

Notes

The Newsletter of Readifolk

Issue 7

Reading's folk song
and music club

Summer 2010

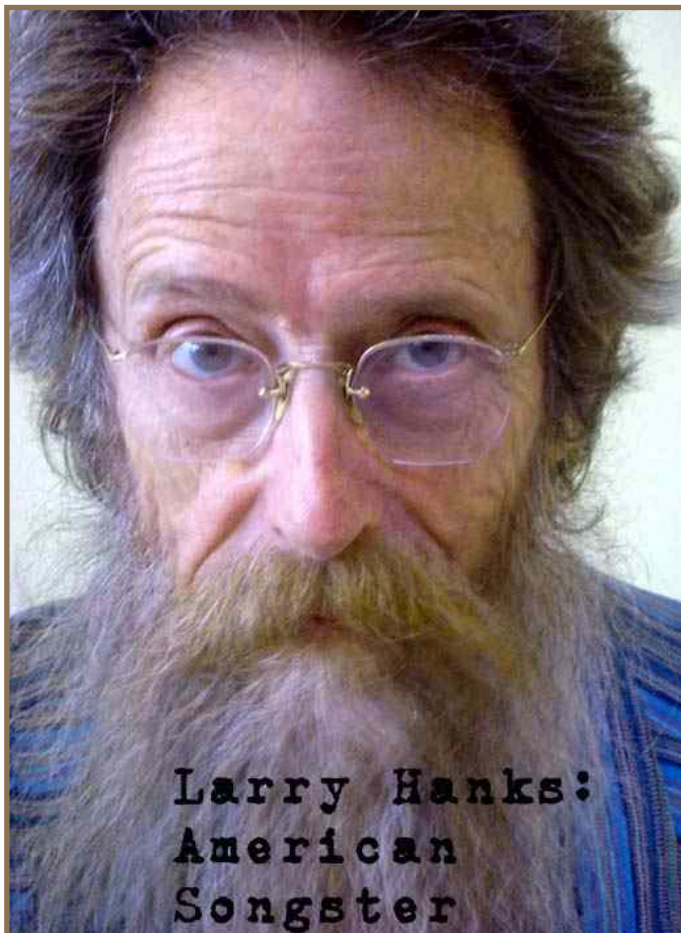
Welcome

to another Readifolk
newsletter

Rumblings from the Roots

Welcome to this the seventh issue of Notes.

Looking back over the last quarter we recall some really memorable evenings. A glance through the independent reviews in this issue will confirm the quality of the performers that we have booked. As usual, you will find on the back page our programme of events for the next quarter, July – September. Unlike many other folk clubs, Readifolk meets throughout the summer with our usual mix of excellent Guest Nights and Singers and Theme



**Larry Hanks:
American
Songster**

Larry Hanks celebrates his Independence at Readifolk on 4th July

Nights. We work on the assumption that you are not all on holiday at the same time, so do come along and support us whenever you can. To paraphrase that well known call of Lord Kitchener – 'Your Folk Club Needs You'.

The charitable members of Readifolk were very busy during June. Morag and Annie organised a whole day folk event, Folk4Afrika, to raise funds for a charity helping street children in Ghana. A large group of Readifolk members helped in running the event and many performed in the afternoon children's session and in the evening concert. Readifolk was again out in force at the Boars Bridge Charity Festival which was in support of the MS Society. Well done to all who took part in these events.

The Readifolk Radio Show

We now have some really exciting news. Readifolk is going on air – well into the ethernet actually. Yes, we have been invited by Reading Community Radio to produce a regular weekly folk music programme called the Readifolk Hour. This will include music, news and comments, produced and presented by a team of Readifolk enthusiasts. We already have several programmes 'in the can' which we are sure you will find enjoyable and worth listening to, and will help to promote the club and its activities.

Initially, the programme will be broadcast on-line on Reading4U, the internet arm of Reading Community Radio. As an internet broadcast, you can listen to it on your computer, or even on some mobile phones. Visit the station's website at www.reading4u.org or www.readingcommunityradio.org for the latest news and instructions on how to hear it.

Our first programme will be broadcast on Friday 2nd July, at 8:00pm. This is Reading4U's first day of broadcasting, too, so we are very pleased to be included in their opening day's output.

Anyone interested in joining the production team should contact Colin for more details.

Una & Colin

Contact us:

Una for bookings and
coming events

una@readifolk.org.uk

Colin for publicity, coming
events and the mailing list

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Our guest-night MC
is (usually) Malcolm

malcolm@readifolk.org.uk

Stewart about the newsletter

stewart@readifolk.org.uk

Julian about the website

julian@readifolk.org.uk

Folk Heroes

Another potted history, this time by Will Kaufman, Professor of American Literature and Culture at the University of Central Lancashire, who visited us in April:

On the Trail of Woody Guthrie



Some have called him the father of the American protest song - perhaps an overstatement, given the shoulders of other giants such as Joe Hill and the thousands of anonymous ballad makers upon whose shoulders he admittedly stood. But there is no doubting the central position that Woody Guthrie holds in history of American protest music. That dimension - protest - is only one of many in the mix that makes up Woody's output: he wrote love songs, children's songs, union songs, war songs, peace songs, erotic songs. There are close to three thousand of Woody's song manuscripts housed in the Woody Guthrie Archives and other repositories; his recorded legacy - the body of songs that most of us know - constitute only a mere fraction of his prodigious output.

What turned this solitary figure - a wayward sign-painter, artist, drifter and casual musician - into the touchstone of American protest music? It was a combination of at least two things: the accident of historical circumstance and a keen ability to absorb and broadcast the stories of those whom he encountered and grew to care about in the midst of adversity. He admitted this himself in one of his famous wartime radio broadcasts: "I am out to sing songs that will prove to you that this is your world and that if it has hit you pretty hard and knocked you for a dozen loops, no matter what color, what size you are, how you are built, I am out to sing the songs that make you take pride in yourself and in your work."

And the songs that I sing are made up for the most part by all sorts of folks just about like you." Living through the boom-to-bust cycles of the Oklahoma and Texas oil towns where he grew up; living through the Depression; living through the Dust Bowl and the great westward migration that followed it; witnessing the repression of the "Okie" migrants in California; immersing himself in the Popular Front and the communist movement of New York in the 1940s; sailing in the Merchant Marine during the war; battling against American racism, Northern and Southern; being battered by the Cold War and the neurotic brutality of McCarthyism; and finally drifting into the dark twilight of the Huntington's Disease that was to take his life in 1967 - all these experiences made up the canvas of Woody Guthrie's life and work.

In the land of my birth, the USA, most people still know Woody Guthrie primarily as the composer of "This Land Is Your Land", a song which, in its politically denuded form, has become a second national anthem - a song which has been happily sung on the platforms of presidential conventions even by the likes of Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan. They didn't know Woody; they didn't know that he had written into that song some of the angriest verses he had ever committed to paper - verses born out of the misery and degradation he saw inflicted upon the citizens of this supposed Land of the Free during the crises of the Dust Bowl and the Depression:

Was a big high wall there that tried to stop me;
A sign was painted, said: Private Property,
But on the back side it didn't say nothing -
This land was made for you and me.

One bright sunny morning, in the shadow of the steeple,
By the Relief Office I saw my people -
And as they stood hungry, I stood there wondering if
This land was made for you and me.

Nobody living can ever stop me
As I go walking that freedom highway;
Nobody living can make me turn back:
This land was made for you and me.

But beware: Woody was also a great self-mythologiser. Read his "autobiography," *Bound for Glory*, with a grain of salt. By all means listen to the tales he tells on the wonderful recordings he made for Alan Lomax in 1940, released as the Library of Congress Recordings (Rounder CD, 3 vols). Go to The Asch Recordings (Smithsonian Folkways, 4 vols) for the classic versions of Woody's Folkways output; and for a rare recording of a live performance from 1949, get a hold of *The Live Wire Woody Guthrie*, which is available only through the Woody Guthrie Foundation and Archives (www.woodyguthrie.org). Get a hold to the two major biographies: Joe Klein's *Woody Guthrie: A Life* (1980) and Ed Cray's *Ramblin' Man: The Life and Times of Woody Guthrie* (2004). Oh, one other thing: read my book, *Woody Guthrie, American Radical*, when it's published next year by the University of Illinois Press.

And as Woody used to say, "Take it easy, but take it."



Woody Guthrie, graffiti on New York wall
Photo by Denise Carbonell on Flickr

Guest Night Reviews

**Were you there? Tell us what you think.
If you weren't, this is what you missed.**

The views expressed here are entirely those of the reviewers, and are independent of the Readifolk organising team.

Katriona Gilmore & Jamie Roberts

4th April



This duo brought their unique songs and music abilities to the fore that Sunday. That it why it is obvious why the voices and their music make them the latest performers of choice for events.

There is a nice balance between Jamie's playing and Katriona's ability to tell the story through song, with a wonderfully clear young light voice. *Hunter's Moon* evokes the same spirit as *The Ballad of Cursed Anna*, with strange goings on in the woods,

told with the best instrument for conveying fear and suspense – the violin. Jamie's expressive guitar playing is something to behold. Jamie plays the guitar, by resting his instrument on his lap, whereupon he embarks on a 'festival' of percussive action. Katriona interestingly plays the mandolin left handed, and the guitar right-handed. For the sensitive ballads we were treated to *Pleased to Meet You* and *I Don't Want to Say Goodbye* – both songs conveying sensitivity and a depth of feeling.

We were all enthralled by their performance. Let's hope they come back again.

Janet

Mike Silver

11th April

This was an evening that promised much for me as, I am sure, for a number of other Readifolk regulars. Surprisingly, I had never seen Mike Silver before, having missed him on several previous occasions, but I knew of his reputation as a fine guitarist and singer. When expectations are so high, there is always the risk of disappointment. In the event, I was not disappointed, but what ended up impressing me most was the strength of the songs and the consistent quality of Mike's performance; his easy rapport with the audience was no surprise, given the length of his experience.

Mike himself said at one point that he appreciated purely acoustic gigs, and there is no doubt we got more of him without the barrier of microphones and speakers. There was also quite a bit of friendly heckling and banter with the audience, which is almost impossible at



an amplified gig, and the Readifolk audience lived up to its reputation for singing the choruses, even the eight-line ones! The clarity of Mike's playing in different tunings on different guitars (including a four-string tenor) was a delight (Gordon Giltrap was once asked why he had so many guitars on stage with him: he replied that it was cheaper than a band!). But I said that it was the

songs that really impressed. The ones that stood out for me were *Fragile Peace* (based on a poem by Mavis Taylor); *Jackaroo* (written for Martyn Wyndham-Read); *Not a Matter of Pride* (described by Mike as a mini soap-opera); and *Black and White 1945* (written by Ross Brown, based on a true story of an old woman's guilty memories of shaving the head of a young French girl who loved a German soldier).

The evening was enhanced by some superb performances from the floor singers, including Allan Moore, who gave us *Walk this World with Music* and *The Lakes of Coolfinn*; Danny and Chris with Steve Knightley's *Arrogance, Ignorance and Greed*; Doug, Bob and Pam on guitar, fiddle and concertina; and Tudor Lodge, whose accomplished performances we would love to see more often.

Although an MC is often anxiously watching the clock, I was captivated by Mike's performance and just wished I could play and sing even half as well.

Malcolm

Will Kaufman presents:- 'Woody Guthrie: Hard Times & Hard Travelling' 25th April

I must admit that before this evening, although I knew of many Guthrie songs and had often sung the chorus lines, I knew very little of the background to the songs or of the life and times of Woody Guthrie: so who better to enlighten me than William Kaufman, Professor of American Literature and Culture at the University of Central Lancashire and a World authority on the works of this folk icon.

This was no ordinary Powerpoint presentation but a celebration of Guthrie songs performed against a background of stunning shots of the Depression, the Dust Bowl, the New Deal etc. - all of which Guthrie experienced at first hand.

Musically, Will sang with an easy-going style accompanied with great dexterity on guitar, banjo and fiddle. The projected images added a poignancy and meaning to the carefully chosen songs.

Highlights of this absorbing presentation, for me, included :-

- Woody's song *Jesus Christ* extolling the principles of Christianity but at the same time promoting his beliefs in activism and the need to speak up for the common man.
- *Brother, Can You Spare a Dime*, a song from the despised Tin Pan Alley, which however epitomised the hardship and despair of the Depression.
- *The Preacher and the Slave*, written by the legendary Joe Hill, a fellow activist and member of Industrial Workers of the World and a great influence on Guthrie - surely a candidate for a future presentation?

The evening finished, all too soon, with one of Guthrie's best known songs *This Land is Your Land* written in anger as an antidote to the trite official National Anthem *God Bless America*. Readifolk joined in with gusto - a fitting tribute to a remarkable man.

The only downside to this memorable evening was the inexplicably poor attendance. Here was a class performer - already snapped up for major Festivals at Whitby, Priddy and Glastonbury, where he is sure to be playing to packed audiences, and yet at Readifolk barely half of the seats were filled. Why?



Uno Hoo

The New Prohibition Band

2nd May



If your foot does not start tapping, or your heart start singing along to the rousing notes of The New Prohibition Band... well, then rigor mortis must have set in. For these three talented musicians

clearly love what they do, and their passion is life-affirming infectious.

The Berlin-based band presented their programme of string band music/blue grass folk at Readifolk, fresh from their performance at the Bordergrass event in Weobley, Herefordshire.

The lovely Cera Impala, sweet-voiced vocalist and talented lyricist, dominated the play list with her individualistic, sensual style, presenting beautiful renditions of standards such as the lilting *Shady Grove*, as well as her own creations. Cera is also a mean hand at the banjo - and (more recently) the ukulele she commandeered from her toddler son.

Self-penned songs like *Troubles*, *Husbands and Wives* and *Row My Boat* are perfect vehicles for her many talents.

Fellow band member and vocalist, Dirk Ronneburg, is also a talented song writer and superb fiddle player... a singer who can also make his fiddle sing! His rollicking original number, *Angeline the Baker*, got the ol' feet a-tapping and the hips a-rocking; what a pity there wasn't aisle space to do a jig, in the packed hall!

As befits their self-described "neo folk", the band presents groundbreaking bluegrass numbers of their own creation, as well as fresh renditions of traditional American backwoods songs. In this regard, the third band member, Jovanka von Wilsdorf, produced some of the most interesting sounds of the night, on a Novation Bass Station. This, according to the product description on the Internet, is a "monophonic analog bass synthesizer... basically the first new analog synth to hit the modern music market". Nope, I don't understand it either, but my goodness, what haunting, stretching notes it produced at the touch of Jovanka's fingertips; the mountain harmonies of Kentucky transformed into pure, electrified sound. Beautiful.

Jovanka is a recent addition to the band, but the collaboration promises loads of potential. This combo of three individually-talented musicians presents a wonderful programme of the new and the traditional - successfully experimental, but truly loyal to their roots.

Vivien

Paul Scourfield

16th May

Paul grew up in Yateley. His father was a morris dancer and Paul got his first morris dancing outfit at the age of five. He started off learning the fiddle, but was inspired to take up the melodeon after hearing John Kirkpatrick playing at the Bracknell Folk Festival. Paul still gets the fiddle out occasionally, but only to blow the dust off it. He is now teaching himself the concertina which he enjoys because of the ready availability of a greater number of notes. Not many people know this.

During his performance Paul cited his influences as being Harry Cox who was writing songs in 5/4 time long before Dave Brubeck, his dad's record collection, and singing choruses to folk songs in the family car on long journeys. Oh, and did we mention Harry Cox.

Paul is a very accomplished melodeon player, and he played and

sang a wide range of English folk tunes and songs during the evening. Moira, who has just started to play the melodeon so knows about these things, commented that he was a joy to watch and listen to.

Paul seemed quite taken with being interviewed for 'Notes' and mentioned it several times during the second half. We admit our questions may not have been particularly sophisticated, but can't recall actually asking "What is the difference between the brown one and the black one" as reported. Since no-one volunteered the answer on the night, we can reveal exclusively here that:

The black one is a Saltarelle DG box with 4 accidentals and 12 bass buttons. The extra notes are useful when playing with his ceilidh band Chalktown as they allow him to play in many different keys. The brown one is by Oakwood and is in CF, which better fits with Paul's vocal range.

We should also tell you about the silver knobs on the top of the melodeons, and how to take out the thirds if your melodeon doesn't have these knobs.

Steve (and Moira)



Corncrow

23rd May

One of the key reasons why I enjoyed very much the appearance by Kim Guy and Steve Hunt - aka Corncrow - was simply the noise they made. Whether playing two guitars together, or guitar and bouzouki, there was a clarity and a liquidity to their sound that I found captivating. Often with capos quite high up on the necks of their instruments they created a high-pitched, clean effect. Both instruments could be appreciated individually whilst jointly producing something greater than the sum of the parts. Throw vocal harmonies into the mix and you get the idea.

Another big plus point was the selection of material. We had songs and we had tunes. We had traditional and we had contemporary. We had English, Irish, Cornish, Russian - you name it. And all delivered with that purity of sound that enhanced the selection. Some of the material was well-known singalong stuff (*I Wandered By A Brookside*, *A Fool Such As I* - and that's not a typo...), whilst some of it was sit-back-and-marvel musicianship (like a Russian-Cornish reel interwoven with *I Wanna Be Like You* from Disney's *Jungle Book*).

I especially like it when visiting acts play one or two songs that I know and enjoy. On this count, Corncrow scored highly with a



beautifully melodic rendering of *The Blacksmith* and an authentically folk-club-friendly version of *Cutty Wren* that reminded me of a recent interpretation by Mawkin:Causley.

All of the above delivered with humour and enthusiasm. What more could you ask for?

Danny

QuickSilver

6th June

A definition of Quicksilver is:-

Mercury: a heavy silvery toxic univalent and bivalent liquid metallic element.

There are only two similarities that I can find with this definition and the Quicksilver that I saw at Readifolk, and they are: Grant has silvery hair, lots of it, and the entertainment flowed smoothly and apparently effortless through the evening.

The music was far from heavy, but was versatile, fluent and professionally delivered in sweltering conditions reminiscent of a restaurant kitchen. According to their website, Quicksilver is made up of Hilary Spencer (Artisan) and Grant Baynham (ex-'That's Life!') and have been working together since 2002. They are two approachable, friendly, unpretentious people with talent by the bucket full.

We were treated to two eclectic sets that proved to be a gymnasium for the chuckle muscles. The music ranged from Django Reinhardt with added lyrics by Grant (played to a standard that would have made Django proud) to a Victoria Wood number, which was much more than just vocals. I have been a fan of Jake Thackray for years and I was pleasantly surprised by, not an imitation of his song *The Kiss*, but an interpretation that captured the phrasing and the essence of Thackray, with a plus that is Quicksilver.

Hilary's powerful voice enthralled and filled the room with Édith Piaf, Flanders & Swann and their own compositions. I glanced round the room to see guitarists mesmerised by Grant's agility and dexterity on the neck producing sounds most of us only lust after. Their stage show "100 Years of Comic Songs" is doubtless a great evening, too.



The \$64,000 question is would I spend good brass to see them again? Yes! Yes! Yes!

Let's mention the floor acts: Ian and Lance from The Westlanders performed a unique version of *Wild Mountain Thyme* with a didgeridoo, which added a different texture. Try *She Moved Through the Fair*, lads. Lynne from Tudor Lodge treated us to two great songs while 3 2 1 had us tapping our feet to accordion and bassoon. Alison played wonderfully, plus one other who will remain nameless.

A great evening at a very friendly club.

Graham

Craig; Morgan; Robson 20th June

Take three women, each with a considerable history of singing in their own right, and combine these talents into an a-capella trio.

That, of itself, would be nothing particularly unusual, but when the trio is Moira Craig, Sarah Morgan and Carolyn Robson, then you have the makings of something above average.



In fact those of us who had not seen them before had a brief glimpse of what to expect during the Askew Sisters' performance at Readifolk earlier in the year; CMR and the Askews have worked together on a project of songs collected by George Gardiner, in particular of songs he was given by five women in the Hampshire village of Axford in the early 1900s. The Askews presented several of these songs in their set, and we heard more from CMR in this one.

Noticeable immediately were the precise and clever harmonies that ranged from close to spacial, and utilised the lower registers of their voices well. From time to time they had me wondering whether there was a fourth voice coming from somewhere. And there was not an ounce of self-conscious awkwardness that you sometimes see in a-capella groups who are not entirely confident of their ground, and none of them was prone to steal attention - rather they listened to each other as they sang, ensuring that the result was a properly discrete ensemble rather than merely a threesome.

Often, an evening of a-capella can leave me longing to hear some instrumentation to fill out the sound, but, aside from a brief appearance by Sarah's English concertina, this didn't detract from their performance. And their set included significantly few songs about gruesome death and revenge, though there was some abuse of young girls' chastity. But the end result was a charming and joyful affair, matched by the personalities of the singers.

Stewart

You can help...

Fancy writing something for the newsletter?

We'll always need people who can review guest night performances with fresh insight. But alternatively, how about an article about an instrument you play or have a particular fondness for? Or perhaps you could transcribe a favourite song or two, giving us some background and history. Or maybe you could research the life and times of an essential folk singer.

And folk-related general interest articles, or other editorial could all help to enhance the Readifolk experience.

Whatever ideas you have we'd like to hear more, so contact Stewart - I'm often at guest nights, or you can email me - stewart@readifolk.org.uk

We are used to assuming that there is a 'standard' guitar tuning, i.e. EADGBE (reading from the bass up), from which various players make deviations for particular reasons. Looking at the history of tunings, things

aren't quite so simple. This tuning developed as the guitar tended to replace the lute as the plucked string instrument of choice in Europe due to its greater resonance: the commonest tuning for a six-course lute was EADF#BE, but alternatives were common from the sixteenth century onward, and still are today. By the nineteenth century, it seems to have become accepted that EADGBE was the best compromise available for the guitar, and this was the tuning that many blues players adopted, although bottleneck

A Brief Guide to

Alternative Guitar Tunings

Those of us who struggle to learn even the basics of guitar playing never get far beyond the standard tuning of Elgar Always Did Great Big Endings.

But this is by no means the only way to tune a guitar; Musicologist and Readifolk regular, Allan Moore, gives us a bit of background to some of the alternatives.

series of chords. It is this approach to playing, also developed by other players such as John Renbourn and John Martyn, which became identified for a while with the term 'folk baroque' and which, in the subtle

hands of someone like Nic Jones, identified what has become an identifiable English folk guitar style. In more recent times, the approach has become particularly associated with Martin Simpson whose innovative attitude to arrangement (which includes subtle snippets of melody and hints of chords) creates a unique style.

DADGAD is the favourite tuning among 'Celtic' musicians, although DADEAD is equally useful. This predilection comes from the possibility of forming a limited range of chords but leaving some strings (particularly the fourth and fifth) open as drones, resulting in rich-sounding chords with added sevenths, ninths and elevenths but often without thirds. This removes any distinction between major and minor; many listeners seem (therefore?) to identify such music as strange and somewhat mystical – ideal for the music of the Celtic otherworld!

Martin Carthy eventually tired of DADGAD and now generally uses CGCDGA (an altogether deeper-sounding tuning), while Simpson uses such tunings as DGDGCD and CGCGCD. Across the full range of contemporary guitarists there seems no longer to be any dominant tuning (individual guitarists will often think of the effect they're trying to create, and choose the tuning which will be most appropriate), although Martyn Wyndham-Read in particular has always insisted that there is no need to deviate from standard tuning. There is a lot of material on the internet on alternative tunings: one fairly comprehensive site is www.howtotuneaguitar.org/tuning/alternate-guitar-tuning-chart (which gives some of the rather exotic titles some of these tunings have acquired), although even this omits my own favourite: DGDF#BD, which I use on *Pleasant and Delightful* and *The Sussex Toast*, among others.



Martin Simpson - no stranger to alternative tunings.

players favoured a 'straight' tuning, where the whole guitar was tuned to a particular chord (most commonly DADF#AD).

In the early years of the American revival in the late 1940s, players such as Pete Seeger would use standard tuning, but would also play banjo, with its open tunings, and this would have made it easier to consider experimenting with guitar tunings (as, notably, did Joni Mitchell). The 'non-standard' tuning which first became popular in folk circles was DADGAD, popularised particularly by Davey Graham in the early 1960s (although it had been used as early as the 1920s by US ragtime guitarists). Graham probably arrived at the tuning independently, as a way of capturing the feel of the Indian and African musics he was so indebted to. He was followed by other guitarists as varied as Martin Carthy and Jimmy Page. Page uses this tuning on Led Zeppelin's *Black Mountain Side*, adapted from Bert Jansch's version of *Blackwater Side*, but Jansch played it in 'Dropped D' (i.e. DADGBE). Carthy used it because it enabled him to use a drone (using the two bass strings), recalling its use in such instruments as the hurdy gurdy, bagpipes and even fiddle.

This was actually quite a profound move. In the early years of the second revival, and following common American practice, a guitarist would use chords to accompany a melody, and EADGBE is well-suited to chordal accompaniments because of the range of simple (i.e. without using a barre) chords it permits. Traditionally, of course, folk songs were sung unaccompanied. The style Martin Carthy began to explore in the late 1960s meant that he would use the middle strings of the guitar to carry the tune (or sometimes a secondary melody, counterpointing the one he was singing) and the bass (and sometimes upper) strings to carry a drone, rather than supplying a

Standart Tuning	E	A	D	G	B	E
Admiral	C	G	D	G	B	C
DADGAD	D	A	D	G	A	D
Drop D	D	A	D	G	B	E
Face	C	G	D	G	A	D
G6	D	G	D	G	B	E
Kottke	C#	F#	B	E	G#	C#
Layover	D	A	C	G	C	E
Pelican	D	A	D	E	A	D
Slow Motion	D	G	D	F	C	D
Triqueen	D	G	D	F#	A	B

A table, showing a few of the many different tunings commonly used on a guitar.

A Song Worth Singing

The enigma of

She Moved Through the Fair

She Moved Through the Fair is probably as typical a traditional song as any we could name. Which folk singer has not, at some time or other, covered it? How many albums is it on? Whose top 20 favourite folk song list does not include it? But there is some argument over how traditional it is, and what it is all about. Here, I shall simply relate some of the various sides of debate, rather than try to offer any definitive understanding of it.

What seems clear is that the variations of the song that we are familiar with today can be attributed to Irish poet Padraic Colum, who, in 1909, committed four enigmatic verses to paper, and defined a style of folk song for generations to come. But from here, things get rather more nebulous, and slight variations in the song form several schools of thought about what it means.

Some people say that Colum's work was a heavy rewriting of two (or more) much older songs - *Our Wedding Day* and *Out of the Window* - and is a distinct song in its own right. It does seem that the tune is based on that of *Our Wedding Day*, which is thought to date back to mediaeval times, with some reworking by arranger and composer Herbert Hughes (who is also responsible for arranging songs like *Down by the Salley Gardens* and *My Lagan Love*). But you will also hear people say that *Our Wedding Day* was a longer song - 10 or more verses - and that Colum simply cut it down, rather than based a new song upon it. Yet another argument has it that Colum's work may have fed back into *Our Wedding Day*, which subsequently became a different song itself, as a result of influence from Colum's version. Without seeing a definitive, early version of the older song, it's somewhat unclear what the truth of that is.

Many singers only sing three of Colum's four verses, making for a simpler, though less powerful, song. The first verse tells us that there are two young lovers, who are planning to marry. Yet there seems more to this than we are being told. Is the man doubtful, and being given assurance by the woman, who seems rather vague when she says that it will not be long until their wedding? Is she actually expressing her own

uncertainties? Some contemporary versions use the word 'kine' instead of 'kind' in line two of this verse - this being said to refer to a person's wealth, the word 'kine' literally meaning 'cattle'. The line may thus suggest a love between people of different social classes.

Verse two sees the woman parting from the man, and moving through the fair - presumably a market place of itinerant traders, which also served as a social event where young people could meet. Was she about to move on with the fair? And what of the imagery of 'one star awake', and the swan moving across a lake - is it a metaphor for something? Or simply a poetic analogy of her movement through the fair?

But the third verse is somewhat confounding, and this may be why so many singers omit it. We learn that people are talking - we hear them say that 'no two e'er were wed', and that there is 'a sorrow that never was said'. One widely held thought is that this refers to tuberculosis, a disease which, in former times, carried a stigma making people unwilling to talk about it, less still admit to having. Others say that there was simply a matter of another lover with whom the woman would run away with before the wedding. A more radical thought is that the 'sorrow that never was said' is a parallel to Wilde's 'love that dare not speak its name', which casts a different light on the song. Whatever the situation, the last line of the verse seems to mark the end of the relationship in some way.

If verse three is omitted, the final verse is often sung with the word 'dear' or 'young' in place of 'dead'. In this form, it seems more like a simple love song. But with verse three included, it becomes a conundrum, whatever word is used here - the lovers have seen the last of each other, yet here they are together again. There is some postulation about whether this is a ghostly visit from the dead woman, a dream, or the sorrowful memories, later in time, of an old man. So, did the object of the singer's affection die of disease, maybe? Or did she run off with someone else, leaving the singer a lifetime of lament? Or was it just an impossible union that social forces prevented from being consummated?

Arrangement by Ed

My - young love said to me, "My mo-ther won't mind and my fa-ther won't

slight you for your lack of kind" And she laid her hand on me, and

this she did say: "It - will not be long, love, 'til - our wedding day - "

- 1) My young love said to me "My mother won't mind,
And my father won't slight you for your lack of kind"
And she laid her hand on me, and this she did say:
"It will not be long, love, 'til our wedding day".
- 2) As she stepped away from me, and she moved through the fair,
And fondly I watched her, move here and move there,
And then she turned homeward, with one star awake,
Like the swan in the evening, moves over the lake.
- 3) The people were saying, no two e'er were wed,
But one had a sorrow, that never was said,
And I smiled as she passed, with her goods and her gear,
And that was the last that I saw of my dear.
- 4) Last night she came to me, my dead love came in,
So softly she came, that her feet made no din,
As she laid her hand on me, and this she did say:
"It will not be long, love, 'til our wedding day"

Readifolk Newsletter

This edition of Notes was compiled by a coalition of people prepared to compromise their values on your behalf, working for a change, a future fair for all, a change you can believe in, and several other vague and fuzzy notions that will make you feel better about things.

My extreme gratitude goes out to all who have contributed to this edition, even if it was your fault that the government got it.



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 JULY - SEPTEMBER 2010

<u>4 July</u>	Larry Hanks www.larryhanks.com	<i>On American Independence Day our visitor from the States, Larry, delights his audience with his rough-hewn bass vocals with 6 and 12 string guitar accompaniment, and virtuoso Jew's harp playing.</i>
<u>11 July</u>	Mynott's Wing www.myspace.com/mynottswing	<i>Two well-known local musicians, Guy Chant and Richard Cox-Smith, combine as Mynott's Wing. The two voices and guitars meld into a unique and inspiring sound.</i>
<u>18 July</u>	Theme: 'Well I Never'	<i>Songs of denial or songs of wonderment? You decide. Plus a special feature spot from 'Kinsfolk'</i>
<u>25 July</u>	The Kittiwakes www.thekittiwakes.com In support Emily Maguire & Christian Dunham www.emilymaguire.com	<i>Kate Denny on vocals & violin, Chris Harrison on accordion & Jill Cumberpatch on violin, mandolin & guitar combine with bright and highly inventive music & song. Support act Emily & Christian are 'rising stars'.</i>

<u>1 Aug</u>	Club Closed	<i>It's another holiday weekend. Business as usual next week.</i>
<u>8 Aug</u>	Liam Robinson www.myspace.com/liamrobinsonlincs	<i>An exciting newcomer to Readifolk, Liam plays melodeon and Anglo concertina and has a wide repertoire of mainly traditional songs and music – lots of joining in!</i>
<u>15 Aug</u>	Singers Night	<i>It's tonsil - exercising time again. Come and surprise us!</i>
<u>22 Aug</u>	Cruel Folk www.cruelfolk.com	<i>Cruel Folk were voted joint winners of the 2009 Readifolk Hiring Fair. They perform modern and ancient music in the English tradition.</i>
<u>29 Aug</u>	Theme: 'It's a Date'	<i>No it's not a Singles night – we're looking for songs that include a date, so make a date with Readifolk.</i>

<u>5 Sept</u>	Singers Night	<i>The usual format – a song, a tune, a poem etc. or just listen and enjoy the home- made entertainment.</i>
<u>12 Sept</u>	Liz Simcock www.lizsimcock.com In support Gary Edwards	<i>Liz was the other joint winner of the 2009 Readifolk Hiring Fair. She is gaining a growing reputation as a fine performer and songwriter. Gary, a regular at the Club, has an interesting range of songs and is a superb guitarist.</i>
<u>19 Sept</u>	John Conolly www.myspace.com/johnconolly	<i>The man from 'Fiddler's Green'. John is an internationally-respected songwriter who has based his style firmly in the folk tradition.</i>
<u>26 Sept</u>	Jon Fletcher Band www.jonfletcher.co.uk	<i>You've seen Jon as the guitarist with Magpie Lane. He now brings his trio to Readifolk to weave strands of English folk, jazz and acoustic pop into a compelling and original sound.</i>

Admission: £5 Guest nights; £1 Singers & Theme nights

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

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