

Notes

The Newsletter of Readifolk

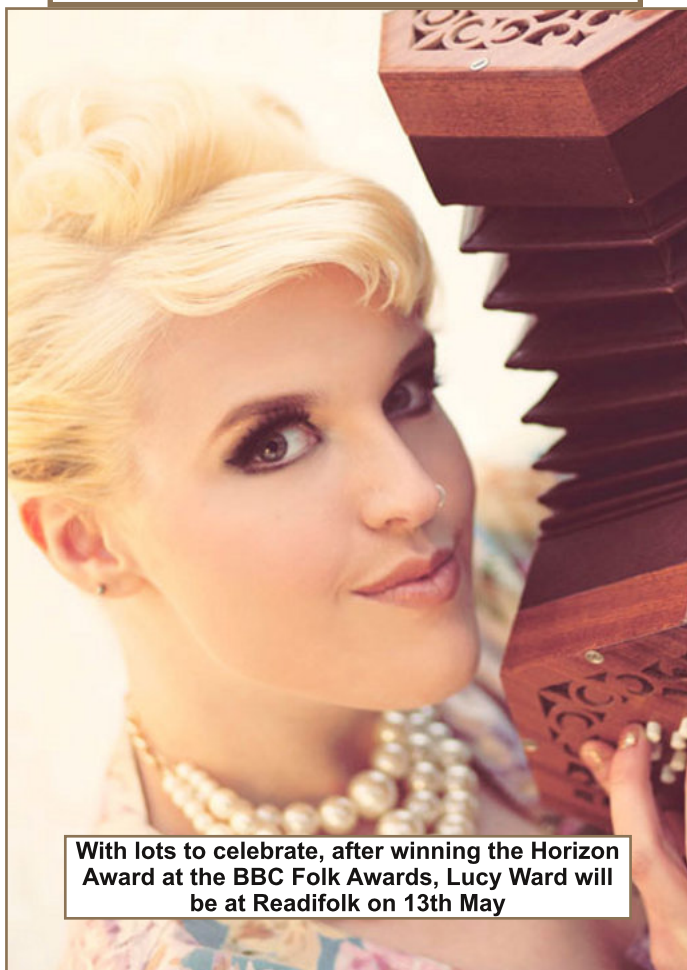
Issue 13

Reading's folk song
and music club

Spring 2012

Welcome

to another Readifolk
newsletter



With lots to celebrate, after winning the Horizon Award at the BBC Folk Awards, Lucy Ward will be at Readifolk on 13th May

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and coming events

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Rumblings from the Roots

Welcome to the Spring edition of Notes.

We are pleased to have survived the bleak Winter period without any disruption to the programme and our Sunday evenings have been brightened considerably by the entertainment provided. The onset of Spring is always an uplifting time and we look forward to welcoming more of you to the club. If you have not been before, do give it a try - we are sure that you will not be disappointed.

Once again you will see that Stewart and his co-writers have put together another very readable newsletter with lots of news, views, upcoming events and interesting articles by our musicians and songwriters.

As usual you will find on the back cover of the newsletter all the forthcoming events at Readifolk in April, May and June. On pages 4 and 5 there are previews of all the Guest Nights in the same period. There are return visits for some of our favourite performers as well several outstanding newcomers to the club.

We are particularly delighted to have spotted the very talented Lucy Ward (pictured left), prior to her winning the coveted Horizon award at the BBC Folk Awards in February. It is becoming a bit of a habit at Readifolk as we also spotted last year's winner, Ewan McLennan, who gave a stunning performance at Readifolk in March 2011. Who's in line for the 2013 award? Watch this space.

As well as the Guest Nights, we have included several Singers and Theme Nights. These evenings are always popular and give an opportunity for everyone to display their talents. If you do not want to perform you are welcome to come and listen - there is always a wealth of talent on show.

On a less upbeat note, you will see that admission prices have been increased from 1st April. This is the first price increase at the club in some five years, when our venue was at The Gardeners Arms. During the intervening period our expenses (venue rental, insurance, artists' fees, etc.) have all increased considerably, to the point where our income is not meeting our outgoings. We believe that the new admission prices still represent very good value when compared with other concert venues in the area and we hope that you will continue to give us your support.

Remember that you can still come to our Guest Nights for £5 if you join our loyalty scheme. You simply pay for your first five visits and the next visit is free - i.e. six Guest Nights for the price of five. See Anne on the door to sign up and take advantage of the price reduction.

We look forward to seeing you at the club.

Una & Colin

Instruments of Joy

Taking a look at the instruments of the folk idiom.

This issue:

The Fiddle

Multi-instrumentalist Ed, who can often be seen fiddling with trio 3 2 1, on the origins and uses of this most versatile of instruments...

The violin as we know it was based on a few predecessors which were played similarly, i.e. by dragging a bow across strings. Examples of previous instruments are the rebec from the middle east, the renaissance fiddle (presumably from the U.K. or France) and the lira da braccio from Italy. A similar instrument family called viols are also thought to have played a part in the violin family's development, though information is scarce about that.

The words 'viol', 'violin' 'violoncello' etc. are derived from the Latin word 'vitula', which means 'stringed instrument', and the common name for a violin - 'fiddle' - came from the Germanic pronunciation where v = f, ergo 'vit' is pronounced 'fit'. This, of course, shatters my childhood theory that 'fiddle' meant that violins are so easy to play, that professionals were getting money for old rope.

Hopefully without boring or baffling you with science, the violin family are generally made from wood, and the higher the quality and the better the preparation, the better the instrument (as in all things constructed). Nowadays, some stringed instruments are made to be amplified electronically, and use materials such as carbon fibre and plastic, as the tonal qualities can be electronically adjusted.

Woods typically used in construction include spruce for the top or front of the body, maple for the back, sides and bridge (string support and length definer) which give the tonal qualities, and ebony (very hard-wearing) for the finger board, tailpiece (string anchor) and tuning pegs. There is also a wooden pillar inside called a soundpost, which is mounted between the top and back underneath the bridge where the highest tuned E string is. This serves two purposes, one to help prevent the top caving in (the E string exerts the most pressure) and the other to assist the reverberation of the higher notes. I suspect the latter was discovered as a result of the former.

Violin makers are called luthiers, which suggests that their predecessors made lutes (similar to modern guitars). Famous luthiers include good old Stradivarius, Maggini and Amati - the original and reportedly the best, and probably the most expensive nowadays.

The expression 'as fit as a fiddle' I guess comes from the hourglass shape of the violin's body, which was designed to allow the movement of the bow across the highest and lowest strings.

Strings were originally made from sheep intestines (often called 'cat gut', though cats were never involved), which were dried, twisted (lots) to give them strength, then stretched across the length of the instrument via the bridge until the

required note was achieved. They are anchored at one end and tightened with a rotating peg at the other, a bit like stretching people on a rack... This of course applies to all stringed instruments, though the tuning pegs vary in design. In a violin, they are wood-in-wood (two types) held in place by applying pressure (gently!). Modern strings are made of synthetic material (e.g. Nylon) or steel.

Violins have four strings which are tuned to intervals of perfect 5ths rising from G below middle C, to E and the violin, though the smallest of the family, has the greatest pitch range due to the size of the instrument in relation to the size of the hands playing it. At risk of stating the obvious, notes other than the 'open' strings are produced by placing fingers at chosen points along the finger board (not as easy as it sounds).

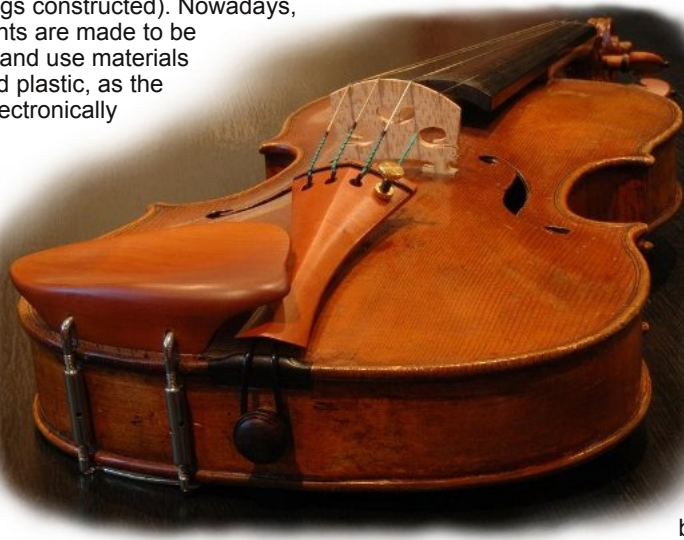
Bows can be described as 'sticks strung with horse hair', which is basically what they are, though again, quality in the making is reflected in the performance. The wood used to make a bow is traditionally brazil (called pernambuco), though other woods or materials are used, flexibility being the main criterion.

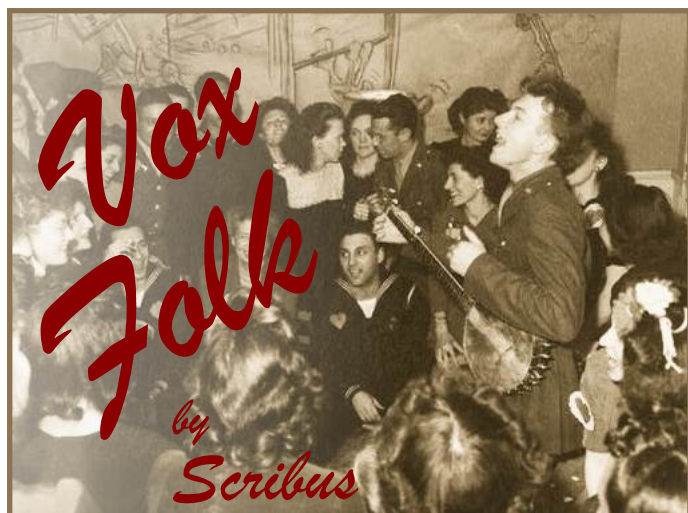
The hair used is traditionally from grey stallions' tails, which are predominantly white, and it is made to grip the strings by rubbing a resin (called Rosin) along it. This process needs repeating from time to time (e.g. before each performance) as the grip will gradually wear off. You will often see white deposits under the strings where the bow is drawn, which is Rosin scraped from the hair by the strings. The hair is anchored at one end of the bow and tightened or slackened using a screw device known as a 'frog'. I doubt I'll ever know why, it doesn't resemble a frog in any way!

Violins are usually played held under the chin and supported (with the aid of a prop) by the shoulder, though some folk players rest them on their chests or hips (methods frowned upon by us classically trained types!). These folk methods restrict the movement of the hand on the finger board and therefore limit the number of notes produced. The 'chest' players tend to develop a distinctive posture, a bit like a slightly straightened letter 'S'... it can't be good for them!

The violin is a very versatile instrument and though its life began as a street dance tune provider, it quickly progressed to be used for orchestral, virtuoso and country dance (yeehaa!) music and is now used in all types of music, ranging from traditional folk and classical to jazz and rock. It is also one of the most clearly audible instruments, beaten only by bagpipes, a horrible instrument called a bombard (I want one!) and the electric guitar.

There you go, everyone should have one!.....well, maybe.....





A roundup of news snippets, information and disconnected folk jottings.

News and Stuff



It is 30 years since a horrific car crash disabled Nic Jones so much that he felt unable to continue making music. But in 2007 he received the Good Tradition award at the BBC Folk Awards to a standing ovation, and in 2010 he made an unexpected appearance on

stage at Sidmouth Folk Week, joining in with a concert in his honour. That concert was reprised last year at the South Bank Centre, in London, and despite saying that he felt "...if I came back they'd all hate me", he has been persuaded otherwise; so far he has confirmed his first four full concert appearances since he lost that argument with the articulated lorry. These will be at Warwick, Cambridge, Towersey and Cornwall folk festivals, where he will be accompanied by his son, Joseph, on guitar, and piano player Belinda O'Hooley.

After much lobbying by the Musicians' Union and the Live Music Forum, the Live Music Act 2012 looks set to become law over the next few weeks; it is intended to relieve some of the bureaucracy and increasing expense for small venues which host live music. Since 2003, a pub cannot even provide a piano in the bar without an entertainment licence, and surveys have shown a depressing decline in the number of pubs and venues prepared to host even the smallest of gigs. But the new act will remove the need for many premises to obtain an entertainment licence: for places which have a licence to sell alcohol, they can host unamplified gigs, or gigs with an audience of up to 200 if the performance is amplified, between 8 and 11pm. Unlicensed premises can similarly host unamplified gigs without the need for an entertainment licence.



This year's BBC Folk Awards was open to the public for the first time, held in the Lowry Theatre, Salford. Folk Singer Of The Year was June Tabor, who also received awards for her recently revived collaboration with Oysterband, gaining Best

Group, Best Album for **Ragged Kingdom**, and Best Traditional Track for **Bonny Bunch Of Roses**. Lifetime Achievement Awards went to The Dubliners and Don McLean, and we were especially pleased that newcomer Lucy Ward, who will be visiting Readifolk in May, won the Horizon Award. You can catch interviews and comment about the event in Proper Music's podcast at <http://blog.propermusic.com/?p=33251>

On the other side of the Atlantic, and despite a major restructuring of its categories this year, the American Recording Academy's Grammy awards continue to put their only remaining folk award under the category of 'American Roots', which prompts one to wonder if this may be missing quite a lot of the other important roots of folk music. The Academy says that they have "...challenges in distinguishing between Contemporary Folk and Americana", and as if to underline their problem, this year's winner of Best Folk Album also won the award for Best Country Duo Performance; they are The Civil Wars and their debut album is **Barton Hollow**.

In February, The Guardian ran an article about Eliza Carthy, in which we learned that one of her current plans is for a new tour with her mother, Norma Waterson, the much loved grand doyen of traditional song. Norma, you will know, was taken seriously ill during her last tour with Eliza, towards the end of 2010, and spent many months in intensive care. She has been slowly regaining her health since, and is making a return to performing at this year's Sidmouth Folk Week. Many of us are hoping that a full tour is able to progress beyond the planning stage, and we can once again welcome Norma back to a nearby folk venue soon.

When David Gibb & Elly Lucas performed at Readifolk last January, they were being filmed for the website www.BrightYoungFolk.com. The edited results have yet to appear on the site, but you will find music and interviews with many others, including previous Readifolkies Katriona Gilmore & Jamie Roberts, and Ewan McLennan, who provides a free download, as well as the not quite so bright young thing Dave Swarbrick.



There are several suggestions in the music press that Columbia Records are preparing to release the entire canon of Bob Dylan's recorded work in one mega box set, which will contain about 40 CDs, and include rareties and bootlegs. There is no official comment about the truth of this, but mean time, his Bobness is at work on his 35th studio album, which is said to have a Latin American feel to it. Apparently, he's also recently bought himself a set of Highland bagpipes.

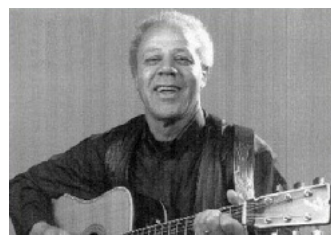
Possibly one of the world's greatest musicologists and song collectors was American Alan Lomax, probably second only to his pioneering folklorist father, John. Alan died in 2002, after a life of finding, recording and writing about traditional songs, as well as producing records and radio shows. Now his vast collection of field recordings is being digitised for free listening online. The Association for Cultural Equity, at www.culturalequity.org, is to stream 17,000 tracks recorded by him, including music from much of Europe, as well as America.

Farewells

Barry Llewellyn - died 23/11/11 aged 63. Singer with Jamaican harmony and reggae group the Heptones.

Saltan Khan - died 27/11/11 aged 71. Sarangi player from north India who drew on traditional religious and folk themes, and who also played with Ravi Shankar and George Harrison, and was featured in the soundtrack of the 1982 film Gandhi.

Cesária Évora - died 17/12/11 aged 70. The "Barefoot Diva" from Cape Verde, singer of morna ballads of world wide renown.



Johnny Silvo - died 18/12/11 aged 75. A long time regular on the folk circuit, Johnny was a good friend of Readifolk, and was also known as a presenter on children's TV programme Play School. He grew up in Bernardo's homes after his unmarried Irish

mother had to flee to London, where she was subsequently killed in a WWII bombing raid. In his 20s he gained popularity by singing folk, skiffle and jazz, and later was also instrumental in persuading Sandy Denny into the recording studio for the first time. He had to cancel his autumn tour last year, which would have included a visit to Readifolk, due to failing health.

Len Berry - died 25/12/11 aged 82. Together with his wife, Barbara, as the Portway Pedlars, Len was resident singer and MC at Nettlebed folk club for many years, and also appeared several times at Readifolk. He was the father of Bob Berry, who was also a recent guest at Readifolk, and revived the Kirtlington Morris in Oxfordshire, eventually becoming squire of the side. He and Barbara retired to Wales, helped by the royalties of a song Barbara wrote that was a hit for Eva Cassidy. Diagnosed with



vascular dementia in 2010, he was in a care home, before eventually succumbing to pneumonia in Wrexham Hospital. The full Kirtlington Morris side performed at his funeral.

Bob Weston - died 3/1/12 aged 64. First rose to notice as blues guitarist with a 1970's incarnation of Fleetwood Mac, he later became a collaborator and soloist, and was featured on Sandy Denny's final album **Rendezvous**.

Louisiana Red - died 25/2/12 aged 79. Blues guitarist from Alabama, who, as a boy, was orphaned when his mother died of pneumonia, and his father was lynched by the Ku Klux Klan. He travelled extensively in Europe, where he absorbed the influences of local music from many countries, particularly Greek rebetiko folk music. He was a young contemporary of many Delta blues players, before later settling in Germany.

Rosemary Tawney - died 13/3/12 in her 80s. Wife of the late Cyril Tawney, and tireless champion of his music, much of which drew on his maritime experience. She oversaw the transfer of his archive to the EDFSS, was involved in other projects cataloguing his work as a musician, and was still active in folk song and dance in her local community.

Shows Worth Seeing

Previewing the new season of guest nights coming to Readifolk.

STEVE TURNER, consummate performer and concertina wizard, makes a welcome return to Readifolk on **1st April**.



What he says:

Steve Turner comes from a family of singers and concertina players. In 1979, he won the Melody Maker "Stars of the 80s" national competition. 2004 saw Steve make a welcome return to the folk scene. Steve's 5th album, "The Whirligig of Time" was released in March 2008. He was the featured artist and on the cover of the January/February 2008 Edition of "The Living Tradition" magazine. Steve also featured on the front page of "Stirrings" magazine with an interview in May 2009.

What others say:

"One of the finest exponents of concertina accompaniments around, if not the best" - *Shirefolk*. "His interpretive power with narrative ballads reigns supreme - a mature and accomplished folk talent" - *Properganda*. "A shining example of the music the British folk scene is capable of producing" - *Folk Roots*.

What we say:

Steve thrilled the audience on his last visit to the club - a superb performance with engaging vocals and stunning concertina playing, drawing from a wide-ranging repertoire. We anticipate another equally enjoyable evening.

Hear more:

www.steve-turner.co.uk/videos.html
www.youtube.com/watch?v=uY-YHbEzprg
www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnyTlgiPIJk



ROGER DAVIES will be bringing his guitar and his Yorkshire songs to Readifolk on **15th April**.

What he says:

Roger Davies is a performing singer and songwriter from West Yorkshire, England, who cites his influences as, among others, Billy Liar, Harvey Andrews, Pete Morton, The Brighouse and Rastrick Brass Band, Brassed Off, Bernard



Wrigley, Charlotte Bronte and Bruce Springsteen.

What others say:

"Roger finds endless ways of portraying the beauty he sees in, and bringing out the poetry of, his beloved Yorkshire. Roger's skilful guitar style unobtrusively accompanies his fine works of art" - *Topic Folk Club, Bradford*. "The best thing I've seen in 20 years. If I had a torch I'd throw it to him" - *Harvey Andrews*.

What we say:

As soon as we listened to Roger's album 'Roger Davies Live', we knew we had to book him for the club. Roger is from Yorkshire and is proud of it. His songs are largely funny but at the same time thought-provoking. We are sure that this is going to be a memorably entertaining evening.

Hear more:

www.rogerdaviesmusic.com/?page_id=4
www.myspace.com/rogerdaviesmusic
www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4RQcsEAQvc



Scottish entertainer **JIM McLEAN** is no stranger to Readifolk. We welcome him back on **29th April**.

What he says:

Acclaimed Scottish guitarist, singer and songwriter. His songwriting covers the whole genre from hard-hitting social comment to the tenderest of love songs. His passion and love for the music shines through every performance. Whether he's inspiring you with his own material, making your feet tap with Country Blues, moving you to song with Celtic and Traditional folk, or re-inventing fellow artistes' material, Jim McLean brings any club to life with pure entertainment and passion.



What others say:

"Had us enthralled. He has a fine voice, a unique guitar style, and an engaging stage presentation. We think he could be a name to watch for the future" - *Tudor Folk Club*. "His relaxed singing style and wonderful guitar accompaniments to songs from a wide range of sources, old, new and self-penned, have made Jim one of our most popular guests" - *Poppy's Folk Club*.

What we say:

Jim hardly needs an introduction from us. He has appeared at the club many times and always entertains with his strong vocals, distinctive guitar playing and friendly banter with the audience. We guarantee an enjoyable evening.

Hear more:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbgIbBoQczw
www.youtube.com/watch?v=muHOhd2UaHg
www.youtube.com/watch?v=amEeIKkZrHo



Flushed with success at the BBC Folk Awards, **LUCY WARD** will be appearing at Readifolk on **13th May**.



What she says:

21 year old acoustic artist from Derby. She plays guitar and concertina but considers her voice to be her first instrument. An eclectic mix of traditional and modern folk interpretations, interspersed with her own songs. She is developing into a fine songwriter and a

consummate performer who wows her audience with her genuine and sparkling personality and stunning voice.

What others say:

"One of the best things I've heard in years" - *Mike Harding*.
"Four Stars... *Bricks and Love*...the most poignant new song I've heard this year" - *Robin Denselow, The Guardian*.

What we say:

Another coup for Readifolk! Since we booked Lucy, she has gone on to win the coveted Horizon award at the 2012 BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards. She was also a finalist in the 'Best Traditional Song' category. Don't miss this opportunity of seeing this rising star!

Hear more:

www.lucywardsings.com/media.php
www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_P9N6RhDB8
www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNrflRUEIGU



Up and coming shanty and folk singer **CHRIS RICKETTS** comes to Readifolk on **27th May**.



What he says:

A leading edge Shanty and Folk singer and accomplished guitarist. He has performed across Britain and the continent, in demand at folk clubs and music festivals. Born and bred in Portsmouth, his music has strong links with the city's naval history and he sings versions of traditional

folk songs and sea shanties (some well known, some less so) in his own unique style presenting the songs in a fresh new way. Was 2009 Radio 2 Young Folk Award semi-finalist.

What others say:

"Refreshingly different... clear sighted and with a real sense of commitment to dragging this repertoire into the modern world" - *fRoots*. "Preserving traditional shanties and folk songs that are slowly slipping away with time, by breathing new life into them" - *Properganda*. "Youth is not wasted on the young when it comes to Chris Ricketts. He has a heart the size of a concert hall, a generous spirit to match and a drive and determination that wills him to win. Which he will" - *John Tams*.

What we say:

We have booked Chris after receiving rave reports from club members. Chris is a young shanty/folk singer and guitarist who performs well-known traditional songs in a refreshingly melodic style. There should be plenty of opportunities for joining in.

www.readifolk.org.uk

Hear more:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=6oA-HTePsII
www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7nT1ILLlmo
www.myspace.com/rickettsmusic



BRIAN PETERS makes a welcome return to Readifolk on **10th June**.

What he says:

A great all-rounder, on the one hand a highly respected singer, and on the other a multi-instrumentalist acknowledged as one of England's leading exponents of the anglo concertina and melodeon, and a skilled guitarist as well. Having honed his performing skills in the folk clubs of England, he's taken his music to stages all over the world, touring regularly in America, Europe and Australia, but always retaining a deep commitment to the musical traditions of his native country.

What others say:

"Has long been one of the very best performers in the field of English traditional song and music. He sings and plays with consummate skill" - *Dirty Linen (USA)*. "A top-notch singer and player, one of the best researched performers currently doing the rounds, and master of several crafts" - *The Living Tradition*.

What we say:

Brian is another firm favourite at the club who needs little introduction. He entertains from a diverse repertoire of songs with accompaniment on guitar, melodeon and concertina. Another guaranteed evening of fine entertainment.

Hear more:

www.myspace.com/brianpetersfolk
www.brian-peters.co.uk/petersvideo.htm
www.youtube.com/watch?v=tU0nIZY7ghQ



George Whitfield returns to Readifolk with new musical partner, Helen Adams, as the duo **FIDDLEBOX** on **24th June**.

What they say:

A full and distinctive sound, showing the influence of the rock, classical and folk styles in which we work. Our programmes include traditional Welsh, Irish, American, and Klezmer music as well as self penned songs and tunes, all delivered in an informal and entertaining style.

What others say:

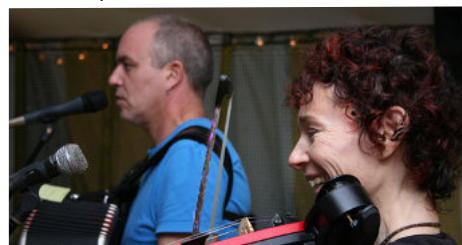
"Quirkily-phrased jigs, eastern-European horas and klezmer style instrumentals... chirpy pop songs with cleverly contrived lyrics" - *Taplas*. "Their sound mixes the classically trained and klezmer inspired music of Helen with the rock driven power of George's accordion. They increasingly enjoy experimenting with electronic effects. There will be lots in the evening to make your toes tap, one or two surprises and a moment or two of enjoyably wistful melancholy" - *Tenby Observer*.

What we say:

Fiddlebox are George Whitfield on accordion and vocals and Helen Adams on fiddle and vocals. George is no stranger to the club having appeared at Readifolk in the duo The Two Butchers and as part of the magnificent band Pressgang. This impressive new duo play traditional Welsh, Irish, American and Klezmer music.

Hear more:

www.myspace.com/fiddlebox
www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bM4jI2CcMY
www.youtube.com/watch?v=3GjRG5QoG98



Readifolk On The Radio

Ian Freedman is anchoring presenter of the Readifolk Radio Show on our local community radio station. He tells us what the station is all about, and Readifolk's contribution to it.

Most of you are aware, at least, that Readifolk has its own internet radio programme that goes out at 6:00pm every Friday evening on Reading4U, Reading's community radio station.

Reading4U is the dream child of one man, Eddie Winship, whose drive and enthusiasm are so infectious that he has no difficulty surrounding himself with people who have the knowledge and skills to turn his dream into reality. Eddie was involved in the early days of Reading107.FM but has shunned the world of commercial radio in favour of community radio.

Not long ago, only the BBC and commercial radio stations were granted broadcast licences, but more recently the idea of radio "by the people, for the people" has gained popularity, and parliament decided to invite applications for FM broadcast licences. In part, this may have been to prevent people being tempted to set up unlicensed 'pirate' broadcasting stations.

A distinction between community radio and local radio, and a prerequisite for gaining a community FM licence, is the participation by the local community in all aspects of its operation. The entire staff of Reading4U is volunteer based; no one gets paid, but all of us who are involved get a great deal of satisfaction from what we do. The station runs training courses in radio production, and this is almost its only source of income. But you don't need to attend one of these courses to be a presenter. In fact if you want to be a presenter all you have to do is ask! If you have an idea for a show and can be available to fill a vacant weekly slot, the likelihood is that you will be accepted.

In order to gain our FM licence, which we hope to do within the next year or so, we have to show that we can behave like a professional station. This involves broadcasting 24 hours a day, with a high percentage of content being 'live' (as opposed to pre-recorded programmes or repeats). So far we have been running continuously since mid 2010 from studios in Walford Hall in Reading's Carey St.

Readifolk have been involved from the beginning. Eddie approached Colin and Una before the station went live. This led to the birth of The Readifolk Hour. In this early form, someone from Readifolk would pre-record an hour of his or her favourite folk music with commentary, to CD. This would go out at seven o'clock on a Friday evening. Early presenters included Ali, Danny, Malcolm, Clare, Stewart and yours truly. Although Eddie would deny it, there was a lot of pressure from Reading4U to cease the pre-recorded programmes and come into the studio to present the show live. Eventually, some of the presenters decided to try live

presenting, and found that, counter intuitively, it is easier to present a live show than to make a pre-recorded one.

This is because when you do it live you can't go back to correct any mistakes. When you make a pre-recorded one, you feel obliged to correct the mistakes, and this takes a lot of time. It's only radio after all!

At the end of 2010 I was approached by Reading4U, who at the time had a shortage of presenters, to present a show separately. I asked if I could extend the Readifolk Hour to two hours, and after checking with Colin and Una, it was agreed that I would present the first hour, and someone from Readifolk would continue to present the second hour. In practice this often means that I and someone else, usually Ali or Danny, will co-host the whole two hours. Others have continued with the pre-recorded format. Thus, The Readifolk Hour became The Readifolk Radio Show.

We were the first at Reading4U to try live music from the studio, and we have had some good guests to date. We have also featured interviews from artists such as Ewan McLennan, Jez Lowe, Chris Wood, Mary Humphries and Belshazzar's Feast.

On the 10th February the station moved to a new studio in Weldale St, and will continue to pursue its application for an FM licence. If you want to become involved, either through Readifolk or individually, really all you have to do is ask. As for me, I can't believe I have been given the privilege of playing at being a radio DJ. At my age I ought to know better!

Tuning In

Whilst Reading4U has its sights firmly set on a community FM broadcasting licence, at the moment you can only hear it on an on-line computer which is fitted with a sound card (most of them), or a web-enabled mobile phone (or other mobile device), or a dedicated internet radio receiver. The simplest way to hear it is to go to the station's website at www.reading4u.co.uk and click on the 'Listen Live' button, or the 'Listen On Your Phone' button. Alternatively, below these are some small downloadable files ('playlists') which you can keep on your computer; when opened with a media player they should automatically connect it to the Reading4U stream. Or, you could enter the address <http://87.106.180.82:80/readingcb128> directly into your media player, where it asks for a location to point to.

The Readifolk Radio Show is broadcast from 6:00 to 8:00pm every Friday evening.



Reading4U
Community radio for Reading


For, from and by the community
streaming 24/7 on Reading4U.co.uk

A Song Worth Singing **Mollymauk**

Bob Watson talks about a song of his that has been sung around the world

Technically, the Mollymauk is a species of albatross, the name being said to derive from the word 'Molomac' (various spellings) used by early German and Scandinavian sailors to describe the great wide-winged birds encountered on open seas far away from land. It's also the probable origin of the 'Molly hawk' referred to in English-language seashanties. The mystic ability of these birds to survive and navigate in such inhospitable places gave rise to wonderment and also much legend and superstition - notably their association with the spirits of sailors who had died and been buried at sea, and the idea (viz Coleridge's Ancient Mariner) that eternal damnation and misfortune awaited anyone who caused them harm.

For me the very word Mollymauk was always filled with music and evocative pictures, the capturing of which took some years and several aborted versions before they gelled into the song printed below. For a time, the song attracted no particular attention,

except from people who complained that my "Down below Cape Horn" was too low and grunty for them to join in with - until one day I accidentally got the right key at a shanty festival singaround, and the room suddenly rang with response and chorus singing. From there the song passed into the repertoire of Danny McLeod, who recorded it with Newcastle seagroup The Keelers and later with his wife Joyce alongside Barrie and Ingrid Temple in the legendary harmony group Salt of the Earth.

Since then *Mollymauk* has found its way into other repertoires and onto more records in this country and abroad, and a number of renditions can also be found on YouTube (including Bob's own at www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2W_uTG3ew - Ed) with the name, spelt as one word with either a U or a W, or as two words. Mollymauk has been a fortunate song, making me a lot of friends - many of whom I've never met - and producing a number of stunning renditions that I have no way of matching.

Freely, with feeling

1. Now the Southern Ocean is a lonely place, Where the storms are many and the shelter's scarce, rest-less wa-ters and the trou-bling sky, There you'll see the Mo-lly-mauk- wheel and fly, Down up-on the Southern O - cean sail - ing, Down be - low Cape Horn. On the Horn. *Chorus* Won't you ride the wind and go, white sea - bird, Won't you ride the wind and go Mo - lly - mauk, Down up - on the Southern O - cean sail - ing, Down be - low Cape Horn.

1. Now the Southern Ocean is a lonely place,
Where the storms are many and the shelter's scarce,
Refrain:

*Down upon the Southern Ocean sailing,
Down below Cape Horn,
On the restless waters and the troubling sky,
There you'll see the Mollymauk wheel and fly,
Refrain*

Chorus:

*Won't you ride the wind and go, white seabird?
Won't you ride the wind and go Mollymauk?
Refrain*

2. See the Mollymauk floating on his wide white wings,
And Lord, what a lonesome song he sings,
Refrain

And he's got no compass and he's got no gear,
And there's none can tell you how the Mollymauks steer,
Refrain

3. He's the ghost of a sailor man, so I've heard say,
Whose body sank and his soul flew away,
Refrain
And he's got no haven and he's got no home,
He's bound for evermore to wheel and roam,
Refrain

4. When I get too weary for to sail no more,
Let my bones sink better far away from shore,
Refrain
You can cast me loose and leave me drifting free,
And I'll keep that big bird company,
Refrain

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Readifolk Newsletter

My thanks go to everyone, big or small, who contributed, much or little to this edition. I mean that without any floccinaucinihilipilification. Some people's names may have been changed to protect the guilty.



READIFOLK

READING'S FOLK SONG & MUSIC CLUB

Every Sunday 8:00 - 10:30 p.m.



Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC)

35-39 London Street, Reading RG1 4PS

PROGRAMME APRIL - JUNE 2012

1 April	Steve Turner www.steve-turner.co.uk	<i>A superb performer with an engaging singing style and unbelievable concertina accompaniment.</i>
8 April	Singers Night	<i>It's your turn to entertain us. Come and sing, play or just listen. You will get every encouragement.</i>
15 April	Roger Davies www.rogerdaviesmusic.com	<i>Roger is making a name for himself as one of today's most entertaining acoustic singer-songwriters.</i>
22 April	Theme 'Wet, Wet, Wet'	<i>It is still April so let's hear your pluvial songs.</i>
29 April	Jim McLean www.acousticvillage.co.uk	<i>Acclaimed Scottish singer performs traditional and self-penned songs - great vocals and distinctive and original guitar style.</i>



6 May	Singers Night	<i>Another chance for home-grown entertainment. Come along and contribute to a warm and friendly evening.</i>
13 May	Lucy Ward www.lucywardsings.com	<i>A heavenly voice plus guitar and concertina – a super star in the making!</i> <i>"Totally, totally brilliant" - Mike Harding</i>
20 May	Theme 'Flowers'	<i>It's time for you to blossom out – don't be a wallflower!</i>
27 May	Chris Ricketts www.chrisrickettsmusic.com	<i>A young dynamic shanty/folk singer and accomplished guitarist. "Refreshingly different" - fRoots</i>



3 June	Singers Night	<i>Another DIY night when you have a chance to show us what you can do.</i>
10 June	Brian Peters www.brian-peters.co.uk	<i>A welcome return of this highly talented singer, guitarist and melodeon player.</i>
17 June	Theme 'For Love or Money'	<i>That covers a wide range of songs. You may even find one that covers both topics.</i>
24 June	Fiddlebox www.fiddlebox.net	<i>Fiddlebox are George Whitfield on accordion and vocals and Helen Adams on fiddle and vocals – a dynamic combination playing traditional Welsh, Irish, American and Klezmer music.</i>

Admission: £6 Guest nights; £2 Singers & Theme nights

More information from our web site www.readifolk.org.uk

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