

What's Afoot?

Zale Fayre steps in to keep Dartmoor dancing

DARTMOOR Folk Festival may have been cancelled for the second year running but many of the event's favourite activities will appear as part of Zale Fayre.

For this year only the Fayre has changed its July date to August 7-8 and will host many of Dartmoor FF's top activities, including the step dancing and broom dancing competitions and music from local artists. All events will be held at South Zeal Recreation Ground.

There will be dance workshops on Saturday morning and aspiring performers will be invited to enter the afternoon competition. From 5pm there will be an open mic until

“dreckly”. Dartmoor Festival's organisers commented: “It had always been traditional, particularly for the Step Dance Competition to be held as part of a ‘Village Sports’ or ‘Fayre’, so the combination of these two local events seemed perfect.”

On Sunday, you can hear the Dartmoor Pixie Band and there will be morris dancing from Tinner, Winkleigh and Otter Morris and Cogs & Wheels.

All this and a village fair, too! What more could anyone want?

Go to www.dartmoorfolkfestival.org.uk for more details.

Top marks for Topsham



topsham folk club
www.topshamfolkclub.org

autumn concerts
Matthews Hall
Fore Street • Topsham EX3 0HF

Fay Hield
Sunday 12 September 2021
8pm - £16

The Rheingans Sisters
Sunday 17 October 2021
8pm - £16

Martin Simpson
Sunday 14 November 2021
8pm - £18

tickets available from
www.topshamfolkclub.org
or Matthews Hall Cafe - Open Tuesday to Friday
10am to 3pm & Saturday mornings 8am to 1pm

www.facebook.com/topshamfolkclub
all enquiries 01392 874718

SIDMOUTH and other big festivals may be folk flagships but the clubs are the backbone of our music and tradition. It's pleasing to report that they are springing back to life, particularly Topsham, which is kicking off with an ambitious programme.

As the poster on the left shows, the club has lined up Fay Hield, the Rheingans Sisters and Martin Simpson as guests for September, October and November. The organisers know the events will be safe as they have already run three successful socially distanced concerts at Matthews Hall, featuring Paul Downes, Si Barron and Chris Hoban.

However, they are not yet sure when they will get back to their regular singarounds at the Bridge Inn and so their highly popular virtual sessions on Zoom will continue on Tuesday nights.

One of the organisers, Adrian Wynn, told us they were pleased to have kept a local feel to their virtual sessions. Asked what advice he'd give other clubs in these troubled times, he said: “You have to do what you can, when you can. You have to be agile.”

More concert details at www.topshamfolkclub.org
• **More club news on page 2.**

NEWS FROM THE CLUBS

This is not a complete list but what we know so far. Organisers are asked to keep What's Afoot up to date as far as possible and to contact us for the next edition.

PENNYMOOR SINGAROUND is again in full swing! Yes we're back on track with new venues which offer more space and ventilation. At last we can all sing a good chorus together.

Our third Wednesday of the month session is now in the upstairs room at the Lamb Inn, Sandford, which offers plenty of space and great acoustics. It starts at 7.30pm.

Just before lockdown, we started a lunchtime session. This now continues on first Thursdays at noon at the Stoke Cannon Inn.

The lunchtime music session on the last Sunday at noon has moved to the large back room of the Half Moon Inn, Cheriton Fitzpaine. We are still offering a monthly zoom session on the first Wednesday at 8pm..

For more details, see our facebook page: Pennymoor Singaround or contact Jon Shapley 01363 83740 jon_shapley@hotmail.com

Other sessions run by Pennymoor members (outside if fine or inside if not) are:

First Tuesday at 8pm at the Lamb Inn, Sandford with Paul and Hazel.

Last Tuesday at 8pm at the New Inn, Coleford with Dave Brassington.

Fourth Wednesday, 7.30pm at Stoke Cannon Inn with Paul and Alison.

Hazel Underwood

BIDEFORD FOLK CLUB bounced back on Thursday August 5 with a singaround at the Joiners Arms, Market Place, Bideford, EX39 2DR. Weekly singarounds will continue on Thursdays but there will be monthly special guest nights: the fine singer, concertina and mandolin player Steve Turner on September 23, and the mighty Moor Music will give a Devon Evening on October 28. There are no plans yet to restrict the audience but the chairs will be laid out with a bit of extra distancing.

Shanty festival is rolling home

THE TEIGN SHANTY FESTIVAL is going ahead on the weekend of September 4-5. Teignmouth will host more than 40 shanty singing groups from all over the UK and overseas. Listen out for shanty legend Tom Lewis and Teignmouth's very own Back Beach Boyz, and the pirate and mermaid duo CASK.

The tall ship Johanna Lucretia will be

If you've missed dancing, on Saturday November 28 the club is running a ceildh at Northam with the superb Dartmoor Pixie Band.

Contact John at bidefolk@gmail.com for more details.

Guest nights at Bideford usually start at 8pm. We advise you to arrive at 7:30pm to be sure of a seat. There's no singaround on guest nights, support performers are invited in advance by the MC for the evening. The club doesn't charge for tickets but passes the box around. The organisers ask: "Please consider how much you might pay for a public concert then contribute at least the cost of a drink. All club events are financed by the collections."

GIDSONG is resuming its monthly sessions at Gidleigh Village Hall on September 7. Hosted by Bill Murray and Tich Scott, the singarounds usually offer a wonderful array of entertainment ranging from Devon folk songs to jazz, step dancing to story-telling, reels to Ravel and so more. The only complaint I have heard is from vurriners who get lost trying to get home (What's Afoot's editor once spent an hour trying to find his way back the A30).

EXMOUTH FOLK CLUB is relaunching its monthly meetings on Sunday September 26 (the second is on Sunday October 24) from 7pm to 10pm. They are moving to 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. For more information, call Chris Austin 07812 688432.

IN PLYMOUTH the first Sunday sessions are resuming at the Dolphin Hotel, 14 The Barbican, PL1 2LS but August's may be lightly attended as many regulars will be at Sidmouth.

moored in Teignmouth harbour for the weekend and visitors will be welcome to "come aboard". The festival will also offer workshops on maritime skills such as knotting, figurehead carving and lobster pot weaving.

Events are free but there will be collections for the charities RNLI, Teign Heritage Centre, Rowcroft Hospice and the Alice Cross Centre.

IF YOU missed Show Of Hands at Sidmouth, there is a chance to see Phil Beer at the Beehive Honiton on Friday September 17.

The community arts venue in Dowell Street, EX14 1LZ, says the concert will be a reduced capacity, socially distanced show: "When booking your seats, it would be much appreciated if you only leave two seats (1.5m+) between your bubble and the next party in the

row." For tickets, £17 each, call 01404 384050, email manager@beehivehoniton.co.uk

• Another guitar superstar is visiting Devon: Dartmouth's Flavel Arts Centre features Martin Simpson on Friday September 17. (If you miss that, he is at Topsham in November, see poster on the front page.) For the Flavel concert see info@theflavel.org.uk or ring 01803 839530.

Jim joins the pilgrims

JIM CAUSLEY has joined the Heavenly Choir. He helped to open the Archangel Way, a pilgrim route that winds round the north side of Dartmoor from Brentor to Chagford, with a specially composed song.

The ceremony was held at Belstone Tor on Friday July 31. He told us: "I got involved with the Archangel Way project because the Reverend Paul Seaton-Burn of Chagford commissioned me to write a song for it. I've known Paul since he has been ministering in the area and through performing at local events such as the folk festival church service in South Tawton. Paul obviously knows of my self-penned songs such as Pride of the Moor and St Boniface Day and I have a knowledge of this area of the moor through my dog walks and work on the Devon Unearthed project with Villages in Action."

Jim didn't join the pilgrims on the Archangel

Way this time as he had to appear at the Sidmouth Festival that afternoon with South Zeal shanty singers Mariners Away.

He had a busy time during Sidmouth week as he also appeared with Narthern (with Barry Coope, Jo Freya and Fi Fraser) and performed a solo set.

And if you've picked up this copy of What's Afoot at Zale Fair then watch out for Jim in concert here. If you missed him in South Zeal you can catch him at Okehampton showground on August 12 and on August 28 you can spend an evening with Jim in Crediton as part of the town's music day.

Jim has a new CD of Devon songs which will be reviewed in the next issue of What's Afoot (see back page for publication details).

Learn more about the Archangel Way at www.tavistockparishchurch.org.uk/pilgrimage-6-launch-archangels-way/



MORRIS dancers are out and about again, enjoying the freedom to dance in public. Quick off the mark were Devon sides, Exeter, Tinnars and Black Bess, who slipped over the border into Dorset on Saturday July 17 for Lyme Morris's Day of Dance. They performed on the promenade with the hosts and other sides including Wyld Morris and the Belles of London City.

BRADNINCH Millers Morris will be dancing with Majidah Tribal Belly Dance Troupe for the Bradninch Club Walk at the Bradninch Musical Gardens August 29 from noon. Go to www.opengardens.co.uk/open_gardens.php?id=957

WINKLEIGH Morris would like to give you a hand – of cards, that is. They are selling packs of souvenir playing cards specially prepared for their

aborted 30th anniversary celebrations last year. The packs are available from www.winkleighmorris.org.uk.

FOR years, Beltane has revelled in showing off the dark side of Dartmoor. Now the dancers have decided their traditional black face make-up could offend, saying: "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 answered a loud call to recognise the sensitivities of our times, and are happy to acknowledge present-day concerns while commemorating our history."

As we went to press, Beltane were still perfecting the new look. We look forward to featuring photographs of it in our next issue.

A voice from the past

STEVE THOMASON, who passed away in October 2020 (obituary on Devon Folk website) left a great legacy on Soundcloud of the songs that he wrote.

Several of these were based on aspects of Devon's heritage, from the time he lived in Exeter before moving back to Derbyshire a couple of years ago.

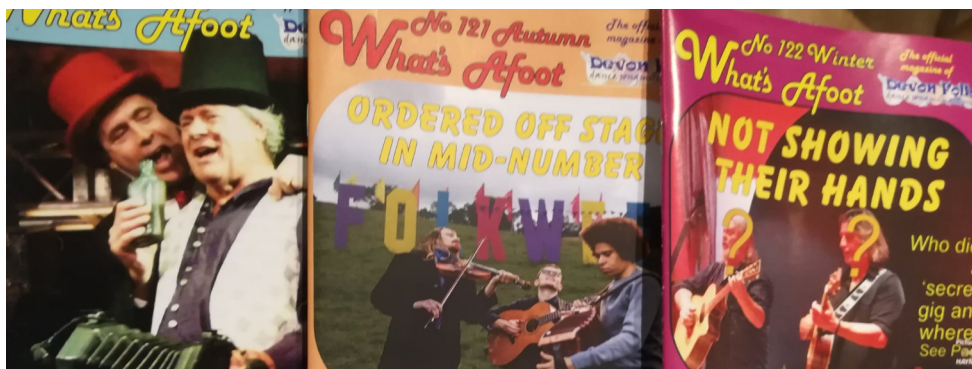
With permission from Teresa, his wife, and Jim, his son, and the assistance particularly of Anahata and John Golightly, all 42 of his songs have now been transcribed, and I have published them in a book. It includes all the lyrics, music, Steve's notes about the songs, and also reproductions of several of his own watercolour paintings. After covering the printing costs, all profits from the sale of the book will go to a hospice where Steve would have spent his last days.

The book is available, cost £8 + £2 p&p, from my website www.bonnygreen.uk/shop.html (Click "new", "book" or "all" under categories to view) or by contacting me directly at bonnygreencolin@gmail.com

Colin Andrews



WHAT'S AFOOT RETURNS IN OCTOBER



WHAT'S AFOOT plans to resume regular publication with our Autumn-Winter edition covering October to December.

This will be at least 48 pages and, if Covid restrictions continue lifting, packed with listings for clubs, sessions and concerts across the county plus news and features. Listings, articles, and photographs should be sent to John Foxen at devonfolkeditor@gmail.com or posted to 129 Tamar Avenue, Tavistock, PL19 9HZ.

The final date for submissions for our next issue is September 1. For adverts, contact Anne Gill adverts@devonfolk.org.uk or ring 01803 290427 by August 24.

What's Afoot costs only £1.50. For an annual subscription of £6, it can be posted directly to your home. Discounts are available for bulk orders. For subscriptions, contact Steve Gill at Maleth, 11 Cleveland Road, Torquay, TQ2 5BD, ring 01803 290427 or email annemgill@tiscali.co.uk

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