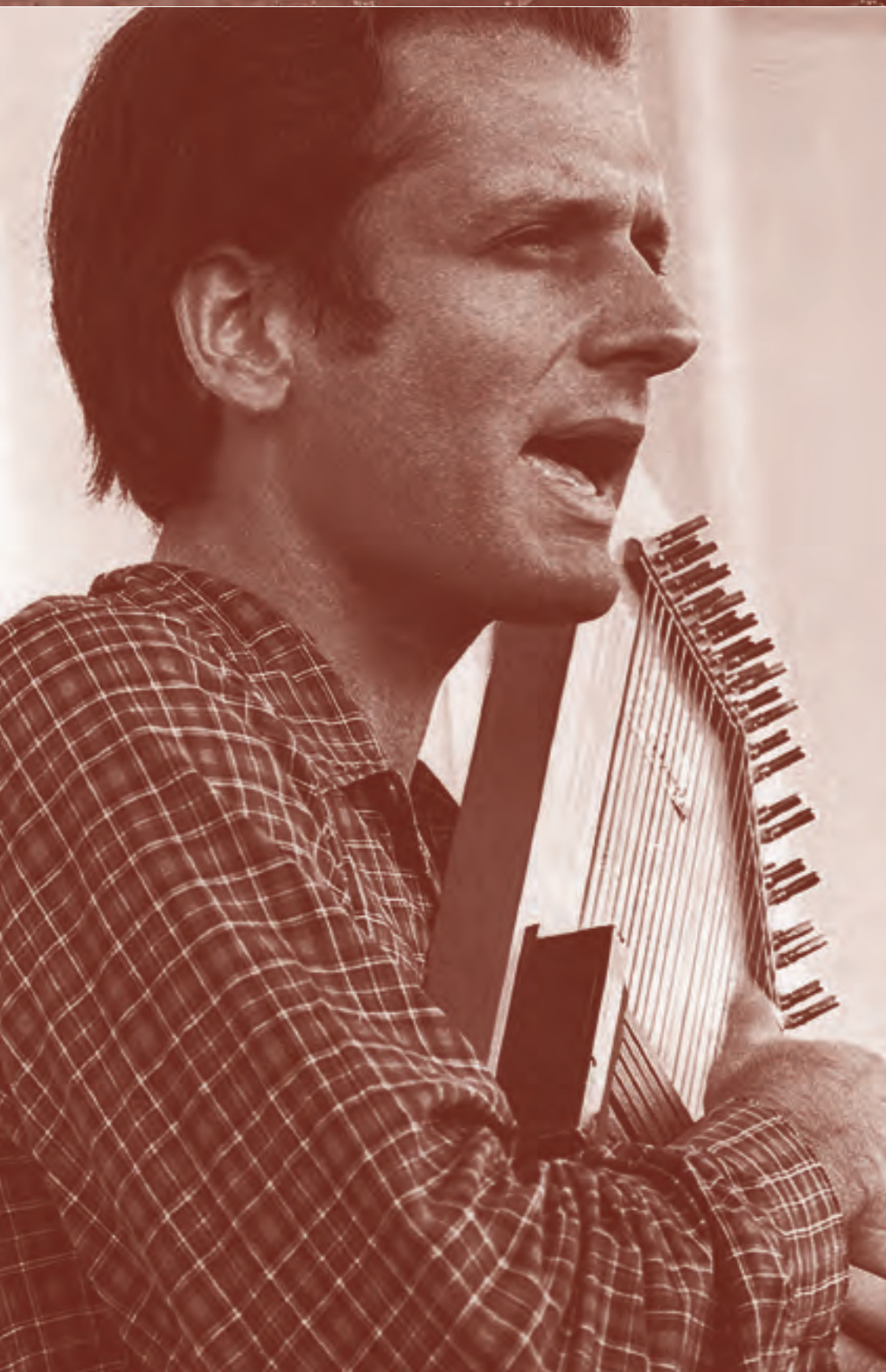




# OLD TIME News

THE ONLY UK PUBLICATION DEDICATED TO AMERICAN OLD TIME MUSIC AND DANCE NO 59 AUTUMN 2009



**Mike Seeger - 1932 - 2009**

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## New Friends...

### New Members List:

- 887 Peter Drake  
Ullapool, Ross
- 888 Midge Drake  
Ullapool, Ross
- 889 Dave Hale  
Alvechurch, Birmingham
- 890 Philip Longden  
Camberley, Surrey
- 891 Richard Partridge  
Haverhill, Suffolk
- 892 Peter Mallinson  
Wotton-under-Edge, Glos
- 893 Susan Costello  
Wotton-under-Edge, Glos
- 894 Bruce Johnson  
Billinghay, Lincs
- 895 Caroline Johnson  
Billinghay, Lincs
- 896 Gerard Hogan  
Dublin, Eire
- 897 Paul Wood  
Longnor, Staffs
- 898 Bernie Dart  
Buxton, Derbys
- 899 Dinny Eley  
Churchdown, Glo



### Three Chairs short of a dining suite!

Lovely to see Bob Ward at the summer camp - here is a pic he sent in of the last 3 chairs left to right, Ray Banks, Bob himself and current chair is the good looking one on the right . . . (ha,ha only joking)

## EDITOR'S RAMBLINGS from an Easy Chair



Old-time music has suffered a tremendous loss with the death on August 7th of Mike Seeger and we have tributes to him in this issue by

our President Tom Paley (one of the original New Lost City Ramblers) and from Ray Banks, our former Chairman. For those of you who may not be familiar with Mike's contribution to our music, these 2 pieces tell it all.

His death actually occurred on the first official day of the great Clifftop Appalachian Music Festival in West Virginia which I know many of you have attended in the past. There had been no official announcement but word had spread rapidly round the campground.

Ironically enough the **New Lost City Ramblers** were booked to do what I believe was to be their last concert on stage that evening with **Paul Brown** standing in on banjo and various other artists such as **Ginny Hawker**, stepping in to fill the gap left by Mike's absence. It was very moving to hear **John Cohen** start the set by saying that they had "a heavy burden to bear", and it must indeed have been hard to go on and

perform that particular evening. The weather, which was very wet all through the festival, really excelled itself half an hour later and the concert was rudely interrupted by horizontal rain so heavy that the stage roof had to be lowered and the concert called off.

There was also at Clifftop a launch party hosted by the **Orpheus Supertones** for the New Lost City Ramblers DVD "**Always Been a Rambler**" which charts 50 years of their music and **Ray Banks** has written a review of it which you see in this issue. If anyone has any further memories or reminiscences of Mike Seeger they would like to share, please send them in for the next issue.

Fiona Cameron

### THE OLD TIME NEWS

is published quarterly and sent to Foootmad members, free. Submissions by email, on PC disk, or on paper.

This document will be made available on the internet for future use.

#### LAST COPY DATES ARE:

1st March, June, September and December.  
Send to Fiona Cameron: editor@foootmad.org.uk

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This issue edited by Editor Fiona Cameron  
Graphic design and production by Mo Jackson  
Distribution by Michi Mathias

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Half page	£30.00 (h128 x w186 mm)
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Sixteenth page	£10.00 (h62 x w42 mm)
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Printed by Zetacolour, East Sussex Tel: 01323 490085

Friends Of American Old Time Music And Dance  
[www.foootmad.org.uk](http://www.foootmad.org.uk)

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**Annual Subscriptions:**  
Individual £15 (concessions £12) • Couple/Group: £25  
Plus £5 for overseas/airmail

### Apology:

We owe an apology to John O'Connell for leaving a sentence out of his article "Hints for Beginning Fiddlers" in our last issue (Issue no.58, p.11, col.3). We can only assume that it had been swallowed by the computer but we have managed to persuade it to regurgitate the following:

*"Sometimes continual retuning can pull the bridge out of alignment, and this can be carefully adjusted".*

Sorry John, Ed.

## Chewing the FAT

### Flat Picking or Finger Picking?

In my piece in the last edition of OTN, I stated that fingerpicking by guitarists is not found in Old Time music. Tom Paley took issue with this and wrote:

*I wanted to send a message objecting to something Andy Imms wrote in the latest issue of the OTN. He says that he's never come across old time guitar played in a stringband context with anything but a flatpick. Well, perhaps he really never has come across it, but it's actually not uncommon.*

*For one thing, I always play fingerstyle (usually with thumbpick and two fingerpicks) when playing guitar in a stringband. However, I'm not from 'the country' or from the real early days. I've been picking guitar since 1945 and had pretty much given up using a flatpick by the time I helped start the New Lost City Ramblers (1958) and virtually completely given it up by the time the original NLCR broke up (1962), but there were lots of real old time guitar-pickers before me and, no doubt, many of them (and many later old time guitarists) used flatpicks.*

*Still, I've seen some of the earlier country guitarists playing fingerstyle (with or without thumb and finger picks) in string bands. The only one I can actually name confidently was Sam McGee, whom I saw, together with his brother, Kirk, playing in a band with . . . of all people . . . Grandpa Jones. Also, although I never saw Roy Harvey play, I'd be very surprised to learn that he always played with a flatpick when he was with Charlie Poole in the North Carolina Ramblers. I reckon, too, that quite a few of the other early stringband guitarists used their fingers, with or without picks. (It may well be, though, that it's less common nowadays than it used to be.*

**I bow to Tom's superior knowledge and stand corrected!**

Andy Imms

### Virginia and North Carolina, 2009 from Gill Millar

On our recent trip to the states we decided to take in the Henry Reed Festival at Glen Lyn, Virginia. It turned out to be a scorching hot day and we were soon looking for some shade. Having found a 'spare' looking gazebo overlooking the competition stage, we settled for the afternoon.

Sometime later a few people gathered around us and we soon realised that we were taking up someone else's space. We were embarrassed to find it was Henry Reed's family. However, as soon as they heard our accents we were made to feel really welcome and were invited to spend the afternoon with them. The gazebo was soon uplifted by each corner and taken a good distance from the stage and we spent the afternoon having a wonderful session. Gene Reed, one of Henry's twin sons was there, his son Guy and Guy's daughter, along with partners. What a wonderful family. It really made our holiday and we have since kept in touch with Tim. They are in the process of completing their DVD of the festival and have promised us a copy. We even made the local press!

During our trip we also took in the Fiddlers' Grove Festival, Mount Airy Fiddlers Convention and the Wayne Henderson Guitar Festival.

However, we found most enjoyment in joining the weekly evening sessions we found in different areas. Some of the old characters were wonderful and again we were made to feel very welcome. The picture below was taken at a session at the String Bean Café, Galax. We actually headed there to listen, but were soon given instruments and made to join in.

We had another memorable trip and would recommend it to anyone. Especially those who perhaps like us, would find the greater enjoyment in going to the 'local' sessions.



## FOAOTMAD TURNS NOMAD!

### Summer Camp 2009

There were several things about this year's summer camp which were unusual but having to up sticks (as it were) at the end of our first week-end was certainly something we had never had to do before. Having been assured that we could have the bottom field it was disappointing to learn that the Farm Centre's booking system had let them down (blame the computer!) and that it had been booked out for the Sunday to a charity event. We then had to choose between spending the whole time up in the top field or moving down on the Sunday evening.

Well, if I had been unsure about whether we had made the right decision, the answer was clear at about 5 p.m. on Sunday when word spread like wildfire that the bottom field was now clear and there was a sudden rush for the hedge! The manager, who was very apologetic about the whole thing, couldn't believe how fast the camp moved - one minute we were at the top then whoosh! - the Gold Rush had nothing on us...

The second thing that was unusual was a spin-off from the above - the manager offered us the small marquee which had been erected for the previous event and it turned out to be a real success. Although the weather was mainly very good (the third unusual thing) so that we didn't need to play in the barn in the evenings, it provided a very useful shelter for playing, eating etc on the one rainy day we had.

It also meant that we had a place to gather when some of our best musicians offered to do free workshops for anyone who was interested. We had fiddle workshops with Dave Procter, John O'Connell and Jock Tyldesley, banjo with Dave Marshall and Ray Banks, guitar with Andy Imms, a sing-a-long led by Keith Burroughs and Cathy Benjamin and a slow jam with Old Yeller Dog. The little marquee was pretty well packed out for these and everyone enjoyed them.

Several different groups played around the farm again as the manager, Mick Rooney, had asked us to do and as at the Spring Camp we were made very welcome by all the staff. About 60 FOAOTMAD members attended and I counted a total of 456 member-nights when I came to settle up with the farm. Within a few days of getting home I had 2 letters from Sacrewell confirming our bookings for the Spring and Summer camps for the bottom field in writing!

Fiona Cameron

# EVENTS & TOURS 2009

## BUFFALO GALS

[www.buffalogals.co.uk](http://www.buffalogals.co.uk)



## SEPTEMBER

**Fri-Sun 18-20** Cornish Bluegrass Association Festival, Hendra Holiday Park, Newquay  
[www.cornishbluegrass.co.uk](http://www.cornishbluegrass.co.uk)

**Fri-Sun 25-27** Going To The West Fest, Pembrokeshire

## OCTOBER

**Tue 20th** St. Giles Football Club, Barlestone, Nuneaton CV13 0EP

**Wed 21st** Hoby and District Village Hall, LE14 3DT

**Thu 22nd** Sir John Moore Foundation, Appleby Magna, DE12 7AH

**Fri 23rd** Ekington Village Hall, Pershore, WR10 3AU

**Sat 24th** Areley Kings Village Hall, DY13 0NB

**Sun 25th** Grimley Peace Hall, Sinton Green, WR2 6NP

## NOVEMBER

**Thu 12th** Bournemouth Folk Club, Bournemouth BH2 6BE

**Sat 14th** Droxford Village Hall, Nr. Wickham, Hampshire

## DECEMBER

**Sat 5th** Ampfield Village Hall, Nr. Romsey, Hampshire

## JANUARY

**Fri 29th** Hampshire TBC

**Sat 30th** Wildhem Village Hall, Nr Andover, Hampshire

## FEBRUARY

**Tue 23rd** Botcheston Village Hall, Leicester LE9 9FF

**Wed 24th** Waltham on the Wolds Village Hall, LE14 4AG

**Thu 25th** Ryhall Village Hall, Stamford PE9 4HR

**Fri 26th** Affrick Village Hall, Worcs. WR6 5HJ

**Sat 27th** Clowes Top Victory Hall, Kidderminster, DY14 9HG

**Sun 28th** Martley Village Hall, WR6 6PQ

## MARCH

**Fri 5th** Totland Church Hall, Isle of Wight

**Sat 6th** Shipton Bellinger Village Hall, Hampshire

**Fri 19th** Medstead Village Hall, Hampshire

**Sat 20th** Cliddesden Village Hall, Hampshire

**Sat 27th** Brighton Hill Village Hall, Basingstoke.

## SARA GREY & KIERON MEANS

[www.maclurg.com/saragrey](http://www.maclurg.com/saragrey)

## JANUARY

**Thu 28** Lewes Folk Club, Lewes, Sussex

**Fri 29** The Milkmaid FC, Bury St Edmunds

## FEBRUARY

**Wed 3** Spalding Folk Club, Lincs

**Thu 5** Church House, South Tawton, Devon

**Wed 10** The Old Oak, Horsley Woodhouse, Derbyshire

**Thu 11** Milford on Sea Folk Club, Milford on Sea, Hampshire

**Fri 12** Swindon Folk Club, Pinehurst, Swindon, Wiltshire

**Wed 17** tbc Blackpool Folk Club, Blackpool, England

**Thu 18** The Star Folk Club, St Andrew in the Square, Glasgow

**Fri 19** Fo'c'sle Folk Club, Richmond Inn, Southampton

**Sun 21** Bothy Folk Club, Park Golf Club, Southport



## SORE FINGERS

### OCTOBER WEEKEND

Friday Oct 23rd-Sunday 25th, 2009

Places available on all courses:

**Old Time Banjo** - Bill Whelan

**Old Time Fiddle** - Jock Tildesley

**Autoharp** - June Maugery

**Banjo** - Howard Burton

**Guitar** - Jason Titley

**Mandolin** - Percy Copley

**Fiddle** - Greg Smith

**Singing** - Gary and Sherryl Payne

**Dobro** - Bill Dalton with Pete Wraith

### Sore Fingers Week 2010

Here's special appeal from organiser John Wirtz to Old Time folk from everywhere!

Please help us secure these courses by booking early. As previously stated, we are firmly committed to keeping Old Time on the programme at Sore Fingers Week and with your support we will!

### So what's on offer:

**Old Time Banjo** - Adam Hurt

**Old Time Fiddle** - Stephanie Coleman

**Autoharp** - T.B.A.

**Banjo** - Tony Furtardo

**Mandolin** - Matt Flinner

**Guitar** - Tim Stafford

**Fiddle** - T.B.A.

**Singing** - Chris Stewart and Janet Beazley

**Songwriting** - Ben Demerath T.B.C.

**Dobro** - Jimmy Heffernan T.B.C.

**Bass** - Eric Thorin

**Beginners** - Stewarts Williams and Team

It's usual for us to add a second banjo and mandolin courses due to the demand. As soon as we approach the stage where the advertised classes are full, we will identify additional tutors.

There's more information on our website at [www.sorefingers.co.uk](http://www.sorefingers.co.uk)

## OFF KEY...

*John Hill*



## WHERE CAN I FIND SOME CLOGGING?

If there are no contact details, email [footfest@hotmail.com](mailto:footfest@hotmail.com) Note that the locations are based on contact addresses and may not provide an exact location.

**AVON** Bristol - Applejacks  
**CHESHIRE** Altrincham - Mind The Step [www.mindthestep.co.uk](http://www.mindthestep.co.uk)  
**CORNWALL** Saltash - Kickin' Chicken [www.kc.hey42.co.uk](http://www.kc.hey42.co.uk)  
**CUMBRIA** Levens, Kendal - Legs Levens [cloggingchris@aol.com](mailto:cloggingchris@aol.com) Chris Tel. 01539 560534  
**DERBYSHIRE** Chesterfield - Feet First [www.feetfirstdance.co.uk](http://www.feetfirstdance.co.uk)  
 Derby - Soled Out [www.soledout.org.uk](http://www.soledout.org.uk)  
 Buxton - Wicked Soles  
 Bakewell-WellHeeled, [web.ukonline.co.uk/whd](http://web.ukonline.co.uk/whd)  
**DEVON** Totnes - Shuffle the Deck  
 Exeter - Alive And Kicking [www.alive-and-kicking.org.uk](http://www.alive-and-kicking.org.uk)  
 Axminster - Rough Diamonds  
**DORSET** Christchurch - Spank The Planks [www.spanktheplanks.org.uk](http://www.spanktheplanks.org.uk)  
 Dorchester - Stampede  
**ESSEX** Colchester - Platypus Appalachian Benfleet - Scrambled Leggs [www.scrambledleggs.flyer.co.uk](http://www.scrambledleggs.flyer.co.uk)  
**GLAMORGAN** Cardiff - Tiger Feet [www.tigerfeet.4ever.org.uk](http://www.tigerfeet.4ever.org.uk)  
**GLOUCESTERSHIRE** Woodmancote - First Class Stamp  
**GWENT** Newport - Brandywine Cloggers [www.brandywine-cloggers.co.uk](http://www.brandywine-cloggers.co.uk)  
 Newport - Shoostring  
**HAMPSHIRE** -  
 Alton-Knickerbocker Glory [kbgdance.org.uk](http://kbgdance.org.uk)  
 Portsmouth - Chequered Flag [www.members.aol.com/CheqFlag/index.htm](http://www.members.aol.com/CheqFlag/index.htm)  
 New Milton - AppalTappers (contemporary 'line' clogging)  
**HEREFORDSHIRE/SHROPSHIRE**  
 Bridgnorth - Kickin' Alice [www.kickinalice.co.uk](http://www.kickinalice.co.uk)  
**HERTFORDSHIRE**  
 St Albans - Tappalachi [tappalachian.co.uk](http://tappalachian.co.uk) miniange@postmaster.co.uk Tel: 07957 614064  
 Hitchin: Regular workshops Maggie Tel: 01908 582 757  
 Bricket Wood - Junction9 [www.junction9.org.uk](http://www.junction9.org.uk)  
**KENT** Ash - Tanglefoot [mysite.freemove.com/tanglefoot](http://mysite.freemove.com/tanglefoot)  
 Rainham - TapRoots [www.roots.ik.com](http://www.roots.ik.com)  
**LANCASHIRE** Bolton - Leap To Your Feet [www.leaptoyourfeet.co.uk](http://www.leaptoyourfeet.co.uk)  
**LINCOLNSHIRE** Scunthorpe - Bootleggers [www.bootleggersappalachian.co.uk](http://www.bootleggersappalachian.co.uk)  
 Spalding - Slapdash  
**LONDON (SW)** - Reilly's Cloggers  
**MIDLOTHIAN** Edinburgh - Kick The Cat [www.users.waitrose.com/~app-clogging](http://www.users.waitrose.com/~app-clogging)  
**NORFOLK** Norwich - Ebekneez Steppers  
**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**  
 Oundle - Rockingham Rapper (with some Clog)  
**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**  
 Castle Donington -Touchwood (no taps) [www.earwicker.org/touchwood.htm](http://www.earwicker.org/touchwood.htm)  
**OXFORDSHIRE**  
 Haddenham - Haddenham Hoofers  
 Wantage - Cornucopia [www.cornucopia-dance.org.uk](http://www.cornucopia-dance.org.uk)  
**POWYS**  
 Ludlow - Raise The Dust [www.raisedust.org.uk](http://www.raisedust.org.uk)  
 Llandrindod Wells - Something's Afoot  
**REDCAR AND CLEVELAND**  
 Saltburn by the Sea - Jump Back Georgia  
**SOMERSET** West Chinnock - No Mean Feet [www.nomeanfeet.org.uk](http://www.nomeanfeet.org.uk)  
**SUSSEX** Crawley - Hi Jinx [freespace.virgin.net/michael.bird/hijinx/hijinx.htm](http://freespace.virgin.net/michael.bird/hijinx/hijinx.htm)  
**TYNE & WEAR** Washington - Washington Downtown Cloggers  
 Newcastle - Pass The Buck  
 Durham, Nettlesworth - Step This Way [stjean.hutchinson1@btpenworld.com](mailto:stjean.hutchinson1@btpenworld.com)  
 Janet. Tel. 0191 3880971  
**WARWICKSHIRE**  
 Harbury/Leamington - Kick Start  
**WEST MIDLANDS** Stourbridge - Itchy Feet [www.itchyfeetappalachian.co.uk](http://www.itchyfeetappalachian.co.uk)  
**WEST YORKSHIRE** Saltaire - Roll Back the Carpet [www.rbc.binless.co.uk](http://www.rbc.binless.co.uk)  
 Shipley - Fiddle n' Feet  
 Otley - Kitchen Taps [www.kitchentaps.org.uk](http://www.kitchentaps.org.uk) Claire Tel. 01943 467848  
 Janet Tel. 01943465342  
 Ripponden - Ryburn Three-Step [www.ryburn3step.org.uk](http://www.ryburn3step.org.uk)  
 Tues. flatfooting classes. Tel: 01422 822569  
**WILTSHIRE** Chippenham - Footnotes [www.communicate.co.uk/wilts/footnotes](http://www.communicate.co.uk/wilts/footnotes)  
 Swindon - Off The Rails  
**WORCESTERSHIRE** Worcester - Soft Option [members.aol.com/woodlandjd](http://members.aol.com/woodlandjd)  
 Chipping Campden - Kick The Bucket  
 Redditch - One Step Beyond [www.onestepbeyond.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.onestepbeyond.fsnet.co.uk)

## WHERE CAN I FIND AN OLDTIME BAND?

Where there is no web contact or for further details, please email: [info@footmad.org.uk](mailto:info@footmad.org.uk)

**BERKSHIRE** - The Illbillies Tel: 01189 677408  
 email: [colmdaly@ntlworld.com](mailto:colmdaly@ntlworld.com)  
**CORNWALL** - The Boardbeaters Tel: 07817 460351  
[graham@kftfiddles.freemove.co.uk](mailto:graham@kftfiddles.freemove.co.uk)  
**DERBYSHIRE** - Down Trodden String Band  
 Tel: 01629 812092 E: [steve-wise@lycos.co.uk](mailto:steve-wise@lycos.co.uk)  
**HAMPSHIRE (Hants/Wilts)** Old Yeller Dog. Contact:  
 Dave Marshall. [oldyellerdog@ntlworld.com](mailto:oldyellerdog@ntlworld.com)  
**LONDON** - Lost Marble String Band Tel: 01462 683074  
[staceybanjos@hotmail.com](mailto:staceybanjos@hotmail.com)  
**IRELAND (EIRE)** - Rough Deal String Band  
 Tel: 00 353 1 8331920 E: [banjabil@hotmail.com](mailto:banjabil@hotmail.com)  
[www.roughdeal.com](http://www.roughdeal.com)  
**KENT** - Rattle On The Stovepipe Tel: 07765 377441  
[storyart@aol.com](mailto:storyart@aol.com) [www.davearthur.net](http://www.davearthur.net)  
**TYNE & WEAR** - Old Fiddle String Band  
 Tel: 07817 460351 E: [graham@kftfiddles.freemove.co.uk](mailto:graham@kftfiddles.freemove.co.uk)  
**WEST MIDLANDS**  
 New Corona String Band  
 Tel: 01902 340844 [penni@care4free.net](mailto:penni@care4free.net)  
**SOMERSET/AVON** - Buffalo Gals T: 01373 474110  
[info@buffalogs.co.uk](mailto:info@buffalogs.co.uk) [www.buffalogs.co.uk](http://www.buffalogs.co.uk)  
**SUSSEX** - Old Faded Glory String Band  
 Tel: 01323 832388 [barry.m.murphy@btinternet.com](mailto:barry.m.murphy@btinternet.com)

## WHERE CAN I FIND A TEACHER

**DERBYSHIRE - Helmut Rheingans**,  
 teacher of the 5-string Banjo in old time frailing style.  
 Contact: [www.orbmusic.co.uk](http://www.orbmusic.co.uk) Tel: 01433 631907  
**HANTS/BERKS BORDER - Andy Imms**  
 Guitar (Old Time, acoustic country blues, slide, country,  
 fingerpicking, flatpicking, alternative tunings)  
 Tel: 01189 701202  
**EAST SUSSEX - Barry M. Murphy**  
 Oldtime banjo basics to advanced and basic flatpick guitar  
 for Oldtime. Email: [Barry.m.murphy@btinternet.com](mailto:Barry.m.murphy@btinternet.com)  
 Tel: 01 323 83 2388  
**EAST SUSSEX - Colin Meadows**  
 Oldtime banjo Tel: 01424 714065 E: [banjovey@aol.com](mailto:banjovey@aol.com)  
**KENT - Graham Anstee**  
 Rainham ME8 0DB Banjo (frailing/clawhammer)  
 beginners/intermediate Tel: 01634 260281  
 e-mail: [graham.g.anstee@btpenworld.com](mailto:graham.g.anstee@btpenworld.com)  
**TENBURY WELLS, WORCS. - Jim Allen**  
 Guitar and banjo tuition, beginners welcome.  
 Tel: 01568 750546.  
**WEST MIDLANDS - Y.Parkes.** Banjo lessons. Old-time,  
 Bluegrass and Tenor contact Yvonne, Tel: 01902570285  
**CAITHNESS - Stuart Tod**  
 Clawhammer banjo Tel: 01847 821602  
**REDCAR, CLEVELAND - Stan Gee** teaches all styles on all  
 stringed/fretted instruments, and Harmonica. Song  
 accompaniment and playing with a band is my Speciality.  
 See my website for full details: <http://picknstrum.com/>, or  
 Tel: 01642 478859.  
**ESSEX/SUFFOLK BORDER - Richard Partridge**  
 Fiddle, double bass, mandolin and ukulele. Specialist in old-  
 time, bluegrass and British traditional music; will also teach  
 classical grades. All ages and levels taught.  
 Email: [music@richardpartridge.co.uk](mailto:music@richardpartridge.co.uk) Tel: 01440 731936

## SESSION FINDER

We rely on being informed of changes to this list.  
 Please contact [info@footmad.org.uk](mailto:info@footmad.org.uk) with any  
 amendments or new entries.

**BERKSHIRE**  
**Reading:** 1st Sunday 12 noon - The Retreat. Colm Daly  
 Tel: 0118 9677408  
**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**  
**Aylesbury:** alternate Wednesdays - The Hop Pole. Mark Wallace  
[wallace@zymosis.demon.co.uk](mailto:wallace@zymosis.demon.co.uk)  
**CLEVELAND**  
**Saltburn-by-Sea:** Wednesday - Spa Hotel: 'Pickin' Parlour - open  
 mike' £1 cover charge. Occasional Friday guest artists. Stan Gee  
 Tel: 01642 478859 [stan.gee@btinternet.com](mailto:stan.gee@btinternet.com)  
**CAMBRIDGESHIRE**  
**Cambridge:** 2nd Tuesday - at The Zebra, Maids Causeway.  
 oldtime/bluegrass. Michelina Craft Tel: 01223 897840

**CORNWALL**  
**Bodmin:** 2nd Thursday. Tony Taylor Tel: 01208 872252  
**CUMBRIA**  
**Middleton-in-Lonsdale:** Friday 9pm - The Head: old-time (dancers  
 welcome). Hugh Connor or Chris Riley Tel: 01539 560534  
**DERBYSHIRE**  
**Bakewell:** Thursday - Manners Hotel. Mac Battersby Email [steve-wise@lycos.co.uk](mailto:steve-wise@lycos.co.uk) Tel: 01629 812092  
**Baslow:** Devonshire Arms, 1st Monday of each month.  
[enquiries@downtrodden.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@downtrodden.org.uk)  
**DEVON**  
**South Molton:** 2nd Wednesday-George Hotel: Oldtime/USA  
 roots. Marianne and Martin Lucas Tel: 01237 472083.  
**Teignmouth:** 1st Thursday - Devon Arms: USA roots.  
 Bob Matthews 01626 352007 or Howard Morton Tel: 01803  
 329734  
**DORSET**  
**Weymouth:** Victoria Inn ('Knights in the Bottom') B3157  
 Bridport Road out of Weymouth, a mile outside the main village  
 of Chickereil. Contact Lynn 01258 880039,  
[lynntargett@talktalk.net](mailto:lynntargett@talktalk.net)  
**DURHAM** Monday 7-9: Memorial Hall, Nettlesworth,  
 Chester-le-Street  
**EAST SUSSEX** 2nd Wednesday of the month. The Black Horse,  
 High Street, Lewes. Tel: Michi Mathias Tel: 01273 471431  
**EIRE Dublin:** Most Saturdays, 4 pm to 7pm Cobblestone Bar:  
 Rough Deal String Band (not a session) Tel: 353 1 8331920  
**HEREFORDSHIRE**  
**Kington:** monthly - The Royal Oak. Jim Allen Tel: 01568 750546  
**KENT**  
**Rainham:** 1st & 3rd Wednesday Oast Community Centre: old-  
 time/bluegrass. Graham Anstey Tel: 01634 260281  
**Tunbridge Wells:** Last Wednesday, 8 pm Beacon Hotel, Tea  
 Garden Lane: bluegrass/old-time. Rick Townend Tel: 01892  
 782412 [banjos@supanet.com](mailto:banjos@supanet.com)  
**LANCASHIRE**  
 The Flowers, Todmorden Rd. Bacup. Clive Green Tel: 01706  
 814682  
**LONDON** Sunday. The Shakespeare, 1 Arlington Way, Finsbury.  
[FrankWWeston@aol.com](mailto:FrankWWeston@aol.com)  
**East London** - old time  
 Last Tuesday 8pm Birkbeck Tavern, Langthorne Road E11  
 Paul: [paul\\_r\\_warner@ntlworld.com](mailto:paul_r_warner@ntlworld.com) 0799 0737 539  
**MANCHESTER**  
**Manchester:** Bluegrass/Old Time session is held at the The Frigate  
 in Whitefield, Manchester, 9-11pm every Wednesday.  
 Cajun session, where old time is often featured, at Lloyds Hotel,  
 Chorlton, Manchester, 9-11pm on the last Tues of the month.  
 Free food and one drink for all musicians.  
**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**  
**Blisworth:** 3rd Monday -The Walnut Tree Inn: old-time/bluegrass.  
 Andrew Metcalfe Tel: 01604 862256  
[a.metcalfe340@btinternet.com](mailto:a.metcalfe340@btinternet.com)  
**OXFORDSHIRE**  
**Oxford:** The Duke of Monmouth, 260 Abingdon Road, Oxford.  
 Last Thursday of each month. The session is Bluegrass/Old Time  
 Contact is: Taube Marks 01865 552111  
**Wallingford:** 2nd Tuesday - Cross Keys: bluegrass/oldtime. Lucy  
 Quinn: [tonyquinn@aol.com](mailto:tonyquinn@aol.com)  
**SCOTLAND**  
 Dunblane, nr Stirling, On Tuesdays. Contact Iain Watt,  
 Tel: 01786 860261  
**SPAIN**  
 Badalona, nr Barcelona, Pub 4 Pedres, C/Lleo 33. Thursday,  
 twice monthly  
**SOMERSET**  
**Taunton:** Tuesday - The Lamb and Flag, Bladon Hill, alternate  
 Tuesdays. Derek Parsons Tel: 01823 442713 or Nick Pilley  
 Tel: 01278 450780  
**SURREY**  
 Ewshot: 1st Friday. Tel: 01276 609954  
**WORCESTERSHIRE**  
**Tenbury:** 2nd Friday - St. Michael's Village Hall. 'The Floor'  
 regular concerts (not session), pre-book a 'spot' if you wish to  
 perform. Jim Allen 01568 750546  
**YORKSHIRE**  
**Ripponden:** last Tuesday - Royal Hotel. **Rishworth:** Ryburn 3 Step  
 Folk Club. Pete Coe Tel: 01422 822569  
**Sheffield:** 3rd Monday - Kelham Ireland Tavern, Russell Street.  
 Dave Young Tel: 0114 2330596  
**York:** Sunday - Golden Ball. Mike Tavener Tel: 01904 798738  
**York:** Tuesday - The Maltings, Lendal Bridge. Mike Tavener Tel:  
 01904 798738 Hebdens Bridge: Wednesday - The Fox and Goose.  
 Tel: Clive Green 01706 814682  
**EAST YORKSHIRE,** The Tiger, Market Place, Driffild. First  
 Thursday of each month. American tunes and songs. All  
 welcome. Contact Stewart Tindale 01377 240324 or  
[tindales@onetel.com](mailto:tindales@onetel.com)  
**NORTH CAROLINA**  
**Brevard:** Tuesday - Celestial Mountain Music, 16 West Main St.  
 Tel: 828-884-3575 [celestial@citcom.net](mailto:celestial@citcom.net)  
**Lancing:** Friday - Phipps Country Store. Tel 336-384-2382  
[fiddlesilas@hotmail.com](mailto:fiddlesilas@hotmail.com)

## Members Ads

Maximum of 50 words plus contact details, FREE to members.

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**12-STRING GUITAR WANTED**, preferably old and cheap-ish but playable! Around £150? Chris Taylor 01227 750392 email: [christy8485@yahoo.com](mailto:christy8485@yahoo.com)

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Tel. 01323 832388

**STRING BAND MUSICIANS**  
WANTED for Shropshire based 'Kickin Alice' Appalachian dancers interested in playing Old Time and Bluegrass music. Contact Merrion Wood on 01743 354423 or [merrion@talktalk.net](mailto:merrion@talktalk.net)

**YEW PINEY MOUNTAIN** by Dwight Diller. The book and CD bundle is available from <http://www.morningstarfolkarts.com> for \$30 plus \$10 postage, from Dwight himself at one of his workshops, or from David Dry at 4, Gill Lane, Startforth, Barnard Castle, DL12 9AS for £20 plus £2 postage. Make cheques payable to D.S.Dry

### STEWART WOULD LIKE TO JOIN OR FORM A BAND

Stewart who lives north of Sheffield would like to join or form an Old Time String or Country band. He plays mandolin, banjo/uke, rock steady guitar, keyboards and sings as well ! Anyone interested please ring 07964192538 or email [stewartcrew2@googlemail.com](mailto:stewartcrew2@googlemail.com)

**GUITAR** (Autoharp/singer perhaps?)  
Guitarist wanted to join fiddler(singer) and banjo player to play for "Step This Way" cloggies, and complete string band. Durham, Tyne & Wear area. Colin Tipping 01207 521842 [colintipping@talktalk.net](mailto:colintipping@talktalk.net)

### INSTRUMENTS FOR SALE:

Violins, Guitars, Banjos, Other For list send SAE to: Helmut Rheingans, 7 Windses Estate Grindleford, Hope Valley S32 2HY

### FIDDLE PLAYER WANTED

Does anyone want to play the fiddle in a fiddle and banjo duo, with a view to playing for dances, barn dances etc.? They needn't be in SE London, as I'm retired and have time to spare to travel. Contact: Nick Barnett, 39 Lankton Close Beckenham BR3 5DZ +44 (0) 20 3254 1089 [nick.s.barnett@btinternet.com](mailto:nick.s.barnett@btinternet.com)  
OR [nickbarnett@onetel.com](mailto:nickbarnett@onetel.com)



Robin Gillan



Beverly Smith & Carl Jones

## Sweet Sunny South 2009

Christine Bell

It was that time of year again last weekend when Sweet Sunny South happens at the Fairlight Hotel, Hastings. The weather was looking good, it usually does for some unknown reason and despite a small hiccup with Robin Gillan double booking himself on Friday night, everything was in place for a great weekend. And we did have a great weekend.

Nick Peachey filled in for Robin Gillan on Friday with the opening set and it was a great opener, thanks Nick. He played a variety of tunes on banjo and accordion including a great Cajun tune which meant that me and my BP (banjo player in case any of you have forgotten him...) got to dance. The Kittyhawks were on next and were terrific. Lots of good harmonies from Lucy Ray and Mo Jackson with solid backing from John Wirtz, Moira Frazer and Richard Partridge

who also added the odd song and Moira joined in on some harmonies too.

Carl and Beverly, aka Smith and Jones, followed. They were last at Sweet Sunny South in 2006 and were excellent then, no change, they are still excellent. The singing, instrumentation, Carl's constant 'bubbling', everything added up to a brilliant set. Saturday was much the same except Robin opened with a superb set. He is a really fine musician, worth seeing if you get the chance.

There were various workshops Saturday and Sunday which were well attended and very enjoyable according to the feedback received. The Gospel/Singing workshop run by Lucy and Mo on Sunday morning culminated in an excellent session in the Showcase, a real achievement. Saturday was also the Final gig for the Kittyhawks as Lucy Ray will soon return to the USA to live. We'll miss you Lucy.

There were lots of little picking sessions for those who did not want to go to the workshops and I gather, from those who did stay up until the early hours, that the evening sessions went really well and were very enjoyable.

It was nice to see the 'regulars' at the festival and it was really nice to see some new faces, a big thank you to all of you. And it was great to see Bob Ward back up and enjoying himself.

The Sunday Showcase was very well attended and there were some great acts to listen too, so much talent out there, it's very reassuring.

All in all, a great weekend, roll on 2010!



The KittyHawks

# WHAT'S IN MY GUITAR CASE?

Rifling through my case the other day, I was struck by how much I carry around with me.

I thought it might be helpful therefore, perhaps for the less experienced, to know what useful items should be in a "toolkit". Hopefully you might get an idea or two from what follows. Much of this will also be relevant for banjo players too.

**Strings.** Carry spare strings, both complete sets and singles. It is a nuisance to break into a set to replace a broken top E, for example, because the chances are that you may never break any of the other strings, so you are left with an incomplete set. Pre-empt problems by buying a few singles of the strings you feel are most likely to go - perhaps 1 to 4 - and this way, your full sets will stay that way.

**String winder.** Turning those machine heads when replacing strings can be a chore, so why not invest in a string winder. You can get one for a couple of

pounds and they often have a notch cut to help with the removal of bridge pins too. Obviously fine tuning needs to be done by fingers but the winder will take minutes off the job, both when unwinding and winding up.

**Snips.** Some people spend ages winding the excess ends of their strings into six neat circles to adorn the headstock. Why? Buy a small pair of snips and cut off the ends right where they emerge from the string post. There - that looks much better doesn't it?

**Bridge pins.** I was restringing once at Sacrewell and dropped a bridge pin into the grass at my feet. Do you think I could find it? Not a chance! Since then, I have always carried a couple of spare pins with me.

**Tuner.** A cautionary note here (no pun intended). Just because the tuner says the string is in tune, they can be more accurate than it is possible for a wooden instrument to be, so you will have to fine tune the instrument against itself to make sure it really is in tune. A spare battery for the tuner would be a good idea, too.

**Picks.** I have loads of flat picks. They do wear out; the points do break off but they are cheap and easy to come by so keep a few by in case of emergency. I also have fingerpicks and thumb picks in case I want to doodle something

besides old time, which I only play flat pick style.

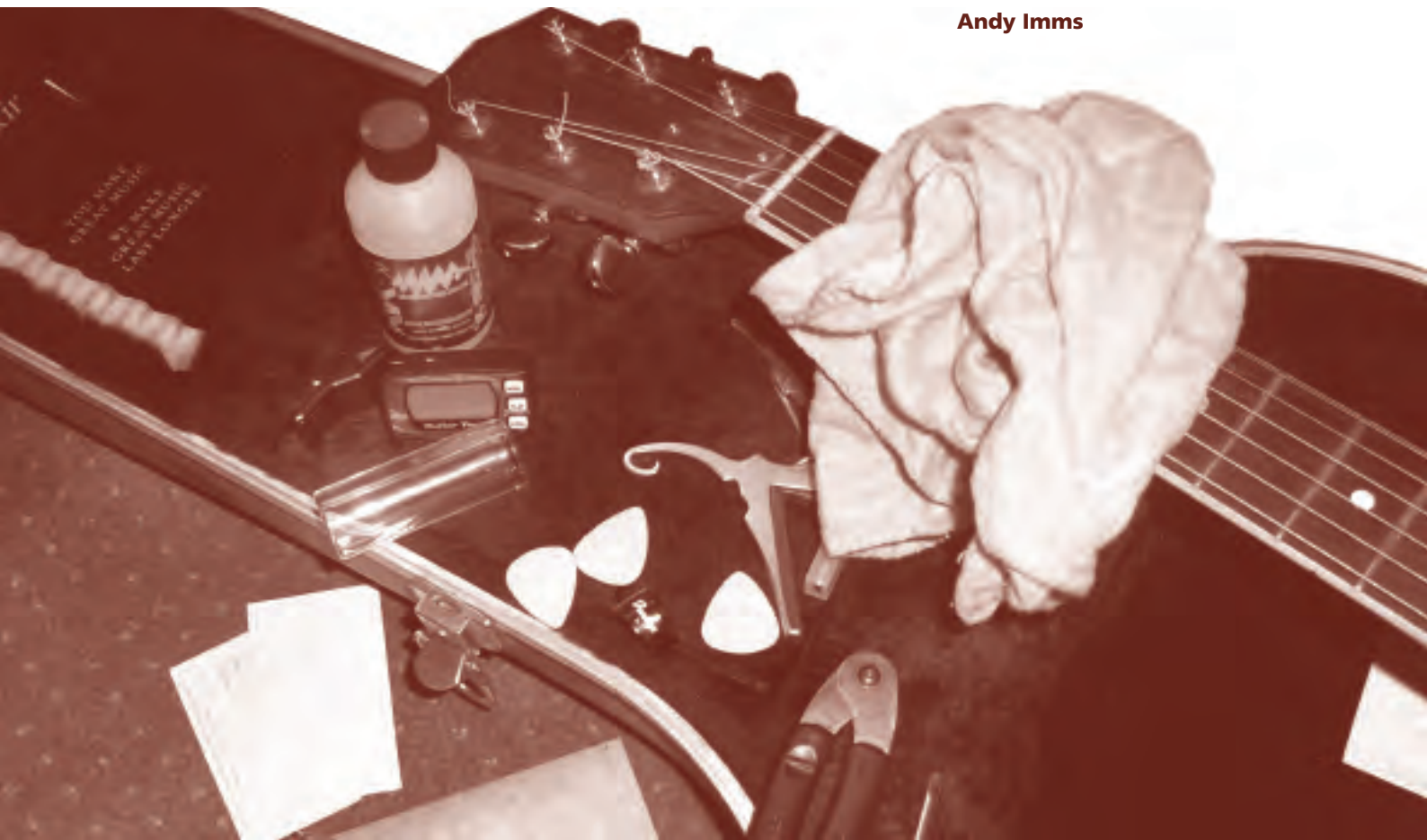
**Capos.** I carry two. One is standard length and I also have a Shubb which has been cut down so when the hinge is on the treble side of the neck and the damping arm is pointing up, it only covers strings 1 to 5, leaving the bottom E uncovered. (a Shubb banjo capo would probably do the same job). I use this as an alternative to lowering the bottom E to D, for dropped D tuning. Using the short capo at the second fret puts you in E when you play a D shape but it means you can play a proper G shape. Sometimes I use two capos, putting the full capo on, say, the second fret and the short capo two frets above it.

**Miscellaneous items** include a strap, although I very rarely, if ever play standing up; a polishing cloth to wipe off perspiration which can ruin the finish on the instrument; a slide (bottleneck), for when I get the blues; "business" cards for those times when you want to share your address or email details with someone but cannot find a pen or paper to write it all down. You can easily produce cards if you have a computer or there are machines in the high street which will do the job for you;

**Finally** - a small notebook and a pen.

**Oh, I nearly forgot. There's a guitar in there too, somewhere.**

**Andy Imms**



## DVD Review

### Always Been A Rambler

Arhoolie Foundation DVD 204

**A film about the New Lost City Ramblers - written, edited and directed by Yasha Aginsky**

By Ray Banks

**This is a long overdue film about the band that in the late fifties and later raised the consciousness of young people in America and elsewhere (including Wales, where I lived!) to the delights of the old tunes and songs of the Southern Appalachians. These they reproduced authentically on record in styles that were old when the earliest source recordings were made in the twenties.**

The band was formed in May 1958 when **Mike Seeger, John Cohen** and our own **Tom Paley** got together. After taking part in some of the many great early recordings Tom left the band in 1962 and was replaced by **Tracy Schwarz** who remained for their various appearances until what must now be the end, with the sad recent death of the great Mike Seeger.

With a narration by banjo player **David Holt**, the film uses both old and new footage from many sources of performances by the Ramblers and interviews with many people including all four members to tell the story of the band and to explain the thinking and history behind its formation, its working philosophy, and the sources of their songs and tunes. Their object was never to make money but to reveal the hidden treasure of the music to as many people as possible.

The band members collected much material from traditional musicians; there's excellent footage of meetings, jams and performances with people like **Roscoe Holcomb**,

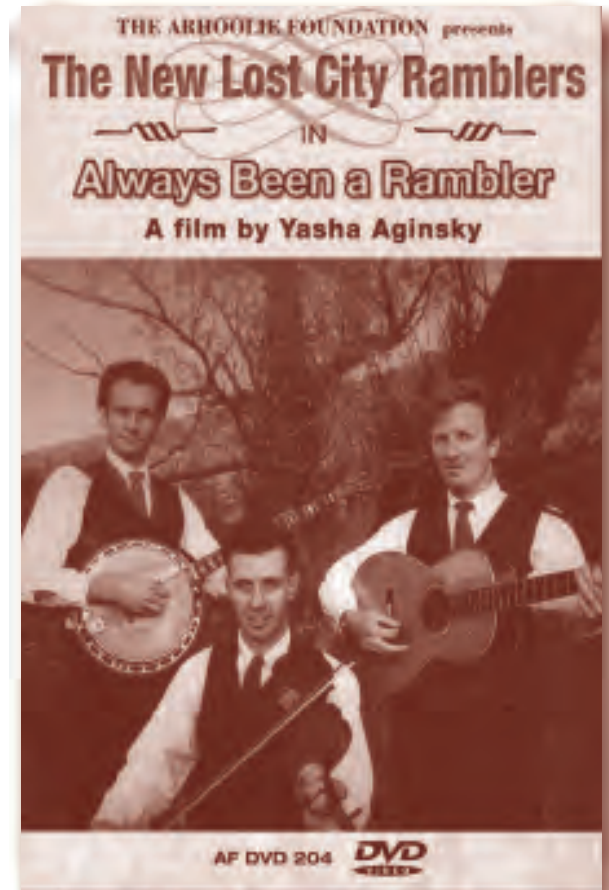
**The Carter Family, Tom Ashley, and Elizabeth Cotten.** Their Cajun specialist was **Tracy Schwarz** who plays melodeon and showed **Dewey Balfa** how to create instruction material for Cajun fiddle. Dewey was quoted as saying that the Ramblers were responsible for the rise in popularity of Cajun Music in the eighties! The story is told of how **Moses Asch** of Folkways records agreed to make their first LP without ever having heard them.

Their records sold well in colleges, where they performed regularly. It was pointed out by a long-time fan that every time the Ramblers played a college, within six months an Old Time band had appeared from the student body; I can vouch for this personally - friends and I formed such a band in UCW Aberystwyth within six months of hearing one of their early records, and changed our lives in the process.

There are some interesting comments from famous artists who were influenced by the Ramblers, like **Ricky Skaggs, Del McCoury, David Grisman, Maria Muldaur** and **Abigail Washburn** and some good musical footage of modern bands and musicians, such as **Rayna Gellert, The Carolina Chocolate Drops, Foghorn Duo, Uncle Wiggly** at a square dance and **Doc Watson**. **Bob Dylan** is heard to comment:

*"One of the things that the new Lost City Ramblers did was uncover great old songs that you could only find in those days in piles of 78s in somebody's barn. They breathed new life into those songs, and their records stand the test of time, just like the originals."*

In the seventies and eighties the Ramblers branched out into some of their own projects like Mike Seeger's **Strange Creek Singers** with **Alice Gerrard** and **Hazel Dickens**,



but the band always remained as something to get back to at Festivals and concerts.

The old footage shows beautifully how good the band was in their heyday, with wonderful arrangements and great command of their instruments, while the newer stuff conveys their professionalism and the respect which they have justly earned from the Old Time world.

As a bonus, two extra films are included on the DVD. The first is *Gone to the Country*, a 24 minute colour film made in 1969, of the New Lost City Ramblers. It has seven songs, some good scenic shots of the Appalachians and a musical conversation with veteran banjo player **George Landers**. The second is some newly released 1959 studio footage of two songs performed by the original line-up with **Tom Paley**.

This is a film for which I've been waiting a long time, and I believe I'll get full value out of repeatedly watching it.

*"We had something to say that was different and worthwhile"*

Mike Seeger

## CD Review

### Troublesome Creek String Band Fast As Time Can Take Me by Ray Banks

County CO - CD - 2738. Available from various on-line sources

**Rick Martin (fiddle, vocal),  
Steve Arkin (banjo),  
Dick Harrington (guitar, vocals),  
Lorie Lichtenwalner (bass, vocal),  
Liz Toffey (banjo uke on 6 tracks)**



This CD was made in 2005 but I only came upon it in February while driving for **Debby McClatchy's Appalachian Magic tour**. **Dick Harrington** played guitar and sang beautifully on the tour and brought some copies of this CD with him. The band made one CD and I suspect it's going to become a collector's item, as Dick tells me the band has stopped touring and probably won't make another. This is a real shame because musically these guys were made for each other.

**Rick Martin** grew up on Troublesome Creek in Perry County, Kentucky. He picked up his fiddling from mentors like **Brad Leftwich** and **Dan Gellert** and is an excellent Old Time fiddler with a real feel for the right way to play a tune; he demonstrates this in a solo version of **Ed Haley's Lost Indian** and throughout the CD.

Banjo player **Steve Arkin** was originally a bluegrass player from New York who toured with **Bill Monroe** in the sixties. After many years of playing Old Time he now plays beautiful tasteful clawhammer and also some two finger picking. These blend perfectly with the fiddle and the vocals, and the banjo

features as solo instrument on a couple of songs.

**Dick Harrington's** rich expressive baritone voice and driving guitar lead most of the songs, while **Lorie Lichtenwalner's** bass adds a solid backbone. Her mountain harmony vocals blend beautifully with Dick's voice.

I really like the song /tune selection, which has some of my favourite driving string band instrumentals with a good selection of classic songs. Sources, keys and tunings are given in the sleeve notes.

The CD cover picture shows cars fording the frequently flooded Troublesome Creek in 1957, when according to Dick the usual technique was to remove the fan belt to prevent the fan from soaking the engine. It was probably a Sunday as the people are wearing their go-to-meeting clothes. Rick Martin's dad is the little boy watching with interest.

*"I give this compelling CD my highest recommendation."*

Pete Sutherland, Old Time Herald

*"Troublesome Creek is an outstanding band: excellent fiddling, tight instrumentals and strong vocals. This is a band that serves it up hot!"* Brad Leftwich

#### Tracks:

- Yell In The Shoats/ Piney Ridge
- River Of Jordan
- Walk Along John To Kansas
- I'm Going To The West
- Dinah
- Gypsy Davy
- Ten Steps/ Little Mary Marshall
- I've Got A Bulldog
- Cousin Sally Brown
- Midnight On The Stormy Deep
- Gospel Plow
- The Three Babes
- Danville Girl
- Paddy On The Handcar/ Georgia
- Horseshoe
- Adieu False Heart
- Rockbridge Blues/ Brush Fork Of
- John's Creek
- When First Unto This Country
- Lost Indian (Ed Haley)
- Little Sadie
- Lonesome Pine Special
- Possum Up A 'Simmon Tree/
- Troublesome Creek
- The Ballad Of Cole Younger
- Sweet Marie

### I'll Never Forsake You Old-Time Country Duets (and a few Trios) Kellie Allen and Pete Petersen

By Nick Pilley

This is a new CD from the husband and wife team who form half of the 'Orpheus Supertones', and are also members of other bands. Kellie and Pete are joined here by, 'Waking Up Tillie' confederate, **Randy Johnson** on fiddle, mandolin and vocals and **Hilary Dirlam** on bass (and accordion). It would be a worthy addition to any collection and should be played often.

There is a lot of variety to satisfy a range of tastes, including vocal and guitar duets, banjo and guitar pieces, string band music (with Kellie's excellent guitar and Pete's **Charlie Poole** style banjo much in evidence), 3 part harmony and gospel songs.

The extensive sleeve notes indicate clearly the background to each song and demonstrates the range of the selections from **Carter Family, Monroe and Louvin Brothers, Grandpa and Ramona Jones** and, of course, **Charlie Poole**, to the occasional modern song (including the **Everly Brothers**).

I enjoyed this CD very much, and hope you will too. It has variety, excellent musicianship and real scholarship behind it. It is well worth a listen if you like harmony singing in several contexts. It is available from **Eve Morris**, 67 Greenway, Bishops Lydeard, Taunton, Somerset TA4 3DA.

PRICE £14.00 (plus £1.50 p and p)



# Obituary

## Mike Seeger

1932-2009

by Ray Banks

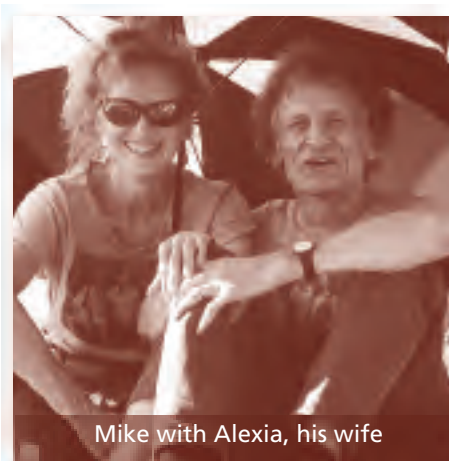
**Mike Seeger, who had been fighting leukaemia for the last few years died on August 7, a week before his 76th birthday, from a rapid onset of multiple myeloma. He had entered hospice treatment in his home in Lexington, Virginia in the last few weeks of his life, and his death was peaceful.**

He is survived by his third wife, **Alexia**, whom he married in 1995. He had three sons (**Kim, Christopher and Jeremy**) with his first wife, **Marge**. His second marriage was to the musician **Alice Gerrard**. He also left four stepchildren, two sisters; two half brothers; and thirteen grandchildren.

Mike was probably the most important and significant Old Time musician of the second half of the twentieth century, and without his contribution to the music we love very few of us would be enjoying it today.

Mike was born in New York to **Charles and Ruth Crawford Seeger**. His father was an ethnomusicologist, while his mother was a classical composer who taught music. His older half-brother **Pete Seeger** is well known to most of us as a major influence in the world of Old Time banjo, while his sister **Peggy Seeger** introduced many of us to our music in British folk clubs with her late husband **Ewan MacColl**. The family moved to Washington DC in 1936 where Ruth Seeger worked closely with **John and Alan Lomax** at the Archive of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress to preserve and teach American folk music. The Seegers sang with their children most Saturday nights and Mike had learned the old ballad **Barbara Allen** by the age of five. Soon he started listening to and absorbing from their collection of early documentary recordings.

He began playing autoharp at the age of twelve then progressed to the others, learning first from nearby



Mike with Alexia, his wife

musicians such as his parents' employee and his close friend **Elizabeth Cotton** and later seeking out other master stylists like guitarist **Maybelle Carter**, banjoists **Dock Boggs** and **Cousin Emmy**, and autoharpist **Kilby Snow**. He became a very good player of many instruments: fiddle, banjo in various old time and bluegrass styles, guitar, autoharp, mandolin, harmonica, jew's harp, pan pipes etc, and sang in a distinctive voice well suited to Old Time music. He sought out and recorded many unknown but often talented rural musicians all over the South, and rediscovered many previously well known artists who had faded into obscurity, like **Ernest Stoneman** and **Sam and Kirk McGee**. He carefully learned their songs and playing styles which he brought back to life in his own way.

In 1957 he formed the **New Lost City Ramblers** with **John Cohen** and **Tom Paley** - later replaced by **Tracy Schwarz** (see the DVD review *Always Been A Rambler*) who, unlike the many folk revival groups of the time such as the **Kingston Trio** and **Peter, Paul and Mary**, did not attempt to polish the music to make it more acceptable to the paying public who'd been fed on pop music. The Ramblers mined old 78 RPM recordings and visited with senior players, bringing largely forgotten music to life with new yet traditional gutsy and respectful arrangements. Their final performance, unfortunately without Mike, was at **Clifftop** this year shortly before Mike's Death.

As well as being a Rambler, Mike formed the **Strange Creek Singers** with **Lamar Grier, Hazel Dickens** and **Alice Gerrard** with whom he also worked as a duo. He did much as a solo artist - performing, lecturing, teaching and preparing teaching videos and other materials on many instruments. He did a great deal of work in the

organisation of festivals, such as the classic **Newport Folk Festival**, the **American Old Time Music Festival** and many others, gaining many awards and grants from prominent institutions, and held residencies at many colleges and universities. He received six Grammy Award nominations, and performed on around 50 CDs or LPs.

In his own words he devoted his life to

“ *singing and playing Music from True Vine - the home music made by American southerners before the media age. Music from True Vine grows out of hundreds of years of British traditions that blended in our country with equally ancient African traditions to produce songs and sounds which are unique to the United States. For the peoples of the rural South, their great variety of music, song, and story provided their Shakespeare, their dance music, their news, and the fabric of their daily lives. This music in time became the roots of today's country, bluegrass, and popular music and remains as ever, enduring and refreshing listening.* ”

He will be very much missed by the whole of the world of Old Time music.

## Tom Paley

Mike Seeger was an old friend and music partner of mine. He was a very private person, not very easy to get to know well. I did like him, but we weren't really close friends; we knew each other mostly through the music that we both loved and that we played together.

For those of us who love Oldtime American country music, Mike was very important, one of the prime movers behind the revival of interest in that music and, especially, in the authentic old styles of performance. His death is a great and saddening loss, not just for those of us who knew him personally, but also for those who were only acquainted with him through his performances and his recordings

# Dave Bing and Gerry Milnes

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## Broadstairs Folk Festival 2009

Josie and Graham Anstee

**Friday morning and TapRoots is off to sunny Broadstairs. The theme this year is Americana, with lots of artists coming from the States. It hardly seems as if another year has gone by and that we will be hosting our 8th year of Appalachian Dance workshops.**

We are looking forward to teaching our new Dance routine in our 5-day beginners Appalachian workshop, working towards a performance on Friday at the Bandstand in front of hundreds of Broadstairs visitors. This year our new dance "Taking the Mickey" is extra special and poignant, as it is choreographed to music composed by our own Graham Anstee in memory of our good friend and TapRoots guitar player Mick Pywell who sadly died last year of cancer. The tune is happy, upbeat with a quirky edge to it, which reflects Mick's personality. The dance, with its Sand Dance basics was choreographed to mirror this fun aspect of Mick.

We put a great deal of effort into our dance to ensure that it is suitable for beginners and is fun to do. Will our beginners enjoy the workshop and our new dance, with its fun moves? We so want it to be a success. But for now it's Friday and there is lots to see and do before our workshops start on Monday morning.

### Concerts

There is so much going on at the Festival, that it can be difficult to decide what to do. There are concerts every afternoon and evening, as well as smaller concerts in various venues around town. The Friday

night concert in the Marquee had rave reviews and was sold out to the general public. We were advised to get there early. I'm glad we did as the acts that night, were brilliant.

### Mothers Ruin

The Broadstairs programme stated that Mothers Ruin were a wonderfully talented group of young British musicians with a sound based around bluegrass, folk rock and jazz. I felt that the band was more old-time influenced than Bluegrass, so that was even better. They are fresh, up and coming; definitely a band to look for in the future.

In the programme it said that Dan Walsh has been touted as 'the best banjo player in Britain' by Hayseed Dixie's Don Wayne Reno. What a lot to live up to! But he definitely is a very accomplished musician. Bethany Coyle was described as having phenomenal vocals, with clarity and passion. She did not disappoint. Matt Price master of all things fretted played both guitar and dobro. He was glad to be in sunny Broadstairs, as he had just come back from Sidmouth where it rained non-stop and his boots will never be the same due to the mud. A young Tom Cronin was amazing on the mandolin.

### The Hot Club of Cow Town

This Trio were described as hard-swinging Western Swing and the band to see. As this was their last performance in a four-week tour of Britain, I am so pleased that I caught their act as they were so wonderful to listen to.

Elana James on fiddle and vocals, looked amazing in a striking black & white dress. She had a mesmerising, sexy, voice like melted chocolate. Listening to her play is enough to make you want to take up the fiddle. Even tapping against the microphone made an amazing sound. Whit Smith put in a sterling performance on guitar and vocals. Jake Erwin was incredible

on double bass, he played a slap style which was so fast and furious, such as we'd never seen before. Together they made a wonderful sound.

### The weekend

Along with the many country dancing, folk based workshops, lovers of American old-time/Bluegrass were spoilt for choice with Clawhammer Banjo (Dan Walsh), Bluegrass Guitar (Matt Price), Bluegrass Mandolin (Tom Cronin) and American Folk Song (Beth Coyle).

We went to the beginners Banjo as Graham had been impressed with Dan's banjo playing in the concert and was interested in seeing his approach to teaching beginners. It was good to see that there are young accomplished old-time musicians who are able and willing to teach others.

Throughout the week there are lots of music sessions in the various pubs, which cater for all tastes. Some have live bands while others run sessions for singers or musicians. My favourite sessions this year were those at the Nelson where Graham was able to play along with the likes of Ben and Tom Paley, Jody Kruskal etc. The Nelson has a lovely wooden floor and I was able to dance to various tunes that Graham (Banjo) and Mike Smith (Fiddle) played for me. Just time for a bit of late advertising, for tomorrows workshop.

### TapRoots Dance Workshop and Busking

Monday morning 9.30 am - armed with bags of spare shoes, dance and step notation, and a voice mike for Kay Anderson, we arrive at the Pavilion ready to start the workshop at 10.00. A few dancers are already arriving and by the time we start the warm up the room seems packed. As we go round the circle saying our names I recognise many of the dancers from previous workshops but it is refreshing to see that there are many new





remember Several dancers who belong to Appalachian sides asked if they could use the notation and perform the dance with their respective sides and asked for the music notation. It has even been taken over to France; do we need an export licence?

On Tuesday and Thursday afternoon TapRoots could be found busking on the Promenade. We are a small group of five dancers with three musicians. It is not long before we draw a large crowd as we start to perform our repertoire of nine dances, all choreographed by us. One lady came up to us and said that we were her favourites and that she looks forward to seeing us each year.

Friday comes around all too quickly; we rehearse and

hone the dance, over and over. Then we rehearse how to get onto the Bandstand stage and as there are 40 dancers we need to perform the dance twice so that everybody gets a turn. In previous years the most we have had on the bandstand was 28 and we filled the stage. Photos are taken of all the dancers and we are ready for our performance.

Friday afternoon, we meet at the Bandstand. It's time for more Photos'. 2.34 pm and is time for us to dance. Everyone is in place and on we go. The Band starts to play the introduction to "Taking the Mickey" and we start to dance. The audience love our sand dance sequence and in no time at all we have gone through the routine twice. Lots of clapping and cheering and we retire behind the bandstand for bubbly and our "After photos". It's amazing how relaxed everyone looks after the event.

### Step This Way!

**it was 'Step this Way Appalachian Cloggers' privilege to be invited to do a demonstration for the fourth of July Independence Day celebrations at Washington Old Hall (Tyne and Wear), the birthplace of George Washington.**

The fantastic old building and gardens are under the care of the National Trust, and well worth a visit by anyone who finds themselves in this region. The day of the celebration dawned bright and sunny, and stayed that way for a programme of speeches from local and US dignitaries, followed by songs and poems from local

faces. It's only later that we learn that we had a total of 48 dancers and several spectators. Who said that there was a lack of interest for Appalachian dance workshops at folk festivals?

As part of the warm up, we introduce simple steps that will be used in the dance. Our aim is to introduce beginners to Appalachian dancing and the most important thing is to get the basic steps & a feel of how they connect to the music. As the week progresses new steps are introduced.

Now it is time for a quick water break and for TapRoots to demonstrate the new dance. It is a fun dance with plenty of arm movement, fun steps and some clapping; hopefully it will be easy to learn. Everyone seems to like the dance and they can't wait to start.

As a dance group we are lucky to have musicians who can play at any required speed. The ability to play slowly for dancers is a much, underrated skill. Our dance notation is broken down into A's and B's of the music so instead of working from beginning to end it is easy to concentrate on any challenging areas of the dance. The first bit of the dance that is taught is from the middle part and includes a clapping sequence and one of the hardest steps in the dance, the Pony.

Over the week more and more of the dance is learnt and by Wednesday it is more or less complete. Our numbers remain high and for two days we have 52 participants.

We provide dance and step notation to participants to help them practice and



school children. 'Step this Way' were able to demonstrate seven Appalachian routines, many of which were choreographed by team members.

Thanks to Dave Turner (a well-renowned traditional dance caller in the region) and his wife Pat Turner, we were able to add extra interest by providing a demonstration of several figures of Running Set. This extra dimension evolved out of a general interest between friends that became regular monthly practice sessions, and the celebrations seemed an ideal opportunity to demonstrate our newly-acquired skills to the public.

The foot-tapping music that accompanied the day's dancing was provided by those stalwarts of old-time music, David Dry (banjo) and the one and only Colin Tipping (fiddle). It was just as well that their skill and stamina levels are high as some of the Running Set figures lasted 10 minutes each time (I've got sore fingers just thinking about it).

The Washington Old Hall booking represents the increasing number of bookings that we do throughout the year. For instance, over the year we attend several traditional festivals such as the **Durham Folk Party**, as well as the traditional activities that are staged at Nature's World near Middlesborough, not to mention the smaller village festivals and Christmas events. Events such as these give the side the opportunity to promote old time music and dance and the pleasure that can be gained from being part of it. Indeed, none of this promotion would be possible if it wasn't for the commitment of the dancers and musicians in the side who attend regular practice evenings, and weekend demonstrations.

So as a blatant recruitment ploy, anyone interested in joining the team as a musician or a dancer, and having as much fun as us, contact:- hutchinson123@talktalk.net

# Boatman Dance

Key of A

## Banjo Tab by Dave Marshall

The tablature is written on seven systems of six-line staves. Each system contains a sequence of fret numbers (0-7) and rhythmic markings (P, H, Pa) placed above the lines. The first system starts with fret numbers 5, 5, 5, 5, 7, 5, 0, 5, 7, 5, 0, 2, 0, 0, 5, 5, 5. The second system includes markings 'Pa' above frets 7 and 5, and 'H' above fret 0. The third system has 'Pa' markings above frets 2, 2, and 2. The fourth system has 'Pa' markings above frets 2, 2, and 2, and 'H' markings above frets 0 and 2. The fifth system has 'H' markings above frets 0, 0, and 2, and 'Pa' markings above frets 2, 2, and 2. The sixth system has 'Pa' markings above frets 2, 2, and 2, and 'H' markings above frets 0, 2, and 2. The seventh system has 'Pa' markings above frets 2, 2, and 2.

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# Reflections of Summer Camp

Photos - Ray Banks

