

# around Kent folk

Issue 132  
December 2025 / January 2026



Your **FREE** Guide to Folk Events  
in **Kent**, **Surrey**, **Sussex** and beyond



**Published by Tenterden Folk Festival, Charity No 1038663**  
Promoting folk song, music, dance, crafts and traditions.

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# NEW FOREST FOLK FESTIVAL

## July 1 - 5 (2026)

Powells Farm, Plaitford,  
Romsey Hampshire, SO51 6EE



Skerryvore - Fisherman's Friends - Seth Lakeman Band - Merry Hell  
Steve Knightley and the Winter Yards Band - Laurel Canyon Project - Ranagri  
Katherine Priddy - Harbottle and Jonas Trio with Richard Trethewey - Hunter Muskett  
Reg Meuross Fire and Dust: A Woody Guthrie Story | Full Band, The Strike - Eric Sedge & Tom Leary  
Banter - Charlie Dore, Julian Littman & Gareth Huw Davies - Gerry Colvin Band  
Megson - Fine Lines - Virginia Kettle's Rolling Folk - Flossie Malaviale  
The Honeybees - True Foxes - Southampton Ukulele Jam - Matt Black

**Until Dec 31<sup>st</sup> - 5 Day Ticket - £135**

**From Jan 1<sup>st</sup> - 5 Day Ticket - £145**

**From June 1<sup>st</sup> - 5 Day Ticket - £155**

Children aged 5 to 15 - 5 Day ticket £60, under 5 free  
Motorhomes, Caravans & Tents £10 per pitch per night



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Enjoy a variety of  
free workshops

Thursday - Local  
Artist Showcase



[www.newforestfolkfestival.co.uk](http://www.newforestfolkfestival.co.uk)



AIF

## Welcome to issue 132 December 2025/January 2026 issue of AKF

Even though I am writing this in late October it seems it is time for me to wish you all a happy Christmas and a prosperous new year. With the autumn budget happening in November a prosperous new year seems even less likely than usual. However, hopefully, you can still have a new year full of folk song, music, dance, crafts and traditions.

As you can see from this issue's cover photo, Tenterden Folk Festival was recently awarded Ashford Borough Council's (ABC) Community Award for Cultural Impact. This was in recognition of the work the whole team has done since 1992 in putting on Tenterden Folk Festival and all the associated outreach work including working in schools across Kent, acting as an informal folk development group for Ashford, putting on numerous one off events from ceilidhs to concerts sometimes in partnership with other organisations including Produced in Kent, The County Show, KCC, ABC, and many others. Despite the festival having now ended, its legacy continues as is shown by several successful events in Tenterden in early October including the first Tenterden all day sing-a-round, Romney Marsh Morris's day of dance, Ashford Folk's music session in The Vine and St Mildred's harvest ceilidh in the Church. Long may it all continue.

Sadly Martin Carthy did not manage to join Norma and Eliza as winners of the Mercury Prize but he did manage to get in the record books as the oldest ever nominee and has done more than most other people to raise the profile of traditional English folk music. Well done and thank you Martin.

I hope you all continue to enjoy reading Around Kent Folk which, of course, continues to be published by Tenterden Folk Day Trust so is itself a legacy of the festival.

*Alan Castle (Editor)*

**PS: You can make a donation to Tenterden Folk Festival or this magazine via our websites or by post (see payment details on last page). Thank you.**

[www.tenterdenfolkfestival.org.uk](http://www.tenterdenfolkfestival.org.uk) [www.aroundkentfolk.org.uk](http://www.aroundkentfolk.org.uk)

You can also find us on social media:

Instagram: [TenterdenFolkFestival](https://www.instagram.com/TenterdenFolkFestival)

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You can always find a link to the latest and past issues of AKF there and on our website.

Please pass the link on to your mailing lists and place it on your social media so that as many potential readers as possible can find AKF online.



Donate Now



### Harwich International Shanty Festival 2025

I was at Harwich where Perly I Lotry were performing and came away with this memory reawakened:

Perly I Lotry the Polish group were superb even unto their last near secret set at the Alma they were on fire. At their earlier meet and greet session Saturday in the Masonic Hall someone asked "what was the song you started with" they said a group brought "24 February" to Poland years ago. I put my hand up and said yes me and The Shanty Crew, and on being asked, was able to say that we sung it in the winter of 1986 and on returning in the spring of 87 found it on national radio, recorded by Stary Dzwony (The Old Bells) led by Marek Siurawski, I added that every Polish group I heard had a version, the song had become an anthem for them. When I was in Krakow 25 years later Marek had me on stage to tell some 2500 of an audience, that fact, a wonderful moment at which we sang the ditty in Polish and English. I had met Perly's in 2005 when their leader was much younger. He is now a Polish MP. He remarked that they had earned nothing from it but their song "My Mother Told Me", has to now had 45 million hits on Spotify. The royalty is so small a fraction of a cent that it takes millions of plays to earn enough for a round of coffee for all 6 group members!!! After the session Rajid the event photographer came up to me, went down on his knees and said "that blew my mind you went viral" I had never thought of it that way.

We did a session to remember absent friends so I wore a Stary Refy Shirt to remember Jurek Rogatski of 4 reefs and sang a couple of Ken Stephens songs, I shared the hosting with a good Dutch friend of both Ken and myself Hans Weehuizen, it was a good session but curiously "Hertogin Cecile" and "Shantyman" were not sung. I did "Survivor Leave" and Shellback ("Salt in the blood") for Ken. Hans did "Rattle the Winches" and "The Drowned Horses of "Ameland" for Bob Watson one of Black Deep did "Old Ports of Call" while Jim Radford was remembered with the "Tattie Fleet" the story of the deep-sea tugs.

I was at the talk Joe Whittaker gave on Cyril Tawney aided by Shep Wooley and input from the audience. I for my part added two pieces "The Hippy Song" and "There are no lights on our Christmas tree", well it is towards that time of year again!

On the Sunday I did my illustrated talk "Pitcairn Island home of the mutineers" to an appreciative audience.

Roll on October 2026

**Chris Roche**



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Dec 4



**Gerry Colvin**  
Dec 11



**Tim Edey**  
Dec 18



**Thomas Wild**  
Jan 15

*Booking now:*  
*Amelia Coburn*  
*Kath Tait*

*Sam Baxter/Merle Harbron*  
*Brothers Gillespie*  
*Katie Spencer*

*Sally Ironmonger / Brian Carter*  
*Joe Solo*

*Michelle Laverick*  
*Karen and Paul*

*John Doran & the Northern Assembly*  
*Jack Rutter*  
*John Hegley*

*Women of Folk - Linda Moylan,*  
*Rebecca Mileham, Lizzy*  
*Hardingham, Louise Hatch*



**trad (ish) Burns Night**  
**Iain & Pat Richardson**  
**Hamish and James**  
**food. £17**  
Jan 22

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**venues**



**Paul Hutchinson,**  
**Karen Wimhurst,**  
**Hannah Cumming-**  
**Pagoda- £15**  
Jan 29

*Monthly*  
*2nd Wed*

**Totally Classical music Open mic**  
**with Jake Ben David 7.30. free**  
*2nd Fri*

**Shanty night with Snottledogs**  
**session/singaround. 7.30 Free**  
*3rd Wed*

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**details 07902140248**

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## Scene & Heard (December 2025 - January 2026)

Midwinter approaching, fallen leaves and frosts... time to gather together and make merry whilst the chill winds blow, dance and sing to wassail in another fruitful season. Don't eat the swans though... As ever there's a broth of sessions, local talent & national guests appearing in concert and at clubs across the county.

Guisers, hoodeners, mummers are freshening up their tatters and rejigging plays with topical patter... Evolution is creeping in, AutoHoodeners of strange mechanical mien, though I wonder what AI will make them do... or thinks that everyone does... the Whitstable Hoodeners gave Faversham Folk Club a grand traditional evening last year and are due back in January. Something about the old songs which raise hairs at the back of your

neck... challenging the darkness, they've been sung here before...

Thinking back, September saw the Hop Festival which now has an open stage for folk music/ dancing as well as the community stage. It's a massive event for the town now, and brings in crowds for beer and music. Graham and the team do a tremendous job and are always looking to increase the dance/folk content.

Delighted to see that Tenterden, so long a treat at the beginning of October, continued in a form which recalled its early years thanks to the goodwill of Alan Castle and the efforts of many such as Dave & Eileen Masterson- the many morris sides challenging Storm Amy and a successful sing which saw over 100 participants during the day. Such a glorious setting and so many memories.

Around the clubs Scold's Bridle made their saucy way to Deal, whilst the Twagger



Band brought bouncy tunes to Tonbridge on hammer dulcimers (!), squeezebox, fiddle, guitar, whistles and serpent... the light touches always lift a room, as they always have. Stan Graham brought his sensitive and singable repertoire to Dartford and Faversham, powerful emotions recognized by the likes of Martin Wyndham-Reid and Vin Garbutt.

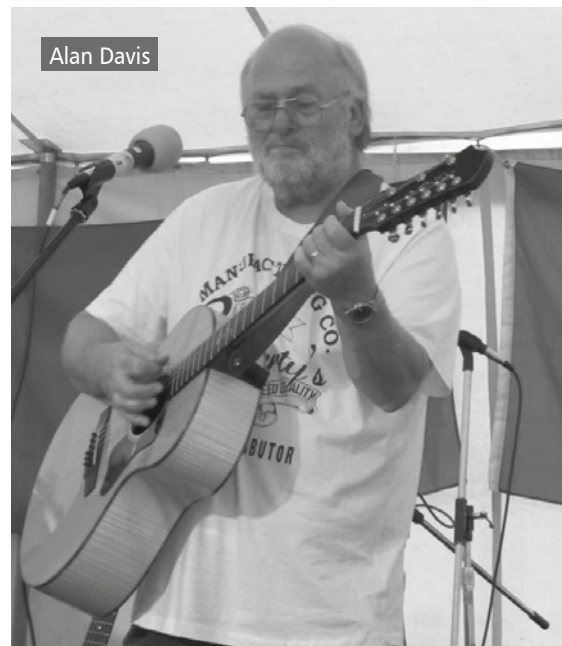
Faversham's strong line-up continued with local favourites John 'Daddio' Clarke and Henty



& English, with Edwina Hayes packing the house for her brand of adorable whimsy. Folk In The Barn, increasingly accessible in the Gulbenkin, saw the marvellous Cara Dillon and Christine Collister, with Fairport limbering up in Sandwich. The breadth of Rosslyn Court's guestlist continues to amaze: Emily Slade, Culverake, Jon Wilks... how does she do it? Well worth a look.

Sad to say more of our good friends have recently left the stage: **Derek Gifford (Giff)**, who tamed any Broadstairs pub with tradition and character, birdwalking and shanty singing with Three Sheets will be much missed at the singarounds and stages. Big Bill Wilkes of the massively deep vocals too. Jon Heslop, witty and acute songwriter whose maritime songs Pete Collins sang so forcefully and whose Folk Pace-Egging song is covered by Impressed- some funny lines well worth seeking out.

Here in Kent **Alan Davis** was for many years a driving force- Skyflynt graced many a



festival, ran singarounds, were key figures in the early years of Tonbridge FC, Tenterden and the restart of Broadstairs under Peter and Dave. I've always regarded Al's voice as one of the best on the scene, especially handling the quieter McTells and H&T Williams ballads. He rocked as well, for a decade Skyflynt finished off tentloads of revellers with Edwin, Muddy Water, London Cockney... the list was endless. And he was always an entertainer, a succession of dreadful jokes... Mrs Doodlebug... most of all, as an arranger he renewed songs, kept crowds happy and enjoyed what he did. It was a huge pleasure to be part of Skyflynt- memories still up on YouTube. Our best wishes to Chris and the

*Continued Overleaf...*



family- an important chap in Kent's Folk History will be fondly remembered.

Small festivals abound- it was fascinating to go up to Scalby near Scarborough and hear an a capella Foodbank & Ferraris, as Sally says, the songs get about! It was delightful to see Anna Shannon, whose brought songs like Frost On The Larch and Farmer's Boy to Broadstairs a few years ago, smiling and with a new CD. One of Woodshed's best ever guests, Anna added so much to every floor song. Her songs should be more widely covered. And all of a sudden Helen North has come out with a real humdinger: seek out Unicorns (not the Bill Caddick, her own) and follow the story- it's as concise as Malvina Reynolds and as hard-hitting. That's what good songwriters do: hit you between the eyes.

As part of his study, Chris Butler has been seeking opinions on English folk music- well worth raising and considering. Is it inherently sad? Predominantly white, male, elderly? What makes it different? Personally I've had many joyful and life-enhancing moments with tunes, dances and entertaining songs, and known very many female singers/ organisers of high quality over the years. As Jeff Warner has pointed out, English melodies are the key, and for me the reason why the music has lifelong interest rather than being a passing fad. The new generation is reaching into the tradition and finding plenty there. And, as ever, a great deal of folk performance is among friends, in every sense unrecorded... what do you think?

And so into the dark days, meteor showers and nippy gales- all our thanks to the festival organisers, club stalwarts, movers and shakers who have made Kent such a welcoming and active place in 2025. May your festive season bring friendship and happiness, and here's to another year of music, dance and song. The moon shines bright... with your pockets full of money, and your barrels full of beer.... May we wish you all a Happy New Year!

**Bob Kenward**

## DEAL FOLK CLUB

Meets Thursdays as below 7.15pm (doors 7pm) to 10pm  
St Andrews Church Hall, West Street, Deal, CT14 6DZ

**December 4th** – Vicki Swan & Jonny Dyer's Winter Warmer  
– a seasonal celebration with nickelharpa & guitar & lots of  
seasonal songs. £10

**December 18th** – Christmas Singers Night – bring your party  
piece, contribute to the buffet and pre-loved CD Raffle. £3

**January 8th** – Singers Night £3

**January 22nd** – Sally Ironmonger & Brian Carter – Kentish  
songs & fun to chase away those winter blues. £8

Tea & coffee £1 or bring your own drink

***www.dealfolkclub.org.uk or ring Sue on 01-304-360877***

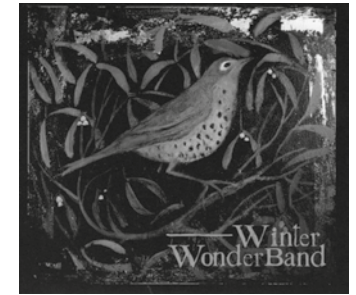
## CD REVIEW

**Winter Wonderband - Joy Illimited**

**WWB01 <https://winterwonderbandfolk.com>**

Despite having been playing together and touring the country every winter for over 10 years, this is the first album from Winter Wonderband and it is a double one. The band is a collaboration between four well-known performers; Maclaine Colston on hammered dulcimer, djembe, finger cymbals and jingle bells; Jennifer Crook on lever harp, guitar and string of bells; Beth Porter on cello, recorders, ukelele and kalimba; and Saul Rose on accordions, floor tom and jingle bells; and they all share the vocals. The first CD was recorded as live in the studio and the shorter second CD was recorded live at Chapel Arts in December 2023. Most of the tracks are traditional or at least very old, such as The Darkling Thrush, a poem by Thomas Hardy later set to a music. Other tracks include Shepherds are the Cleverest Lads, The Coventry Carol, and Gallant Poacher. The first CD closes with two more unusual tracks, Last Christmas and Fairytale of New York which is slightly affected by an exaggerated accent. The second CD is live versions of some of the same songs plus For Love Lane a tune written by Maclaine and Saul while staying in Jennifer's cottage, presumably in Love Lane. The CD comes with a booklet with song notes and words. Publicity for the album includes a quote from an audience member at a gig in Kent last year, "I want that playing in my living room in the run up to Christmas". What more needs to be said?

**Alan Castle (Editor)**



## WANTED

Back issues of  
**Around Kent Folk**

Particularly issues  
1 to 94

*If you have spare  
copies please*

**contact:**

**[akf@tenterdenfolkfestival.org.uk](mailto:akf@tenterdenfolkfestival.org.uk)**

## WANTED

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**IT IS HAPPENING AGAIN**

**The all day sing-a-round  
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The Tenterden Club, Church Road, Tenterden TN30 6AT  
11:30 a.m. to 10.30 p.m.

*Details to be announced in due course*



For information contact:

E: [info@tenterdenfolkfestival.org.uk](mailto:info@tenterdenfolkfestival.org.uk)

Alan Castle 01233 626805

or Folk @ the Platform 2 bar

Dave 07504 799832 or Eileen 07887 370525

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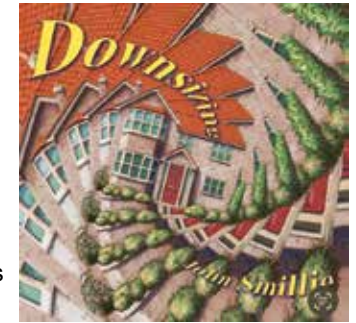
W: [www.tenterdenfolkfestival.org.uk](http://www.tenterdenfolkfestival.org.uk)



**CD REVIEWS**

**John Smillie - Downsizing (15 Tracks)**

There's always a buzz of expectation when John Smillie gets up to sing, his songs light up the room and bring surprises every time. Concealed within his pleasant vocals and nifty guitar work are home truths you'll be thinking about on the way home and which pop into your head again, unbidden, the following week. Downsizing, as the name suggests, is stripped down musically to let the lyrics shine. John has a gift for hearing what we say to each other and gently turning those thoughts around, sometimes finding a bit of the surreal, so you end up where you didn't expect to be. Sometimes humorous, sometimes sad, he lays out these observations on the lawn for us to view- part of his own house clearance- and recognize that we'd never expressed them so well. There's some delicious punning, check out all the baseball references in a love song, and his rhymes are audacious, a real pleasure. I loved the idea that 'where there's a towel, life will find a way'... a tale of two grubby black items lurking in the toilet of a folk club pub. Unlikely saviours... and yet... Thought has gone into the order too, a wry 'Love Talk' which will find sympathy from all who enjoyed 'Shopping With Your Wife' on Superman's Lament is followed by the most poignant song here, Susan Didn't Know. An unforgettable image. Quoting others would take them out of context- best that you discover them yourself: you'll have to play Downsizing over and over to find them all. Beautiful. John is selling Downsizing in aid of MENCAP, so seek him out and buy yourself a present that will reward you time and again. 'My wife squeezed my hand, and, smiling, said, "You know....."'

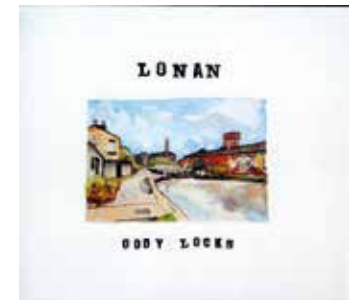


**Bob Kenward**

**Lonan - Oddy Locks**

LONCD02 [www.lonanfolk.com](http://www.lonanfolk.com)

Lonan are a trio from the Leeds area of Yorkshire who perform contemporary and traditional songs and tunes. The trio comprises Evan Davies (mandolin, fiddle, guitar, vocals), Katy Ryder (flute, whistles, guitar, vocals) and Robin Timmis (guitar, fiddle, vocals). This short six track album illustrates their range of material as it includes a couple of tracks they have written, Oddy Locks and Sands of Dover, plus two traditional tracks, Rothwell Debtors' Prison / Les Beaux Jours, and The Shearing, plus Maerdy (The Last Pit in the Rhondda by Dave Burns, and a cover of Richard Thompson's Beeswings. Sands of Dover is the story of an hotel worker from Nepal who went against his tradition and married someone from outside his caste. Of course Beeswing also mentions Kent. "We busked around the market towns, And picked fruit down in Kent". The days when students did the fruit picking are mainly long gone. The sleeve notes give quite a bit of interesting information about each track. This is an interesting and enjoyable album from a group I'd not heard of before.



**Alan Castle (Editor)**

[www.croydonfolkclub.org.uk](http://www.croydonfolkclub.org.uk)

Croydon Folk Club is a not for profit organisation

# Croydon Folk Club

@ Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road, Croydon, CR0 1BD  
Mondays at 8pm Join us for first class folk and real ale at club prices!  
Contact Jenny or Brian by e mail at [croydonfolkclub@aol.com](mailto:croydonfolkclub@aol.com).

The Cedar Hall, and the bar at Ruskin House are fully accessible

**Nov 24th** Jon Wilks £15 (£12) [jonwilks.online](http://jonwilks.online)  
inc a special spot by Maria Mihailik

**Dec 1st** Singers and Musicians Night £4

**8th** Sue and Mary from Suntrap £8 (£6)  
[suntrap.org](http://suntrap.org) inc a special spot by Tim Almond

**15th** Christmas Party with Liz Simcock

(Free entry) [lizsimcock.com](http://lizsimcock.com) (Some food provided) **22nd/29th** Closed for Xmas and New Year

**Jan 5th** Singers and Musicians Night £4

**12th** Hilary Spencer £10 (£8) [hilaryspencer.com](http://hilaryspencer.com)

**19th** Open Mike Unplugged £4

**26th** Back of A Length £8 (£6)  
[facebook.com/backofalengthduo](http://facebook.com/backofalengthduo)

Phone:- 07703210795 Pay on the door,  
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## A NIGHT OUT ON THE TILES

**G** **Am C** **C** **Em**  
In the bleak mid winter, My windows are all iced up,  
**Am** **D** **G** **Am** **D7**  
Now temperatures have dropped; Should have stayed in bed;  
**G** **Am C** **G** **Am C**  
Starmer is a stinker, Burnt all my firewood,  
**Am D G** **Am D G**  
With fuel payments stopped. Even my wood shed.

In the bleak mid winter, Situation's dire;  
Search for every splinter, For to fuel my fire.  
My home I'm slowly wrecking, I've not much left to burn;  
Ripped up all the decking, Next's Dog's kennel's turn.

In the bleak mid winter, Backed against the wall;  
Frozen to my sphincter, Burnt floorboards and all.  
All day I sup cough linctus, To warm my inner core;  
My back passage windy, Since I burnt the door.

In the bleak mid winter, I can't help but moan;  
The telly's on the blink and, No signal on my phone.  
If I were a wise man, I'd seek help for sure;  
Doubtless they'd advise me, To get out some more.

No help am I seeking, Clueless as I am;  
Aerial just needs tweaking; Who needs repair man?  
Despite the cold wind biting, Thought shell suit should suffice;  
Lord God Almighty, Think I've turned to ice.

Maybe I have chewed off, More than I can chew;  
Made it to the rooftop, With wobbly ladder too.  
Trying to be clever, I'd burnt half the rungs;  
Now on so many levels, I find it was so wrong.

Thought I'd try my phone now, Whilst I am up here;  
Battery's fully blown now, That's not all I fear.  
The wind's blown down my ladder, To add to all my trials;  
At least at last I've had a, Night out on the tiles.

JJ CROSSLEY 2025

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## Egerton Folk and Blues Club

Now meeting at the Charing Sports  
Pavilion, off The Moat, Charing (TN27  
0JJ) on the last Tuesday of the month,  
from 7.30 pm. All still welcome - and not  
just folk and blues.

No paid guest performers, just  
residents, itinerants and wayfaring  
strangers (rich or poor).

Sound system available if you need it.  
Hat collection (if you need one).

Contact details: Jerry 'Hatrack' Crossley  
Phone - 07387 382050  
Facebook - EgertonFolkandBluesClub



# Faversham Folk Club



Save these dates! Reservations :  
07957 461832 - please book early!

Please note we are a cash-only club.

There are 2 cash points close nearby.

[www.favershamfolkclub.net](http://www.favershamfolkclub.net)



December - January

Our hearty thanks to all who have made 2025 such a pleasure at the Limes- our 23 guest acts and all the performers who've played- and especially our loyal listeners who come along week in week out- we couldn't do it without you! Doors open 7.00 pm every Wednesday, Club runs 7.30 - 10 pm

- 3 Dec **John Kirkpatrick** - Master of squeeze returns with his Carolling & Crumpets: joy and pleasure to see in the winter. £12/14
- 10 Dec **Doug Hudson** - Festive merriment and glee from Kent's mighty maestro- sure to be a cracker! £10/11
- 17 Dec **Singers** - A chance to bring out all the old favourites- choruses and amusements aplenty. £2

We close for Christmas/ New Year 24 & 31 Dec - see you in 2026

- 7 Jan 2026 **Singers Plus: Whitstable Hoodeners** - Tradition rules with plays and heartwarming delights: and lusty singing too. £2
- 14 Jan **BarnFire** - Shaun Murray & Phil Bennett bring their unique blend of roots/ country/ traditional /jazz on fiddle/ guitar/ mandolin- something for everyone, and songs too! £10/11
- 21 Jan **Singers Plus: Global Fusion/ Ros Hone** - Welcome return visit, harmonies which light up the room. £2
- 28 Jan **Bob Kenward** - Songs from the Garden of England and beyond - always fresh & entertaining. £10/11

**Coming soon: 4 Feb: From The Workshop, 18 Feb: Morrigan, 25 Feb: Bill Crawford, 04 Mar: Brown Boots**

All other Wednesdays Singers Nights £2

For Reservations please call 07957 461832

Club & Gig enquiries 07885 742763

Please leave a message if no answer- thank you!

The Limes, Preston St, Faversham ME13 8PG.



## Lewes Saturday Folk Club

### Traditional music every Saturday night

Elephant & Castle, White Hill, Lewes BN7 2DJ 8.00 – 11.00

[www.lewessaturdayfolkclub.org](http://www.lewessaturdayfolkclub.org)

[valmaigoodyear@aol.com](mailto:valmaigoodyear@aol.com) 01273 476757

*Loyalty card: 6 evening visits = £5 off an evening*

*All payments in cash on the day. Access by staircase.*

*Assistance dogs only please.*

#### Dec 6 **Robb Johnson & Roger Watson**

Songs & tunes with humour & a social conscience, £12 cash

**Dec 13 Jackie Oates & John Spiers** Trad songs & tunes, fiddle, melodeon (£15 cash). All-day workshops on fiddle & melodeon (£45 cash). Email to reserve workshop places & evening tickets.

**Dec 20 Christmas Party** Open fire, candles, mince pies. Bring a party piece or choose a carol from our book. Dress up. £6 cash.

**Dec 27 Shepherds Arise** Old Sussex carols, dance tunes, readings & a Sussex Mummers' play. Email to reserve tickets. £8 cash.

**Jan 3 Copper Family** Sussex songs in vocal harmony from guardians of the tradition. Email to reserve tickets. £15 cash.

**Jan 10 Wassail** Open fire, candles, Twelfth Cake, Wassail bowl, seasonal songs & tunes. Bring a twig from your apple tree. £6 cash.

**JAN 17 SUSSEX ALL-DAY SINGAROUND** Free  
**The Royal Oak, Barcombe, BN8 5BA 11.00 a.m. – 11.00 p.m.**  
The day begins as usual with an hour of join-in tunes while people arrive. Ballads & the occasional instrumental party piece will be very welcome. Break from 6.00 - 7.00 p.m. Food on sale until 9.00 p.m.  
**TUNES SESSION at the ELEPHANT & CASTLE, LEWES**  
**Sunday 18th Jan Noon – 3:00 Free**

**Jan 24 Simon Stallard** Trad songs in English & Scots Gaelic, flute. £8 cash

**Jan 31 Milly Murphy CD launch** Sussex singer-songwriter £5 cash

## Sussex Folk News (December 2025 & January 2026)

In the early 1970s Martyn Wyndham-Read started a series of Maypoles to Mistletoe concerts which portray the seasons of the year through song, music, dance and verse. This show has been performed for the last 50 years and has, in itself, become a tradition at Christmas time in and around the Sussex area. It seems hardly possible to say that the man who started it is still at the helm and he is still organising and singing in it. The two performances this year take place at the same place in the intimate setting of the Normandy Centre in Denne Road in Horsham with two performances at 3pm and 8pm on Saturday 13th December.

Obviously the participants vary from year to year and this year includes the ladies of Magog Morris as well as Broadwood Morris Men. There will be the Maypole Band as well as Carolyn Robson, Sue Mills and a cast of..... well, quite a few! Advance tickets are needed and these can be obtained from the [www.ticketsource.co.uk](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk) website.

The Normandy Centre is also the home of the Sunday night Horsham Folk Club and they have some attractive nights coming up in this period with the first and last dates during these months seeming the most interesting and different. Lawrence Menard (USA) and an Australian, Clare Quinn perform as Those Folk. With Lawrence's Cajun beginnings and Californian upbringing melding with Clare's grounding in Australian folk music, their sound is diverse and inspiring. Vocal harmonies are featured alongside guitars, mandolin, banjo, accordion & banjo. Their show offers a charismatic, authentic and thoroughly entertaining evening with the Menard name associated with the exciting best of Cajun song and music.

Their last guest artists of this period on January 25th will be the wonderful choir, Ukrainian Voices. I have had occasion to work with these singers and musicians on a number of occasions



and I can tell you that they are delightful. Founded in Brighton, July 2022, the Ukrainian Voices Choir brings together 17 singers aged 9 to 74, many of whom are refugees who found safety and new beginnings in the UK. United by their love of music, they share a rich repertoire of traditional and contemporary Ukrainian songs.

Since its founding, the choir has performed concerts across the South East, receiving heartfelt praise for its moving performances that transcend language and culture. Beyond music, the choir provides friendship, emotional healing, and a sense of belonging, while also celebrating Ukrainian heritage and strengthening community ties through the universal language of song. The choir is joined by members of Nebo i Zemlia choir, founded last year in Lewes, both under the Directorship of Lyudmilla Kulakova, who brings these two choirs together in strong collaborations.

One of the longest continuously running folk clubs in Britain is Chichester Folk Club and they are blessed with many faithful, very talented regular performers and in Marilyn

Campbell they have one of the longest running and most dedicated organisers. This enables them to run many of their nights without booking guests but the performers that they do book are always from the top drawer. On 1st of December they present Mick Ryan and Paul Downes. Mick has a powerful, resonant voice and Paul is a splendid guitarist and singer and together they effortlessly shift between moods – one minute light-hearted and whimsical, the next deeply personal and moving, the next solidly traditional. You can find this club at the Chichester Inn, 38 West Street, every Monday evening.

The Lamb Folk Club in Eastbourne meets on the first and third Wednesdays of the month in the pub of that name in the old town and again, their first and last attractions of these two months seem to be the strongest. On 3rd December 2025 it's the highly rated Skinner & Twitch. Steve Skinner has a background in musical theatre, having managed a theatre company and toured the country with musical reviews. Sandra Twitchett has a classical training, currently being a member of the Huddersfield Choral Society, and has a passion for British folk. Then on January 21st there's a return to our area of Sarah McQuaid who uses her winning voice and accompaniments on acoustic and electric guitars, keyboards to create a truly immersive experience. Her live performances are full of warmth, wit, and intimacy, and have earned her loyal followings on both sides of the Atlantic.

The meetings either side of Christmas of the Lewes Saturday night folk club at the Elephant & Castle in White Hill have a very familiar look to them from previous years. Their warm and cosy Christmas Party in on December 20th than on the day after Boxing Day they have their annual visit from the Shepherds Arise group which brings together many familiar faces from the local folk scene in an evening that offers Old Sussex carols with fiddle, flute, bassoon, serpent, whistle & concertinas, Sussex tunes, Sussex readings, Sussex mummers' play. The start 2016 as they have done in every recent with the iconic Sussex traditional singing family, The Copper Family on January 3rd with another regular event, their Wassail evening on the following Saturday.

Two other December dates at this club really catch the eye; both feature new pairings of well-established performers; Robb Johnson is a great songwriter & guitarist with a social conscience & a fine sense of humour. His newest CD, The Optimist Hotel, features his new musical partner, Roger Watson, a songwriter in traditional style & hugely influential melodeon player. They perform there on 6th December followed by Jackie Oates & John Spiers and together they will bring you traditional English music & song with Jackie's fiddle & John's melodeon. They are two of the top performers of our times.

It is pleasing to be able to bring in a fifth folk club in Sussex for this issue. The Uckfield folk club meets upstairs at Upstairs at the Station Pub, Uckfield, TN22 5DL every third Tuesday of the Month, 7.30pm though the only date that can offer you at the moment is their Christmas singaround which seems to be not on their regular 3rd Tuesday but on 9th December.

Finally, a rarity in my Sussex Folk News is a mention of a folk dance but here is a family ceilidh arranged as a Family Christmas Ceilidh in the large space of the Corn Exchange in Brighton. This is another event that will need you buy advance tickets and they can be bought from the Dome Ticket Office. Dancing will be the long established dance band in the county, The Sussex Pistols and they will be working with their regular dance caller whose name is.

**Vic Smith**

## CD REVIEWS

**Peter and Barbara Snape with Poppy Weatherall - Such Times as These**

**Lukes Row Music LRCD8 [www.thesnapes.org.uk](http://www.thesnapes.org.uk)**

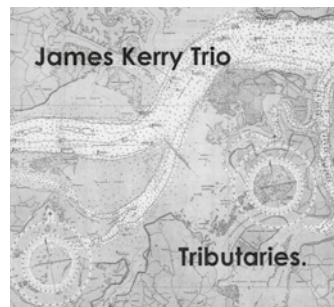
Peter and Barbara Snape are well-known on the folk scene for their fine arrangements of traditional English folk songs and their research, collecting and performance of the songs originally collected and collated by Anne Geddes Gilchrist OBE around Lancashire and beyond in the early 20th century. You may have seen them perform at Tenterden or Chippenham Folk Festival as The Gilchrist Collective with Brian Peters and Sue Burgess. The new album includes 16 tracks, mainly from the Roud collection, and including Seventeen Come Sunday, William Taylor, Drummer Boy For Waterloo, The Unquiet Grave and The Golden Vanity as well as A Carol of the Manger and The Shepherds both written by Anne Gilchrist at the beginning of the 18th century. Peter's fine melodeon playing sits behind and emphasises Barbara's clear and precise vocals. They are joined on several tracks by Poppy Weatherall on fiddle and vocals and by Linda Green on piano on the two carols. The CD comes in a cardboard cover with a small booklet explaining the sources of the songs. If you like well present traditional English folk songs, then this album should be in your collection.



**James Kerry Trio - Tributaries**

**JK2025CD [www.jameskerrymusic.com](http://www.jameskerrymusic.com)**

Tributaries is the second studio album from The James Kerry Trio and is a follow up to Source. The trio comprises local lads, James on melodeon and Danny Tonks on guitar, plus author and musician Tom Kitching on fiddle and mandolin. Of the 10 all instrumental tracks, five were written by James, two by Tom and one, the Loose Hornpipes, by Simon Care. The other tracks are traditional arranged by James. On the cover James says that the tunes on this album are from all sorts of places, old and new, and that some are wild and energetic and others are quiet and reflective but that they are all rooted in the folk tradition. James goes on to dedicate the album to the late Ken Bryant and Barry Laing who many of you will have known. Most of the arrangements lend themselves to playing at folk music sessions. The CD comes in a cardboard cover but lacks much in the way sleeve notes or other information. Even so it is a good listen and definitely one for the lovers of well-played old and new folk music. The trio were on tour to launch the album in October and I'm sure they will be out and about again in 2026.



**Alan Castle (Editor)**

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**02 December - Benji Kirkpatrick**

**09 December - Katie Spencer**

**16 Dec - Phil Beer and his special guest Emily Slade**

**23 Dec - Christmas Greetings! Sorry we are closed!**

**30 December - Happy New Year! Sorry we are closed!**

**06 January 2026 - Barn Fire**

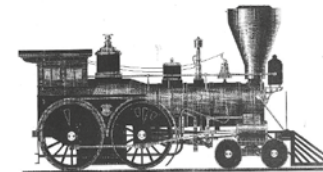
**13 January - Brown Boots**

**20 January - The Medlars**

**27 January - The Goblin Band**

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## Les Batons review

On Sunday 21st September guest band Portmanteau opened our Autumn season in fine style with 2 varied all acoustic sets of driving schottische, bourrée, waltz and mazurka tunes both traditional and self-penned. Travelling down from Cambridge, braving the challenges of the Dartford crossing, Caro Appleby is a fine multi-instrumentalist, James Rhodes plays melodeon, whilst Robin Fairey favours wind instruments, including the bass bassoon. They also play half-acoustic / half-synthesised balfolk



gigs, which can be found on their web site [portmanteaubalfolk.com](http://portmanteaubalfolk.com)

Before Portmanteau, as usual Alison and Peter, also from Cambridge, rehearsed our in-house band before we all enjoyed another sumptuous bring and share buffet, then began the bal with a set from their ever growing 'Tune Book' list. Whether you play by ear or need the 'dots', you are most welcome to come and join in.

The afternoon continued non-stop with musicians floor spots in between our guest band's sets with several dances being taught 'on the hoof'. My especially favourite was to a lively number, as played by Bill and Petra, called "Meatballs, whisky and beer", originally an Irish Hornpipe, adapted by Topette and even by Swedish Ola Bäckstrom, each putting their own stamp on it.

Sunday 19th October brought Duo Mistral, Chris and Caroline Shaw, playing mostly



fiddles and melodeons but also featured Caroline on the Boha or Cornemuse Landaise, a bagpipe instrument from the Gascony region. Their set covered a wide variety of tunes and songs from Biarnèe, Limousin, Brittany and Gascony, plus they taught the Montagnarde, a Hanter Dro and a Sept Sauts dance for both experienced and novice dancers.

Sawney White Bird trio will be our last guest band of the year on Sunday 16th November enticing us onto the dance floor with fiddle, saxophone and whistles, concertina, mouth organ and French bagpipes played by Ravi, Heather and Jane.

For more details see [www.lesbatons.org](http://www.lesbatons.org) and, if you should come across any good quality photos of Les Batons' early years, 2001-2010, please let us know, so they can be incorporated into the updated archive Gallery shortly to be added.

Looking ahead to the New Year, on Sunday 18th January our session Dance About will feature 3 sets of expertly taught French and Breton dances with the usual musician floor spots in between for you to book in advance and show off your talent.

Allons dan s ez!

**Nina Taylor**



## Les Batons

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All welcome, no partner or experience required

### Sundays

12 to 1pm Music Session 1pm to 5pm informal Bal

**16 Nov 2025** **Sawney White Bird**  
[sawneywhitebird.com](http://sawneywhitebird.com)

**18 Jan 2026** **DanceAbout**  
3 Dance workshops and floor spots

**15 Feb 2026** **Confluence Duo**  
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**15 March 2026** **Deux Sans Frontières**  
[deuxsansfrontieres.co.uk](http://deuxsansfrontieres.co.uk)

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At **Hollingbourne Village Hall**  
Kent ME17 1TR (park behind hall)  
[www.lesbatons.org](http://www.lesbatons.org)  
email: [les.batons@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:les.batons@yahoo.co.uk)

The  
**TENTERDEN FOLK SESSIONS**  
The Tenterden Club

Wednesday 10th December 2025  
Wednesday 14th January 2026  
Wednesday 11th February 2026  
from 7:30 to 10:30



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Church Road  
Tenterden  
TN30 6AT  
[thetenterdenclub.co.uk](http://thetenterdenclub.co.uk)

The second Wednesday of the month  
Free folk song and music in ground floor bar  
*All welcome*

Membership of the Tenterden club is recommended if you are coming to the Folk Sessions regularly and starts from only £15 for over 65s.



Tenterden Folk Club has been running consistently since 1992  
For information contact Alan Castle  
E: [info@tenterdenfolkfestival.org.uk](mailto:info@tenterdenfolkfestival.org.uk) T: 01233 626805  
W: [www.tenterdenfolkfestival.com/Tenterden-Folk-Sessions/](http://www.tenterdenfolkfestival.com/Tenterden-Folk-Sessions/)

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## CD REVIEW

### Ninebarrow - The Hour of the Blackbird (Winding Track 9BTHOTB)

We admit it, we have an enduring and great respect for these two since they first emerged and became regulars, then Patrons, of the Lyme Folk festival. If that makes us fans we're happy to admit it. Over the years they have immersed themselves in their beloved Dorset, seeking to interpret its history, ways and environment through their music and song. Whether they are reinterpreting a traditional song, or crafting one of their own, they bring a unique sound that is at home both in folk circles and to a wider audience. Their immense musical talent is beyond reproach. This latest offering adds to their growing catalogue of soundscapes.

Ninebarrow have been developing their music in partnership with choirs since the time of COVID restrictions. It started with individual choir members recording their parts on mobile phones and laptops and sending them in. 'Says Jay: "The response to that blew us away, and we thought if one song can sound this good recorded through phones and laptops imagine what a studio album collaboration could sound like."' This album is the culmination of that partnership, seeing them revisit thirteen of their back catalogue of songs joining with Hampshire's Hart Voices and Surrey's Chantry Singers under the musical directorship of Roy Rashbrook, himself a member of the choir of St Paul's Cathedral. Add to this Jon Whitley's and Jay LaBouchardiere's superb and haunting vocal harmonies and you can see where the album is going. This is much more than a "best of" album, but showcases their deepening musical and artistic journey.

It's really hard to single out a particular track for special attention, so we're not going to try. We loved them all for different reasons.

Produced once again by Mark Tucker, who always succeeds in bringing the best out on every track, this album has far-reaching appeal, both within and beyond the folk scene. A joy to listen to.

**Dave & Eileen Masterson**



## Cyril in the Stocks

Recently found again, photos of the long lamented and great Lancaster Maritime festival, where shanties ruled alongside the pressgang for 22 years. I was reminded of those far off days. It was a form of genius to have the press gang roaming the quayside all in costume, Admiral David Wright in charge, no one was exempted from their activity whether on



the quay or in the pubs. The Three Mariners, The George, The Waggon and Horses. To be carted off by the press was a badge of honour, Lancaster Maritime was set in the year 1803 when so briefly the Crown was at peace with France. One year a visitor was taken up the steps of the customs house and suspended over the balcony in clear air, it was only later that this visitor was found to be a Frenchman, he must have taken it in good heart as he came back the following year. And so it was that Cyril Tawney was impressed and carted off to be put in the stocks outside The Three Mariners where he was liberally given noggins of spirits. I also remember Sid Kipper coming off stage where he had just sung 'Don't harpoon my Blue Whale' a rewrite of 'Blue Suede Shoes' only to hear as he approached me a voice shout "now do 'Whale-house Rock' looking at me he said take a note?"

**Chris Roche**

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## FOLK AT THE DRUM

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If you enjoy playing or listening to acoustic music of all types (folk, blues, country, rock, etc), you are very welcome to join us in the function

room of the pub for a relaxed and entertaining evening.

Nominal £2 entry fee.

For more information, contact Jeff on 01303 813188

## **BITS OF PAPER**

Yes, this is a bit of paper, but before you get enraged,  
I beg you to remember that I'm more than middle aged,  
I really can't remember words however hard I try,  
I must think of innovations that will help to get me by.

Some ways are tried and tested, you know the ones they are,  
A crib sheet written on your hand, or taped to your guitar,  
A partner in the audience to prompt you if you panic,  
Or covering confusion with a grin that's slightly manic.

But what about a cue or two in print of larger size,  
Hidden over there against, perhaps, a raffle prize,  
Or placed upon a table in a beer mat kind of way,  
I'd casually glance over and then look right away.

I could wear, in desperate moments, when my brain has turned to jelly,  
A speaker in my ear like presenters have on telly,  
Tuned into a roady in a van parked just outside,  
With a folder of my poems, who cares, I have no pride.

If I was singing in the bar, so long as no one passes,  
I could project the words and have them scroll across the glasses,  
Or get them sent by satellite and focused just down here,  
Then reflected from the surface of my lemonade or beer.

Or, better still, a handy ruse which might impress the locals,  
I'll have a tiny autocue installed in my bifocals,  
And failing that I'll just chill out and try some meditation,  
And summon up a spirit guide to give me inspiration.

BUT

Hang on, what would the Royal Philharmonic say,  
If someone said, "Right, put your music stands away,  
What the hell, let's wing it and play the lot by ear",  
Me? Lose my bits of paper? No way, no chance, no fear.

*Maureen Jones June 2005*

### **Tonbridge Folk Club (Nellie's)**

Ye Olde Chequers Inn, 122 High Street,  
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**Please note that we start at 7:30 and finish  
at 10:30.**

**1st Dec Skinner & Twitch**

**15th Dec Alan Austen**

**5th January Steve Turner**

**19th January Country Folk**

**2nd February Maya Kally**

**16th February Enda McCabe**

**2nd March Daria Kulesh**

**Tel: 01892 822945**

[info@tonbridgefolkclub.org](mailto:info@tonbridgefolkclub.org)

[www.tonbridgefolkclub.org](http://www.tonbridgefolkclub.org)



### **St Agnes Fountain SOLD OUT!**

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December, Canterbury Cathedral  
Lodge, Full Price £24, Under 25 £12

### **Albion Christmas Band**

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**2026**

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Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> January – Kingston Barn,  
Full Price £16, Under 25 £8

### **Ainsley Hamill (Trio)**

#### **To Celebrate Burns Night**

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> January, Colyer-Fergusson Hall,  
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25th Closed ~ Christmas Day

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## Essex Folk News

for traditional music, dance and song in Essex



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**Issue No. 133 February/March COPY DATE: 18th December**

Then ...

18th December 2025 – February / March

18th February 2026 – April / May

18th April 2026 – June / July

18th June 2026 – August / September

18th August 2026 – October / November

18th October 2026 - December / January

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# BROADSTAIRS Folk Week



— 7-14 AUGUST 2026 —

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Early booking is open for Weekend and  
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Please support the Festival by joining our  
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