE

CONTRA dancing is the American version of ceilidh. It's a little less energetic (no galloping) and uses slightly more complicated moves.

You dance with a partner (usually changing each dance) in long lines of couples.

Each time through, you perform the dance sequence with another couple in a group of four.

At the end of this you move up or down the set to dance with a new couple, and the sequence starts again.

The navy's ballad that won our parson's heart

THE Queen Of Hearts seemed a natural choice for this issue after having a friendly music session with Dartmoor entertainers Bill Murray and Jim Causley at my local, the Royal Oak at Meavy, writes John Foxen.

Bill and Jim had been doing a gig at Sheepstor on the day after the coronation. It had finished at 3pm but they had got the taste for playing and singing – as you do – so they popped into the Oak for a glass or two and a few tunes and songs.

It was one of those spontaneous sessions that to me are the best part of folk music. It was a sunny afternoon and the three of us sat in the bar and played tunes while most of the punters sat outside. But the door was open and, according to our splendid landlord Steve, those outside were enjoying the music as it drifted out to them. There was no pressure to perform perfectly or for the customers to sit and listen attentively.

We played a good few tunes then, because Tavistock is just up the road, Bill felt obliged to sing *Tavistock Goosey Fair*.

It got a good reception so Bill urged Jim to sing *The Queen Of Hearts*. "This is the right place," he said. "It comes from just over the moor from here – Burrator Reservoir."

Jim obliged with the haunting melody to the delight of those inside and outside the pub.

"Is it really a local song?" asked one of the listeners.

"Everyone thinks it's a Joan Baez song," said Bill firmly, "but it's not American – it comes from Dartmoor."

Joan Baez did indeed make the song famous back in the Sixties but to be fair, in her song book she credits our relentless collector of songs of the west, the Reverend Sabine Baring Gould, as the source.

In his notebook, the prodigious parson records that he heard *The Queen of Hearts* sung by a navy on a train from Tavistock to Yelverton. That's back in the day when you could travel by train from Launceston to

Plymouth but with one change at Tavistock. What wonderful progress our railways have made since then.

In his book *Songs of The West*, Baring Gould remarks: "Sung by a workman engaged on the Burrow-Tor reservoir at Sheepstor, the water supply for Plymouth, 1894. A quaint little song."

I find it more than quaint. In fact I'd describe it as a hauntingly beautiful tune. Others have commented that its melodic structure (getting technical its "variable second" – the E that gets flattened in the last bar) make it highly unusual in English folk music.

Although the lyrics have been found in various broadsides, the tune has been collected only by Baring Gould. He felt it had the flavour of the era of King Charles II. The parson and his collaborators had a habit of hiding away or changing tunes they thought were a bit too strange for English middle class ears. It's a blessing they didn't "improve" or discard this one.

When our session ended Bill, Jim and I drove off on our separate ways. There is no longer a train from Yelverton and the car rules now. But I kept thinking of the unnamed navy on the train from his lodgings in Tavistock, riding to Yelverton then facing an uphill walk of three miles or more before starting a day of backbreaking toil. He kept up his spirits with an old song that enchanted the parson and still enchants us today.

He wasn't being paid to make music and had no thoughts of finding fame with his song. He sang for the love of it. I thought of Jim and Bill who had to keep singing after their gig had ended because the music had taken them over. You could put those two in front of a firing squad and they'd be asking: "Hang on, have we got time for one more song?"

So here is the song. Don't let it die but like the navy let this and other great songs become part of your life.

You can find Jim's version on his CD *Devonshire Roses*.

'This song comes from just over the moor from here – Burrator Reservoir!'

The Queen of Hearts

Melody

To the Queen of hearts he's the
Ace - of Sor - row. He's here to - day, he is
gone to - mor - row. Young men are plen - ty but
sweet - hearts few. If my
love leave me what shall I do?

To the Queen of Hearts he's the Ace of
sorrow,
He's here to-day, he's gone to-morrow;
Young men are plenty but sweethearts few,
If my love leave me, what shall I do?

When my love comes in I gaze not around,
When my love goes out, I fall in a swound;
To meet is pleasure, to part is sorrow,
He is here today, he is gone to-morrow.

Had I the store in yonder mountain,
Where gold and silver is had for counting,
I could not count, for the thought of thee,
My eyes so full that I could not see.

I love my father, I love my mother,
I love my sister, I love my brother;
I love my friends, my relations too,
But I'll leave them all for the love of you.

My father left me both house and land,
And servants many at my command;
At my commandment they ne'er shall be,
I'll forsake them all for to follow thee.

An Ace of sorrow to the Queen of Hearts,
O how my bosom bleeds and smarts;
Young men are plenty, but sweet-hearts
few,
If my love leave me what shall I do?

Pennymoor Singaround

Song and Music Sessions

Song Sessions: 1st Thursday – 12 noon The London Inn, Morchard Bishop, Nr. CREDITON Contact: Jon 0136383740

3rd Wednesday 7.30pm The Lamb, Sandford, Nr. CREDITON Contact: Jon 0136383740

Music Session: Last Sunday 12 noon Half Moon Inn, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Contact Claire 01884860023

Visit Facebook: Pennymoor Singaround

To confirm updated venues or contact:

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Jon: 01363 83740 – jon_shapley@hotmail.com

Also run by Pennymoor members:

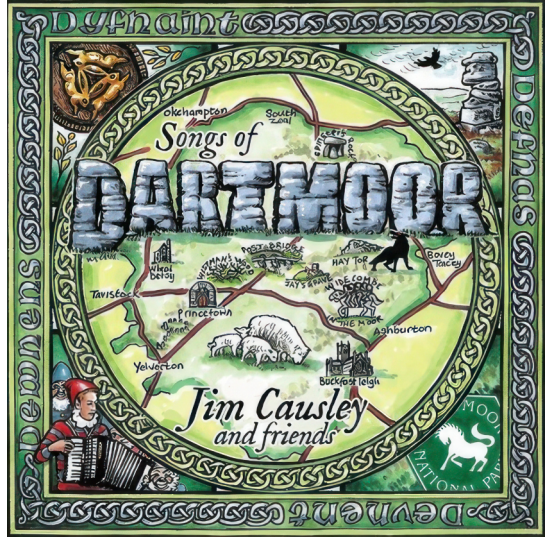
1st Sunday 8.00pm The Devonshire Inn, Sticklepath Contact: Derek 01837840316

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Jim takes his pals out for a proper Dartmoor musical tour



BEING asked to review Jim's latest CD is a privilege. Last year when he was doing some work in the Museum of Dartmoor Life in Okehampton, he was asked if they could have some of his CDs of traditional Devon songs to play in the museum. As a result of this conversation, Jim set to work putting together this Dartmoor-themed CD of 20 tracks.

The first thing to point out is that this is not a typical Jim Causley CD. In fact, on some tracks you won't even hear him. For this special project, Jim chose to bring in his musical friends and collaborators and occasionally put them in the spotlight instead.

This gave him a chance to show off his now considerable skills as a recording engineer and producer, skills that he honed during lockdown. A number of the songs have appeared on Jim's previous albums but it is worth listening to the fresh treatments that he has given them here.

Jim has recorded a number of Devon albums but this CD is his first to be dedicated solely to Dartmoor song. It covers a spectrum ranging from the ancient traditional songs collected by the Reverend Baring-Gould in the late 1800s to Devonshire dialect Music Hall pieces, wartime songs and some more contemporary numbers by modern-day songsmiths who live on the moor.

Of the 20 tracks on the album, many will be familiar such as *Childe the Hunter* and *My Lady's Coach* from the Baring Gould Collection. As you would expect, Jim produces

superb renditions of them both. Our favourite track on the album is *The Archangel Way*, with words, and music by Jim. He was commissioned to write this song by Devon Pilgrim, an organisation created by Exeter Cathedral to oversee the various new pilgrimage routes being created in the country. The Archangel Way is one of these new walking routes which begins at St Michael de Rupe, Brentor and finishes at St Michael the Archangel in Chagford.

In contrast, there are several tracks showing his command of the Devon dialect, as in *Down 'Pon Ole Dartymoor*, *Tavvystock Goozey Vair* and *Widdecombe Fair* and he is joined on these numbers by family members and friends and the Mariners Away Shanty Crew.

WE WERE pleased he included *The Dinky Farm Nigh Burrator* sung by Maggie Duffy with Wilfred Hodges on piano, as Maggie is also excellent when she sings in our Devon dialect. Not a song we were familiar with, it was written and composed by C. John Trythall who also wrote *Tavvystock Goozey Vair*.

Many songs have been written around the legend of *Jay's Grave* and the words to the song on this CD were written by Marilyn Tucker for Wren Music's Gothic Dartmoor project. Guitar and backing vocals are provided by Paul Wilson. Marilyn also sings on *The Hairy Hand* and is joined by Paul and Jon Dyer who plays bass on both of these songs.

The CD would not have been complete

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Review

without *Craftsmen of the Moor*, a song written by the late Bob Cann. Bill Murray sings *Jan Pook* another song in dialect. Also included is *Chagford Show*, written by Tich Scott and the splendid fiddler Carl Allerfeldt, both Dartmoor farmers.

Jim plays piano accordion, button accordion, accordion, melodica, piano and keyboards and is joined on some tracks by his regular collaborators Matt Norman on mandolin and banjo and Nick Wyke playing violin, viola and guitar. As with his previous albums, the excellent artwork has been provided by the talented Karen Cater who lives in the Far East (Essex).

We have only scratched the surface and with 20 tracks, there is so much more on this CD. We would recommend you to buy a copy and find out for yourself.

Steve and Anne Gill

COPIES of the CD can be obtained from Jim's website, www.jimcausley.co.uk where you can also find his other Devonian CDs, *Devonshire Roses*, *Devonia* and *Dumnonia*.

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DEVON FOLK COMMITTEE NOMINATION FORM

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

Name

Address

Telephone Email

*Please return this form by 11th February 2023 to:
Mrs A. Gill, Maleth, 11 Cleveland Road, Torquay, TQ2 5BD*



Help us to help Devon's traditions

DEVON Folk is a non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting traditional music song and dance throughout the county.

It publishes this magazine and helps with festivals and other activities. You can support us by joining the association, using the form printed here or by subscribing to What's Afoot, published every quarter. For just £10 a year you will receive four copies of the magazine through the post.

If you want to do more to help revitalise Devon's folk scene after the covid crisis and to spread the joy of the music, song and dance that we love, there are vacancies on the Devon Folk committee and people with a strong interest in folk, energy and enthusiasm and ideas are asked to sign up.

We particularly need young people to take an interest.

A nomination form is printed on the facing page 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, which is usually held in March.

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Please complete and return to the Devon Folk
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