

# Notes

## The Newsletter of Readifolk

Issue 17

Reading's folk song  
and music club

Spring 2013

### Welcome

to another Readifolk  
newsletter

### Rumblings from the Roots

Welcome to the Spring edition of Notes.

Included in this newsletter is another assortment of articles and news items which we hope you will find of interest.

On the back page you will find the full programme of events at Readifolk in the next three months. You will see that there are some fantastic Guest Nights with return visits from some of our favourite performers as well as some really talented newcomers. Previews of all of the guest artists can be found on pages 4 and 5. There are of course lots of Singers and Theme Nights where everyone is invited to perform if they wish.

Incidentally, we think that we may be due an entry in the Guinness Book of Records for the furthest distance travelled to attend a Readifolk Guest Night. We recently received an e-mail from Adelaide, Australia asking us to reserve two seats for the Reg Meuross concert on 12 May. OK, the sender was coming to Birmingham anyway, but even that is a good distance to travel. It just goes to show what fantastic guests we have appearing at the club.

You will be pleased to hear that as a result of the continuing good attendances at our events we are able to maintain the admission prices at £6 for Guest Nights and £2 for Singers and Theme Nights. We believe that this represents really good value for money when compared with other concert venues in the area, and if you come regularly to our Guest Nights you can reduce your admission price to just £5 by joining the Readifolk loyalty scheme. In any six month period, if you pay for your first five visits the next visit is free - i.e. six Guest Nights for the price of five.

The Readifolk Radio Show, which is broadcast via Reading Community Radio on the internet ([www.reading4u.co.uk](http://www.reading4u.co.uk)) every Friday evening from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., goes from strength to strength. As well as the 'anchor man' Ian, we now have eight regular programme producers who promote the Readifolk events as well as lots

of other folk-related items and of course lots of great folk music, including occasional live acts. In the next quarter Ian is going to be inviting would-be presenters to have a go at producing a show with him. It's great fun, so if you fancy trying your hand as a radio presenter, have a word with Ian on any club night.

One innovation introduced by Ian recently is the production of podcasts of each of the two-hour shows. This now enables you to listen to the show at your leisure and at a time to suit you. The podcasts can be accessed via the Readifolk website [www.readifolk.org.uk](http://www.readifolk.org.uk). Click on 'Radio Show' then 'Podcasts' to open up a list of all the shows. We hope that the introduction of the podcasts will encourage more listeners to the show and that more of you will be encouraged to come along to see the live performances at the club.

Make a note in your diary of a special Charity Guest Night at Readifolk on Sunday 14 July when Reading's very own folk band Ryewolf ([www.ryewolf.co.uk](http://www.ryewolf.co.uk)) will be headlining a fund raising event in support of Reading Community Radio. This promises to be a really lively and entertaining evening, so be sure to be there - more information in the next newsletter.

We look forward to welcoming you to the club.

**Una & Colin**

### Contact us:

Una for bookings  
and coming events

[una@readifolk.org.uk](mailto:una@readifolk.org.uk)

Colin for publicity, coming events  
and the mailing list

[colin@readifolk.org.uk](mailto:colin@readifolk.org.uk)

Stewart about the newsletter [stewart@readifolk.org.uk](mailto:stewart@readifolk.org.uk)

Alison about the website

[ali@readifolk.org.uk](mailto:ali@readifolk.org.uk)



Pilgrim's Way will be at Readifolk on 14th April

## *Instruments of Joy*

Taking a look at the instruments of the folk idiom.

This issue:

# The Cajón

Something convenient to sit on...

It was amusing to hear Jenni Murray on the radio recently, introduce a group of musicians, and find that she didn't know that the cajón is more than just something convenient to sit on, for a musician who seems to have forgotten to bring his instrument.

In fact, I would imagine most of us in this country would be surprised to hear that the cajón, as a properly made instrument rather than just an ad hoc box to thump, originated in South America some 200 years or more ago. A clue to this is in the pronunciation of the word - the j is sounded in the back of the throat, rather than on the tip of the tongue, similar to the Scottish ch in 'loch'. Some people prefer simply to pronounce it as an h - ca-hon. The Spanish word caja means box, and its derivative, cajón, means a drawer, and we don't need to get any more complicated than that to describe the instrument - it's a wooden box or drawer, often mistaken for something convenient for a musician to sit on.

It is increasingly seen in all forms of popular music, and has already been heard at Reading on several occasions.

It's hard to be precise about when and where a wooden box mutated into a musical instrument, as people have been bashing away on hollow objects to produce satisfying sounds for as far back as we can trace the origins of mankind. But a box of this type, made with materials specifically selected more for their tonal qualities rather than their functionality, can probably be attributed to the Spanish colonial slaves, transported from Africa to the Americas, around about the 18th or 19th centuries. In colonial Peru, for example, slaves would be prohibited from having musical instruments, so one that was derived from a simple storage crate could easily be hidden from persecuting eyes. Usually, this instrument was played by sitting on the box, and tapping the front face of it, between the player's legs.

A slightly different form of the cajón can be traced to another former Spanish colony, Cuba, where, towards the end of the 19th century, African drums were banned from religious ceremonies. So, for similar reasons, boxes and crates were used and adapted, eventually becoming purpose-made instruments. These ceremonies become known as Cajón Ceremonies, where dancing and drumming would be used to contact ancestral spirits, bring good luck and health, and resolve other problems. The Cuban-derived instrument tends to be played as a normal hand drum would be, either by holding the box between the knees, on the lap, or by standing it on the ground and hitting the top surface.

Other parts of Spanish colonial America also developed forms of box-drum, too, probably as a result of the trade in slaves

moving people from one colony to another.

Given that the instrument developed largely as the result of Spanish oppression, there is some irony in the fact that it was a Spaniard who eventually brought the cajón to Europe and ensured its wider popularity. Flamenco guitarist Paco de Lucía was visiting Peru in the 1970s when he was inspired by the playing of cajón master Caitro Soto. Soto presented de Lucía with a cajón to take back to Spain, where he incorporated it into Flamenco music, the tapped out rhythms of the box-drum complementing the complex hand clapping patterns (palmas) found in Flamenco music. This melding of the Peruvian and the Spanish eventually led to the popularising of the cajón throughout Europe and the rest of the world, so it is, therefore, the Peruvian style of cajón that is now most familiar to us.

From this introduction into Europe, many cajóns are still manufactured in Spain, though the simplicity of its basic

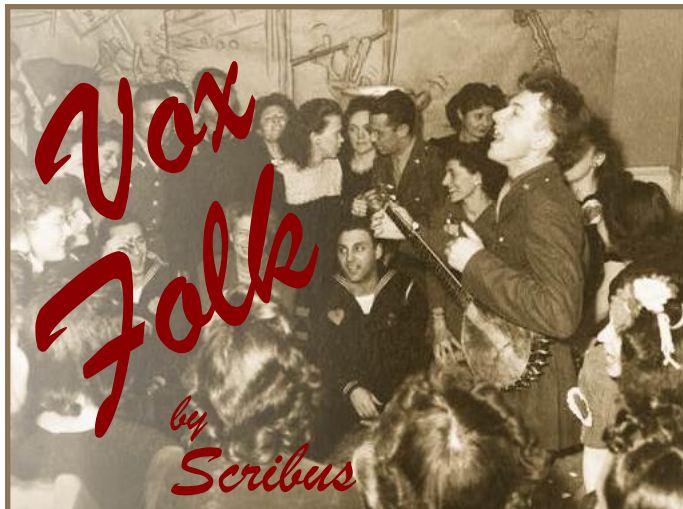
design means that there are now manufacturers all over the world, many producing hand crafted items in small runs. The construction of the cajón is often no more complex than a six sided, rectangular box, which is tall enough to sit on. Five sides are made of wood strong enough to support the player, and give the box rigidity, while the sixth side is usually made of thin wood, often plywood, but sometimes a tone wood similar to that of a guitar soundboard. This front face, or tapa, is usually held in place by screws around its perimeter; sometimes the screws in the vicinity of where the board is struck are omitted, to give it a better 'snap' when it is played. A sound hole will be cut into one of the sides, usually opposite the tapa.

Many manufacturers have added their own features to this; it is quite common to find snare strings fitted behind the tapa, to give the cajón a rattle similar to a snare drum. You will also find cajóns with pads and divisions on the tapa, to give different sound qualities. Some will have angled faces, there are wider bass cajóns, and you can even buy a sort of flat-pack cajón that can be folded down into a small, hand-luggage sized, case. The Cuban style cajón has inspired some makers to offer cajóns that rest on your lap, or are held between the knees, to be played bongo-style, as well as instruments that are a little more recognisable as drums, standing upright, perhaps on stands, to be played on their upper surface.

When playing the instrument, different areas of the playing surface will produce different sounds, which can emulate a bass drum or a side drum. Some players press their foot against the tapa to change the pitch of the cajón, and there are many subtle techniques with the hand, using fingers, palm and even knuckles, to produce a variety of sounds and patterns. The cajón has been called, with some justification, a drum kit in a box.







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

## News and Stuff



**In case you missed it at the end of January**, the BBC Folk Awards gave the Folk Singer of the Year award to Nic Jones, who many would say should have got one years ago, were it not for a long period of enforced retirement. Kathryn Tickell was Musician of the Year. Lifetime Achievement awards went to Aly Bain, Dougie MacLean and Roy Harper, and a Roots award was given to Billy Bragg. The full list of winners can be seen at <http://tinyurl.com/bxks24s>.

**Since Mike Harding was discharged from his duties** by the BBC as presenter of their Radio 2 Folk Show, he has started to make his own shows, available on the internet, either live or as podcasts. Launched just after Christmas, 27,000 people tuned in as the first show became available, resulting in the site crashing. Normal service has since been restored, with Mike saying "I had no idea so many folk fans would hit the site at the same time." Tune in here [www.mikehardingfolkshow.com](http://www.mikehardingfolkshow.com).

**Readifolk's own radio show**, broadcast on

[www.reading4u.co.uk](http://www.reading4u.co.uk) every Friday evening is also being made available as podcasts, for a trial period, for those that can't be within hearing distance of their computer when it's broadcast live. Presenter and anchorman Ian Freedman says "It'll be extra work, but worth it if we get some extra listeners." There are no reports of this site crashing yet, and the podcast can be found through the show's own Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/readifolkradio](http://www.facebook.com/readifolkradio).



**Readifolk Radio Show co-presenter** and floor singer,

Graham Swannell has also managed to secure his own show on Reading4U. It's not a folk music show, but it immediately precedes the Readifolk Radio Show, late afternoon on Friday.



**And another familiar face at Readifolk** who has also recently gained his own show on our local community radio station is young Spencer Brooks, who

has often impressed us with his intricate guitar playing. You can hear his show at noon, every other Saturday.

**Many local musicians and music enthusiasts** were alarmed at the change of hands of The Retreat pub, tucked away in St. John's Street. Landlords Bernie Whiten and Jane Marsden had done a great deal to make their small venue into a local mecca for local musos, as well as gaining Real Ale awards, and the popular epithet of 'Reading's Favourite Back Street Pub'. But it seems they were unable to reach an agreement about continuing their tenure with the brewery who own the pub, Admiral Taverns. Happily, the new management also seem interested in having a musical venue, with sessions and players already making an appearance.

**In an age when modesty and discretion** seem to count for so little, perhaps we should not be surprised at a Smartphone app. that is intended to predict the size of a, err... *gentleman's equipment*. The app. is called the Chubby Checker, an amusement that is claimed to predict *certain dimensions* based upon other factors of a gentleman's build; for those of us who lead sheltered lives, 'Chubby' is, apparently, slang for *the object in question*. Anyway, the well known artist of the same name is suing it's creators and Mr Checker's lawyer, Mr. (ahem) *Willie* Gary has said they are claiming half a million dollars, as the software has tarnished the singer's trademarked name. One has to assume it was, um..., a toss up between calling it this, or the *Little Richard*.



## Farewells

**Doug Adams died 21/9/12 aged 60** - Melodeon player with several London Morris sides, and enthusiastic sessions player, he also revived Deptford's Jack In The Green Mayday event, and was usually it's leading musician.

**Kéléligui Diabaté died 30/11/12 aged 81** - Malian balafon player, he was master of this traditional type of xylophone, despite being refused a formal training, and having to adapt its playing techniques to his left handedness. He also played saxophone and guitar. Reports vary as to whether he is related to the famous griot family Diabaté which includes kora players Sidiki and Tourmani

**Seán McNamara died January 2013 aged 84** - Fiddle player and teacher, and founder of the Liverpool Céilí Band during the 1960s, he was an exponent of Irish and Gaelic music, and continued to perform it into old age.

**Trevor Grills died 11/2/13 aged 54** - Singer with Fisherman's Friends, who recently gained a major recording deal after supporting, and with support from, Show Of Hands. A native of the group's homeland, Cornwall, he died on tour, as a result of an accident at a concert hall that also killed the group's tour manager.



**Kevin Ayers died 20/2/13 aged 68** - Singer songwriter from the psychedelic era of the Canterbury Scene, combining elements of folk and jazz into his off-beat songs, he formed Soft Machine, and The Whole World, working with the likes of Mike Oldfield, Robert Wyatt and David Bedford.

**Stompin' Tom Connors died 6/3/13 aged 77** - Canadian country-folk singer, many of whose 300+ songs celebrated his homeland and became local anthems.

# Shows Worth Seeing

Previewing the new season of guest nights coming to Readifolk.

On 7th April the **Askew Sisters** make a welcome return to Readifolk.

#### What they say:

Emily and Hazel Askew are a young duo making waves on the folk scene with their energetic brand of English folk music. Using fiddle and melodeon, they play and sing with an infectious enjoyment and love for the music, winning them fans wherever they go. From rhythmic foot stomping tunes to powerful interpretations of songs and ballads, their playing always guarantees to engage and inspire those who hear.



#### What others say:

"The breezy robustness of their musicianship is demonstrated in the joyous way the two parts switch around during the course of a tune set, adeptly maintaining listener interest... infectious pumping energy characterises their performance" - *fRoots magazine*. "Fantastic traditional music - the sisters of stomp are heading your way!" - *James Fagan and Nancy Kerr*.

#### What we say:

Emily and Hazel Askew are returning to Readifolk by popular demand. We love their enthusiasm and their lively interpretation of mainly traditional song and music. Emily and Hazel are a delightful duo who are sure to impress you.

#### Hear more:

[www.myspace.com/askewsisters](http://www.myspace.com/askewsisters)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Sr64UkN9so](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Sr64UkN9so)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpqs\\_v\\_9oW4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpqs_v_9oW4)



New band **Pilgrims' Way** will be making their first visit to Readifolk on **14th April**. Let's give them a proper Readifolk welcome.



#### What they say:

Pilgrims' Way are a 'refreshingly different, reassuringly traditional' new three-piece band

from Stockport, bringing together some of English folk's best new talents. A unique brand of 'no-frills' folk, edgier than the folk on the village green but firmly rooted in the traditions of England and its cross-currents with Ireland and America.

#### What others say:

"The real deal. I am genuinely impressed by their understanding and feel for the music - a young band I expect to hear great things from in the future" - *Mike Harding*. "The stunning voice of Lucy Wright..." - *Fiona Talkington, Late Junction*. "Lucy Wright seems able to get to the soul of a traditional song and bring it back to life. Pilgrims' Way have two important strengths - a deep respect for the tradition whilst not being tied to its baggage" - *Spiral Earth*.

#### What we say:

We are delighted to bring this new trio to Readifolk. Tom Kitching appeared at the club with Gren Bartley in June 2011 and gave a memorable performance. In this trio, Tom (fiddle, mandolin, vocals) is joined by Edwin Beasant (melodeon, guitar, bass, etc.) and Lucy Wright (vocals, jews harp and

second fiddle). The combination of these three well-respected musicians is stunning.

#### Hear more:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sq0Xogvr2FO](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sq0Xogvr2FO)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywNbUR8dr8g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywNbUR8dr8g)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=TneXAiTxl1s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TneXAiTxl1s)



**George Wilson** with the big, rich voice will be coming to Readifolk on **28th April**.

#### What he says:

Born within the sound of the shipyard rivet guns, making him a true 'Geordie', this native Tynesider moved south when he joined the Royal Navy as a boy. His music has been variously described as pop, folk, rock 'n' roll and dire. George has built up quite an impressive reputation as both an entertainer and compere at some of the country's most prestigious music festivals as well as in folk clubs and pubs all over England.



#### What others say:

"... everyone who comes into contact with this gentle giant will already know that George has a fine baritone voice that should be required listening... would put many 'professionals' to shame" - *UK Folk Music Magazine*.

#### What we say:

George is a larger than life character who has appeared solo and in several bands and is well known as a compere at many folk festivals. We have seen George at the Wallingford Bunkfest many times and his first appearance at Readifolk is long overdue. He has an impressive repertoire of traditional, contemporary and humorous songs.

#### Hear more:

<http://george-wilson.co.uk/fool.html>  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pGDLjv1Xb0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pGDLjv1Xb0)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6txEWUzTrM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6txEWUzTrM)



On **12th May** Readifolk welcomes back **Reg Meuross**, a great singer/songwriter.

#### What he says:

Reg's career began with The Panic Brothers, his duo with Richard Morton, formed in 1986. Five years of successful touring and TV work followed, with appearances at all the major British festivals. Reg then went on to form The Flamingos, and in recent years Reg has been a crucial member of Hank Wangford's band, The Lost Cowboys. In 1996 he released the critically acclaimed CD **The Goodbye Hat** and was nominated for several music awards, including best song for **Ring Around the Roses**. It wasn't followed up until 2004 with **Short Stories**, and in 2007 by the excellent **Still**.

#### What others say:

"My Jerusalem pulls no punches but does it in a very subtle way. A beautiful and intelligent song. He's a great songwriter that guy" - *Mike Harding*. "One of Britain's finest singer/songwriters" - *Time Out*. "There's something special about the way he writes and delivers a song" - *Townes Van Zandt*.



#### What we say:

We are really looking forward to this return visit of Reg to Readifolk. Reg is a singer/songwriter of the highest order. His thought-provoking stories are set to wonderful melodies. At his last appearance in August 2009 he gave us one of the very best evenings that we can remember at the club. He attracted a large contingent from his 'fan club'; this time round we have even had a reservation from Adelaide, Australia - it's true!



#### Hear more:

[www.myspace.com/regmeuross](http://www.myspace.com/regmeuross)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=-XNsm1FdV\\_s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-XNsm1FdV_s)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRqKdHmaM5M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRqKdHmaM5M)



**Liz Simcock** returns to Readifolk on **2nd June**. If you missed her before, don't miss her this time - she stunned us all with her exquisite songs and performance.

#### What she says:

Liz Simcock writes songs and performs them in folk and acoustic clubs in and around the Southeast. In 1999 she featured on the **Playpen Album of New Acoustic Music** alongside Eliza Carthy, Billy Bragg, Eddi Reader and Kathryn Williams. Since then she has trodden an independent path, recording three albums and gaining a growing reputation as a performer and songwriter.



#### What others say:

"She came, she saw, she conquered!!! An absolute joy to listen to. Her stage persona is very engaging and honest, though remaining thoroughly professional at all times. A rare

treat in this day of egocentric wanabees, Liz was a breath of fresh air" - *Peter Kitchen*.

#### What we say:

Liz Simcock will be known to many at Readifolk as she was the joint winner of the 2009 Hiring Fair. She appeared subsequently as a Guest at the club and received much praise for her performance. Liz returns to the club with her band - and what a band! - Dave Ellis (guitar) and Boo Howard (bass) appeared at Readifolk as a duo in 2012 and gave us a great night. As a trio this line up promises to be amazing!

#### Hear more:

[www.lizsimcock.com/listen.html](http://www.lizsimcock.com/listen.html)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nGf8SEqOn8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nGf8SEqOn8)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGWD4ttPeWQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGWD4ttPeWQ)



**June 16th** sees the long-overdue return of top-flight artiste **Bob Fox** to Readifolk.

#### What he says:

In the year 2000 Bob celebrated 25 years of singing folk songs professionally and was invited to appear as special guest on the Fairport Convention **Wood and the Wire** UK tour in February. His first ever solo CD **Dreams Never Leave You** was subsequently recorded at Dave Pegg's Woodworm Studio with various members of Fairport playing on it. The CD delighted both the folk press and Bob's growing legion of fans; he also performed an impressive set at the Cropredy Festival in August 2000. Bob was nominated Best Folk Singer once again in the 2004 Folk Awards and his version of the Chris Leslie song *My Love is in America*, recorded on **Borrowed Moments**, gained a nomination for Best Original Song.

#### What others say:

"Fox always was one of the scene's superior singers and his

voice is as confident and as ebullient as it ever was" - *Colin Irwin, Folk Roots*. "Bob is a greatly under-rated singer and musician; if he were pushier he would be up there with the Carthys and Gaughans and he could certainly teach the upcoming generation a thing or three" - *Raymond Greenoaken, Stirrings*. "At last, the record we've been waiting for from Bob, it's the sound we hear in live performance, that astonishing guitar technique coupled with one of England's finest voices" - *Ralph McTell*. "Possibly the most complete male artist in English folk" - *Colin Randall, The Daily Telegraph*.

#### What we say:

Bob was booked to appear at the club in November 2011 but had to withdraw when he landed the prestigious role of Songman in the West End production of **War Horse**. He is now on a short break from that role during preparations for the show's countrywide tour. We are delighted that Bob is returning to Readifolk to entertain us with traditional songs, mainly from his home territory of the North East of England, and hopefully share with us some of the War Horse numbers.



#### Hear more:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vd7q9S1RH8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vd7q9S1RH8)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=69aUaUeaINM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69aUaUeaINM)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAHGwEO2fwE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAHGwEO2fwE)



On **30th June** we welcome singer/songwriter **Terry St. Clair**.

#### What he says:

The folk blues of Bert Jansch and Jackson C Franks inspired Terry to play the guitar. He worked as an apprentice book-binder, and spent most of his time playing guitar and singing in local folk clubs and started to write songs. In 1968 Terry met Toni Savage, a local folk club organizer and agent who supported Terry's career and booked him into folk clubs and concerts around the country. Terry set up home in North London and was being booked to play in Italy, Holland and Southern Ireland. He continued to write songs and perform, gaining bigger audiences. In 1994 Terry recorded **Basically...Terry St.Clair**, a completely acoustic album, and now feels this is the most satisfying and honest way to record.



#### What others say:

"It is very heartening at the end of the 20th Century to discover that a singer/songwriter of the calibre of Terry St.Clair can still be found in a musical world which seems to value loud tuneless junk and amateurism above melodic tunes and the long established art of the

seasoned troubadour" - *John Tobler, Folk Roots Magazine*.

"Intelligent & emotive acoustic songs performed with style and assurance. He is a thoughtful and classy singer, guitarist and songwriter" - *Time Out Magazine*.

#### What we say:

We first saw Terry on stage at the Boars Bridge Festival and booked him immediately. He performs a wide range of traditional and contemporary songs, some self-penned. He is a very fine guitarist and an excellent all-round entertainer.

#### Hear more:

[www.myspace.com/terrystclair1](http://www.myspace.com/terrystclair1)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fk4zp4NzNw4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fk4zp4NzNw4)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZrphj6lGeY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZrphj6lGeY)



It was a 17 year old Ewan MacColl who wrote this song, in support of the 1932 mass trespass on Kinder Scout, a well noted turning point in the history of public access to the land. Although this event is well known and celebrated, it was not the first time people had, en mass,

protested about their exclusion from land by the Enclosures Acts, but it is generally regarded as the point from which things began to change.

Although the ownership of land by the aristocratic and powerful can be traced back to Norman times or earlier, from the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, some 4,000 individual Enclosures Acts were passed into law, not only further establishing this division of land amongst the gentry, but ensuring that the general population could now be excluded from it, with few, if any, rights of access. Vast areas of open, uncultivated land became the hunting playground of their owners, who employed gamekeepers to help protect it from uninvited intruders.

According to the book *Who Owns Britain*, published in 2002, even now 70% of the land is owned by 1% of the population. Breaking that statistic down a little further, around two thirds of the land is owned by just 6,000 people, and the remaining 60-odd million of us squeeze into a housing area of around one tenth of that.

During the late 19th century, particularly in the industrial cities of the north, it is not surprising that hard working, poorly paid people wanted some respite from the cramped, polluted proximity of their daily lives. With public transport came easy access to the remoter parts of the countryside, and the simple task of walking in the open air became increasingly popular. For people from Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield, equipped with stout shoes and a knapsack, the moors and dales of the Peak District came within easy reach for a weekend's hiking. The first organised ramblers' association, the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers, was set up in 1900 by Bert Ward. Organisations like this campaigned for access rights to the countryside, but their achievements had been limited, and by the 1930s, only 12 legal public footpaths existed in the Peak District.

However, many landowners were not happy with the prospect of changing this, and went to great lengths to stop people walking on their open moors and heathland. Walkers were constantly being turned off land by gamekeepers, sometimes violently, with keepers employing sticks and dogs to beat off the uninvited. As early as 1907, Bert Ward took part in a mass trespass on Bleaklow, an adjoining hill to the north of Kinder, to protest their denial of access to it. But it was Benny Rothman, a political activist and keen Rambler from Manchester, who took up this earlier cudgel, after again being turfed off Bleaklow along with fellow members of the British Workers' Sport Federation in early 1932. Rothman organised the mass trespass onto the hill and plateau of Kinder Scout on 24th April 1932. Reports say that several hundred people gathered in a disused quarry, and then set off to climb Kinder Scout. They were met by both gamekeepers and police, but the number of protesters meant that the resistance of the gamekeepers was soon overcome, and the police did not intervene.

Upon achieving their intended destination, they were met by a party from Sheffield, who had set off from Edale, led by Bert Ward. As the walkers made their way back, off the mountain,

they were met by police, who, on the pretext of helping their march through the nearby village of Hayfield, led them into a trap, where a gamekeeper helped police identify five ringleaders, including Rothman, who were arrested. As the act of trespassing was covered by civil law, rather than criminal law, and thus carried no prison sentence, the five were charged and found guilty of unlawful assembly and breach of the peace, each spending several months in jail.

This, in itself, brought about wide public condemnation, and a few weeks later, several thousand ramblers rallied at Winnats Pass to demand access to the land. The mass trespass on Kinder Scout had become a turning point for a gradual but ongoing change in laws that have since enabled walkers to enjoy more of the open countryside. The first major change came 17 years after the trespass, after the Second World War, and a landslide victory by Labour in parliament, when the Access to the Countryside Act (1949) was passed, and the Peak District became the country's first National Park. Other National Parks have since been established, and in 2000, the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act was passed, opening up more land to walkers.

As a teenager growing up in Manchester, Ewan MacColl was involved in both politics and rambling, as well as singing and performing. He and Benny Rothman knew each other, and MacColl was asked to be in charge of publicity for the event, as well as to help organise it. That such an early song of his should still be in the folk repertoire speaks of both its melodic and lyrical appeal.

The version here can be heard sung by MacColl himself on YouTube at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=YENYMwuCG2Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YENYMwuCG2Y)





Arrangement by  
Ed

# The Manchester Rambler

Ewan MacColl

I've been over Snowdon, I've slept upon Crowdon, I've camped by the Wainstones as well, I've  
sunbathed on Kinder, Been burned to a cinder, And many more things I can tell. My rucksack has oft been my  
pill - ow, The heather has oft been my bed, And sooner than part from the mountains, I  
think I would rather be dead. *Chorus* I'm a rambler, I'm a rambler from Manchester way, I get all my pleasure the  
hard moorland way, I may be a wageslave on Monday, But I am a free man on Sunday.

1. I've been over Snowdon, I've slept upon Crowdon,  
I've camped by the Wainstones as well,  
I've sunbathed on Kinder, been burned to a cinder,  
And many more things I can tell.  
My rucksack has oft been me pillow,  
The heather has oft been me bed,  
And sooner than part from the mountains,  
I think I would rather be dead.

*Chorus:*

I'm a rambler, I'm a rambler from Manchester way,  
I get all me pleasure the hard moorland way,  
I may be a wageslave on Monday,  
But I am a free man on Sunday.

2. The day was just ending, and I was descending,  
Down Grindsbrook just by Upper Tor,  
When a voice cried "Hey you" in the way keepers do,  
He'd the worst face that ever I saw.  
The things that he said were unpleasant,  
In the teeth of his fury I said,  
"Sooner than part from the mountains  
I think I would rather be dead".

*Chorus*

3. He called me a louse, and said "Think of the grouse",  
Well I thought, but I still couldn't see,  
Why all Kinder Scout and the moors roundabout,

Couldn't take both the poor grouse and me.  
He said "All this land is my master's",  
At that I stood shaking my head,  
No man has the right to own mountains,  
Any more than the deep ocean bed.

*Chorus*

4. I once loved a maid, a spot welder by trade,  
She was fair as the rowan in bloom,  
And the blue of her eye matched the June moorland sky,  
And I wooed her from April to June.  
On the day that we should have been married,  
I went for a ramble instead,  
For sooner than part from the mountains,  
I think I would rather be dead.

*Chorus*

5. So I'll walk where I will, over mountain and hill,  
And I'll lie where the bracken is deep,  
I belong to the mountains, the clear running fountains,  
Where the grey rocks rise rugged and steep.  
I've seen the white hare in the gullies,  
And the curlew fly high overhead,  
And sooner than part from the mountains,  
I think I would rather be dead.

*Chorus*

Readifolk Newsletter

Once again, many thanks to all the contributors and helpers, without whom this newsletter would not be possible.  
This edition of Notes is guaranteed to be free of any horse meat. However, the horse manure seems unavoidable.



# 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 2013**

7 April	<b>The Askew Sisters</b> <a href="http://www.askewsisters.co.uk">www.askewsisters.co.uk</a>	<i>This delightful young fiddle and melodeon duo play mainly traditional music and songs in a modern and exciting style.</i>
14 April	<b>Pilgrims Way</b> <a href="http://www.pilgrims-way.net">www.pilgrims-way.net</a>	<i>A superb new young trio who play traditional material with their own distinctive arrangements.</i>
21 April	<b>Theme</b> <b>'Think of England'</b>	<i>It's almost St George's Day so patriotic songs would be appropriate - or you may have a more obscure link to the theme. It's up to you.</i>
28 April	<b>George Wilson</b> <a href="http://www.george-wilson.co.uk">www.george-wilson.co.uk</a>	<i>George has an impressive repertoire of traditional, contemporary and humorous songs with guitar and cittern accompaniment. A great entertainer.</i>



5 May	<b>Singers Night</b>	<i>The usual format - a song, a tune, a story, a poem, a joke or just come and be entertained by us. All welcome.</i>
12 May	<b>Reg Meuross</b> <a href="http://www.regmeuross.com">www.regmeuross.com</a>	<i>Reg is a singer/songwriter of the highest quality who deserves wider acclaim. Thought-provoking stories set to wonderful melodies.</i>
19 May	<b>Theme</b> <b>'Drink &amp; Be Merry'</b>	<i>Let's hear your favourite drinking songs and we'll all be merry.</i>
26 May	<b>Singers Night</b>	<i>It's your turn to entertain us. Don't be shy - we want to hear you.</i>



2 June	<b>Liz Simcock Band</b> <a href="http://www.lizsimcock.com">www.lizsimcock.com</a>	<i>An exciting new combo of Liz Simcock (vocals and guitar) with Dave Ellis (guitar) &amp; Boo Howard (bass). We've seen all three at the club in various formats - together they are superb!</i>
9 June	<b>Theme</b> <b>'Colours'</b>	<i>An easy theme, so come and brighten up the evening with your colourful songs and music.</i>
16 June	<b>Bob Fox</b> <a href="http://www.bobfoxmusic.com">www.bobfoxmusic.com</a>	<i>On a break from his acclaimed role as Songman in the West End production of War Horse, Bob returns to Readifolk to entertain with traditional songs mainly from his home territory of the North East of England.</i>
23 June	<b>Singers Night</b>	<i>Come and join in the fun. Anything goes and you are sure of a warm response.</i>
30 June	<b>Terry St Clair</b> <a href="http://www.terrystclair.com">www.terrystclair.com</a>	<i>A well-respected singer/songwriter with a broad range of traditional and contemporary songs. A fine guitarist and good all-round entertainer.</i>

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

**More information from our web site [www.readifolk.org.uk](http://www.readifolk.org.uk)**

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