

\$3.00

# MULGA WIRE

INCORPORATING  
**SINGABOUT**



**No. 261**

Registered by Australia Post  
Publication PP 100001235



**Autumn 2024**

ISSN 0157 - 3381  
ISSN—2207- 7413 (online)

**A BUSH MUSIC CLUB PUBLICATION**

# EDITORIAL

G'day everyone,

Our Sapphire Jubilee year has arrived. What better way to celebrate than with a good look at where we came from through the eyes of those who were there. Read on to John Meredith's story of the early days and the birth of what we now call "Bush Music".

For over seventy years BMC members, along with our brother and sister organisations, have been actively promoting our folk heritage and attempting to gain the interest of a wider public so distracted by commercial media. In that time, we've seen a remarkable resurgence of interest in Australian folk culture. All of this has been possible thanks to those dedicated collectors who have so generously spent their time to ensure these traditions are safely handed down to us.

But let's not forget the performers - ordinary folk just doing what they enjoy, singing, playing and reciting with their friends in all manner of big and small places, homes, halls, around the campfire etc. Consider too that festivals have become an indispensable place for gathering and sharing.

So, this year we were *astonished and shocked* to hear that the National Folk Festival has almost completely eliminated popular long running traditional events from the program, leaving behind just a meagre token of that content. Those wishing to share their love of our culture and participate in their own way have been sold out in no uncertain manner.

We can only hope that howls of protest will resound near and far, high and low, to bring about a return to those ideals and aspirations, the very foundations on which the National Folk Festival was built and has continued over the years.

Cheers for now,

**Ralph Pride**

pridehome@msn.com.au

**MULGA WIRE** is published quarterly by the Bush Music Club Inc. Free to members, all others, \$3.00.

**CONTRIBUTIONS AND ADVERTISING:** Items for publication may be sent to the editor by email or posted to GPO Box 433, Sydney 2001 Copy should be received three weeks prior to publication

**ADVERTISING;**

Full page \$45 Half Page \$25 Quarter Page \$ 15 Business Cards \$7 Classifieds \$1.50/line  
Inserts \$30 min.

**COPYRIGHT:** Except where it is indicated that copyright is reserved, all articles published in Mulga Wire may be freely reprinted, provided that source and author are clearly acknowledged. Graphics not attributed are from our own club archives.

**VIEWS EXPRESSED** herein are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Bush Music Club or the editors.

**VOLUNTEERS:** Mulga wire is published and distributed by club members to whom we owe our thanks and support. Offers of assistance will be gratefully accepted.

**PRINTERS:** Unique Print, 134 Broadway, Chippendale, NSW.

**DEADLINES FOR NEXT ISSUES.....**

Winter	15th May
Spring	15th August
Summer	15th November

**COVER PICTURE:**

**The *Bushwhacker's Bush Band* in the early 1950's at Sydney Showground.**

Top:- Alex Hood, bones; Alan Scott, nose flute; Brian Loughlin, lagerphone; Bottom:- John Meredith, melodion; Chris Kempster, guitar; Harry Kay, harmonica.



Welcome to Autumn everyone! The club has had a busy Summer with Ryebuck Bush Band playing at our first bush dance of the year, appearances at the Illawarra Folk Festival and, also, at the Banjo Paterson Festival, Yeoval. A very enjoyable time was had by all in all of these events.

The Saplings had two fun sessions and played beautifully at the Illawarra Folk Festival. The BMC Youth Bush Band will be at the National and a new session for Saplings will be starting on Sat 20<sup>th</sup> April at Tritton Hall, Marrickville.

We're well into our 70<sup>th</sup> year with the next event happening on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> May with a reunion for members and friends outside Sydney at the Goulburn Club. Looking forward to seeing you there.

Over the Easter Weekend, there will be a camp to celebrate bush music with lots of opportunity for playing tunes, singing songs, reciting poems as well as time-out relaxing, bush-walking, cycling, rowing, and more. Check out the article in Mulga Wire.

There's a lot happening in the folk world so check out our magazine for more information and stay safe.



*Sharyn Mattern*

## **IN THIS ISSUE**

LATEST NEWS	4
IN THE BEGINNING <i>Bush Music Club's Early days - John Meredith</i>	6
BANJO PATERSON POETRY FESTIVAL <i>Revue - Doug Richardson</i>	8
OF COURSE THERE ISN'T MUCH TO SEE... <i>Poem by Karen Fong</i>	9
ILLAWARRA FOLK FESTIVAL - <i>Revue— Cathy Andrews</i>	10
VALE EDDIE SAMSON <i>Pete Cahil - Sue McMahon - Tony Romeo</i>	13
"BB" <i>Poem - Eddie Samson</i>	15
REMEMBERING RICHARD EVANS - <i>George Bolliger</i>	14
THE NORTH WIND <i>Traditional schottische tune</i>	15
THE SCRAP IRON FIVE <i>New Song from Phyl Lobl</i>	16
JIM RISELY - <i>Poem from Rita Ashby</i>	18
DANCE NEWS - WHAT'S ON <i>Latest Information</i>	19
MUSIC WORKSHOPS & SAPLINGS NEWS <i>Revues</i>	19
BMC Members' Reunion - Club Information Page	22
SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES <i>Monthly and weekly events</i>	24

# **SPECIAL INVITE**

## **To the BMC Members' and Friends' Reunion**

Come and help us celebrate the Bush Music Club's 70th year at the Goulburn Club on **Sunday 26 May**.

The plan for the Sunday:

Welcome and cuppa between 9:15 and 9:45

Talk about various aspects of the Bush Music Club's history between 10 and 11 (Sharyn Mattern, Chris Woodland, Ralph Pride, Dave Johnson, George Bolliger and Helen Romeo)

Music and Song session with selections from *Singabouts* throughout the years

Hearty stew and catch-up between 12:30 and 1:30

Then over to our members and friends: an opportunity to share a favourite tune, yarn, song, or poem. You may like to just listen or tell us what the Bush Music Club has meant to you over the years.

There is **no registration charge** but the stew for lunch will be \$12 (pay at the Bar).

**To register for the day and to help with catering, please email Karen on [bmcmail1954@gmail.com](mailto:bmcmail1954@gmail.com) and indicate whether you would like a meat or vegetarian stew.**

The activities on the day will be **upstairs** in the Club. Unfortunately, there is **no lift access** but the Goulburn Club has been raising money for the last few years for a lift.

Why not make a weekend of it? **The Goulburn Club at 19 Market St**, overlooking Belmore Park, often has a music session on Friday nights. Goulburn offers lots of activities for the Saturday, including taking their self-guided Heritage Tour throughout the city, walking on the new trail along the banks of the Wollondilly River or meeting friends and relaxing at the many cafes and eateries. The Visitor Information Centre in Goulburn is situated at 202 Sloane St, near the Railway Station.



**Don't forget to buy your BMC 70th Anniversary Badge**

## NEWS

**BMC AGM:** Bush Music Club's AGM will be held on Sunday, 24 March, 2024 at 11:00 in the Hut.

**A NEW BALL IN 2025:** a Winter Ball to be held on Saturday 31 May, 2025 at the Ermington Community Centre, if available.

### **NEW MAILING ADDRESS FOR BMC**

**Bush Music Club  
Hut 44/142 Addison Rd  
MARRICKVILLE NSW 2204**

**DEATH OF CHRISTIAAN DOLISLAGER.** It is with great sadness we note the recent passing of long-time member and friend, Christiaan Dolislager, aka "The Accordion Man". No details are available at the moment but we believe a memorial will be held at later in April. Chris will be missed very much by the wider folk community.

**NEW WEDNESDAY LUNCHTIME SESSION** - 3rd Wed - at 11.00am—2pm  
*Songs; Stories; Poems; Yarns and more*

Bring a song/s to sing either alone or we'll all join in, also your lunch and \$10. Tea, coffee and biscuits provided. Looking forward to seeing you there.

**BOOK RELEASE:** My little book ***Rhyme and Reason*** was published last year. It dives into the political satire we know as nursery rhymes, relating the social political economic religious turbulence of 13th to 18th century in England, from which emerged a nascent parliamentary democracy. Who was Humpty? Why was a baby on a treetop? I am happily giving talks to community groups on the subject, arranged.  
Susan Ackroyd. [Sandjackroyd@gmail.com](mailto:Sandjackroyd@gmail.com)

**.THE OLD BLACK PIANO** which graced Hut 44 for many years, has had an interesting life. In the mid 1980s my workplace had need for a piano. Refugees from Eastern Europe were flooding in to our education centre in South Coogee, adults keen to learn English, find work. At one point we had a classical concert pianist and an opera singer. A piano was needed.

Discussing this with my brother, who has connections with the Dept of Foreign Affairs in Sydney, he mentioned the Richard Lipp piano in the Department's reception room that was surplus to requirements. We could rescue it!

We passed the hat around, paid for its removal and tuning, and enjoyed many 'concerts' with our students.

Later the centre was closed, so I organised the piano to move to Hut 44. Some readers might have played it, or sung along to it.

Forward to the 2000s, and BMC no longer needed the OBM, a newer piano having been acquired. So once again it was moved, this time to my home in Dulwich Hill.

There it remains, but it now needs a new home. It needs some repairs, according to its last tuner. So if anyone is interested, a piano with an interesting life is to be had for free.  
Contact Susan on [Sandjackroyd@gmail.com](mailto:Sandjackroyd@gmail.com)



# IN THE BEGINNING

## *The formation and early history of the Bush Music Club.*

by John Meredith

It all started with the formation of *The Heathcote Bushwhackers*. In June 1953 a literary and musical evening held at Jack Barry's house at Heathcote was to have an "*Australian Night*", something unique in those days when our own culture appeared in danger of being engulfed in the flood of second-rate canned American music. Jack, Brian Loughlin and I got together with button accordion and two of our recent discoveries; a tea chest bass and a lagerphone. We stuck on false whiskers, dressed rough and gave out with our entire repertoire; *Click Go The Shears*, *Botany Bay* and *Nine Miles From Gundagai*. In spite of my whiskers falling off, or maybe because of them, we were an immediate success - as a comedy act! Chris Kempster joined us after that performance and then Harry Kay.

We were invited to perform our bracket of three numbers at a *Tribune* concert organised by the Australian Communist Party, at the Hurstville Rivoli Theatre. We were a sensation! The audience shouted, stamped and clapped for more and wouldn't shut up. And we didn't know any more! Eventually we went back and did *Botany Bay* again and invited them to join in on the choruses.

The idea of a group playing traditional instruments and singing Australian songs, straight and not in choral arrangements, was novel and soon we could not cope with the engagements that came rolling in. The following year we supplied the songs and music for four or five historical radio features written for the ABC by Nancy Keesing. We were joined by Alan Scott, Cec Grivas and later by Alec Hood. One day Brian Loughlin told me that someone had suggested that we form some sort of a club and after many bright and not so bright ideas for a name we fixed on **The Bush Music Club**.



**The Bushwhackers Band**

Chris Kempster; John Meredith; Alex Hood; Harry Kay; Alan Scott; Jack Barry; Brian Loughlin

Recently, while going through an old scrapbook, I came across the programme for what was probably Sydney's first Folk Music Concert. Arranged by Lilli Williams it was presented at History House, then in Young St., on Wednesday 24th November 1954, by Leonard Theile and Patricia Martin ... and *The Bushwhackers' Band*. The first item after interval was **How Many Miles To Gundagai?**, described in the programme as "A bush operetta in one act, based on the controversy around the Dog on the Tuckerbox, using traditional ballads and ballads of the late 19th century, arranged by John Meredith".

We Bushwhackers were quite ambitious in those days and to celebrate the world premiere of the work we published a little eight-page booklet. On the last page of this leaflet there appeared the first advertisement for the inaugural meeting of The Bush Music Club:

*We have been approached by many singers and instrumentalists who wished to join the "Bushwhackers", but we consider that the optimum number for an ensemble such as ours is six. We have been refusing engagements at the rate of three or four a week for several months, not because we want to, but simply for the reasons that we need time to rehearse, we have to work for our living and because we have to get some sleep occasionally.*

*We don't like disappointing people so we have decided to form a club, where in return for a nominal membership fee we will give away our secrets. The Bushwhackers will help you to learn the accordeon, harmonica, bones, bush bass, lagerphone and lots more. We will provide the words and music of our songs and show you how we sing them.*

*The inaugural meeting and first rehearsal of the BUSH MUSIC CLUB will take place at the Realist Theatrette, 1st Floor, 188 George Street, on Thursday October 14th, at 7 p.m. sharp. Further details may be had from John Meredith, 5 Henry Street, Lewisham, or from any of the "Bushwhackers".*

If you have read the foregoing closely, you will have observed that the Bush Music Club had been going for about five weeks before the History House Concert took place. This was because the concert had twice been postponed, firstly because of a double booking of the auditorium and secondly because of a radio commitment by Thiele. Our booklet had been prepared in time for the first planned date.

The inaugural meeting was like all other inaugural meetings; we all talked and argued a lot, elected a committee of office bearers, sang a few songs and went home, feeling that we had done a good job. I went along confidently to the second gathering, expecting an overflow house. Three of us turned up! Everyone else sent along excuses of Union meetings, influenza, hay-fever, teething babies etcetera. For that memorable second meeting there was myself, Tom Durst and Kenna Rushbrook.

For a while we made music with accordeon, fiddle and mandolin and thought it sounded quite pretty. So did somebody else! On another floor in the Ironworkers Building was the recently formed Trade Union Club - a licensed club, but which in accordance with existing liquor laws closed at 6 p.m. A drunken woman came looking for grog and blundered into our recital. We ushered her out but she was back again within five minutes. After several repeats of this performance, we locked our door on the inside. It was a glass panelled door and on her return the frustrated and thirsty lady smashed the glass in her desperation, then fled down the stairs, hotly pursued by Tom Durst, who caught and escorted her to the caretaker where reparations were effected.

*To be continued next issue*

First published in Mulga Wire No 17, February 1980



# BANJO PATERSON AUSTRALIAN POETRY FESTIVAL

On the weekend of 17-18 February, several members of the Bush Music Club set out for the Orange district of NSW. Armed with a quantity of our booklets, *'Singalong with Banjo Paterson'* and our instruments, we made the four-hour trip from Sydney to Yeoval where we set up camp at the showground.

Friday dawned cloudy and often looked like rain. We spent the day sorting out our presentation and came up with a sequence we would use during the show – later we headed out to get dinner in the town.

On Saturday we drove to the Molong Freemason Hotel to attend the 'Poets Brawl', an event where the contestants each paid \$5 to entertain an audience that received free admission! The *November Shorn Bush Band* kept us entertained while food was served and drinks were ordered.



George & Michelle Bolliger, Doug Richardson, Sharyn Mattern  
Brian Gutkin and Ralph Pride cheering on at the Poet's Brawl.

Each contestant had to recite or read a poem lasting no longer than one-minute and it had to contain the phrase ***"Of course, there isn't much to see"***. The presentations were quite varied though a few started in a similar manner: *'There was movement at the ...'*

George Bolliger did a great job reading a poem that Karen Fong had written for the event. The Bush Music table cheered loudly for him when he got up and again when he finished. Later in the evening we cheered even louder when the people's choice award was being judged. It wasn't enough to give George the prize.

The winner was David Stanley. He came on stage wearing a *fake moustache* that stuck out well beyond his shoulders on either side. This prop supported the assertion in his poem that 'Molong' was the name chosen in honour of the hairy appurtenances of the pioneers of this region, and 'Moshort' was clearly inappropriate.

Sunday was our day to perform. Our venue was the *Banjo Paterson Museum* run by Alf and Sharon Cantrell which has a fascinating collection of all sorts of curious and evocative things. That alone is worth the 4-hour trip. *'Clancy's Cafe'* is in the adjacent room in the same building. In the side yard there is a simple stage on one side and room for maybe 40 chairs facing the stage.



David Stanley reciting his prize winning poem.



Our part was to provide musical interludes to the 'Poets Brunch'. Throughout the day we and Chris McGinty a local singer guitar player and an excellent reciter of bush poetry were called at regular intervals to perform. Chris is a former member of the Bush Music Club and was always entertaining.

With a number of the other performers, we stayed back to enjoy a three-course dinner as grateful guests of Alf and Sharon. It was a very pleasant convivial evening with fine food and company.

Next morning was another beautiful day. We broke camp and went home well pleased with our pleasant, relaxing and informative outing.

**Doug Richardson**  
February 2024

*Here's Karen Fong's unplaced offering—as recited by George Bolliger.*

## **Of course.....**

*with apologies to Banjo Paterson*

There was movement at Freemasons, for the word has passed around  
That at Molong nothing's really going on,  
*Of course, there isn't much to see* if drivers burn the rubber  
Down the Mitchell Highway past the town.

All the lager-skulling patrons from the stations near and far  
Had mustered at the Bottom Pub overnight  
For the locals from the villages in this wide brown land of ours  
Were ready to boast of Molong's fair delights.

There's Mario, whose pizzas are the best this side of Bourke  
And who could fault the snitties Monday nights  
Forget the Big Banana, we've got Animals on Bikes  
And wineries and cideries all around.

We also recommend the Cobb and Co Coach House up the road  
Where Clancy of the Overflow once stopped to rest a bit  
And horses, bay and chestnut, fed 'n stabled round the back  
While the whips they downed a pint and hit the sack.

Yes, Molong is worth stopping for, slow down and take a break  
Stretch your legs, enjoy a coffee and some cake  
Slow life's pace and chew some fat with mates both old and new  
We warmly invite you... there's heaps to see and do.

**Karen Fong,**  
February 2024

### **Notes:**

The Freemasons Hotel is where the Poetry Brawl was held  
The 'Bottom Pub' is another name for the Freemason's Hotel  
A '*snitty*' is a chicken schnitzel  
'Animals on Bikes' – a trail of sculptures, starting at Molong  
Horsemen on Coaches were known as 'whips'





## **Illawarra Folk Festival 19-21<sup>st</sup> January 2024**

This was my first weekend adventure with the Bush Music Club (BMC). George mentioned that the weather could be interesting however that did not deter our group. It was a great experience and lots of fun.

The festival was in Bulli and started Friday morning in the local church at the School of Music organized by the festival. The first session on Friday was also well attended and well coordinated and enjoyed by participants. The next sessions were on Saturday and Sunday in the Session tent and these were also well attended and again lots of fun.

On Sunday afternoon there was a bush dance and the band was joined by a number of young players from the 'Saplings'. It was wonderful to have a number of young people joining us. As we need to look to the future!

Around the sessions we managed to see a few performers at the folk festival and as said fun was had.

Keen for the next new adventure and would recommend this to others. Thanks to the committee and all the significant people who made this happen.

***Cathy Andrews***

# COLONIAL THEME BUSHDANCE

with

## “Southern Cross”



Programme could include  
Four Sisters Barn Dance, Thady U Gander,  
La Russe Quadrille, Picking Berries,  
Marching Thru Georgia, Pendeen Scramble, Virginia Reel

A great opportunity to learn the classics  
**Varsovienna, Polka Mazurka and Princess Polka**  
*with Posties Jig as the uncalled Dancers' Dance.*

All dances are taught, walked through and called.

*Colonial Costume is encouraged*

## Saturday, May 11

7.30 – 11.00 p.m.

at the

East Gosford Progress Hall  
Cnr. Wells Street & Henry Parry Drive

*Beginners very welcome*

**Bring a plate of supper to share and your own mug.**

**Enquiries:**

John 0427 285 436

Mike: 0428 223 033

**Admission:**

General: \$20.00

Affiliates: \$18.00

Members: \$15.00

Students: \$15.00

Children 12 – 16: \$5.00



## VALE EDDIE SAMSON



Eddie Sampson was the person who introduced me to Australian Poetry not only to our great poets but to my amazement he also produced a number of wonderful poems.

I admired Eddie as he happened to be a great racing car driver when younger, mostly speedway and this fact got my interest straight away. Then listening to his own poems, I thought "If this bloke can write poetry, then I might have a go myself "...and that was the beginning of my journey into the world of Rhyme. His sense of humour and enthusiasm made my visits to Hut 44 a highlight in my life.

I can still see him beating his chest in time to recreate the sounds of galloping horses in a poem and the cheeky look when he harassed Bob Bolton into playing a gumleaf.

I guess I really admired all these things from

Eddie but what I admired most was his unwavering loyalty to Australian poetry and music. Wonderful memories of an incredible character who, like Bob Bolton, was the heart and soul of the BMC for me.

We miss you cobber and we'll never forget your light that shone in our little Hut on Monday nights.

***Pete Cahill.***

It was always going to be a good night if Eddie turned up.

You would have to go a long way to meet a nicer bloke. Pete and I were always blown away by his repertoire. His delivery was superb. My favourite poem was the one about the father of the bride, "When asked "who gives this bride away?" .... "GIVES !..... GIVES !" ..and on it went. Brilliant ! Very happy memories of this wonderful bush poet.

***Sue McMahon***

So sad to hear of Eddie's passing! He has been one of those sort of "mischievous rogues" of the Bush Music Club and I mean that in the nicest possible way. He had a very quick wit but never seemed to be the one to push himself onto people – seemingly to be a step or two away from the limelight while all the while observing what was happening around him in that way that poets and songwriters seem to do.

He was a deep thinker with a great sense of humour and when the opportunity arose he delivered his poems with a real flair of expression that captivated his audience. He didn't just recite a poem, he was telling you a story and getting you involved.

He was also very generous in his support and encouragement of others – a genuinely nice bloke whose presence and contributions will be sadly missed.

***Tony Romeo***



My favourite was “The Man With Rubber Pedals”. Sadly, we don’t have very many of Eddie’s own poems in our club archives. If any readers remember poems or has recordings or copies stashed away, please let us know.

A few years ago Eddie gave me a handwritten page with the following words. Previously, he’d had everyone at the Monday club session in fits as he mercilessly lampooned Bob Bolton. (Bob’s encyclopaedic knowledge was legendary) Bob took it all on the chin and laughed just as much as the rest of us. We always enjoyed their good natured banter.

**Ralph Pride**

## “BB”

You’ve bought a new computer, and you think that it is grand,  
If it beats BB I’ll buy one, the money’s in my hand  
There’s so much information, in just one compact unit,  
All working to perfection, you don’t even have to tune it.  
They can’t measure megalitres yet, until the rain does stop.  
Why don’t they just ask BB? He’ll tell ‘em, to the last drop.  
You start to tell a story, you’re trying to set ‘em up,  
When in comes all those details, and blows your story up.  
You want to show your knowledge on a topic that you fancy;  
You should have known with BB there that it was rather chancy.  
You’ve dissected into little bits, you’ve got the people baffled.  
He shreds up all your little bits, and you retire, rattled!  
Someone played a grand old tune, ‘twas Irish to be sure,  
But BB says the Scot’s wrote it, and wait, he’ll tell you more.  
The English had a go at it, the Irish added twiddle,  
Yanks dragged it on over there, and had ‘Hey Diddle Diddle’.  
The Germans changed it round a bit, the Italians added “I”,  
But I can tell you, it’s just the same, as ‘*The Road To Gundagai*’.  
Tom asked a simple question, B volunteered his help.  
“But I’ll have to get home by tomorrow”, I heard the victim yelp.  
A new bloke seeking info, of an instrument old and nice,  
B says it’s in the purple book he’ll have it in a trice.  
“Is this too many questions, you’re sure that it’s all right?”  
Doesn’t bother “BB” ..... *he can talk all night* !  
BB got a big award for 150 blood donations.  
Just imagine if it was sperm - it would elevate the nation.  
He plays on all the instruments, pluck-‘em, squeeze or rattle.  
Try to find what he *can’t* play, it really is a battle.  
He blows on the harmonica, nose-flute, and old tin-whistle.  
Put your money up I’ll bet, he’d even play a thistle.  
But I think I’ve got him cornered and it must causing grief...  
Please, let everybody know,..... “*He can’t play the gum-leaf*”.

**Eddie Samson**

# REMEMBERING RICHARD EVANS



Richard Evans passed away on 5th January, 2023 after suffering a cardiac arrest.

Richard was born in England and travelled to Australia with his parents at the age of 6. Going to school in Sydney, he mingled outside school hours with the likes of Bob Bolton and Ralph Pride (BMC stalwarts); he had lifelong friendships with a number of mutual acquaintances. After completing a fitting and turning apprenticeship with NSW Railways, he did further study to become a tool maker. His interest and passion with motorcycles saw Richard travel to Europe in the late 1960's where he both acted as a racing mechanic and also raced in several events. Richard bought a BMW bike in Germany and brought it back to Australia with him.

In 1970 Richard was travelling around Australia by motorbike and arrived in Perth. He saw an anglo concertina in a shop window and bought it to entertain himself on-route; this would make a change from playing his mouth organ and being unable to sing at the same time. Little did he know that this cheap German-made concertina would shape much of his future life. *"From little things big things grow"*.

When I first met Richard in the late 1970's, he was living in inner Sydney and had already developed a reputation for tuning and restoring concertinas. While he helped me to install an electronic pick-up in an accordion, Richard told me stories about his activities as chief scrutineer with a major 6-hour motorcycle race that the club he belonged to was involved in. In the early 1980's Richard gave up his job at Sydney University and moved to Bell in the Blue Mountains with his partner Eva. From there he made over twenty "Kookaburra" Anglo concertinas and was editor of the "Concertina Magazine", which served to both educate people about concertinas and to spread the word about this quirky instrument.

Much of Richard's time was spent in repairing and restoring concertinas for people; although the majority of his clients were located in Australia, his reputation saw a significant number of people approach him from overseas to conduct repairs to their instruments. Richard was always prepared to stop and help others. At the recently held Concertina Convergence in Goulburn, over half of the attendees had been assisted by Richard with their instruments in one way or another.

Richard was my mentor for over 14 years. Every fortnight I would travel to Bell to learn the mysteries of how to repair and restore concertinas. Over that time, I got to know a genuine bloke who had an active mind, was always interested in learning something new, and was happy to share his knowledge. On one shelf in his workshop sits a little clay pot with the sign, "Ashes of dis-satisfied customers" written on it. I looked inside one day and found it empty. Richard Evans, RIP.

**George Bolliger,**  
February 2024.



One of Richard's famous Bell Concertinas on display with his mascot kookaburra and someone's fiddle at his memorial session in 2023.

Below is one of Richard's favourite tunes, a schottische collected from Clem O'Neal of Stuart Town in the central west of NSW. It was transcribed by Chris Moore and subsequently published by Richard in "Concertina Magazine".

### The North Wind

From Clem O'Neal, Stuart Town NSW

The musical score for 'The North Wind' is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is composed of eighth and sixteenth notes, with various chords indicated above the staff: G, D7, A7, and D7. The second staff continues the melody, ending with a double bar line. The third staff begins with a repeat sign and a C chord, followed by G, D7, G, and G7 chords. The fourth staff continues the melody, ending with a double bar line. The fifth staff begins with a repeat sign and a G chord, followed by D7, G, A7, and D7 chords. The sixth staff continues the melody, ending with a double bar line. The score is transcribed by Chris Moore and published by Richard in 'Concertina Magazine'.

With Anzac Day just around the corner, Tony Romeo sent along this great new song from Phyl Lobl about a WW2 episode that should be more widely known.

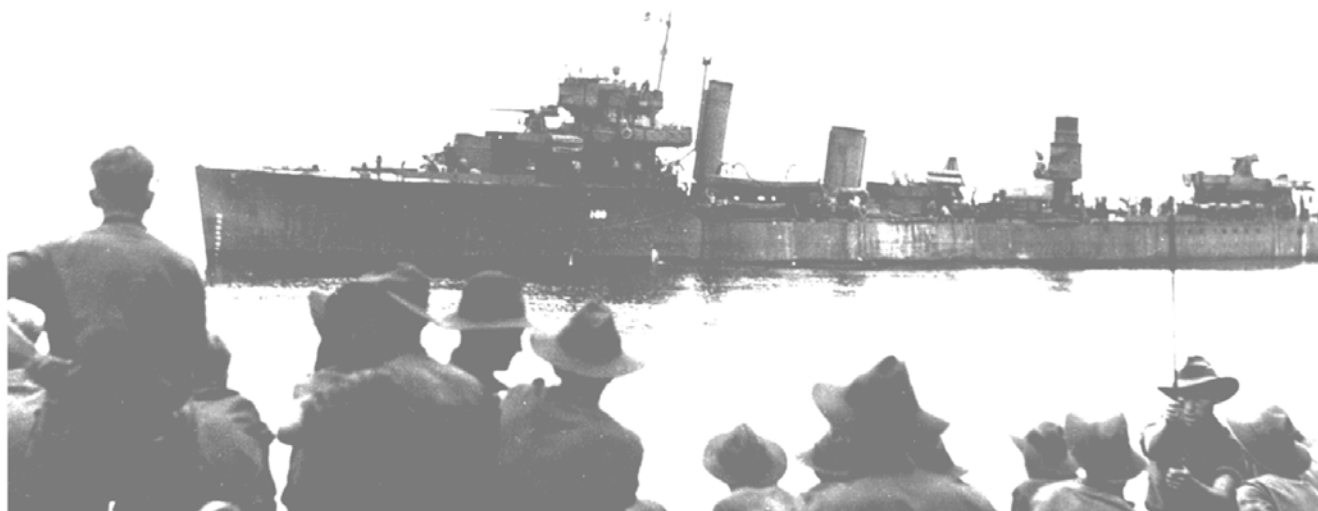
## The Scrap Iron Five

Phyl Lobl 2023

In Eur - ope's "Mid - dle Sea", nine - teen for - ty one and two,  
 Scores of ships and sail - ors went down in - to the blue.  
 Not so the ships of the "Scrap Ir - on Five",  
 Crewed by Aus - tra - lians de - ter - mined to sur - vive.

### Chorus

"Stu - art", "Voy - a - ger", "Ven - det - ta" and "Vam - pire",  
 Braved the bomb - ing "Jun - kers" and the scree - ming "Stu - ker's" fire.  
 With "Wa - ter - hen", com - mon - ly called "The Chook",  
 They guard - ed war - ring wa - ters from Al - ex to To - bruk.





In Europe's "Middle Sea", Nineteen-Forty-One and Two,  
Scores of ships and sailors, went down in the blue.  
Not so, the ships of the "Scrap Iron Five",  
Crewed by Australians, determined to survive.

***"Stuart", "Voyager", "Vendetta" and "Vampire"  
Braved the bombing "Junkers", and the screaming "Stuka's" Fire.  
With "Waterhen", commonly called the "Chook",  
They guarded warring waters, from "Alex" to "Tobruk".***

Joe Goebbels had them mocked, as "scrap, not worth a look!"  
They dared, and they lived, through the long siege of Tobruk.  
For two-hundred days and then forty days more,  
They helped the "Desert Rats", to turn the desert war.

When on a ferry run, to the 'gunnels' loaded down,  
Rusted old destroyers, with two funnels gained renown.  
Dodging like dolphins, between the killer mines,  
"Scrap Iron Ships", were supporting allied lines.

The good and arms supplied, were carried by the ton,  
Down the "Bomber Alley", and all along "Spud Run".  
Rescuing the wounded, then shipping them out,  
Never lost a man, and never lost a rout.

Their rivets rattled loud, in the wild stormy weather.  
Some said gum and wire, held those boats together.  
The "Rats of Tobruk", took pride in their name.  
The "Scrap Iron Five", were proud to do the same.

The "Scrap Iron Flotilla" was an Australian destroyer group that operated in the Mediterranean and Pacific during World War Two. The five ships of the flotilla had been Royal Navy ships that had been built and served during World War One and were then transferred to the R.A.N. in the 1930s.

From the very start of their service in the Australian Navy, HMAS "Vendetta", "Vampire", "Voyager", "Stuart" and "Waterhen" were old ships, small with worn-out engines. Their crews used to joke they were held together by string and chewing gum; when the Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels heard of them, he sneered that they were a load of scrap iron. In the same defiant spirit as the "Rats of Tobruk" they adopted their name from the Nazis' propaganda, and the five ships happily and proudly called themselves the "Scrap Iron Flotilla". Scrap iron or not, the flotilla was involved constantly and closely in all the operations of the Mediterranean fleet.

By the middle of 1940, these destroyers were valiantly escorting troop and supply convoys to the besieged Tobruk, transporting injured Australian and Allied troops, successfully hunting for submarines, and bombarding enemy coastal positions. Sometimes the weather could be their worst enemy - from filthy sand-storms blowing off Africa to icy gales from Europe that whipped up mountainous seas and froze the guns.

Note, the song includes the line "from Alex to Tobruk" - where Alex is actually a shortening for Alexandria.

We frequently find ourselves singing Helen Palmer and Doreen Jacobs' great song, "**The Ballad of 1891**" which reminds us of the infamous events surrounding that great shearers' strike following which fourteen shearers were jailed..... "*When they jail a man for striking, It's a rich man's country yet*"....Rita Ashby has kindly sent along her poem about the *one that got away*.

## Jim Risely

(Ahead of Them)

26<sup>th</sup> March 1891, Clermont

Quick! They're coming ! I'm just ahead of them !  
They've arrested all the ones at the office up in town,  
I was told to get here as fast as the horse could go  
To tell yer there's a warrant and yer'd best be nowhere found.

They're marching 'em to the police station; there's redcoats everywhere !  
Over a hundred of 'em lined up along the street,  
I got on the pony quick as I could get  
Before anyone should notice the chance they could be beat !

Jim Risely was a quiet bloke, kept much to himself,  
With his wagonette all full of books, an asset at any time,  
He was cooking breakfast when the young lad galloped up  
For everyone detested that the strike was made a crime.

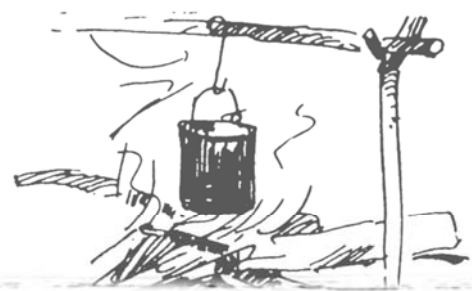
The billy was still boiling when the officers arrived,  
Who thought they'd wait him out, for any moment he'd be back,  
But were solely disappointed, despite extended watch,  
For he went to Argentina and never left a track.

---

*Jim Risely was one Union shearer they never got.*

Reconstructed from Julian Stewart's "Part of the Glory" (Reminiscences of the Shearers' Strike, Queensland 1891), Australian Book Society, Sydney, 1967 and newspaper reports of the day

© 2023 **Rita Ashby** ("**Wirrinya**")



# KEITH WOOD - DANCE WORKSHOPS

Hi Everyone

The schedule for my dance workshops this year is shown below.  
Dances are at Pennant Hills Community Centre from 2:15 to 5:15pm.

Sun 21 Apr	Contra – Colours
Sun 26 May	English country
Sun 16 Jun	Contra – Rerun
Sun 21 Jul	Contra – Linda Leslie
Sun 18 Aug	Keith's dances
Sun 15 Sep	Contra – Flowers
Sun 13 Oct	English country
Sun 17 Nov	Contra – Rerun

Search "*keith wood dance*" for more information. (The messages seem to be classed as spam if I include a URL.)| See you on the dance floor



*Cheers, Keith*



**Central Coast's Second Saturday**

## ***BUSH DANCES***

**East Gosford Progress Hall**

Corner Wells Street & Henry Parry Drive East Gosford

7.30 p.m. – 11.00 p.m.

March 9: Social: Dances from the British Isles (John Short)  
 April 13: Bushdance (Ryebuck) May 11: Colonial Bushdance (Southern Cross)  
 July 13: Jane Austen Night (Short Dented Potts)  
 Aug 10: Social: Dancing Across Australia (John Short)  
 Sept. 14: Bushdance (Rosella)  
 Oct 12: Flannel Flower Spring Ball (Barangaroo)  
 Nov. 9: Bushdance (Frohlich Bros.) Dec. 14: Christmas Contra (Ryebuck)

**Enquiries:**

John 0427 286 436 Mike: 0428 223 033

**Central Coast Bush Dance and Music Assoc. Inc.**

General Admission \$20  
 Members & Students: \$15  
 Children 12 – 16: \$5

For more information visit our website [www.ccbdma.org](http://www.ccbdma.org)

# **PENNANT HILLS DANCE WORKSHOP**

**Pennant Hills Community Centre  
Lower Hall, Downstairs from the Library  
7.30pm to 9.30pm Mondays (except public holidays)**

We farewelled 2023 with our Christmas Party with live music provided by the BMC's Concert Party and our annual Request Night, where there is no fixed program and the dances are requested by those present. Both events were very well attended and a great way to conclude 2023.

We are now back to our regular Monday night dancing for 2024, expanding our dancing repertoire and learning movements such as double figures of eight and crossover reels, and incorporating these into the dances we are learning. We also revise the more common movements such as setting, stars and swinging, with a focus on correct timing.

Whether you're a new dancer or experienced, there is always something interesting happening at the Pennant Hills dance workshops, so why not come and join us?

See you at Pennant Hills !

***John Short***



## **BEECROFT FAMILY BUSH DANCE** **IN THE AFTERNOON**

**Beecroft Community Centre  
Beecroft Road, Beecroft (*opposite Fire Station*)  
Saturday Afternoon 2.00pm to 4.30pm  
Admission \$ 20 Concession \$15 Members \$15 Family \$40**

### **2024 Diary Dates**

4th May	BMC Concert Party
3rd August	BMC Concert Party
7th December	BMC Concert Party

[Please note the slight unavoidable increase in admission, of \$1, from 2024].



# MONDAY WORKSHOPS NEWS

## Slow session

There have been a couple of sheets of double-sided collected tunes that were handed out this month. We have been playing from them, as well as the *"Easy Tunes" booklet*.

Everyone appears to be progressing well with sight reading and playing by ear.

George will be taking a leave of absence in April while he goes fossicking. We expect a share in the golden riches on his return. In the meantime Ralph has offered to take up the slack and while the cat's away,.....

## Evening Session & Concert Party

**Banjo Paterson Festival:** We practiced songs that Banjo Paterson had written & collected in preparation for a trip to Yeoval that occurred during February. Owing to other commitments only a small section of the CP were able to attend but we made our presence felt nevertheless. (See Doug Richardson's revue page 8)

**The Bush Traditions Autumn Gathering** was held again at Gunning late in February and several members of the Club attended, making a significant contribution to proceedings. Many thanks to the organisers and especially to BMC members Sue and Don Brian and family for organising catering and were so generous with their time to make the event such a great success.

**Monday Nights** have continued to play music from the "Yellow" and "New" books. The next activity for the CP will be the **BMC dance at Beecroft** on Saturday May 4th. John Short has supplied a list of intended dances, and Ralph Pride is currently in the process of compiling a list of suitable tune sets for us to start practicing.

**The monthly theme** for March has been Animals/ Transport. We have had a good response to this in both songs, stories and poems. Attendances have been fairly good. Marrickville BB performing at the Saturday Market at ARCC has generated some local interest in club activities.

***Here is the list of themes for the remainder of the year.***

March ..... food	April .....immigration
May.....poetry / mining	June..... dancing
July.....trees/ chopping/ wood	August.... farming
September... .bushrangers/ police/ the law	October.... .leisure
November..... banks/ money/ work	December.. something Australian

## SAPLINGS

The Saplings have had a busy start to the year with two sessions at the *Illawarra Folk Festival*. Many thanks to the parents and grandparents who continue to bring their young musicians to our sessions, and a special thanks to our excellent tutors.

The BMC Youth Bush Band have a dance and a concert spot at the National this year, so if you will be there please go and cheer them along.

***On Saturday 20th April from 1.00 - 3.00pm  
Saplings will be having a session at Tritton Hall.  
All young musicians are welcome.***

For more information contact [helenromeo.romeo@gmail.com](mailto:helenromeo.romeo@gmail.com).

# What's On

**Trad&Now Live!** is a *free* international streaming service for Australian folk music in its broadest sense. It has been live on air since July and has gone ahead in leaps and bounds since then. Go to [www.tradandnow.com](http://www.tradandnow.com) If you click on the TradLive logo, that will take you straight to the music.

**Australian Spectrum Show** FM90.5 with Ross Fear, 9-12 Tuesday Nights

**The BMC Blog:** – <https://blog.bushmusic.org.au/> Sandra Nixon has been very busy updating the Bush Music Club Blog, so visit the BMC website and check out the latest additions..

**National Folk Festival** 28th March—1st April 2024

**BMC Members' and Friends' Reunion** 26th March at the Goulburn Club,

**Dancefest—Bundanoon** 7-10th June

**Kangaroo Valley Folk Festival** 18-20th October



## **BUSH TRADITIONS SESSIONS**

An evening of Australian folk music – songs, dance tunes, poems and more...  
The Goulburn Club, Market St, Goulburn

**FIRST FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH  
7.30 - 10.30PM**

Bring voices and instruments and join in or just come and listen.  
Music and words are available or play by ear.  
Refreshments available. Meal available (menu at [goulburnclub.com.au](http://goulburnclub.com.au))  
\$5 donation per session or \$40 annual Goulburn Club membership

Enjoy:

Songs and poems – mainly on the month's theme  
Tunes – especially Australian collected tunes from the local area

### **2024 DATES AND THEMES**

April 5 <sup>th</sup>	Arms
May 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Drivers and Drovers
June 7 <sup>th</sup>	No Session (Bundanoon DanceFest)
July 5 <sup>th</sup>	Sydney or the Bush
August 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Transported
September 6 <sup>th</sup>	Bluey
October 4 <sup>th</sup>	Way Away Aweigh (+ Spring Gathering)
November 1 <sup>st</sup>	Bit of a Stretch
December 6 <sup>th</sup>	Eureka

*Further information: David Johnson 0407 938 960  
[dave@bushtraditions.org](mailto:dave@bushtraditions.org)*

# **BUSH MUSIC CLUB INC.**

## **MEMBERSHIP**

New members are always welcome and encouraged to participate in the activities of the Club. Membership forms are available from Club functions or can be downloaded from our website or fill in our online application form.

Members receive a copy of the Club's quarterly newsletter ***Mulga Wire***, concession rates at Club functions, as well as the satisfaction of supporting an organisation dedicated to the continuation of Australian tradition, its preservation and the wider recognition of our treasured heritage.

## **TRITTON HALL**

Our *air conditioned* headquarters at Hut 44, Addison Road Community Centre, Addison Road Marrickville are available for functions meetings, rehearsals, etc at very reasonable rates

For more information phone 0466 877 423



## **Bush Music Club Committee**

<b>President</b>	Sharyn Mattern	9799 7439 (H)
<b>Vice President</b>	Don Richmond	0409128754
<b>Secretary</b>	Karen Fong	0466 877 423
<b>Treasurer</b>	Allen Davis	9639 7494 (H)
<b>Committee Members</b>	Brian Freeman Elaine Elmers George Bolliger	

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

GPO Box 433, Sydney 2001 Phone – 0466 877 423

Website -	<a href="http://www.bushmusic.org.au/">http://www.bushmusic.org.au/</a>
blog -	<a href="https://blog.bushmusic.org.au/">https://blog.bushmusic.org.au/</a>
Youtube -	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/BushMusicClubInc">https://www.youtube.com/user/BushMusicClubInc</a>
Email -	<a href="mailto:bmcmail1954@gmail.com">bmcmail1954@gmail.com</a>
Facebook -	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/BushMusicClub/">https://www.facebook.com/BushMusicClub/</a>
Meetup -	<a href="http://www.meetup.com/Sydney-Bush-Music-Club-Meetup/">http://www.meetup.com/Sydney-Bush-Music-Club-Meetup/</a>
Instagram -	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/bushmusicclub">https://www.instagram.com/bushmusicclub</a>

## **REGULAR MONTHLY AND WEEKLY ACTIVITIES**

### **BEECROFT BUSH DANCE** - Feb, May, Aug, Dec (page 20)

With live music from Sydney's best bush bands

1st Saturday of the month from 2pm - 4.30pm

**Beecroft Community Centre**, Beecroft Rd Beecroft

### **DANCE WORKSHOP** - Feb to Dec (except public holidays) (Page 16)

Monday nights 7.30 - 9.30pm

**Pennant Hills Community Centre**, Yarrara Road Pennant Hills

### **Slow Music Workshop** - Feb to Dec (except public holidays)

Monday afternoons 5.00 - 7.00pm at the hut \*

### **Song and Music Workshop** - Feb to Dec (except public holidays)

Monday afternoons 7.15 - 9.30pm at the hut \*

### **NEW WEDNESDAY LUNCHTIME SESSION**

*For Songs; Stories; Poems; Yarns and More*

Bring a song/s to sing either alone or we'll all join in, also your lunch and \$10 Tea, coffee and biscuits provided

### **Zoom Session** (on line session)

2nd Wednesday of month commencing 11am for 80 minutes

email for more info [bmcmail1954@gmail.com](mailto:bmcmail1954@gmail.com)

### **MARRICKVILLE MUSIC GROUP** - Feb to Dec

1st Wednesday of the Month 11am - 2pm at the hut \*

Music from all genres including bush. \$10 - tea and coffee provided.

### **PLAYFORD DANCING AT THE HUT** - Feb to Dec

1st Tuesday of the Month 7.30 - 9.30pm at the hut \*

English Country Dancing, with *live music*. \$10

### **SYDNEY SLOW IRISH SESSION** - Feb to Dec

Sunday nights 6.30pm at the hut \*

Irish traditional music at a pace that suits beginners and intermediate players. \$10 (concession \$5) includes tea and bikkies.

**\* BMC Headquarters is at Hut 44, "Tritton Hall"**

142 Addison Road, Marrickville

**For more information please contact the club on**

**[bmcmail1954@gmail.com](mailto:bmcmail1954@gmail.com) or 0466 877 423**