



The Old-Time News

Volume 1 Issue 3

FRIENDS OF AMERICAN OLD-TIME MUSIC AND DANCE

Autumn 1995

Recent events

Didmarton Festival of Bluegrass Music (Sept 1st-3rd 1995)

I would like to be able to give a full account of everything that went on at Didmarton this year, review the stage acts and workshops etc. but I'm afraid I can't. There was one enormous, amazing Old Time session going on almost all the time in the pub garden or in the adjoining skittle alley and I couldn't tear myself away - apart, of course, for the FOAOTMAD Committee meeting ! This session was not for the faint-hearted nor, I might add, for the purists or elitists among us, but it was a great advert for Old Time music. It seemed to outnumber any of the Bluegrass sessions I saw and although at times it was so big you could hardly hear yourself play, everyone was made welcome and even the most recent beginners were emboldened to join in and a great time was had by all.

On a less enthusiastic note, the problem with Didmarton is that you have to pay the full £20 even if you don't want to get into the marquee, whereas at



Ironbridge, for instance, you can just pay for camping and spend the weekend in sessions. We also had a Didmarton session with *Old Red Eye* (Dave Young, Eve Morris on bass and Nicky Harris)

great deal of difficulty in persuading the people on the gate that one of our number was unemployed (and therefore entitled to a massive £2 reduction) but had left his UB40 at home. Clearly folk musicians are a shockingly dishonest lot!

Appalachian Clogging Workshop at North Wales Bluegrass Festival (6th-8th July 1995) with Terry McKay from Kicking Alice

The workshops had not been graded and so were attended by mixed abilities. They were held on consecutive days and lasted one and a half hours each. The venue had a nice wooden floor but little ventilation, it being a very hot weekend.

Terry said that it was aimed at beginners although a number of participants were already familiar with this style. Following a strenuous warm-up, we quickly learned a number of steps which were then put into a routine, working in pairs. Attention was paid to eye contact and smiling at others whilst dancing.

Following performances on Saturday, the Sunday workshop gained some more beginners. It included some flatfooting steps and some free-stepping in a similar routine to the previous day. The pace was fast and the combination of shuffles and the 3 beat walking step can be confusing as they sound the same but look very different. It was certainly very stimulating and gave all participants something to go away with.

Clare Sheridan

Mountain Dulcimer Workshop at Sidmouth Folk Festival (Mon. 8th July 1995) led by Andrea Preston and hosted by the Nonsuch Dulcimer Club

This was a first, long awaited by myself and several others. 10 or 11 mountain dulcimers all being played at once was exhilarating and there were several observers along as well. Andrea, accompanied by husband Mike on banjo, guitar or dulcimer gave us some examples of how the dulcimer can perform. We were then raring to have a go.

Once we got going they wanted us to play up to speed. We played *Bile 'em Cabbage Down*, *Waterbound* and *Coming Round the Mountain*. You should have heard us - just like real old timers !

We shared ideas for picks, goose or turkey feathers cut into shape so as to be thin and flexible, but although having a real pretty sound, these are not very reliable. Andrea recommends thin picks fixed into a dowel stick (looking like a small paddle), or a piece of thick guitar string in the end of a paintbrush handle also works well.

The noter can be a piece of dowel, a pencil or a bought one with the flat end to press on the strings.

The discussion on tuning and string sizes went over my head, but I think the consensus was for DAA tuning in the workshop. You can even get a dulcimer capo to save retuning when playing with other musicians.

The idea I liked the most was to have my mountain dulcimer on the wall at home, it looks pretty, sounds good when you sneeze and inspires me to play more often.

I hope this is the first of many mountain dulcimer get-togethers. Please write in with any ideas, hints etc. that you have, I would be most interested.

Clare Sheridan

Biscuits and **Gravy**

Fiona Cameron

The West Galax Diner might not seem the obvious place to start an account of this year's adventures in America but

We didn't make it in time for Clifftop and so have nothing to say on the subject but we did go instead to a smaller local festival at Jefferson in Ashe County where we saw two of our favourite bands, the **Roan Mountain Hilltoppers** (in their most recent form) and the **Konnarock County Critters**. The next day we set off for Galax (Virginia), probably the biggest festival of the season, to make camp. Although the competitions don't start 'till the following Wednesday, you can get into the Camp Ground (or rather Ball Park) from Sunday morning and by the afternoon it's already half full. You can then stay on for the sessions or come back later in the week as we did. The camp ground does get very crowded and since most of the people seem to have enormous, fully-equipped camper vans, the facilities are a bit basic - just portaloos and if you want a shower you have to run the gauntlet of the nearby swimming pool. I was moved to protest at having paid good money for what was, to all intents and purposes, a cold shower but it was explained to me that since the heating system was solar powered it was best to come first thing in the morning - another of the famous southern tall tales, I presume !

Galax regulars tend to huddle together in large encampments with a covered space in the middle for sessions and you can do the rounds of these sessions either as participant or spectator although it has to be said that the former is easier than the latter at some of them. We were lucky to be under the wing, and indeed in the encampment of **Donnie Scott**, a highly-rated Dobro player, and all kinds of interesting people would

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drop in. But before you accuse us of having gone over to the other side, I should explain that the division between Bluegrass and Old Time seemed much less clearly marked in the States. Which brings me back to the West Galax Diner whence we and several of the aforementioned interesting people were whisked every morning in Donnie's van and where they now appeared in the guise of wits and raconteurs. My favourite was **Will Keys** who plays the banjo in such an unusual style and whose banjo-playing hand is, I believe, the one which featured on this year's official Galax T-shirt. I should, at this juncture, mention the unusual quality of the food at the Diner and in particular the Biscuits and Gravy which I had never really enjoyed before. One other name I must drop in advance, as it were, of his becoming famous, is that of **Nathan Leath** (seen in the picture with guitarist **Steve Kilby**), who at eleven years old and only playing the fiddle for two years, is probably going to be the next Mark O'Connor.

He dropped in a couple of times to play and went on to win not only the Bluegrass Fiddle Competition (they do not have a junior event !) but Musician of the Year as well and seems, I have to say, to be totally unspoilt by his success so far.

The competitions are the essence of these festivals and there are no concerts as such. At a big festival like Galax, there may literally be hundreds of musicians queuing up to go on stage in any one category and there is no running order so if you want to see a particular performer you may have a long wait. You will also have to sit through performers who differ enormously in experience or expertise - simply by getting up and doing something you can get about \$50 dollars back from your entrance or camping fees so most people will have a go. We would have done so ourselves but you have to register well in advance and they are very strict so be warned ! However, I had made up my mind to see **Benton Flippen** in the Old Time Fiddle competition and when I saw a tall, thin figure in the queue with **Jim Lloyd** (who is greatly in demand as accompanist) I decided to presume on my acquaintance with Jim and get an introduction. Unfortunately, I had decided to while away the time by trying an "Elephant's Ear" which turned out to be made of doughnut dough, covered in sugar and about the size and shape of its namesake. All that night I lay awake wondering if it was my sticky handshake that held the great man back into second place and, of course, trying to digest the elephant's ear !

The other thing they're very strict about at Galax and the other festivals is that you must not drink alcohol in public, or openly anyway, although most people can be



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seen clutching a cold beer cunningly concealed by a “huggy” (?). The sheriff’s men patrol the ground in a very laid-back way but if they think you are drunk they will certainly arrest you. The next weekend we headed for the much smaller and quieter and to some, more congenial festival at Fries (pronounced freeze) where you Fries in summer and Fries In winter - get it ? This is

set in an atmospheric old mill town complete with disused textile mill and rows of once identical, once company-owned clapboard houses. It stands on the New River (actually the 2nd oldest on earth we were told) but the tracks where the New River Train once ran have been converted into a nature walk. Thence to Rural Retreat to visit with Jim Lloyd at his barber shop. He doesn’t have a quartet but he does have



Plaque by the New River in Fries 1

impromptu sessions when people like **Brian Grim**, a fellow Konnarock Critter, drop in for a haircut. Apart from being a barber and a musician, Jim is also a local councilor and keeper of the town’s 1945 fire truck and we spent one hilarious evening taking it to the car wash and roaring round town at 20 mph ! This is definitely small town America and the railroad runs right through the middle of town. In the middle of the night it feels like it’s coming right through the middle of the bedroom as well. You soon get to know everyone and we made the rather unexpected acquaintance of the local sheriff one night in the course of an evening stroll when we stopped to admire our first praying mantis and the local busybody mistook us for burglars !

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Main stage at Galax 1995 1

¹Apart from the festivals there are often local sessions if you know where to find them. We were staying near Asheville, North Carolina with a musician friend and one Thursday afternoon she pointed us in the direction of **Jerry Adams Drug Store**. It is on the highway, miles from anywhere and sure enough, in the room at the back

of the store we found a session in progress. Jerry himself is a banjo player and made us very welcome. The guitar player turned out to be the son of Fiddlin’ Arthur Smith and he could hardly believe that we had heard of his father in England - “Are you sure you’re not thinking of Arthur Smith the guitar player” he said, “Sugar Tree Stomp” I replied and launched straight into it !

Alright, I admit it, I didn’t have the nerve. Later in the afternoon a figure crept unobtrusively in through the back door with a battered fiddle case and Colm and I instantly recognised another of our heroes, **Gordon Freeman**. Amazingly he had to be persuaded to play but once he got going he didn’t stop for hours - why is it that always the one day you didn’t bring your tape recorder ?

When we got back to London everyone wanted to know why we hadn’t got a sun tan - hanging around in drug stores and barber shops I suppose !

FOR SALE

Old-Time recordings from the US. All of Marimac catalogue and more. Listings of Rounder, Sugar Hill and Flying Fish.....contact-

Eve Morris, 64 Alma Terrace, York YO1 4 DJ. Tel- 01904-632674

Publications

Some more publications have been brought to my notice which may be of interest to FOAOTMAD members :-

1. From the U.S. - **CDSS News**, produced by the *Country Dance and Song Society, 17, New South Street, Northampton, MA 01060-4075 USA*. This comes out 6 times a year and includes dances, tunes, articles on dance and dance music plus letters, adverts and a list of dances, festivals and workshops in the UK as well as the States. The latest issue also gives FOAOTMAD a mention under the title of "Old-Time in the UK".

2. From the UK - **English Dance and Song**, a quarterly magazine from *EFDSS, Cecil Sharpe House, 2 Regents Park Road, London NW1 7AY*. This publication is, as its name implies, mainly concerned with English Folk matters but the editor, **Dave Arthur**, is himself a 5-string banjo player and connoisseur of Old Time music and there are some very interesting and evocative accounts of visits to Old Time country and consequent musical encounters, as well as occasional articles such as one on American dancing and calling by **Bernard Chalk**.

- banjos for sale

- Circa 1900 Lyon & Healy, made in USA, 5-string open-back banjo. £220

- Currently under construction by Kevin Parsons, 1920s style Vega "Regent" 5-string neck on original Vega "Little Wonder" pot. Estimated price £550

- Lots of other English and Asian 5-strings from £95; Plectrums, tenors, guitar-banjos, mandolins and ukuleles. Custom gauge strings for all fretted instruments and autoharp. Also custom made straps for all instruments. Send large s.a.e. for full listing to Stan Gee, 38, Egton Close, Redcar TS10 4PG Tel: 01642 478859

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

11th November

New Forest Bluegrass and Old Time Festival hosted by **Same Train Different Teapot** and featuring **Sugarbeat, The Daily Planet, Grassroots, Missing Strings, RickTownend and Rosie Davis and Bridging the Gap**. Will include dance and instrumental workshops, sessions etc., to be held at Bartley School, Cadnam, Hants. Further details from Mike or Andrea Preston, 12 Waterford Road, Ashley, New Milton, Hants BH25 5BH Tel: 01425 618286 Mobile: 0831 279290.

23rd to 25th February

2nd National Old Time Music Festival at Trinity Arts Centre, Gainsborough, Lincs DN21 2AL Tel: 10427 810710. This year to include banjo, fiddle, dulcimer, performance workshops, flatfoot Appalachian dance plus more space for sessions, slow sessions for beginners led by experienced players, clog-ins etc. Plus Old Time Band, Fiddle and Banjo competitions and the 2nd Annual Meeting of the Friends of American Old Time Music and Dance and celebrity concerts !

Sat 30th March to Wed 3rd April

BBMA Sore Fingers Week in the Cotswolds featuring **Dr Banjo Pete Wernick** plus **Jody Stecher and Kate Brislin** with workshops in Old Time banjo, Old Time fiddle, Harmony singing and a complete six session course in Appalachian dance plus beginners Mountain Dulcimer, all in a separate weekend programme at £25 (FOAOTMAD members get same concessions as BBMA) which will be of particular interest to Old Timers ! Bookings and details Tel: 01425 618286.

Tues 14th Nov

Pete Stanley and Brian Golbey. Excellent and long standing duo playing banjo, fiddle, guitar and singing in the Old Time and Bluegrass tradition at Dartford Folk Club, The Railway, Dartford, Kent. Info from Pete Stanley 0171 916-4178.

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Tel-0171-249-2770

Getting Started - Clawhammer banjo

Fiona Cameron

So far I've had no contributions from fiddlers on getting started, so I'm starting with the banjo in the hope that what I say may provoke some response from other banjo players.

I had already been playing old time fiddle for a few years when we acquired an old banjo and I decided to learn to play it - a little half-heartedly to begin with, it must be said ! I was playing regularly in sessions in London, so that I not only knew a lot of tunes already but I knew a lot of banjo players who gave me help and advice. Owing to financial constraints, however, I was basically going to have to learn from books. I don't read music so I was used to learning tunes by ear and in any case most, or all, of the old time banjo tutors on the market seem to use tablature rather than music. I think

most people would agree that the best way to learn folk music is by ear so that you get a good feel for the tune. A lot of the banjo tutor books include both an explanation of how to read tab and a soundsheet (one of those little floppy records fixed in the front) so you can get an idea of what it should sound like. If you already play guitar, you'll know about hammer-ons and pull-offs which is good but you'll be used to leading with your thumb which is apparently a difficult habit to get out of.

If, like me, you're a fiddler, you'll have a lot of new techniques to learn. Then there is the question of style - even within the area of clawhammer/frailing banjo there are a number of options. There is also the question of whether you want to be able to take the lead, back up the fiddler or accompany a song (or all three) and different styles may be suited to different roles.

Anyway, these are the books I used and how I got on with them but there are many other books and if you have a particular favourite, let's hear about it ! A word of warning first - if you have more than one book, terminology will almost certainly be a problem as one man's drop-thumbing is another man's double thumbing and the "Galax Lick" seems to be many things to many people !

1. Instant 5-string Banjo by Fred Sokolow (Oak Publications 1985)

I'll start with this one as it's the first one I bought - I wasn't too sure about playing the banjo and it was cheap. It's one of the series of little narrow books designed to fit into your instrument case. It deals with reading tab, hammering on, pulling off, chords and basic frailing. It also includes 2-finger picking (which he calls double-thumbing - see what I mean !) and "Scruggs style" bluegrass banjo. It was enough to get me started, but if you want to learn plenty of old time session tunes and concentrate on clawhammer, you'll probably need something else.

2. Melodic Clawhammer Banjo by Ken Perlman (Oak Publications 1979) and

3. Clawhammer Style Banjo by Ken Perlman (Centerstream Publications)

If you want to know all there is to know about clawhammer and you've got more than five fingers on each hand, these two books are for you! Seriously though, they are nothing if not comprehensive. Although MCB was written first and calls itself a comprehensive guide to modern clawhammer banjo, it is for beginners at clawhammer rather than beginners at the banjo. CSB, on the other hand, is "a complete guide

for beginning and advanced banjo players" and it really does start at the beginning. It is a big, thick book and designed to be worked through systematically at the rate, we are told, of 4-8 months for part one and twice as long for part 2. I found it a bit wordy for my taste and didn't want to read 2 more pages before I got onto the next tune, but then I always was an impatient learner. And some of us, of course, will never be good enough to make it to the end of part 2 at all. It covers a

great range of techniques, some of which are very complicated, and teaches you how to play Irish jigs and other tunes which many people (myself included) wouldn't dream of trying to play on a 5-string banjo. For me, the main drawback of this book is that it doesn't have a soundsheet.

Although it's not designed for beginners, MCB is, in some ways, easier to use - it does include a soundsheet and the first 2 sections cover the basics - reading tab and left hand techniques. Like CSB, it includes some very complex techniques which are introduced later on with the relevant tune. The last 2 sections, entitled "Jigs, Reels, Hornpipes and Set Tunes" and "Novelty Tunes", speak for themselves I think and only the first half of the book deals with more conventional string band/session tunes. Obviously, these two books have a

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lot in common and they are aimed at people who want to master “Melodic Clawhammer” technique which, as I understand it (and I’m sure you’ll correct me if I’m wrong !) means that the banjo is playing as many melody notes as a fiddler, rather than just providing rhythmic accompaniment.

4. **Clawhammer Banjo** by Miles Krassen (Oak Publications 1974)

I have to say that this is my favourite and, in fact, **Robin Gillan** who won the banjo competition at Gainsborough, told me that this was the one he used most when he was learning. Most banjo tutor books will tell you whose version of a tune they have used and this book is “based on the playing of Wade Ward, Fred Cockerham, Henry Reed, Frank George and others” which is probably why it appealed to me. Krassen says in his foreword that it is the music of the Galax (Virginia) area and of south eastern West Virginia and deals with just one style - “the clawhammer used to accompany fiddlers” in that area, as opposed, I presume, to melodic clawhammer. It may be a matter of taste, but if you’re a real beginner, it’s no bad way to start. It covers all the basic techniques, lots of session tunes (conveniently grouped by key/tuning) and a soundsheet. I only wish I’d bought this book first. Incidentally, it has a companion volume, also by Krassen and also published by Oak Publications, called “Appalachian Fiddle” so that if you have a friend who is learning the fiddle (and can read music!) the versions are supposed to match.

Two more books worth a mention although they are not specifically designed as tutors.

5. **The Art of Mountain Banjo** by Art Rosenbaum (Centerstream Publications 1981)

This book is best suited to someone who can already play the banjo as it only deals briefly with techniques, but it covers up-picking, 2-finger, 3-finger and down-picking tunes in an enormous variety of tunings and it does have a soundsheet.



Art pictured recently

6. **The Banjo Pickers**

Fakebook by David Brody (Oak Publications 1985)

Like all the Fakebook series, this book covers an enormous number of tunes and is conveniently spiral-bound so that it stays open when you’re using it ! It does cover basic techniques, how to read tab etc., so it is accessible to complete beginners and the tunes are presented in basic, straightforward versions. It includes Bluegrass, Irish and New England tunes as well as old time. The old time tunes are in styles variously described as Clawhammer, Melodic Clawhammer and Galax Styles and are arranged by Bob Carlin, Ken Perlman, Hank Sapoznik and Marty Cutler (Bluegrass only) identified by their initials on each tune.

NB Next Issue

- **Getting Started in DANCE !!**

My personal tip for learning the banjo would be to start with simple versions of the tunes (such as the 2 lots of tab included in this issue by **Guy Tucker** and **Pete Stanley**)

and gradually introduce more complicated techniques as you get the hang of them. Tab is useful for learning new techniques or a particular version of a tune but the danger of playing from complicated tab versions is that you won’t be able to play fast enough to join in a session and you’ll never develop your own style.

In Memoriam . . .

LES BENNETTS

Back in the late 50s and early 60s, pop music was a crooner in front of an orchestra, very smooth and sophisticated. Then along came Lonnie Donegan and his skiffle group, who woke things up with a jolt. It was not only lively, but simple. It said anyone with a guitar or banjo could strum this rhythm, and we did, in our hundreds. Skiffle was the impetus for lots of young people to seek a career in country music. Some people were affected most strongly by the jazz aspect and moved further into that idiom. I moved into the country side of things and discovered from the record credits, for example, who the Carter Family really were. Whilst skiffle in the beginning, was essentially a rhythmic form, Lonnie singing his high, nasal country style vocal against his rhythm guitar with double bass and wash-board (later drums), there began to be included a melodic element, what we now call a lead guitar. One of Lonnie’s first lead guitarists was the jazz player Denny Wright. Whilst highly rated by mainstream jazz enthusiasts, he was always too erratic for my tastes, as if he didn’t know what was happening. Then along came Les Bennetts, who had had his own band (Les Hobaux) and initially was just falling in on an impromptu basis, but it worked so well he stayed. Les was not an academic musician, he played by the seat of his pants, but everything he did seemed to work, from attention-getting intros, to full verse/chorus breaks which we spent hours trying to work out note for note. He had a strong flatpick technique that was fluid and fast without being scrappy. He could vary it from Rambling Jack Elliot to Django Reinhardt (he left me some tapes of himself emulating George Barnes). His style on the banjo was what we would now call Dixieland, strictly plectrum style but very invigorating. When we first met and I was introduced to him as a finger-picking banjoist (I’d discovered Pete Seeger’s little Red Book by then), he was somewhat defensive, stating that he couldn’t do that finger-picking stuff but he could play in C, G or guitar tuning (the most logical for a plectrum banjoist), but it was obvious that he had learned it at its source, in the bars in New Orleans. He was an irascible musician to work with, the only way was HIS way, and it was usually the right way.

Like most people with a streak of genius, it was balanced by a streak of fecklessness. I bought innumerable guitars and banjos from him when he was hard up, and sold them back when he had an idea for a new musical project. Typically, I lent him the last guitar he played when he had the idea that Britain was ready for a skiffle revival, but it was not to be. He was diagnosed as being terminally ill just six weeks before his death, early in July. He bore this news with stoic fortitude and ironic humour. Although only 55, he reckoned he’d lived

enough for three ordinary men. He will be sadly missed by his family and friends of course, but also by all those pickers whose initial inspiration was the skiffle craze; Lonnie's high lonesome sound and Les's magic licks. Wherever you are Les, keep picking !

Stan Gee

Sessions

BECKLEY, nr Rye

4th Wednesday of every month at the Rose and Crown, Northiam Rd, Beckley. Mainly Bluegrass but they are working on it !) Contact no: 01424-813316

EASTBOURNE

3rd Thursday of every month at the Crown, Old Town, Eastbourne. Mainly Bluegrass but they are working on it !) Contact no: 01323-412508

GAINSBOROUGH

Regular sessions/workshops led by Old Red Eye if they get enough support. Contact no: Keith Johnson 01427-613643

LONDON

Sundays at 9.0pm at the Three Loggerheads, Virginia Rd, E2 (Shoreditch)

Fridays: The Union, Farringdon Road, Kings Cross
Contact Colm/Fiona 0171-281-2433

SHEFFIELD

Fridays (led by Old Red Eye String Band) at the Red House pub, Solley St, Sheffield S1. Contact no: Jim Pycroft 01742-376989 or Bill Cox 01742-438502.

SOUTHAMPTON

Alternate Mondays at the Frog and Frigate, Southampton. Contact no: Mike Preston 01425-618286

YORK

Sundays: The Golden Ball, off Bishop Hill, York.
Contact : Eve Morris 0194-632674

MANCHESTER AREA

Contact no: Sean Nichol 0161-643-7137 for a number of regular events in the Manchester area.

Starting a session?
advertise it here and
they'll all *come!*

Building a collection

Paul & Clare Sheridan's favourite Old Time Music.

1. June Apple - The Cotswold Mountain Boys.

The Old Time band who play for Roughshod Cloggers (so obviously we're biased). They are brilliant - you just can't keep your feet still when you hear them.

2. Lift Up Your Wings - The Fiddle Puppets. (Yodel-ay-hee 009)

Old Time music, singing and stepping. It really gets over the energy of this group who unfortunately have broken up now.

3. Green Grass Cloggers (Rounder 0228)

From North Carolina, varied and lively. Clogging, freestyling, singing and Old Time tunes.

4. Rambling and Wandering - The Wandering Ramblers (number not known)

Lively music; the cover notes tell the origin of each tune.

5. Dirk Powell and John Herrmann (Yodel-ay-hee 003)

Excellent Old Time musicians. A lively variety of tunes. The cover even gives the tunings for fiddle and banjo and the origin of the tunes.

6. Make the Old Times New - Rosie Davis and Rick Townend (Bobb 001)

Nice mixture of traditional and self-penned by Rosie and Rick. Lovelysoft stepping by Rosie.

7. Human Fly - The Horseflies (Cooking Vinyl 57283132AM)

Wacky new-wave Old Time music and singing. We love it !

8. The Red Mules (Marrimac 9056)

Great tunes and songs. Some songs are the Old Time equivalent of Leonard Cohen if feeling depressed. Paul heard them first as a great dance band in America.

9. One Eyed Dog - Dirk Powell, John Herrmann and Tom Sauber (Yodel-ay-hee 008)

The same musicians keep popping up. Brilliant in any combination ! Notes on origins of tunes, very enjoyable to listen to or dance to.

10. By and By - Critton Hollow String Band (Flying Fish Records FF90355)

Includes Joe Herrmann (also on Fiddle Puppets and brother of John) and his wife Sam. Interesting collection of tunes, lovely harmony singing.

11. Southern Mountain Classics - Wayne Erbsen

Wherever you go in North Carolina you hear tapes of Wayne in shops and cafes. Here he plays banjo, guitar, mandolin and fiddle. Phil Jamieson is also featured clogging, with Dirk Powell on fiddle, John Herrmann on guitar, Meredith Mackintosh on bass and Don Redi on mountain dulcimer. All are wonderful musicians playing beautiful Old Time tunes.

That's the list we've received from our dance reps -

HOW TO MAKE A TEA CHEST BASS

WHAT YOU NEED.
 TEA CHEST
 2 METRES ROPE
 METAL WASHER
 PLASTIC PAD
 BROOM HANDLE

Knotted rope through notch in **flat end** of broom handle.
 I got **two metres of tent guy rope** about three times the thickness of string



Curved end of broom handle resting on padding (plastic will do).



Check in Yellow Pages for Tea Chest Dealers near you. Ask them for advice, my dealer used to make them and had played in a Skiffle group! He was most helpful.

The inside knotted end of the rope with metal washer to prevent wear on hole.



When you are ready to make it, drill a hole (just sufficient for your rope) right in the centre of the tea chest bottom. Draw the rope through to the inside and slide on the washer and tie the knot. Then measure by trial where to tie the knot on the top of the broom handle. Now move house to a remote rural area!

Colm Daly.

now lets hear what your favourite Old Time albums are

Editor's Note

Here we are again, Folks - the Old Time News, a little late perhaps in order to coincide with my half-term ! In trawling the various publications which are coming my way these days, my attention was caught by the following which I felt morally obliged to "share" with you ! I hope their authors will not object to my quoting them and take it rather as a sign of respect, nay approval !

From **Jam Session Etiquette** by Derek Brandon (British Bluegrass News Sept 95) -

"It's not nice for strangers if they never get a chance at the ball. They'll go away feeling unfulfilled and the session will get a bad reputation How did that stranger get into the group in the first place ? Did some considerate, socially-aware member open out a bit to let him in ? Maybe, but more likely some insensitive, aggressive, well-known instrumentalist elbowed his way in front of the poor stranger and pushed him out of the circle, just to get near to the star. Hope that you don't recognise yourself here ! And how do strangers get to lead a piece after joining a session ? Hopefully, someone notices them and asks them would they like to "do one"; more sensitive people don't like just to barge in."

From **Tune Notes : Which version ?** by Laurie Andres (Country Dance and Song Society News Sept/Oct 95)

"Learn the version of a tune that prevails in your local community you will immediately be able to share the tune with other musicians. After all, who wants to play fiddle tunes in a closet by themselves ?" and "Listen, listen, listen, but don't think too hard"

Does any of this ring a bell ? Strike a chord ? Feel free to share your views on either subject with us - I will guarantee to put it in the next issue provided, of course, that there is no foul language ! We have been lucky enough to have Art Rosenbaum joining some of our London sessions lately and he turned out to be a charming and most unassuming man - good job we didn't push that particular stranger aside by mistake !

Old Time Sampler CD

FOAOTMAD is being offered the chance to compile a CD of our music. When the BBMA did the same thing they got lots of publicity for Bluegrass out of it, including radio broadcasting. This is YOUR CHANCE to get exposure for solo, duet or band performance in a professional recording studio, and our chance to promote Old Time music. If you're interested contact:

Guy Tucker, 3 Palatine Ave. Withington, Manchester, M20 3DP 0161-445-2358

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR Fiona Cameron, 16c Alington Street, London N4 3BP. Tel 0171 281 2433.
All contributions are welcome. Box advertisements free until Spring 1996 on condition that FAOTMD members get 10% discount .

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