

# Bluegrass News

by Lindsay Wall



Rhiannon Giddens and Francesco Turrisi

From this column we express our sympathies and thoughts to all those who have suffered from the 2020 bush fires and especially those involved with the cancelled Numerella and postponed Cobargo Folk Festivals.

## Tamworth 2020 News

Kristy Cox (now a mother of two) has claimed a 2020 Golden

Guitar at Tamworth for Recording of the Year, "Yesterday's Heartache".

This is prior to releasing her new album "No Headlights" on Feb 28, with Jason Roller guitar and fiddle, Mike Bub bass, Justin Moses mandolin and resonator guitar, Aaron McDaris banjo and Tammy Rogers and Jerry Salley harmony vocals.

Rod McCormack won another Golden Guitar and named Instrumentalist of the Year for his "Timeless Traveller".

Joy McKean, aged 90, matriarch of Australian Country and author of the "Lights on the

Hill", became the 51st inductee into the Australasian Country Music Roll of Renown.

The Australian National Guitar Museum was also launched at the 2020 Tamworth Music Festival.

The museum currently contains 45 guitars including those formerly owned by Smoky Dawson, Tommy Emmanuel, Slim Dusty, Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers.

The museum is located at the Tamworth Visitor Information Centre, which in turn is landmarked with the Big Golden Guitar at the Tamworth City



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## Yarra Junction Fiddlers Convention

The Yarra Junction Fiddlers Convention for 2020 was scheduled for Feb 14-16 and at the time of going to press apart from some fine print at the bottom of the program page the indomitable event does not indicate any fear of fire – the sort of incorrigibility that has inspired Fiddler patrons for over 30 years.

Listed acts included the Flying Engine String Band, Cat and Clint, Hard Drive, Strzeleck Stringbusters, Hard Drive, My-T-Fine String Band and from New Zealand, The Faustians.

Regular workshops held were beginner fiddle, Bluegrass banjo, clawhammer banjo, mandolin, gum leaf playing, flax weaving.

## Festival Watch

The Frances Folk Gathering committee on the SA / VIC border has announced that after 20 years and loss of their major commercial sponsor, there will be no event in 2020, and are winding up after hitting a "high note" in 2019.

The Great Alpine Pick (Feb 28 - Mar 1) returns to Harrietville VIC with headliners The Stetson Family.

The Port Fairy Folk Festival (Mar 6-9) line up includes The Blind Boys Of Alabama, John McCutcheon, Kieran Kane & Rayna Gellert, and Rhiannon Giddens.

The Blue Mountains Music Festival (Mar 13-15) has announced their first wave of acts to include Rhiannon Giddens & Francesco Turrisi, Kieran Kane & Rayna Gellert, and Montgomery Church.

closed and the first artist announcements include headliner Shane Nicholson, from Virginia, the Whitetop Mountaineers, and from even further north, the Alaska String Band.

Turkey in the Mountain preparations are underway (Mar 28-29) at Mt Burrell on the outskirts of Nimbin NSW with views of Mt Warning.

The event is limited to 40 campers at \$50 each for the weekend.

The National Folk Festival, Easter weekend (Apr 9-13) at Exhibition Park, Canberra, ACT, have made their second announcement round of performers which now includes, the Whitetop Mountaineers, Alaska String Band, The Barkers Vale Brothers, Scroggin and Whoa Mule.

### Other Bluegrass News

Bill Lawson of Bluegrass Unlimited, Adelaide's 101.5FM weekly Bluegrass program, hangs up his headphones and microphone after 34 years of hosting what we believe to be the longest running Bluegrass radio program in Australia.

Fiddler, George Jackson, formerly of New Zealand, then Queensland and now Nashville, was interviewed mid January by Oldtime Central, and the 22 minute interview is now available from the Oldtime Central website and also via YouTube.

The Mountain Pickers Association meeting at the Ferntree Gully Bowling Club, Vic, feature bands as follows: Feb 25 The Colvin Brothers, Slime Dime,

Water For The Well; Mar 3 The Alaska String Band; and, Mar 24 The Whitetop Mountaineers.

### Overseas Artists' Tours

Recent Autumns and Springs have consistently seen a strong procession of overseas artists through the Australian festival circuits, and this year is in keeping with this trend, perhaps a little more folky than some other years, but by all means no less impressive.

This season we see the Alaska String Band, Rhiannon Giddens and Francesco Turrissi, Flats and Sharps, Kieran Kane and Rayna Gellert, and the Whitetop Mountaineers.


The Alaska String Band is comprised of members of

the Zahasky family of Juneau, Alaska, who combine Americana, swing, jazz, Bluegrass, pop, Gospel, Hawaiian and Celtic influences with guitars, violins, mandolins, dulcimer, banjo, bass, ukes and percussion.

The Alaskans' first visit to Australia was made in 2014. See the Gig Guide for their 2020 engagements.

Rhiannon Giddens playing fiddle and banjo is best known as a member of the Carolina Chocolate Drops and has recently participated on a pair of Smithsonian Folkways projects, "Our Native Daughters" and Mike Seeger's last documentary "Just Around The Bend".

Francesco Turrissi is an Italian pianist and percussionist specialising in jazz and Mediterranean music.



## Chicken Hot Rod

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2RRR 88.5FM Sydney, NSW  
www.2rrr.org.au

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During a chance meeting in Ireland (where else) Rhiannon and Francesco discovered their fusion sound and have taken to touring the world from the US to Japan and now Australia.

Kieran Kane and Rayna Gellert, both songwriters and musical artists in their own rights for some time, have joined forces periodically over the last couple of years, and are touring

Australia.

Martha Spencer and Jackson Cunningham, return to Australia with more Old-Time fiddle, guitar, banjo pickin' and flatfootin'.

See the Gig Guide for more.

### Transcription

This month we have another classic from the arrangement of Charlie Walden - the Eighth of January, written in commemoration of the Battle of New Orleans and well before Johnny Horton.

## Eighth of January

Traditional arranged by Charlie Walden



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# Dance Directory

## Wongawilli Dance Club

Colonial  
Bush dance at Wongawilli Community Hall, Wongawilli Rd, Wollongong area NSW. All dances walked through & called. No Partner needed. \$4 includes supper. Meet every Wednesday night 7:30pm.

0404667614

happyeyes3333@gmail.com

## Australian Traditional & Bush Dance Society

Have fun and stay fit with a group of singles and couples who enjoy bush and folk dancing and other social activities. Meet Late January to mid-December - 2nd, 4th & 5th Tuesdays, 7.30pm - 9.30pm, Coles Hall, 43A Stephen Tce (cnr Stephen Tce and Third Ave) St Peters S.A.  
enquiries@atbdsdancesa.com.au

## Lazarka International Folk Dance

Traditional dances from around the world. Meet each Tues at 5pm - 7pm & each Thurs 9am - 11am at the Community of Christ hall, Taree  
6552 5142

## Attention Dance Co-ordinators and Teachers

Trad&Now is the longest running and only national magazine that regularly includes dance news and contact information to enable dancers to locate dance classes and dances anywhere in Australia.

It does this in dance news pages regularly set aside for that purpose and in the National Club, Dance and Radio Network Directory at the back of the magazine.

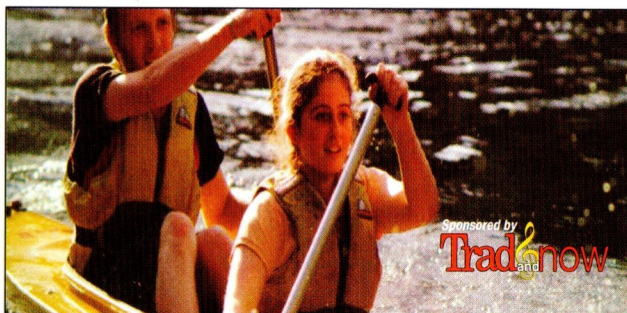
We are now looking to expand the Directory to make it a bespoke Dance Directory published on the dance pages to include a great deal more information and to ensure that the information is kept up to date by having it checked regularly by dance organisers.

By doing this, it is expected that more people will become aware of what dances and dance classes are available and become involved, generally growing the dance movement around Australia.

If you are a dance class or event co-ordinator and would like your information included in the new expanded directory, please complete the form on page 22-23 or on our website at [www.duckscrossing.org/tan/Trad\\_directory.pdf](http://www.duckscrossing.org/tan/Trad_directory.pdf) and return it to us, ideally by email to [info@tradandnow.com](mailto:info@tradandnow.com) or to the address on page 3, and we will include the information in the next available edition.

Entries in the expanded directory are completely free but we require someone from each organisation listed to be a subscriber to the magazine to ensure that the information is kept up to date.

The entry will remain in the directory for as long as the subscription remains current and a subscription still only costs \$55 for 11 editions.



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# Footing it on the light fantastic: a study of convict culture



*All Max in the East, a Scene in Tom & Jerry, or Life in London.*

Dancing was one of the most popular leisure activities for Australian convicts. "All Max in the East" by Cruikshank shows a dance in a London cellar. Courtesy of The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

Over the last five years, a vast amount of research has been undertaken in the area of dance in early colonial Australia.

This has culminated in an extensive project revealing the previously unexplored topic of convict dance in the period between 1788 and 1840.

Despite the common perception of the convict experience as being completely miserable and unrelentingly harsh, research has uncovered a surprising amount of detail proving that dance was an important part of convict life, just as it was for the majority of non-

elite people in the British Isles.

This information was drawn from a variety of different sources including the court transcripts of the Old Bailey Criminal Court in London, the Medical Journals of surgeon-superintendants on convict ships, police reports in the colony, as well as diaries, newspaper anecdotes, and official documents.

The accounts describe the people, locations, and occasions where dancing took place.

In some cases, the names of tunes, dances, and the types of musical instruments were recorded.

These reveal a fascinating connection with the music, song,

and dance collected in the 20th century by folklorists.

Currently, this doctoral research project by Dr Heather Blasdale Clarke at the Queensland University of Technology, is being developed into a free online database.

See the colonial dance website

<https://www.colonialdance.com.au> for more information, and check the other projects - History of step dancing in Australia, Captain Cook's Country Dance: book & CD soon to be released, and a teaching resource for primary school teachers.



# Folklore conference presenters announced

The Scary Family Band



## The 15th National Folklore Conference will again take place at the National Library of Australia.

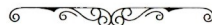
The 2020 event will be held on Easter Thursday, April 9, to tie in with the National Folk Festival in Canberra over the Easter weekend.

This annual conference is facilitated by the Australian Folklore Network, the National Library of Australia, the National Folk Festival and Curtin University, and is convened by

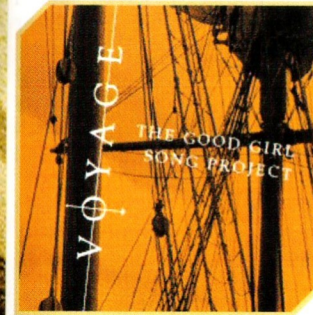
Professor Graham Seal for that University.

This year's conference will feature: June Factor: A circle of folklore – from children to adults and back to the young; Judy McKinty: Safeguarding the Invisible: Children's Folklore as Intangible Cultural Heritage; Steve Bullock and Greg Woodruff: Contemporary Revision of an Historic Songbook; Jennifer Gall: Between the Threads: tales from Australian house

museum costume collections; Karl Neuenfeldt: Perfect Pearls: Australian Pearling Songs; Gene Smith: Delia Murphy, First Lady of Song and the Irish Embassy; Daniel Kelly: A Factory Lad: The Songs of Colin Dryden; Mike Jones: Creatures from the Deep Past: Stories, Landscapes and History; W. Benjamin Lindner: Waltzing Matilda - A Forensic History; and a lunchtime concert by The Scary Family Band from Tasmania.



## CD and book Reviews



### Voyage The Good Girl Song Project

CD review by Tony Smith

The Good Girl team have been appearing at folk festivals around New South Wales and beyond over the last few years.

While this CD, produced at Sing Sing studios, might not have the visual impact of the dramatisation, it is very evocative.

The project evolved as a genuine team effort, with the performers workshopping arrangements, and is a triumph for the writer, Helen Begley.

Begley wrote 12 of the 13 tracks, with 'Johnny Boyles' being traditional.

Good Girls were those who came voluntarily to the colony of New South Wales, by way of contrast with those who were sentenced to transportation.

Because of fears about the moral state of a colony founded by criminals, in which the predominantly male population exploited Indigenous women, the authorities encouraged migration schemes such as that of Caroline Chisholm.

Personally, I am ambivalent about these fears, as on my mother's side, my ancestors include three female convicts.

The only migrating ancestor who was not a convict, was a baby at the breast of her serial chook stealing mother from Tipperary.

The songs tell the story of a journey from Gravesend to Sydney.

While there are already some excellent songs about female immigrants, this thematic presentation gives a comprehensive musical picture of the experience.

Here are the initial enthusiasms, the second thoughts, the seasickness, the vulnerability to sexual exploitation, the hopes and fears.

The songs are presented with great musicality, making Voyage a genuine folk opera.

The singing is precise in melody and harmony and the diction is clear, allowing the power of the lyrics to reach the listener.

The tunes are appropriate to the era and the voyaging experience and enhance the communication admirably.

A themed CD places special demands on writer and performer alike, and Voyage succeeds perfectly in providing an experience that is smooth and enjoyable.

Alongside songwriter and guitarist Begley, are singers and instrumentalists of skill and sensitivity.

Fiddlers, Carmen O'Brien and Sally Taylor, are essential to the maritime feeling.

Jamie Molloy contributes concertina and vocals and Mick Gribben bodhran and vocals.

Penelope Swales provides whistle and vocals and Penny Larkins is lead vocalist.

In the production at Cobargo Festival 2019, the performers

achieved great rapport with the audience by dramatisation appropriate to the medium.

There was no over acting or melodrama.

The opening track, 'The Good Girl', which gets a reprise at the end, sets the theme of Voyage.

It introduces an enduring paradox between naivety and ambition.

It describes the many 'push' factors behind the decision to leave England, including the threats of poverty and the workhouse.

There is ample light and shade in the songs, some of which are rollicking in style, while others are laments and others narrative ballads.

The realism of the drinker 'Elizabeth Wade' balances the idealism of 'Good Girl'.

'Father Oh Father' describes the difficulty that the girls had equipping themselves to sail, while in '1833', the wind sounds 'like a mother's wail'.

'Oh, the Sea' is particularly beautiful, with its rich harmonies set against a background of strings, bowed and plucked.

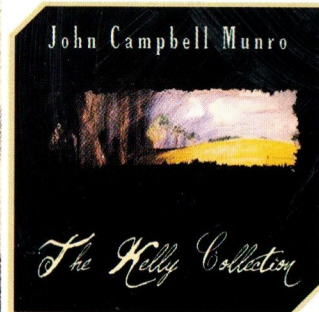
In 'Saucy Song Sung by Loose Women' he promised her five shillings 'if she would hold his tassel'.

The ghostly 'Overboard' makes compelling listening.

Voyage is well researched and hopefully writer Helen Begley and the team will produce a further album following the experiences of the migrants in the colony.

The Good Girl reprise discovers some disillusionment and cynicism setting in as the women were greeted as 'whores', leading one good girl to 'wanna go home'.

# CD book Reviews



## John Campbell Munro - *The Kelly Collection*

**John Campbell Munro was born in Glasgow and 'escaped' to Australia at the age of 18 years.**

Having had a flirtation with folk music in Scotland, John found the local folk haunts in Australia and was soon immersed in the music.

He was a founder member of Country Express in 1969, and later Colcannon (Australia) in 1988, but he is probably best known as Eric Bogle's 'sidekick' for decades.

John toured Australia and the World many times with Eric, and toured widely with Colcannon, including the U.K.

John recorded his solo album 'Plying My Trade' (CDTRAX312) for Greentrax in 2007.

He sadly died, far too young, in 2018, after a long battle with cancer.

All the songs on this CD are written by John and most were recorded by Pete Titchener only a few months

before John's death.

Musicians: John (vocals, guitar and mandolin); Emma Luker (fiddler and backing vocals); Kathryn Ruby (backing vocals); Kathie Renner (piano); Eric Bogle (vocals); Pete Titchener (rhythm and lead guitar plus vocals); Paul Callaghan (vocals); Roger Montgomery (monologue); Khristian Mizzi (vocals); Rob McCarthy (tenor banjo); Damien Steele Scott (bass) and Jon Jones (percussion).

Kathryn Ruby takes lead vocal on 'Never Mind', Eric Bogle takes lead vocal on 'The Trial', while Eric, Paul Callaghan, Pete Titchener and Khristian Mizzi share lead vocals on 'Stringyback Creek'.

Eric Bogle, in May, 2019, wrote: "This, more than any other musical project that I have ever been involved in, has been a labour of love, as it has been for most of the musicians and others who so freely, generously and unstintingly gave of their time and talents in the creation of this CD.

"We crafted this presentation of songs not only as a tribute to the masterful musicianship and song writing of John Campbell Munro, but also because the songs themselves are fine examples of the songwriter's art and deserve to be heard.

"But mostly, we made this CD because John was our friend and we loved him...."

Ned Kelly, common criminal or folk hero?

Hard to say, but what is undeniable is: he killed three policemen at Stringyback Creek; he robbed banks at Euroa and Jerilderie; he held

hostages, traded in stolen livestock and planned to derail a train carrying police to Glenrowan.

And, he led his brother Dan and his friends Steve Hart and Joe Byrne on a merry dance that took their lives too soon.

Equally certain, is that Ned was born into a family of Irish migrants which harboured rebel attitudes and fled religious persecution.

They were conspicuous in the Australian community and attracted the notice of a police force which was in the main inept, corrupt and brutish.

The family and its friends were victimised and abused on a regular basis, and so major friction between the clan and the authorities was inevitable.

Those interested can read more in the extensive sleeve notes.

Other albums featuring John Campbell Munro available on Greentrax through Trad&Now are CDTRAX121 - Eric Bogle and John Munro - 'The Emigrant and The Exile' - 1996; CDTRAX312 - John Munro 'Plying My Trade' - 2007; CDTRAX375 - Eric Bogle with John Munro - 'A Toss Of The Coin' - 2013; CDTRAX391 - Eric Bogle and John Munro - 'Voices' - 2016; CDTRAX263 - Colcannon (Incl. John Munro) - 'Dolphin Bay' - 2004; CDTRAX282 - Colcannon (Incl. John Munro) - 'Journeys' - 2005.

*Greentrax recordings are available through Trad&Now.*

# CD and book Reviews

## *SqueezeBox Boogaloo*



## *Squeezebox Boogaloo - Map To Your Heart*

CD review by Ian Dearden

**Accordionist/vocalist/songwriter Geoff Tofler, the front man for Sydney-based Squeezebox Boogaloo, was living in Boston in 1990 when he first encountered and fell in love with zydeco music.**

Once he was bitten with the bug, he immersed himself in this exuberant genre of music, bought a range of accordions, travelled repeatedly to zydeco's spiritual home, Louisiana, and then on his return to Australia in 1998, he did the only thing he could do, he formed a zydeco band.

Since then, he's fronted this funloving, up tempo Australian contribution to the world of zydeco, he has revisited Louisiana many times, and the album under review is a slice of primarily original songs in the genre, recorded in 2009.

As you would expect, the

accordion is loud, brash and right out front, but there are also tasty contributions from other band members, in particular, Eric Richard on electric and acoustic guitars and Michael Pace on violin.

The two non-original songs on the album are exuberant covers of "Going Back To Big Mamou" and "Diggy Diggy Lo".

The only song which doesn't feature accordion is "Eating Out In New Orleans", which features Tofler's classic New Orleans barrelhouse piano, and functions as a potted guide to the splendid New Orleans cuisine, which makes me hungry just listening to it.

The melting pot of Tofler's Louisiana influences enables him to sweep in a little country, a little jazz, a little blues and a touch of rock and roll into the pot, which makes for a delightful, goodtime album, and, no doubt, a great live experience.

My pick of the original songs on the album is the title track, "Map To Your Heart", "Hot Opelousas Night" (a musical guidebook to New Orleans) and "The Coming Year", a 'welcome to the year' song which, as album opener, neatly encapsulates the band's philosophy ('Let the good times roll...and keep on dancing').



## *The Eureka Suite* by John Munro

CD review by Graham Blackley  
TN2425-87

**Highly respected musician, John Munro, who passed away in 2018, played an important role in the Australian folk music scene after moving here from Scotland in the mid-1960's.**

It was a pleasure to see Munro and Eric Bogle performing together years ago at the Port Fairy Folk Festival, as their deep rapport and intuitive connection was apparent throughout a robust set.

On 'The Eureka Suite', which Munro composed and produced, he is joined by the always-inspiring Bogle and a host of other luminaries, such as John Schumann.

This excellent collection can be enjoyed as a window into a pivotal historical and cultural event, The Eureka Stockade, and as a glimpse into the republican cause, or you can simply sit back and relish the sheer musicality of the talented performers.

"The Yarrowee", for instance, is a beautiful tune delivered with a light touch and tinged with a gentle melancholy.



### Maggie Somerville - *The Forest Prayed: Poems of Mary Gilmore*

CD review by Chris Spencer

#### On this album, Maggie Somerville has set 16 poems, written by Dame Mary Gilmore, to music.

While I was aware of Gilmore, being pictured on our \$10 note, I wasn't fully educated about her work and influence on the Australian literary scene.

After doing some research about Gilmore, I discovered that she is regarded as an Australian patriot, feminist, social crusader and folklorist.

Other things I learned were that she and Henry Lawson may have considered marriage, she went to Paraguay with William Lane's new settlers, and her best work is considered among the best written by any Australian poet.

Readers are encouraged to do some of their own research.

I found her entry in the Australian Dictionary of Biography very illuminating.

I wonder how Somerville made her selection of poems considering the large volume of work created by Gilmore.

In this review, I will concentrate on the music rather than the lyrics of Gilmore's poems.

Somerville has selected a range of themes that concerned Gilmore, as well as poems written from different eras.

The earliest was written in 1916, the latest in 1947.

The themes include drought, poor treatment of migrants, aborigines, war, fellow poets (Lawson and Shaw Neilson), and the role of women.

Maggie has assembled a marvellous array of musicians to help her bring the poems to life.

If I have one criticism, it is that some songs are similar in tempo.

However, the arrangements with the use of a variety of instruments assist in giving each song a different sound.

Another aspect I enjoyed was the range of instruments used in the recording, tin whistle, banjo, mandolin, violin, viola, ukulele, cello, harmonica, didgeridoo, concertina, harp and keyboards.

These were played by Somerville herself, Catherine

## CD and book Reviews

Leslie, Sam Leman, Jenny Rowlands, Rob Fairbairn, Ray Simpson, Helmut Lopaczuk and David Billings.

Here are some observations of several tracks I made while listening to the album several times.

"I Heard a Thrush in a Tree Today" has a tweeting thrush intro, delicate violin accompaniment, and an all too brief all male chorus.

"The Forest Prayed" is piano based with a 'solo' on the saw by Ray Simpson!

The saw makes another appearance on "Truganini".

Whistling accompanies the jaunty "The Whistling Man", while on "Never Admit the Pain", Somerville has chosen to only to include 8 lines of the full poem.

She also asks a male to recite the first stanza and then concludes the 2nd with a full sounding choir.

Perhaps the highlight of the album for me is "No Foe Shall Gather Our Harvest", which includes an excerpt of the then Prime Minister John Curtin's speech, which adds to the poem's patriotism and call to arms.

## CD and book Reviews

In contrast, is "And We All Joined Up", which while having a similar theme to "No Foe ...", has a very light hearted arrangement using a jaw harp.

Another distinctive song is, "I Wisht I Was Unwed Again", which takes a look at the lot of a housewife.

I'm not sure if Gilmore intended the poem to be humorous.

The album finishes with the anti-war song, "War".

In summary, this album is unusual in its approach, although not unlike John Schumann's and Hugh McDonald's recording albums of the poems of Henry Lawson.

However, there is much to like, its folkiness, the production, the instrumentation, and the raising of a profile of an Australian female icon.



### Traditional Graffiti - 1

CD review by Ian Dearden  
TN2431-87

Evolving out of the ashes of what was The Wheeze and Suck Band, now on semi-permanent hiatus,

Traditional Graffiti features the instrumental and vocal talents of Ian 'The Pump' Macintosh (vocals, melodeon, guitar), John 'Red Tips' Milce (percussion) and Nigel 'Muddy' Walters (vocals, mandolin, cello mandolin), all ex-pat Brits now resident in Sydney.

Ian hails from Oxford, Nigel from Bath and John from Liverpool.

Collectively, they are imbued with the English folk tradition of bands and performers such as Fairport Convention, Steeleye Span, the Albion Band, the Watersons, Martin Carthy, Roy Bailey and Nic Jones.

Their debut release is a 6 track extended EP (plus a bonus 'electrique remix' of "Come On, Come On"), which has a mix of original songs in the English folksong tradition and traditional tunes, as well as an inspired swerve into deep south acoustic blues ("White Bread & Whiskey"), a song which tips its hat at Tommy Johnson's 'Cool Drink Of Water Blues' from 1928.

Apologies to the appropriate authorities, but these guys prove that white men definitely can sing the blues!

The album was recorded by Ben Worsey at Everland Studios in Sydney, and he has captured the beguiling acoustic elements of this band superbly.

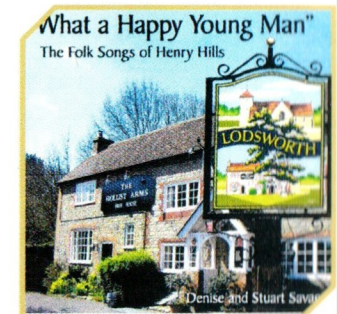
Ian and Nigel have that characterful English folk vocal sound down pat, and the whole package works superbly as an exciting and energetic ensemble.

I was particularly taken by the original instrumentals, "Fools Round/Puzzlejug"

and "(Up the) Dilly Dancer", as well as their rendition of the traditional "Somerset Wassail".

This is a delightful album. Great playing, masterful singing and excellent songwriting.

What more could you ask for?



### Stuart and Denise Savage - 'What A Happy Young Man': The Folk Songs of Henry Hills

CD review by Tony Smith

#### This Henry Hills (1831-1901) was a farmer from Lodsworth in Sussex.

He is remembered chiefly because he was a tireless singer with a great repertoire.

W.P. Merrick collected many of Henry's songs in the later years of his life.

Merrick did not use recording devices, but Frank Kidson wrote the tunes as Henry sang them.

While folkies might ponder the effects of writing the notes, it seems that Henry was remarkably consistent in his performances.

I became particularly interested to learn about the Henry Hills because there is another Henry Hills in my ancestry.

My maternal grandfather's father

was a Henry Hills, although he seems to have been nicknamed Harry.

This was possibly to avoid confusion with his wife Henrietta (nee Dixon).

Henrietta's mother, 'Annie' Moore, where the 'Annie' is always in inverted commas came to Australia as an infant in the arms of her convict mother.

Most of what I know about my ancestors comes from research by cousins.

I know little about our Henry, but his daughter, Beryl Star Hills, was a teacher and a creative soul who sketched, sang and wrote ditties.

Beyond great grandfather Henry, the speculation begins.

But who was the Sussex Henry who wrote songs?

As Don Brian observes in his research into convict voices, Henry's tune for 'Here's adieu to all Judges and Juries' was perhaps the prototype for the late nineteenth century music hall song 'Farewell to Old England Forever', aka 'Botany Bay'.

'Farewell' might be the song which has carried Henry's songs best to Australia, but the man was prolific.

Collectors interviewed Henry often, so many of his songs survive in various archives, such as those of the English Folk Dances and Song Society.

Stuart and Denise Savage have compiled a CD of Henry's songs.

The name 'What A Happy Young Man' tells something of Henry's demeanour.

These 18 tracks represent just a fraction of those collected.

Stuart and Denise added accompaniment on English concertina and guitar, and harmonies where appropriate, and the result is very pleasant listening.

Quite often, Henry learnt songs from itinerant workers and gave them a personal touch.

Consequently, many are variants of similar songs collected elsewhere around England.

This is the case for example with 'Reynardine', 'Farewell my dear Nancy', 'The Bold Princess Royal' and 'John Barleycorn'.

This reflects the way the folk process operates in times and places where transport is leisurely, there are no mass media to homogenise outputs,

## CD and book Reviews

and strictly amateur musicians are not so mindful of copyright issues.

Songs and dance tunes were built on memory, an imperfect human skill.

One distinctive characteristic of Henry's songs is that they often have a device for audience involvement such as repetition of the last lines of verses as refrains.

Often these songs were sung at 'harvest homes', celebrations when the arduous work of grain harvest was complete and the produce was safely stored.

Partly because of this context, but also because of the nature of the songs by this happy young man and the quality of the reproduction in this CD, any listener will add voice to these refrains.

The Sussex Traditions' website has details of where the CD can be obtained.

Sing and be happy!

### Trad&Now is lucky to have a large panel of voluntary reviewers

**They are people who have been involved with the folk music community for a long while and/or they are performers in their own right.**

They spend a great deal of time listening to CDs very carefully and then sharing their thoughts with the rest of us.

This helps readers decide whether they should purchase a CD or not by giving them some idea as to what to

expect.

However, as with movie reviewers and with any critics generally, the review published may not be the same as what you would personally feel about a CD.

Everyone has their own taste in music and the range of tastes seems to be endless.

Reviews are the opinion of the reviewer only and not necessarily that of Trad&Now or its editorial staff.

Performers submit CDs without any guarantee of a favourable review and readers should always form their own opinion, preferably by hearing the CD under review for themselves or seeing the performer at a live performance.

If you are interested in joining our review panel, please contact Trad&Now at [info@tradandnow.com](mailto:info@tradandnow.com)

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