

Notes

The Newsletter
of Readifolk

Reading's folk song
and music club

Issue 24

Winter 2014/15

Inside:

Fingerpicking
Guitarists

The Mistletoe
Bough

Plus:

All the forthcoming
shows at Readifolk



Not to be missed: **Dave Ellis & Boo Howard**
return to Readifolk on **11th January**

Fingerstyle Guitarists

An incomplete list of some of the greats, who can all improve the quality of your life

Chet Atkins: Often regarded as the granddaddy of all fingerstyle guitarists playing today, and to whom so many current players pay allegiance, Atkins himself said he was inspired by Merle Travis, expanding on Travis' simpler technique, incorporating further counter melodies and syncopation into each tune. Atkins' repertoire drew on the influence of country, blues, jazz, and other contemporary forms, and since his death in 2001, his legacy has in turn continued to influence players of all forms of guitar music. It's probably fair to say that without Atkins, few fingerstyle guitarists would play the way they do.

Richard Smith: When Chet Atkins invited an 11 year old Richard Smith onto stage in London during a performance, Richard left the great man floundering. Having started to play at 5, his prodigious talent meant that he went on to win numerous awards, and Atkins said he was "the most amazing guy I know on the guitar. He can play anything I know, only better." Born in Beckenham, he moved to Nashville when he married American cellist Julie Adams, with whom he now often performs as a duo.

Tommy Emmanuel: Together with Richard Smith, Tommy is perhaps one of the greatest technical guitarists, with an impeccable fingerpicking technique, but he also plays with great heart. Better than anyone else, Tommy will leave you thinking that two, perhaps even three guitarists are playing, interweaving intricate melodies, but which all come from a single fretboard. Tommy's childhood in Australia was tough; after hearing Chet Atkins play on the radio, Tommy focused all his efforts into emulating him. His father recognised the young Tommy's talent, and, together with brother Phil, formed the family into a touring band which never settled in one place until his father died when Tommy was 11. Despite being diagnosed with a heart condition a few years ago, Tommy still tours the world relentlessly, and continues to inspire further generations of guitarists.

Muriel Anderson: It's easy to start thinking that the technical masters of the guitar are all male, and the public presence of males does certainly seem to outweigh that of the females. But it's not an exclusive club, and Muriel Anderson, amongst other female performers, should be included in a list of all time

greats. Her technique is impeccable, but she generally has a more gentle rhythmical style than many other fingerpickers, and often favours a

nylon strung guitar for its warmer tone. Most notable is her frequent use of the harp-guitar, which has an extension above, and sometimes below, the main guitar body to accommodate extra un-fretted strings, which can be played harp style, to augment the strings being played on the fretboard.



Paco de Lucia: At the forefront of the New Flamenco style in Spain, he took flamenco playing out of its guarded niche and helped it reach an international audience, at the same time crossing boundaries, particularly into jazz. This angered many purists, who accused him of trouncing the flamenco traditions. Reports vary about his childhood; from a family of flamenco musicians, some say his playing was the result of long hours of forced practice imposed by a strict father, but he is quoted as saying "A Gypsy's life is a life of anarchy. That is a reason why the way of flamenco music is a way without discipline as you know it. We just live. Music is everywhere in our lives." His first professional appearance was at the age of 11, and he died earlier this year.

Vicki Genfan: A player who augments her playing with extensive use of *tapping* - percussively striking the strings to produce notes and harmonics, as well as plucking and strumming normally. In conjunction with unusual open tunings, this results in a very rhythmical style that sets her apart from most other fingerstyle players.

Macyn Taylor: One to watch for the future. Having won several guitar competitions as a teenager, Macyn Taylor graduated in Music Performance at the University of Wisconsin at the age of 17. She started playing the guitar at seven and seems to have shown a remarkable facility for learning songs; she says she was performing shows within a few weeks of first picking up the guitar, playing retirement homes, coffee shops, charity events and churches. When she was 12, whilst performing at a students union, she was spotted by a music professor who encouraged her to develop her talent further. Now, at 20, the rest is set to be history. Here's a video of her at about 13: www.youtube.com/watch?v=vYSH1izToL4

News and Stuff

We were saddened to hear that John Kirkpatrick's wife, Sally, died in November. As you may know, John was due to play at Readifolk before Christmas, but when his wife was taken seriously ill, he cancelled all bookings. We send him our sympathy and very best wishes, and raise a silent glass.

Swedish TV presenter Fredrik Wikingsson is making a programme about whether being in a large audience enhances one's perception of a performance. It was on this pretext that, incredibly, he managed to persuade Bob Dylan, together with his touring band, to stage a complete show in the Philadelphia Academy of Music for an audience of just one - Wikingsson himself. Afterwards, Wikingsson said "I was smiling so much it was like I was on ecstasy. My jaw hurt for hours afterwards." As for His Bobness - he is not reported to have said very much at all.

A new campaign is underway calling for the Culture Secretary to adopt The Agent of Change Principle with regard to live music venues: the onus should not be upon venues that pre-date nearby new housing developments to take extra measures to reduce sound levels; instead it should fall to the housing developers to take sufficient soundproofing steps. By the same token, a new music venue in an existing residential area would be the one that has to ensure sound levels are kept acceptable. This, campaigners say, should deal with the problem where a new residential development near an established music venue can force the venue to close as a result of complaints about noise. There is an online petition here: <http://change.org/SaveMusicVenues>

Farewells

Pete Shutler - died 21/9/14 aged 68. Accordionist with the Yetties who rose to fame singing comedy songs as well as traditional music, playing both folk song and dance music. The Yetties recorded 49 albums before disbanding in 2011; however they can be heard every Sunday, playing *Barwick Green*, used on the omnibus edition of *The Archers*, with Pete's accordion to the fore.

Contact us:

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www.readifolk.org.uk



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

Maggie Boyle - died 6/11/14 aged 57. Many



Readifolk regulars will remember her appearances at the club, bringing her beautiful voice with her. She collaborated with many other musicians, including her former husband Steve Tilston, and as a member of the trio Grace Notes, but rarely performed alone, and only released three solo albums. She also presented the *Kitchen Songs* project on the internet, in which she persuaded musical luminaries to sing songs in their kitchens.

Ian McClagan - died 3/12/14 aged 69. Most well known as the keyboard player in the Small Faces and later the Faces, he was more latterly a well respected accompanist to the likes of Bruce Springsteen and Bob Dylan, as well as touring with Billy Bragg, and forming his own band Bump.

Clive Palmer - died 23/11/14 aged 71. Founding member of The Incredible String Band in the 1960s, he left before they achieved recognition, subsequently forming several bands including The Famous Jug Band and Clive's Original Band. A virtuoso banjo player, he continued to play in local clubs and bands, and took some part in a latterday reunion of The Incredible String Band, but made a living mostly as a musical instrument maker.

Manitas de Plata - died 5/11/14 aged 93. A self-taught gypsy guitarist from France, a young Ricardo Baliardo was given the name Manitas de Plata (Little Silver Hands) as his reputation grew. However, his initial refusal to sign a recording deal or to travel, meant that wider recognition came slowly, though he eventually achieved international acclaim.

Shows Worth Seeing

Previewing the new season of guest nights coming to Readifolk.

On **11th January**, **Dave Ellis & Boo Howard** make a welcome return to the club.

What they say:

Dave Ellis & Boo Howard are an acoustic duo writing original material in London with a partnership going back over 30 years. They still haven't peaked yet!



What others say:

"Top class guitar, top class songs, top class harmonies. Top class" - *Tudor Folk Club*. "Dave is known for his unique guitar style and Boo for her great voice and

exceptional bass playing. Some great original, sensitive and subtle songs, with guitar playing of the highest order. Acoustic rock, folk and blues at its best" - *Cambridge Folk Club*.

What we say:

We look forward to some more of their sublime singing, playing and banter.

Hear more:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHTPWXDWBqY
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ppEombRjKiY
www.daveandboo.com



Stuart Forester & Carol Anderson visit Readifolk for the first time on **25th January**.

What they say:

In September 2013 Stuart teamed up with the sensational fiddle player Carol Anderson from Aberdeen creating a formidable musical force with truly exciting possibilities. The duo have been gigging around the UK and working on new songs by Stuart and fiddle tunes from Carol's extensive repertoire.



What others say:

"Awesome" - *Dick*

Gaughan. "This guy is clearly a talent. Pure class" - *The Living Tradition*.

What we say:

We have heard so many good reports of this duo. Stuart's album **A Yard of Ale** is excellent. We are really looking forward to seeing them live.

Hear more:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=bf-8_IKvi-s
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cw9YTOuUMdQ
www.stuartforester.com



Kim Lowings & The Greenwood make their first appearance at Readifolk on **8th February**.

What they say:

Kim Lowings & The Greenwood have been going from strength to strength establishing themselves on the British Folk Scene. Stourbridge - based songwriter and Appalachian Mountain Dulcimer player Kim Lowings sings with an enchantingly pure voice. Their original songs draw on traditional themes; their traditional songs have a contemporary twist. Both will transport you away.



What others say:

"I've had the pleasure of seeing Kim Lowings and The Greenwood a number of times recently, and have been struck by Kim's confident and engaging delivery, showing a maturity beyond her years. Her storytelling, backed by sensitive and imaginative ensemble playing held the audience in thrall - expect great things to come" - *Paul Sartin*. "Rising stars of the folk scene with captivating traditional and original songs" - *Potbelly Folk & Roots Club*.

What we say:

Their debut album **This Life** received many complimentary reviews. We've loved listening to the CD and are anticipating an equally impressive live performance.

Hear more:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqlucwwKbdw
www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0wLqeL8lyv
www.kimlowings.com



We hope to drive away the winter blues when **John Cee Stannard & Blue Horizon** visit on **22nd February**.



What they say:

Singer and guitarist John Cee Stannard was a member of the folk outfit Tudor Lodge, who recorded a number of John's songs back in 1971 on the Vertigo label but he then put his song-writing skills

largely on the back seat; just over forty years later, John got together with some session musicians and some new blues songs he had written, and recorded a solo album. Blue Horizon is: Mike Baker, who plays guitar, and Howard Birchmore plays a great harmonica. We got together after the **Doob** album and have been playing gigs since November 2013. Our first album as a trio is **Bus Depot Blues**.

What others say:

"This is the happiest blues record I've heard in a long time" - *Dai Jeffries, folking.com*. "Stannard is clearly an accomplished musician and songwriter" - *Morgan Hogarth, Rock'n'Reel*. "A homage to the blues performed in cafes and jazz clubs in the 40s and 50s" - *Tetsuo Uchida, Euro-Rock Press*.

What we say:

John is well known to the Readifolk audience, having appeared several times with Tudor Lodge and he often does a solo floor spot on Guest Nights. John, together with Mike Baker and Howard Birchmore play blues that will thrill you.

Hear more:

www.johnceestannard.co.uk
www.youtube.com/watch?v=sHm-ckSsT-I
www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9iYheukKlO



We look forward to another rousing evening with **Scarecrow** on **8th March**.

What they say:

Scarecrow are an Oxfordshire-based acoustic

band that plays folk music but offers something a bit different: some



instrumental music, some songs and occasionally a bit of jazz or blues. Some tracks are well known and others more obscure but all have been worked on to produce tight and unusual arrangements.

What others say:

"This band provided lively entertainment, variety and a display of real musical skill. Definitely a band I would like to catch again!" - *Banbury Canalside Festival*.

What we say:

This is a long overdue return visit of this talented local trio. We loved their performance last time and anticipate another lively and entertaining evening.

Hear more:

www.scarecrowband.co.uk



Rosewood make their Readifolk debut on **22nd March**.

What they say:

Although Rosewood is a new-ish name, the members of this trio have been performers on the folk scene for some years and have played at major UK folk festivals as well as the club circuit. Members of Rosewood have played or still play in Bass Instincts, Bofl, Crownstreet, Harkeles, The Hosepipe Band and RSVP. Rosewood sing and play traditional and contemporary songs and tunes, some of which they have written themselves. Their unique features are the range of their source material and the array of instruments they play. These include bandoneon, footbass, hammered dulcimer, bagpipes, bouzouki, and deskbells.



What we say:

This new-ish group evolved from the band

Crownstreet which appeared at Readifolk in 2012. Their music and style is very similar to Crownstreet whom we liked very much. We anticipate another really enjoyable evening.

Hear more:

www.rosewoodband.co.uk



Our winter programme is completed on **29th March** with a visit from **Bright Season**.

What they say:

Bright Season formed in 2013 bringing together the talents of singer and guitarist Michael J Tinker, fiddle-player Ella Sprung and accordionist Simon Dumbleton. Together they perform traditional and self-penned songs and tunes, displaying their own individual gifts and combining to deliver stunning arrangements and harmonies.

What others say:

"This is a stunning blend of voices and

instrumentals, combining to deliver mesmerising arrangements and harmonies" - *Living Tradition*. "If ever three musicians were meant together, Bright Season are it. A stunning blend of instruments and voices. Truly mesmerising" - *Ant Miles, Downend Folk Club*.

What we say:

This exciting band from the Folkstock stable brings together three very talented musicians. We are sure that this will be an evening to remember.



Hear more:

<https://soundcloud.com/folkstock-records/bright-season-album-clips>
www.brightseason.net

A Song Worth Singing

The Mistletoe Bough by T E Bayly and Henry Bishop

Once a popular Christmas song, particularly in Yorkshire, radical 19th century French writer Alphonse Esquiros observed that the solemn chanting of the Mistletoe Bough was a national occurrence at Christmas time.

It seems strange that this harrowing tale should have been so popular at a time associated with glad tidings. The song tells the story of an unfortunate newlywed, who, in her new husband's large country house during the Christmas holiday, tired of the festivities of her wedding day, and suggested instead a game of hide-and-seek.

Sadly, she hid herself so well that no one ever found her, until many years later, in the attic, a long forgotten oak chest, with a spring catch, was opened to reveal a skeleton still clothed in a wedding dress.

The first incarnation of *The Mistletoe Bough* was

as a poem, published by Samuel Rogers in 1822, entitled *Ginevra*, where he set the events in Italy. Rogers said "The story is, I believe, founded on fact; though the time and the place are uncertain. Many old houses lay claim to it." It was probably this poem that T. H. Bayly used as the source for the song, with music added by

Henry Bishop. However, an earlier account of the tale can be found in Volume VI of the *Monthly Anthology and Boston Review*, published in 1809, which places the events in Germany.

But the events seem more like the stuff of myth, and true to form, many old stately houses in

Britain have been suggested as the true location. With the song's reference to Lord Lovell, Minster Lovell Hall, in Oxfordshire, may also have been in the mind of the song writer, but in fact the legend associated with that house is that Lord Francis Lovell's own skeleton was found there, where he had secreted himself in a hiding place



The Mistletoe Bride by David Cox

to escape the 15th century Battle of Stoke.

The popularity of the song means that it has been the basis for three films, first as a silent

move in 1909, directed by Percy Stow, then in Edward J. Colins' 1923 version, in which the unfortunate bride is murdered, and finally in 1926, directed by C. C. Calvert.

Arrangement
by Ed

The mistletoe hung in the cas - tle hall, The holly branch shone on the old oak wall, The

Baron's retainers were blithe and gay, Keeping the Christmas ho-li-day. The Baron beheld with a

father's pride, His beautiful child, Lord Lo - v - ell's bride. And she, with her bri - ght eyes

seemed to be The star of that goodly company. Oh, the mistletoe bough, Oh, the mistletoe bough

1. The mistletoe hung in the castle hall,
The holly branch shone on the old oak wall.
The Baron's retainers were blithe and gay,
Keeping the Christmas holiday.
The Baron beheld with a father's pride
His beautiful child, Lord Lovell's bride.
And she, with her bright eyes seemed to be
The star of that goodly company.
Oh, the mistletoe bough,
Oh, the mistletoe bough.
2. "I'm weary of dancing, now," she cried,
"Here, tarry a moment, I'll hide, I'll hide,
And, Lovell, be sure you're the first to trace
The clue to my secret hiding place."
Away she ran, and her friends began
Each tower to search, each nook to scan.
And young Lovell cried, "Oh, where do you hide?
I'm lonesome without you, my own fair bride."
Oh, the mistletoe bough,
Oh, the mistletoe bough.

3. They sought her that night, they sought her next day,
They sought her in vain when a week passed away.
In the highest, the lowest, the loneliest spot,
Young Lovell sought wildly, but found her not.
The years passed by and their brief at last
Was told as a sorrowful tale long past.
When Lovell appeared, all the children cried
"See the old man weeps for his fairy bride."
Oh, the mistletoe bough,
Oh, the mistletoe bough.
4. At length, an old chest that had long laid hid
Was found in the castle; they raised the lid.
A skeleton form lay mouldering there
In the bridal wreath of that lady fair.
How sad the day when in sportive jest
She hid from her lord in the old oak chest,
It closed with a spring and a dreadful doom,
And the bride lay clasped in a living tomb.
Oh, the mistletoe bough,
Oh, the mistletoe bough.



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 JANUARY - MARCH 2015

4 Jan	Theme 'Arrivals and Departures'	<i>Lots of possibilities with this theme e.g.songs about the New Year, the Old Year, departing guests etc. Let's hear what you have to offer.</i>
11 Jan	Dave Ellis & Boo Howard www.daveandboo.com	<i>A long standing musical partnership providing superb harmonies, terrific guitar and stunning songs.</i>
18 Jan	Singers Night	<i>The usual format - a song, a tune, a poem, a joke or just come and listen and join in the friendly banter.</i>
25 Jan	Stuart Forester & Carol Anderson www.stuartforester.com	<i>Stuart Forester, a great guitarist, singer and songwriter, and sensational fiddle player Carol Anderson are a formidable musical partnership.</i>

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1 Feb	Theme 'All Change'	<i>Trains, partners, attitudes? You decide.</i>
8 Feb	Kim Lowings & The Greenwood www.kimlowings.com	<i>Kim Lowings and the Greenwood are a collective of voices and many instruments. Their original songs draw on traditional themes and their traditional songs have a contemporary twist.</i>
15 Feb	Singers Night	<i>Another opportunity for you to make a contribution to a warm and friendly evening.</i>
22 Feb	John Cee Stannard & Blue Horizon www.johnceestannard.co.uk	<i>Local guitar supremo and singer/songwriter John Cee Stannard, and the superb duo of Mike Baker on guitar and Howard Buckmore on harmonica, bring you unforgettable blues and roots music.</i>

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1 Mar	Theme 'We'll Keep a Welcome'	<i>It's St David's Day, so let's mark the occasion with your Welsh songs. All contributions welcome.</i>
8 Mar	Scarecrow www.scarecrowband.co.uk	<i>This Oxfordshire based group offer something a bit different: some instrumentals, some songs and occasionally a bit of jazz or blues.</i>
15 Mar	Singers Night	<i>Another DIY night when you have the chance to show us what you can do.</i>
22 Mar	Rosewood www.rosewoodband.co.uk	<i>A trio of seasoned performers. They sing and play traditional and contemporary songs and tunes, some self-penned. They have a wide ranging repertoire and a large array of instruments.</i>
29 Mar	Bright Season www.brightseason.net	<i>A trio performing traditional and self-penned songs, displaying their own individual gifts and combining to deliver stunning arrangements and harmonies.</i>

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

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

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Find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/readifolk and Twitter www.twitter.com/readifolk

The Readifolk Radio Show is on the internet every Wednesday and Friday evening 7 - 9 p.m.
<http://blast1386.reading-college.ac.uk> click on 'Listen Live'. And now on www.bluesandrootsradio.com too.