

around Kent folk

Issue 133
February / March 2026



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



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Promoting folk song, music, dance, crafts and traditions.

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AIF

Welcome to issue 133 February/March 2026 issue of Around Kent Folk

I'm writing this in early January so it is not too late to wish readers of AKF a Happy New Year.

Just before Christmas I was lucky enough to see Maddy Prior and Steeleye Span in concert. I first saw them around 50 years ago at an early Laycock and Chippenham Folk Festival and I've seen them many times since. In fact in December 1986 I even had the pleasure of interviewing them for the Kentish Express (see *overleaf*). At the time I was writing a regular folk column and the paper arrange free access all areas tickets to the concert at the Leas Cliff Hall in Folkestone but Steeleye preferred to go over to the pub for a chat over a pint. I was also instrumental in getting them their first booking at Revelation Ashford while I was a Trustee about 15 years ago. Although the membership of the band has changes several times over that period and Maddy's voice has matured, I still enjoy seeing and hearing them as did around 300 other people in Ashford. In the early days of Tenterden Folk Festival we put on a concert in partnership with The Sinden Theatre with Maddy, her daughter and I think it was a niece. I've also enjoyed seeing Maddy with The Carnival Band. Who have been your favourite and most followed performers on the folk scene over the time you have enjoyed folk song, music and dance? Let us know.

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 www.aroundkentfolk.org.uk

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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.



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Front cover: Steeleye Span as they were in 2014 Photo by: Lewis J Brockway

Congratulations to Alan Castle and his team on Tenterden Festival's Cultural Impact Award, and on his 75th birthday recently celebrated. Alan has long been a staunch organiser and supporter of traditional Kent music & customs, and without his determination to accentuate the profile of the music we know and love the Kent folk scene would be very different.

Bob Kenward

'Spanners' in the work once again

FOLK

LAST month The Leas Cliff Hall at Folkestone was the venue for a rare local appearance of that famous band Steeleye Span.

The band was at the forefront of the move to introduce electric instruments and rock type arrangements to traditional songs and tunes.

They became internationally known and were one of the few folk groups to feature regularly in the pop charts. These high level pressures eventually led to the break-up of the band after a very successful tour of Germany in 1978.

However, two years later Steeleye Span were persuaded, by public demand, to reform and have been working on a regular basis ever since.

The present line up is still fronted by Maddy Prior taking many of the lead vocals on a wide variety of traditional and contemporary ballads and songs. The other musicians and vocalists are Rick Kemp bass guitar; Bob Johnson, lead guitar; Peter Knight, piano and violin; and Nigel Pegrum on drums.

Busy

Over a drink in their hotel bar Nigel told me that they had ended up doing more this year than had originally been planned, partly to promote their latest album, Back In Line (Flutterby Flutz), but mostly because they enjoyed working together.

Besides the album and two UK tours they have fitted in appearances at folk festivals and concerts and included tours of America and Australia.

They will be taking a well deserved break until March next year to concentrate on their individual activities.

Nigel will be spending more time at his Pace Studios in Milton Keynes recording other people and also playing with The Parson Nose Ceilidh Band. Maddy and Rick will be doing some duo work and Peter says he may be able to fit in the odd visit to the folk clubs around Hastings, where he lives.

As for 1987 Maddy tells me a tour of the Middle East is being planned. She also mentioned plans for a new single based on the mystical green man theme which is closely connected with May Day fertility rights. It should be well worth waiting for.

As for the concert itself, everybody enjoyed the mixture of new and old material but old favourites, such as All Around My Hat, received the longest and loudest applause and the evening ended after several encores.

Alan Castle

Les Barker Poetry Many readers will remember Les Barker with affection and a wide smile on their face. Les self produced some 70 poetry booklets and in the absence of these being readily available if you have any of these and can donate, photocopies or originals, to the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library at Cecil Sharp House it is hoped that a complete set can be held there.

The Library's address is Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London, NW1 7AY.

Scene & Heard (February - March 2026)

So much seen & heard since our last issue- Kent has been so buzzing with winter gigs and sessions, favourite artistes and new faces, traditions kept and some augmented that it's impossible to track them all. So, with apologies to all for brief reports, here goes...

The Tenterden singaround on a Tuesday lunchtime in November proved the vitality of the concept- plenty of excellent traditional singers whose late-night travelling days are now few gathered to celebrate the songs we've all enjoyed over 50 years- choruses abounding and memories conjured. Well done, Dave & Eileen and here's to many more.

Deal's guest nights saw audiences from across Kent for Ashen Keys, then Johnny Dyer & Vicki Swan. Plenty to look for in their programme for 2026- as with all clubs, check the ads here and on their website to be sure of reserving seats. Johnny Coppin... Folk In The Barn continue their range of high-quality concerts of which we hear much appreciation. St Agnes' Fountain and Albion Christmas band in one month! As too Tim Edey's annual Kent tour, a sellout across the county with excellent support acts (Sally Ironmonger/Brian Carter, Katy Bradley)- all well worth the price of admission. Gavin & Julie Atkin and Co ply their carols in traditional visits, and continue their online Sunday Zoom, a boon to all stuck indoors in inclement times.



Johnny Dyer & Vicki Swan



John Kirkpatrick

The Hospice band in Faversham has now topped the £18k mark donated to local charity, all based on street music- seeing children instinctively dance to folk tunes is always uplifting. The local Limes club has been well attended with guests as Pip



Doug Hudson

Ives, Dan Walsh, John Kirkpatrick & Doug Hudson showing the value of entertainment alongside their skills. Great to hear Doug revisiting his full repertoire- so many breathless red faces in the crowd- we all went home warm! Duos and groups feature strongly in the 2026 menu, something for everyone...

A rare visit to Dartford was well rewarded, Mick Ryan & Paul Downe in top form, supported ably by Sue Hudson & Ian Petrie. As ever, the club attracts top names from afar as well as local luminaries. A tribute night in

Continued Overleaf...



Mick Ryan & Paul Downes

memory of the beloved Ivan North was held at Orpington Folk & Music club, plenty of opportunities to sing, with themed night and guests. Ted's shirts grow ever brighter... Paul Green at the Liberal club hosts eclectic combinations of local artists, whilst Ashford Folk meet on Thursdays and welcome allcomers to their sessions. Broadstairs Woodshed is a moveable feast these days, gathering genres like snowball-rolling-Irish to trad to Americana according to the theme. We gather from David Pleasants that the Drum session info ought to read

'every Monday from 1930-2200 except Bank Holiday. Glad to correct.

In the Far East, Rosslyn Court finds itself in the midst of accolade by Time Out: Cliftonville is the in place to be! To be sure partly due to Morag & Chris Butler's efforts to raise profile and provide a stream of worthwhile new music to Thanet. How she's found time I've no idea, however Morag has a 6-track EP out, beautifully produced by Ty Watling. More on this elsewhere. Over West, Skinner & T'Witch amused Tonbridge and had a raft of tight songs to ponder. Excellent to see the return of Alan Austen, his authentic Kent songs to the fore, robust tunes on squeezebox and personal contribution to folklore and customs brought out in his lyrics and reminiscences of local singers past. Liz Simcock, Paula Ryan and Liam Sherry all brought skill and memorable moments to the Chequers, an easy walk from the station.



Skinner & T'Witch

Since we're in the area, The Royal Oak in Tunbridge Wells sees monthly 2nd Tuesday folk sessions, the Christmas extravaganza with John Clarke and Hartley Morris raising the roof- Paul Stepto/Pete Metcalfe and John/Di Cullen arrange fascinating combos, always 3 slots a night...



John Clarke

A few thoughts on the last S&H... interesting to hear Jack Rutter express his view that he couldn't really see the point of singing songs which weren't uplifting... it was great to catch up with Roy Gill, a Kent legend, who recalled great sessions of song after morris stands and the joy spread through country dances and ceilidhs. Sadly Roy keeps his violin in its case these days, but his enthusiasm and pleasure burn bright as ever.

Lots of planning going on for festivals to

come.. Dates for diaries filling up... If you've not yet caught up with the Official Broadstairs Folk Week Facebook page, well worth a look with much more than appetizing lists of events for next August. The Copper Family Christmas link and level of involvement show a keen sense of tradition, a thoughtful way in for those who wonder what it's all about and a treat for those who enjoy fireside watching.. bound to be more as the year advances... it's only a few months to Sweeps!



Hartley Singers

Back in the short, dark days, out came Hooden Horses, Wassailers and Mummers, in their full glory and spate, across the county. DeadHorse, Broomdashers, you were astonishingly brave in that Nor'Easterly! As were those on the Downs, in the streets and squares... Wantsum, Hartley, Loose Women et al. Congratulations to all who keep Kent fit and colourful! January outdoor traditional celebrations are springing up- Bob and Howl... there's sure to be a grand apple crop...

May everyone winter well, and good luck to all who venture out- there's always a session and a warm welcome in the folk world, wherever you are!

Friends and good company... a toast!

Bob Kenward

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CORRECTION

In last issue (December 2025 - January 2026) regarding the "Scene & Heard" article we included a photo of "The Festival Band". This was unfortunately given the incorrect caption of "The Old Stagers".

Apologies for the mix up.

DEAL FOLK CLUB

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

February 19th – Dave Ferra – Kent's own blues maestro entertains. One of the top players in the country. £8

March 5th – Singers Night £3

March 19th – Bob Kenward's Kent Song Collective Show – 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

The TENTERDEN FOLK SESSIONS

The Tenterden Club

Wednesday 11th February

Wednesday 11th March

Wednesday 8th April

from 7:30 to 10:30



The Tenterden Club
Church Road
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TN30 6AT
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.



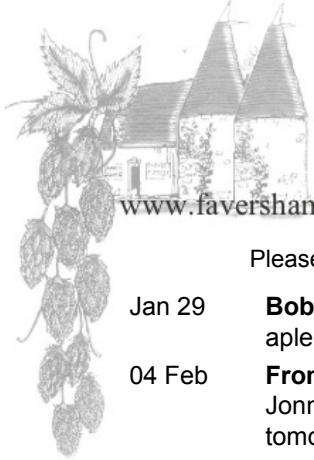
Tenterden Folk Club has been running consistently since 1992

For information contact Alan Castle

E: info@tenterdenfolkfestival.org.uk T: 01233 626805

W: www.tenterdenfolkfestival.com/Tenterden-Folk-Sessions/

Faversham Folk Club



Save these dates! Reservations :
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Please note we are a cash-only club.

There are 2 cash points close nearby.

www.favershamfolkclub.net



February - March

Please reserve your seat on 07957 461832- all welcome!

- Jan 29 **Bob Kenward** - Songs from the heart of the county, choruses aplenty. £10/11
- 04 Feb **From The Workshop** - First time at FFC for the wonderful Jonnie & Helen, powerful and melodic songs of today and tomorrow. £10/11
- 18 Feb **Morrigan** - Grand harmonies and rapport from Sarah, Ros & Chris- always fun! £10/11
- 25 Feb **Bill Crawford** - We're lucky to catch Bill, highly entertaining traditional singer from the West Country, the night after his appearance at C# House. £10/11
- 04 Mar **Brown Boots** - Will and Martin give us traditional tunes good & strong- always a busy evening with so many surprises- the future of folk. £11/12
- 18 Mar **Singers Plus Upping The Shanty** - Local supershantians add to the Singers' Night 2x20 min slots guaranteed to raise the roof. £2
- 25 Mar **Dave Ellis & Boo Howard** - Guitarists, come and marvel at a master at work, with Boo's keyboard and bass augmenting their glorious vocals. £10/11
- 01 Apr **Cathy Barclay & Sarah Yarwood** - Welcome return of traditional family duo singing cut-glass harmonies- a beautiful way to bring in the spring £10/11

**Coming soon: 15 Apr: Hartley Singers, 22 Apr: Culverake,
06 May : Fourgone Confusion, 20 May Jeff Warner**

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.

CD REVIEW

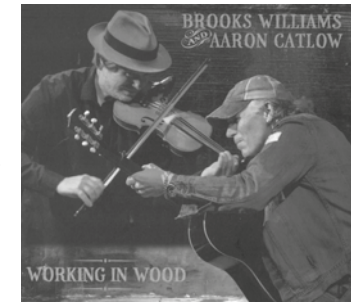
Brooks Williams and Aaron Catlow - Working in Wood

RGBM 2601 www.brookswilliams.com/brooks-aaron

Brooks Williams plays acoustic guitar and provides vocals, Arron Catlow supplies fiddle and vocals, with Jon Short guesting on double bass. Brooks guitars on this album come from Atkin Guitars of Canterbury; <https://atkinguitars.com/>. The album has a distinctly American sound to it despite being recorded in Bath and mixed and mastered in Glasgow. The 10 tracks are a mix of songs written and arranged by Brooks and Aaron and other contemporary American songwriters plus the traditional Hesitation Blues.

Other track titles include Whatcha Gonna Do About It, London Road, Working in Wood, and Deep River Blues. Brooks first solo gig of 2026 was a Guitar Workshop on Saturday and Sunday 17th and 18th January at The Blue Boar, Maldon, Essex so you have sadly missed Brooks' only guitar workshop of 2026 and one of his few relatively local gigs. However he is back in our region on Monday 23rd February for the Midnight Special Blues at The Cabin, 173-175 London Road, Camberley, Surrey. The Working with Wood CD launch Tour brings both Brooks and Aron to Lingfield Community Arts at Lingfield in Sussex on March 6th. Before and after these dates they seem to be all over the country from Devon to Scotland. A very popular Americana duo with folk influences.

Alan Castle (Editor)



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Alan Castle 01233 626805

or Folk @ the Platform 2 bar

Dave 07504 799832 or Eileen 07887 370525

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Feb 2nd Singers and Musicians Night £4
9th Counters Creek £15 (£12) counterscreekmusic.com



Counters Creek

Counter's Creek, left, is an acoustic folk band based in London who make original music inspired by the folk music of the British Isles and beyond. Jigs, reels, grooves from Eastern Europe & West Africa, catchy melodies with closely interwoven harmonies allied to a real sense of swing and dance energy.

16th Open Mike Unplugged £4
23rd Lynne Heraud and Pat Turner £10 (£8) lynneandpat.co.uk
Mar 2nd Singers and Musicians Night £4
9th North Sea Gas £15 (£12) northseagas.co.uk



North Sea Gas

".....they inherit the mantle vacated by The Corries and The McCalmans with tight vocal harmonies and well-chosen material.....most commendable about North Sea Gas is their ability to balance up tempo material with quieter more thoughtful moments and treat each with commitment and professionalism. "Fire in the Glen" is an excellent showcase for their talents and shows them taking the Scottish ballad group mantle with fire and grace."
John O'Regan Freelance Music Journalist,

16th Open Mike Unplugged £4
23rd George Sansome and Matt Quinn £12 (£10) georgesansome.co.uk
30th Simply Dylan £15 (£12) simplydylan.com



Simply Dylan

No frills, no gimmicks, no pretence SIMPLY DYLAN is John O'Connell's personal exploration and celebration of the rich and diverse work of Bob Dylan. John O'Connell, a rare talent who has had his name indelibly written in to the tapestry of Liverpool's music scene, has collaborated with other highly reputable musicians from the city to form his Dylan Band.

Apr 6th Closed for Easter
13th Martin Simpson £25 (£20) martinsimpsonmusic.com
Phone:- 07703210795 E mail:- croydonfolkclub@aol.com
Pay on the door, cards accepted, or via:- wegottickets.com

CD REVIEW

Damien O'Kane & Ron Block – Banjovial (Pure Records PRCD90)

We were asked to review this album because we've been long-standing fans of the banjo (we thank the likes of Medway's Phil Burkin for this). So, as it says in the album's publicity "Calling all banjo non-believers. Come on down and face the music, your time is up!"

For those who are not familiar with them, Coleraine's Damien O'Kane and California's Ron Block are considered to be two of the world's most respected exponents of the banjo: O'Kane on Irish tenor banjo and Block on 5 string bluegrass banjo. Together they have become a tour de force, weaving together their individual banjo styles with their unique, innovative approach to bring yet another ground breaking album that is full of imagery and joy.

This is a 12-track album of 10 new tunes and two original songs. Whether tune or song, they draw inspiration from their personal lives and experiences, as detailed with care in the sleeve notes. Some tracks have a driving beat, while others are more contemplative, but what is clear that this is an album full of thankfulness and joy.

Although this is mainly an instrumental album, the two songs should not be overlooked. Ron Block's 'Love is Like That', inspired by his mother's love and Damien O'Kane's 'The Loudest Word' are both beautiful lyrically and are worthy stand-alone tracks.

Of note, the final track is a departure from the banjo and from O'Kane's and Block's writing, instead being handed to guitarist Steven Byrnes, so ending the album without a banjo in sight!

Co-produced by Damien and Ron and percussionist Josh Clark, the album also features Steven Byrnes on guitar, Duncan Lyall on double bass and Moog and guests Irish button accordionist Sharon Shannon and American bluegrassers Aubrey Hainie and Tim Crouch.

If you want to explore the versatility of the banjo, you can do no better than listening to Banjovial.

Dave & Eileen Masterson

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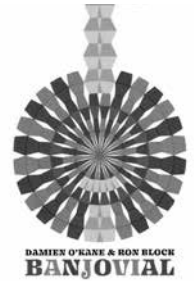


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Assistance dogs only please.

Feb 7 Ewan Wardrop £10 cash

Trad & new songs, guitar, step-dancing, ukulele, melodeon

Feb 14 Valentine's Night £5 cash

Bring songs & tunes to suit the theme.

Feb 21 The Medlars £10 cash

Trad songs & tunes from East Anglia, vocal harmony, fiddle, guitar

Feb 28 Bill Crawford £10 cash

Trad songs from Devon

March 7 Mossy Christian & Megan Wisdom £12 cash

Trad & new songs, fiddle, melodeon, concertina, harmonium.

All-day vocal harmony workshop £45.

Email to reserve places for day or evening.

March 14 Pete Coe £12 cash

Trad & new songs, melodeon, bouzouki, banjo, guitar, dulcimer.

All-day workshop on Dance Music from the Dales for any instrument. Email to reserve places for day or evening.

March 21 Charlie & Rowan Piggott £15 cash

Irish trad with melodeon & fiddle. **Email to reserve places.**

March 28 Steve Turner £12 cash

Trad & new songs with phenomenal English concertina, mandolin, tenor banjo.

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



Sussex Folk News (February & March 2026)

The Lamb Folk Club in Eastbourne meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, upstairs in The Lamb Inn, High Street, Old Town, Eastbourne, BN21 1HH. That means that in February, their meetings are on the 4th and 18th. The meeting on the 18th will be an Open Stage night and their guest artist on the 18th is Luke Jackson. Luke (from Kent) has been called a powerhouse of a performer, with a passion and commitment that blows audiences away. Book him, the praise continues, and those who get to experience the event will be thanking you for a long time.

On the 4th March, The Mountain Firework Company will be coming over from Brighton, They are an acoustic 5 piece that came together to create what has been described as “gorgeous folk/alt country pop, with equal parts darkness and cheeky humour” and “alternative bluegrass with a dark treacle folk centre. The Mountain Firework Company’s driving melodic sound comes from an all-acoustic string band line up of Guitars, Fiddle, Banjo, Mandolin, Double bass and Drums.

They are followed on the 18th by a Scottish trio that must be amongst the longest-running folk groups in the UK. Based in Edinburgh, North Sea Gas will be south of the border for a March-long tour of English folk music venues. Put simply they are a highly entertaining Scottish folk band who have an ever-growing fan base ranging through all age groups thus giving their shows a wonderful atmosphere and universal appeal. Dave Gilfillan, Grant Simpson and Ronnie MacDonald. Have been performing together for forty-five years and are one of Scotland’s most popular folk bands with great vocals and tremendous three-part harmonies.

Moving westwards we come to Lewes where the Saturday Night folk club meets at the Elephant & Castle in White Hill. Important news for them is that they are shifting their evenings forward by 30 minutes so that they will now be running from 7.30 – 10.30. The move enables attenders to catch last trains and buses. At usual, they have a very strong programme for these two months and it starts off with a very impressive guest.

Anyone who has seen Ewan Wardrop’s amazing one-man show Sweet Thames, Flow Softly, about London folk clubs in the 60s & 70s, as I have been lucky enough to do will be looking forward to his debut for the Lewes club. He is the singer of traditional and new songs, step-dancer, guitarist, jig-doll operator as well as a being a member of the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain. In fact, he is a great all-round entertainer and is the guest singer in Lewes on 7th February.

The Medlers from Essex make a quick return to Sussex to appear at the Lewes club on February 21st. The three members - Alie Barnes (voice) Emma Hardy (fiddle) & Tom Hardy (guitar, voice) will be bringing songs & tunes from the East Anglian tradition.

The last guest night in February, the 28th, sees a return visit for Bill Crawford. Bill sings traditional songs from Devon with great charm & authenticity. He was a member of the top four-piece harmony group, The Claque.

The first two March meetings in Lewes sees the guest artists running all day workshops before performing in the evening. On the 7th the very interesting couple of **Mossy Christian & Megan**



Wisdom who have dedicated their performances to an authentic approach to English traditional songs and tunes with fiddle, melodeon, concertina and harmonium. Their workshop is on vocal harmony singing.

Postponed from last Autumn, the welcome return of Pete Coe takes place on 14th March. One of the folk scene’s treasured veterans, Pete comes down from Yorkshire to sing his mix of traditional songs & tunes and his own compositions, all accompanied by his multi-instrumental skills on melodeon, bouzouki, banjo, guitar, dulcimer. The title of the workshop that he will be running is “Dance Music from the Dales”.

The other two March meetings also bring vastly experienced performers to the Elephant & Castle. One of Ireland’s finest and most experienced traditional musicians, Charlie Piggott will be there on the 21st. He was the banjo player as a founding member of the highly successful De Dannan before switching to button accordion and forming his own band. He is partnered on this night by the masterly fiddle playing of his son, Rowan who is also a fully professional musician.

The last night to mention at the Lewes club is another perennial favourite, Steve Turner. He is a fine singer and his song accompaniments of the English concertina are a wonder. On 28th March, you will also be able to hear his great skill on the tenor banjo and the mandolin.

Horsham folk club meets every Sunday night at the Normandy Centre in Denne Road, RH12 1JF. Their rota of attractions that include Song & Dance evenings, feature evenings focussing on some of their regular talented supporters and booked guest nights and the last named is what I am going to concentrate on.

The first of these will be on 8th February with a bluegrass band from the Worthing area, Flint Country performing for them. Their leader, Chris Stockel plays mandolin. In 2024, Chris was the only Brit chosen to perform on the international stage at the IBMA World of Bluegrass week in Raleigh, North Carolina. In 2025 Flint County were chosen to perform in Holland at the European World of Bluegrass festival. The band features singers Emma Jane and Astra Grayland, a third Chris plays guitar, Christopher McPhee, and Tom Warner is on bass.

Their guest performers in March will be the strangely named Three Idle Women. They have a fondness for close harmony singing and stories that are carried through Three song. They take audiences on a musical journey through time. Together, they weave heritage, stories and song. The trio capture snapshots of life with humour and tenderness.

Finally, this time. I have to mention the Chichester folk club which can be found on Monday evenings at the Chichester Inn in West Street. This is another club that relies mainly on their well-supported club nights but they do have booked guest evenings once a month. In February in the 9th the guest will be David Collins. He is rapidly building a name for himself. Particularly around London folk clubs. Once a semi-finalist in “Young Folk Musician Of The Year”, David Collins has recently released his debut album, “Sundown.” David is a singer-songwriter with a strong feel for traditional songs who combines the two strands.

On 19th March, The Chichester Inn will resonate with the sound of that popular quartet Crows who offer performing a mix of original and traditional music with imaginative instrumental arrangements and powerful 4-part harmonies. Their line-up includes one of the folk scene’s most admired duos Mick Ryan & Paul Downes

Two of the clubs have special Valentine’s night feature nights – Lewes on the 14th and Chichester on the 16th of February.

Vic Smith



FEAST OF FIDDLES – Annual Tour 2026

A musical extravaganza covering almost every genre. It's not just folk, it's not just fiddles- it is PURE ENTERTAINMENT!

2026 and Feast of Fiddles are out again – their 31st tour. Born in Nettlebed on Valentine's Day 1994 as a one-off special concert, Feast of Fiddles is a band of friends that puts on a show of huge dynamic range performed with passion, joy and a liberal dose of fun. Fiddlers Phil Beer (Show of Hands), Garry Blakeley (Band of Two), Marion Fleetwood (Trad Arr, Sandy Denny Project), Mark Jolley (Banter), Tom Leary (Joe Brown) and Simon Swarbrick (Merry Hell) bring a large range of fiddle playing styles to the rock back-line – all held together by legendary drummer Dave Mattacks. This year Phil Beer will join for seven performances and former dep Mark Jolley joins the band for the whole tour. This is a live music entertainment like no other on the circuit which is guaranteed to be enjoyed by even the most doubting of friends dragged along!

BEXHILL: Academy Theatre

Monday 23rd February, 2026

Door time: 6:45pm Start time: 7:30pm


The link for this event is <https://wegottickets.com/event/678756> or from B & T Music 9 Claremont, Hastings TN34 1HA

Oban Shanty Fest 2025

I was booked for this the third the Oban International Shanty Festival to give my illustrated slide show 'Cape Horn in Søren Larsen 1991' and to sing shanties. I had last been in Oban in 1993 when I joined the sailing ship Eye of the Wind to sail the Irish sea to Isle of Man, Dublin and Penzance. It was a long drive from Surrey but no matter as Pat and me took this chance to include another tour of Scotland. We arrived in Oban on the Friday afternoon for the event over Friday and Saturday, starting with a concert on the Friday evening bookended with another on Saturday evening our first job was to find a space to park the motor home in the town which was not at all easy. The Friday concert was in the rather magnificently timbered Argyle Gathering Hall, some 200 in attendance. I had not seen the Aberdeen trio Tripple before a mother and two daughters who sing close harmony sometimes intricate scat singing which must take infinite practice to achieve, otherwise they sang traditional such as Mingulay. Black Deep from Harwich did the honours for the deep south, other Scottish groups such as The Rosabellas made a valiant attempt at shantying, doing better in Gaelic reminiscent of waulking songs used to work Tweed cloth in the old way, the whole shebang ended with Kimbers Men. Saturday was a full day of shantying around the pubs and workshops in the community centre, Hans Weehuizen Bones and even Joss Cameron on Buccaneers for both young and old. In between my spots I saw Disclaimers a local Oban group, for my spot at the Whisky Vaults I did the crossing the

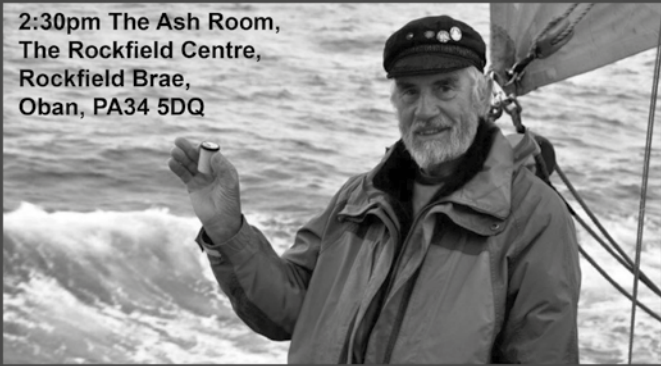
line ceremony while singing Paddy West taking several bemused youngsters around the horn and across the line. And caught Aberdeen's Alex-Josephine-Gaye whose love of the sea was obvious. Dunblane Singers led late night sessions on both days. The event was organised by Tom Malone of group Voicemail from Glasgow they are a raw shanty group, unaccompanied in the traditional way all six of them. The weekend was wound up with a performer's only session into the early hours at the Whisky Vaults where there were 230 single malts to choose from.

Chris Roche



The Oban International Shanty Festival Workshops @ The Rockfield

2:30pm The Ash Room,
The Rockfield Centre,
Rockfield Brae,
Oban, PA34 5DQ





Tales of the Sea with Chris Roche

He has rounded Cape Horn three times, square-rigged voyaged across the Pacific and crossed the Atlantic 7 times. Chris will share stories of his adventures around the world in the Rockfield Centre especially on his time rounding Cape Horn in the Søren Larsen, the little ship seen in TV series The Onedin Line when she was the first British Isles owned and registered square rigged vessel to make Cape Horn in 55 years.

A native of Folkestone, Chris has been interested in traditional sail and shantying for more years than he can shake a stick at and is the former leader of 'The Shanty Crew'.

Tickets from: www.ticketsource.co.uk/oban-international-shanty-festival-2025



CD REVIEWS

Martyn Joseph – Troubled Horses
(Pipe Records PRCD042/PRLP042)

We still have our vinyl copy of 'An Aching and a Longing' (1989), which is now considered a seminal recording. Certainly Martyn Joseph has travelled far since those early days as a singer/songwriter, but that journey has been one of activism, soul-searching, introspection and a continued search for authenticity and truth.

'Troubled Horses' is his 28th studio album (and that's not counting the live albums). His voice has matured over the years, developing a depth and tone that has resulted in him being referred to as the 'Welsh Bruce Springsteen' by some. That's where the comparisons end, because Martyn Joseph is unique in his style. It was Mojo magazine who called Joseph a 'Welsh national treasure', describing how his 'energising and provocative' songs move "from subtle tenderness to growly indignation". He is an acute observer, critiquing the world around him and fearlessly making comment on injustices and power imbalances. His songs in this collection are deliberately raw as they reflect on time's passing and love's longings. This is the product of an older man who still has much of worth to say.

Two of the album's eleven songs are co-written with Stewart Henderson. The first of these, the title track, addresses the refugee situation, reminding us that we are not so removed as we would like to believe ("there's no country to 'want back' if we've all come from elsewhere"). The second is 'Last Night I Heard America', a mournful reflection on what America has become in recent years. The rest are written solely by Joseph.

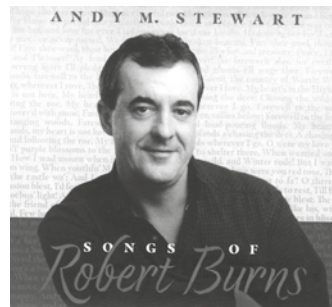
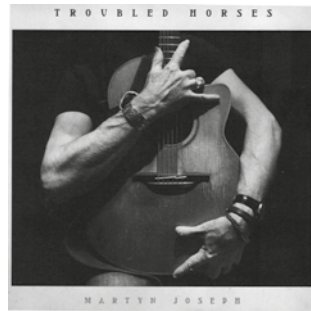
The whole album is a stripped back affair with voice, guitar and harmonica simply laid down, allowing the lyrics the space they need to be heard. And heard they should be!

Dave & Eileen Masterson

Andy M Stewart - Songs of Robert Burns
Birnam CD BCD625

The late Andy M. Stewart (1952 to 2015) was probably best known, south of the border, as the lead singer with top Scottish folk band Silly Wizard. However in 1989 he recorded this album of songs from Scotland's top poet Robert Burns (1759 to 1796) for German label Wundertute. He was joined by Manus Lunny on guitar and Bouzouki, Donald Shaw on accordion and keyboard and Charlie McKerron on fiddle, all members of Capercaille. Now Andy's son Donald Stewart has got together with Birnam CD's Martin Hadden who was a band mate and long time friend of Andy, to re-remaster and released that album. The album sleeve includes short biographies of Andy and of Robert Burns and there is also a 16 page insert with the words to the 11 songs on the album. Tracks include Rantin' Rovin Robin, Is There For honest Poverty (For A' That), Green Grow The Rashes, Hey How Johnie Lad, The Lea Rig, and To The Weaver's Gin Ye Go. This is a very well presented and produced album and is well worth a listen if you are interested in traditional songs and ballads well sung and great musicianship.

Alan Castle (Editor)



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Jeff Warner Sandra Kerr
Brown Boots Boogie Band

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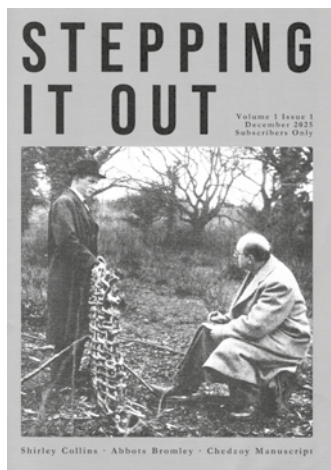
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MAGAZINE REVIEW

Stepping It Out - Affiliated to Veteran
veteran.co.uk

Stepping It Out is a new, national, traditional music, song and dance magazine brought out by Mossy Christian and Megan Wisdom and affiliated to the Veteran music label, which Mossy recently took over following the death of John Howson who founded Veteran Tapes in 1987. As editor, Megan says that there is no set formula for the magazine yet but there is likely to be a mix of regular features, photos, special articles and of course advertising, which is essential to keep this type of magazine going. The magazine is A4 format and mainly greyscale but with some colour especially for photos and adverts. Issue one came out in December and includes the editors welcome, an article on tracing Northumbrian fiddle traditions, an article on G.W. Bennett by Mossy, the words and tune to The Farmer from Leicester, and Prickly Pear, an article on Francis Collinson by Nick Dow, a centre page photo of Johnny Doughty from Sussex from the Doc Rowe collection, a cartoon from Tony Hall, a photo feature on the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance, an article from Shirley Collins on the traditional music scene of Sussex, an article on The Volly at Sidmouth, some short reports and tour news, and a diary section. Advertising rates start for as little as £14.00 for a quarter page which is amazingly cheap. Copy date for issue number two is 8th February. For details on how to advertise or to subscribe for the printed version at around £30.00 for four issues visit the website at veteran.co.uk/magazine/. Stepping It Out shows great promise of being a very interesting magazine if the quality of this first issue is anything to go by. I recommend you to give it a try and help to make it a success.

Alan Castle (Editor)



FOLK AT THE DRUM

The club meets every Monday evening at The Drum Inn, Stanford, Stone Street (TN25 6DN), between Canterbury and Hythe, from 7 till 10pm.

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

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BBC Radio 2 Best Folk Club of the year 2008

www.dartfordfolk.org.uk

Enquiries: dartfordfolkclub@gmail.com

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03 February - Arthur Coates and Kerran Cotterell

10 February - Bird in the Belly

17 February - Harbottle & Jonas

24 February - Dick Miles

03 March - Ashen Keys

10 March - Simon Kempston

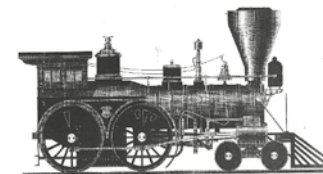
17 March - Johnny Campbell

24 March - Kathryn Roberts & Sean Lakeman

31 Mar 2026 - Simply Dylan

Members £8, Non-Members £12, Membership £15

FOR UPDATES AND FURTHER DETAILS PLEASE GO TO
OUR WEBSITE & FACEBOOK PAGES



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 Tonbridge, TN9 1AS

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2nd February Maya Kally

16th February Enda McCabe

2nd March Daria Kulesh

16th March The Tonic

20th April Michelle Laverick

18th May Awake Mother

Tel: 01892 822945
 info@tonbridgefolkclub.org
 www.tonbridgefolkclub.org

FOLK IN THE BARN

Ainsley Hamill (Trio)
To Celebrate Burns Night
 Sun 25th January, Colyer-Fergusson Hall, Canterbury

Martyn Joseph
 Sunday 1st February – Canterbury Cathedral Lodge

Peter Knight & Maddy Prior
 Sunday 8th Feb – The Chapel, CCCU, Canterbury

Sykes-Martin
 Saturday 28th Feb – Godmersham & Crundale VH

McGoldrick McCusker Doyle
 Tuesday 10th March – Canterbury Cathedral Lodge

Fairport Convention
The Electric 5 piece with Dave Mattacks & Tour
Support from Jenn Butterworth
 Thurs 2nd April – Colyer-Fergusson Hall, Canterbury

Tony Christie – The Great Farewell
 Saturday 2nd May – Gulbenkian, Canterbury

Full details and Join the mailing list at.....
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Ashford Folk are a
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enquiries@ashfordfolk.org
 www.ashfordfolk.org



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Affiliate of the English Folk Dance and Song Society



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Farnborough Social Club

6 Pleasant View Pl, Farnborough,
 Orpington, BR6 7BL



FEBRUARY
 5th, 12th, 26th
 19th

Singers & Musicians Night
 David Collins

MARCH
 12th, 19th
 5th
 26th

Singers & Musicians Night
 Steve Jennings Tribute Night
 Bob Wood

Orpington Folk Music and Song Club exists to promote folk music and song. It is a non-profit making organisation and is for those who wish to listen to or take part in an informal evening of folk music and song.

Every Thursday @ 8:00pm

Contact : 0208 325 6513 ~ 01474 853189

Website : https://orpingtonfolkclub.org.uk
 email: info@orpingtonfolkclub.org.uk

efn

Essex Folk News

for traditional music, dance and song in Essex

Issue 201
June to August 2024
£2



Including... PA equipment on offer
New bands Phoenix Rising and Mr. Walsh's Wonders
...and lots more news, reviews and listings.



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1st Tuesday of every month
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We welcome you to come and join us
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or just to listen

Contacts: Dave 07504 799832
or Eileen 07887 370525

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More great live music at Rosslyn Court

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Details/ticket link at: www.rosslyncourt.com/events

Please book in advance - doors at 7pm for 7.30
start



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live music
in these
difficult
times



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Feb 5



Kath Tait
Feb 12



Sam Baxter &
Merl Harbron
Feb 26



Brothers Gillespie
Mar 12



St Patricks
free open mic
Mar 19
not
livestreamed



Katie Spencer
Mar 26

Booking now:

Sally Ironmonger / Brian Carter

Joe Solo

Michelle Laverick

Karen and Paul

Jon Doran & the Northern Assembly

Jack Rutter

John Hegley

Women of Folk (=

Linda Moylan, Rebecca Mileham,

Lizzy Hardingham, Louise Hatch)

Nick Lawrence

Something Sleeps

Thomas Abrahams/Manor

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Luke Jackson

George Sansome Matt Quinn

Simon Kempson

Jonny Hepbir & Ducato

Findlay Napier

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2nd Fri

Shanty night with Snottdogs
session/singaround. 7.30 Free

3rd Wed

Jazz concerts with Alex Clayton-Black
and guests

8pm £12 cash on the door

details 07902140248

Gypsy jazz workshop with Jonny Hepbir
Sun 22 March 2-6 £30 - see website

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Rosslyn Court is a small, quirky, seated, friendly, listening venue on one level, with a bar.
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- See the website Singdanceandplay.net; contact gmatkin@gmail.com

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Folk In The Barn

2026 (unbelievably) is our 23rd year and to celebrate we have booked a varied and exciting Winter-Spring Programme for you all.

On the 25th of January, for the first time, we're hosting a Burns Night Concert, in the Colyer-Fergusson Hall at the Gulbenkian, with Ainsley Hamill and her dynamic Trio. There are so many wonderful young Scottish artists on the UK scene, and Ainsley is one of the most compelling. In February we welcome back 'The Welsh Springsteen' Martyn Joseph to The Cathedral Lodge, followed by folk legends in – 'An Audience With – Maddy Prior & Peter Knight (original members of Steeleye Span), a rare duo performance with discussion, at Canterbury Christ Church University Chapel. Another very special collaboration sees Miranda Sykes (Show of Hands) with Hannah Martin (Gigspanner Big Band) at Godmersham & Crundale Village Hall on 28th February as SykesMartin, unmissable.

Looking ahead to March-April and stalwarts of the Transatlantic Sessions – McGoldrick, McCusker, Doyle will be back, along with the tireless Fairport Convention. But our leftfield booking this season has to be the farewell tour of the great crooner himself – Tony Christie in early May. Will he 'Show us the way?'... I hope so! Come along and join the fun! Full details www.folkinthebarn.co.uk

- Ainsley Hamill Trio – Celebrate Burns Night - Sun 25th Jan, Colyer-Fergusson Hall, Canterbury
- Martyn Joseph - Sunday 1st February – Canterbury Cathedral Lodge
- An Audience With - Maddy Prior & Peter Knight - Sunday 8th Feb – The Chapel, CCCU
- Sykes-Martin - Saturday 28th February – Godmersham & Crundale Village Hall
- McGoldrick McCusker Doyle - Tuesday 10th March – Canterbury Cathedral Lodge
- Fairport Convention Spring Tour - Thurs 2nd April – Colyer-Fergusson Hall, Canterbury
- Tony Christie – The Great Farewell - Saturday 2nd May – Gulbenkian Theatre, Canterbury

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This issue of Around Kent Folk was produced by Alan Castle and Andy Wood on behalf of Tenterden Folk Festival. Promoting folk song, music, dance, crafts and traditions. Registered Charity No 1038663

Issue No. 134 April/May COPY DATE: 18th February

Then ...

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

18th December 2026 – February / March

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