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Australian TRADITION

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NEWSLETTER OF THE VICTORIAN FOLK MUSIC CLUB INCORPORATED

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VFMC DANCE—JULY

Photo by Trevor Voake

MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE: OUR V.F.M.C. MONTHLY FAMILY DANCES ARE NOW ATTRACTING LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE—SEE DANCE FLYER, PAGE 8

PLEASE SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER BY FRIDAY 15TH AUGUST 2025 TO: EDITOR@VFMC.ORG.AU

The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the VFMC

WHAT'S ON AT VICTORIAN FOLK MUSIC CLUB

Session nights: The Club meets **each Tuesday** evening at **Ringwood East Senior Citizens' Hall, Laurence Grove**. Sessions run from 7.30 pm to 9.15 pm. The format varies each week of the month, and visitors are welcome to attend and join in, or just sit and observe if preferred.

Week 1 & 3 **Round Robin:** singing, playing, reciting, yarns, solo, group, etc.
Week 4 **All-In Session:** group playing of set tunes, dance sets, group singing
Week 5 **Theme Night:** workshops, 'Hot Spots' or open stage nights
Admission for **Round Robin** and **All-in Sessions** is $6 for members, $7 non-members. Cash at the door or pay by card. Accompanied children no charge.

Concerts: Tuesday of Week 2, featuring top acoustic performers plus floor spots. The concert is from 7.45 to 10pm with a supper break at 8.45pm. Same hall as the sessions. Admission is $11 members to $15 others, cash or card at the door or purchase tickets online from Humanitix. Accompanied children no charge.

Dance Events: Family Bush Dance 1st Saturday evening each month except January at Ringwood East Senior Citizen's Hall. Live bands vary and dances called. Admission is $10 members to $12. No charge for accompanied children.

More information: See www.vfmc.org.au for further information about sessions,

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31st					1st Aug.	2nd Family Dance
3rd	4th	5th Club Session Round Robin	6th	7th	81h	9th
10th	11th	12th Concert Night Guest Artist/s	13th	14th	15th	16th
17th	18th	19th Club Session Round Robin	20th	21st	22nd	23rd
24th	25th	26th Club Session All in	27th	28th	29th	30th

Victorian Folk Music Club

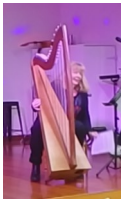
Next concert 9th September - Three A Cappella Choirs

CONCERT NIGHT REVIEW—JULY 2025

SPOT ACTS:
The MC for the night was Tony O'Neill and he introduced the Spot Acts.

Regina playing violin and Don on guitar presented two musical pieces. Firstly, *My Cape Breton Home* a tune by Holland/ Alpaugh from Nova Scotia Canada. They followed with Don switching to accordion to play some lively Irish polkas.

A fresh newcomer to spot acts, Andy accompanied himself fingerstyle on guitar and sang a Jackson Browne song*: These Days.* Then a song written by Bob Dillon 1971 *Tomorrow is a Long Time.* Good songs beautifully presented.



Maree Buttler performed solo with her harp and sang one of her personal favourite songs about bullocks and the role they played in early days: *The Teams,* a Henry Lawson poem (1896) set to music by Cathy O'Sullivan. Then Maree played *Black is the Colour of my True Love's Hair*.

Joan and Ray Mundy came up next. Joan played the piano and sang a song by one of her favourite composers, the Irishman Finbar Furey. *I Wonder Who's Teasing You Now?* She then joined Ray on stage and he played guitar while Joan played accordion. They sang an old Aussie shearing song featured in the Joy Durst Songbook favoured by the club: *Ryebuck Shearer.* Then they finished off their performance with a couple of dancing tunes.

Another first-time spot act was the group Rick and Friends. Rick played guitar, Bill on fiddle and Sam providing vocals the presented a traditional old style 'riddle song' dating back to the 1600's but still well-known: *I Gave my Love an Apple*. The presentational style projected a medieval feel to their act. Their second piece started off quietly as a beautiful musical tune building up to a dramatic Iberian/Spanish climax complete with castanets. The trio presented a very professional performance.

(continued over…)

CONCERT NIGHT REVIEW (CONTINUED)

Regina, Don and Maree returned to the stage with their instruments to join Rick and friends in an impromptu performance of Irish Gigs.

We were pleased when Cora Brown agreed to pop up on the stage to sing a'capella in Irish the Our Father. Then she led the audience in the beautiful three-part harmony chant from Africa's Cameroon: *Bele Mama* (Call Mother).

MAIN ACT: SAOIRSE

For eighteen years Saoirse (which means freedom in Irish), have been entertaining audiences throughout Australia with their Irish songs, music and dance. Although the quartet was reduced in number, Bernadette and Anthony O'Neill provided a great hour of entertainment.

They began with Anthony on guitar, Bernadette playing bodhran (Irish drum) singing *The Star of County Down*, words by Cathal Mac Garvey set to at traditional tune. Next was another traditional song *Still I Love Him,* followed by an emotional song about the return of a migrant to his hometown. Written by Charles Kickham, the song *Welcome Poor Paddy Home.*

The theme of separation continued with a song written by Bernadette during Covid times exploring the pain echoed from years ago when the Irish left home with little hope of seeing their loved ones again. *The Immigrant's Prayer.*

Carry me home, take me there, my aching heart will ache no more. These words resonate with Australians as in 2011 census, 9.4% of Australians claimed Irish heritage.

(continued over…)

CONCERT NIGHT REVIEW (continued)

Anthony explained that fiddle players picked their tunes from the pipe players and proceeded to play several lively tunes. He played a tune as Bernadette encouraged us to retreat to our own Happy Place. A tune by Zoe Conway, a well-respected Irish violinist and fiddle player.

Bernadette sang one of her own songs *Safe to Shore*. Influenced by the prayers of the wives of fishermen of the Aran Islands for their men to return safely each day from the treacherous sea.

A love song by Richard Thompson written in 1975 was Anthony's next choice. A soft, gentle style: *I Need You at the Dimming of the Day.* A change of pace when they played some lively Irish polkas on the fiddle and mandolin.

A song Bernadette wrote for her mother was about the longed-for Saturday night dances in the old days when they all danced until dawn.

An upbeat version of *John Riley/Fair Maiden in the Garden* followed, a traditional broken-token folksong from the seventeenth century with multiple names and styles.

The pair finished with Bernadette's interesting song about the chances of meeting interesting people at the *County Fair.* It was a great hour of Irishness which brightened up a dreary July evening.

Bernadette and Anthony O'Neill never disappoint, professional as always. Go raibh maith agat. (Thank you in Irish gaelic).

The VFMC extends thanks to the volunteers who always make sure that the concerts run smoothly. You are appreciated.

Next month: Cate and Amla.

Report by Bette Martin

Photos by Bill Buttler & Stephen Whiteside

THE DANCE PAGE

Diary dates for August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27th July Contra	28th Scottish	29th	30th Irish	31st Scottish	1st August English (Surrey Hills)	2nd VFMC Dance The Brumbies
3rd TSDAV	4th Scottish	5th English (Bennetswood)	6th Irish	7th	8th	9th Contra
10th	11th Scottish	12th	13th Irish	14th	15th English (Surrey Hills)	16th Bendigo East Hop
17th Welsh	18th Scottish	19th English (Bennetswood)	20th Irish	21st	22nd	23rd
24th	25th Scottish	26th	27th Irish	28th	29th English (Surrey Hills)	30th
31st	1st September Scottish	2nd English (Bennetswood)	3rd Irish	4th Scottish	5th	6th VFMC Dance The Brumbies

VFMC Family Bush dance at East Ringwood Senior Citizens Hall Laurence Grove, East Ringwood 7:30-10:30 pm contact Bill 0417 300 682

Melbourne Colonial Dancers (MCD) - Wednesdays at Deepdene Uniting Church Hall, rear 958 Burke Road, Deepdene. Contact Denise Hibbs 0493 219 385.

Irish dancing at St. Phillips Church, Hoddle Street, Collingwood 8-10pm. Contact Mary 9435 4435

English Tuesday dancing at Bennettswood Neighbourhood House, 7 Greenwood Street, Burwood 8-10pm. Contact George 9890 5650

English Friday dancing at Church of Christ Hall, 1 The Avenue Surrey Hills 8-10pm. Contact George 9890 5650

Welsh Sunday Church of Christ Hall, 1 The Avenue, Surrey Hills 2-4.30pm. Contact Ian 9878 2414.

Contra Sunday Beckett Hall, 72 Highfield Rd. Canterbury info: 0422-932532

Scottish Monday and Saturday Paton Memorial Hall, Deepdene Uniting Church, 958 Burke Road, Deepdene 8pm. Contact Deepdene.dancers@bigpond.com

Scottish Thursday Taggerty Hall, Maroondah Highway at Taggerty, corner of Thornton Road

7-9pm Contact Di Gaylard 5963 3277 or musicman@virtual.net.au.

Bendigo East Hop Holy Trinity Church Hall Keck St. Flora Hill 8pm inquiries 5442 1153

Victorian Folk Music Club Inc.

Registered No. A2511Y

Family Bush Dance

Saturday, 2nd August 2025

(and the first Saturday of every month except January)

7:30-10:30 pm - light supper included (alcohol-free)

Ringwood East Senior Citizens' Hall

Laurence Grove, Ringwood East

Featuring live music with:

The Brumbies Bush Band

Entry: $10 members, $12 non-members, Kids free.

Tickets available at the door or online at:

https://events.humanitix.com/vfmc-august2025-dance

Phone:	Bill 0417 300 682
Email:	dance@vfmc.org.au
Website:	www.vfmc.org.au

PLAYING BY EAR—DEBUNKING THE MYTHS

Myth #1: Session players play by ear

You are standing near the back of a pub, Guinness in hand, marvelling as the little session of fiddlers, flutists and a lone banjo spin out an endless stream of reels and jigs. "How do they do it?" you wonder aloud. A voice at your side whispers "They are playing by ear!".

Wrong! It is unlikely that many, if any session players are playing by ear at all. Odds are, most of them will be playing from memory most of the time. On the other hand, many of them will have originally *learned* the tunes by ear – which is not quite the same thing.

Myth #2: I can't memorise a tune

Many people say they have played the same tune over and over trying to learn it off by heart, but it just won't stick. Their conclusion is that they just can't learn tunes off by heart.

I would ask them whether they can sing "Happy birthday" or "Twinkle, twinkle little start" … or "I did it my way". Can you remember your birthday or your husband's / wife's name? Did you ever learn the times tables or the alphabet off by heart at school? If your answer to any of these is "Yes", then you can memorise a tune.

Part of the problem is that our modern way of life creates unrealistic expectations. We have access to literally thousands of tunes via sheet music and the Internet. We hear dozens of tunes every day on radio and TV. We no longer value each individual song or tune as a little jewel in its own right.

Collectors of folk tunes in the early twentieth century all tell similar stories. They encounter elderly singers and musicians in remote areas, where they have grown up with their families with little contact with town or city life. They will have half a dozen tunes that they learned from their parents. Each one will be played well, with no sense that their repertoire is limited – and why should there be? They are mostly farmers or farmers' wives to whom music is an adjunct, not their central role.

The place to start is with a modest ambition – maybe just learning the first two bars of a simple tune. Once you can produce them at will the following day, move on to the rest of the tune. Keep playing the tune regularly to make sure you don't lose it.

(continued over…)

PLAYING BY EAR (continued):

The simple method I find infallible for learning a tune from sheet music is as follows:

Put the music on a stand and cover it up with a book or a sheet of paper.

Try to start the tune without the music.

If you can't get started, uncover the music for a few seconds and try to remember the first bar or two.

Cover the music again and play the first bar or two from memory.

Try to keep it going into the next bar. When you get stuck again, peek, but make sure you cover it up as soon as you know what comes next.

Once you have memorised your first tune, wonderful things start to happen:

You find it less of a challenge to learn your next tune

You start to notice little repeated bars and sections that make it easier to remember the whole tune

You start listening to the tune as you play it, and you start to hear little changes you can put in to make it more interesting

You start to get a feel for where tunes start and finish, which can eventually lead on to (yes, you guessed) …

Myth #3: I can't play by ear

Have you ever been at a birthday party when the candles have been lit and the group of friends and family are about to sing "Happy Birthday", and someone says "Hang on a minute, I'll get the sheet music", and then everyone stands around and waits until he comes back, because they naturally can't sing the tune without the dots?

Have you ever heard your beloved one singing in the shower, and then stop and stick his / her head out the bathroom door – "Can you remember if the next note in 'My Way' is a G# or a Bb?"

(continued over…)

PLAYING BY EAR (continued):

Of course not! We grow up learning to speak and sing without even knowing it is happening. Our voices are as much a part of our body as our legs, arms and eyes.

When it comes to playing an instrument, we encounter the same barrier as before - unrealistic expectations. For most of us, we are not yet at the stage where our instrument is an extension of our body that we don't have to think about. As adults, we are apt to think of ourselves as inept if we can't do something or acquire a skill almost immediately.

Again, the place to start is with a modest ambition – maybe to play "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" by ear. One of the big advantages of starting with a nursery song is that we already know the tune. This is a valuable pointer to how to learn a less familiar new tune – if we don't know how it goes, we will struggle to play it by ear. At festival fiddle workshops, where tunes are generally taught by ear, the teacher will often get the pupils to sing the tune a few times before picking up their instrument. This gives them a way to get the various pieces of the tune in context. The teacher will generally break the tune up into short phrases of one or two bars, and point out the repeated sections to help the pupils to minimise the amount they have to memorise.

The first few tunes may well be a struggle. After a while, you will start to become familiar with your instrument and be able to guess more accurately how far you need to jump to the next note. In the beginning, regard it as an achievement if you can just guess whether to move up or down.

- by Bill Buttler

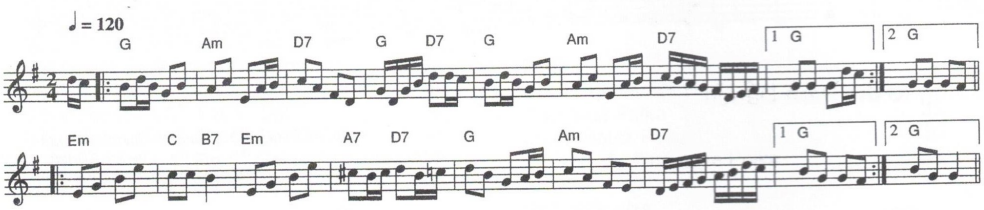
Theme Night Session, 29th July

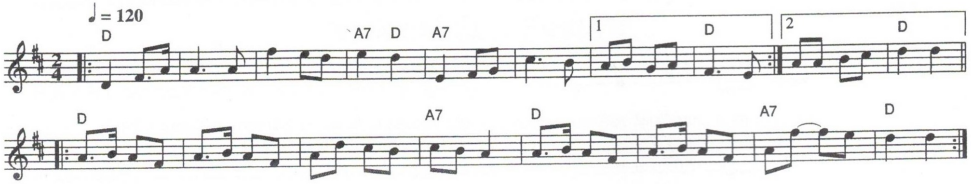
The Tuesday after next, 29th July, it will be a 5th Tuesday when we usually have a special night in the form of a workshop or theme night.
It is possible to speculate that our very first exposure to the world of music might be in the form of a lullaby, sung by our carers. The simplicity and sentiments of lullabies often makes them the most sublimely beautiful pieces of folk music, with words, tempo, modulations, gestures refined about as far as can be. Lovely stuff.
Let's make **Lullabies and Children's songs** the theme for Tuesday 29th.
To which we can add any interesting anecdotes or tales of your own first impressions after arriving on Planet Earth.
If you can't think of anything along those lines that's ok, anything that tickles your fancy. That will be Tuesday 29th. *- Don Fraser*

A PERFORMANCE BY THE BILLABONG BAND IN JUNE FOR MAROONDAH COUNCIL

- photo by Bryce Russell

5. He Played His Ukulele As The Ship Went Down

From Bill Case, Mt Gambier, SA
collected & transcribed by Alan Musgrove

4. Gulgong Set Tune

collected from Sally Sloan
John Meredith Collection, NLA
This is one of numerous collected tunes based on 'Marinarella', 5th Fig, Palermo Quadrilles, Charles d'Albert 1855.

Thanks to Trevor Voake for supplying the above two tunes, which are both from the NFF Aussie Settlers Sessions 2014.

HOW MANY VFMC MEMBERS FOLLOW THE RUGBY AND MAYBE WATCHED THE WALLABIES VS LIONS SATURDAY 19TH JULY? RESULT = LIONS WON 27-19.

If so, you might like to look this song up on YouTube—written and performed by John Williamson in 1999. It is a truly great song!

A NUMBER ON MY BACK (THE WALLABY ANTHEM)

When I think of all the men that played,
That took the knocks and made the grade,
The legends that the game has made,
I can't believe I'm here.
I'll wear the gold with a sleeve of green,
It makes me strong, it makes me keen.
And I'll go forward like a steel machine
'Til cracks in the foe appear.

Could it be a dream? My father's son, that's me.
I have a number on my back, I am a Wallaby.
And I will seize the day 'cause it belongs to me,
I have a number on my back, I am a Wallaby

And if the ball won't roll my way
No matter how I try that day,
I won't let my temper fray.
I'll fight on till the end.
And I will keep a solid chin
'Cause champions don't always win,
They're known for coming back again
And we will make amends.

Could it be a dream? My father's son that's me.
Humbled by the truth, I am a golden Wallaby.
And I will seize the day 'cause it belongs to me,
I have a number on my back, I am a Wallaby.

Could it be a dream" My father's son that's me.
I have a number on my back, I am a Wallaby.

CHRISTY MOORE— QUIZ

(1) Who is Christy Moore? (2) What country is he from? (3) Which two bands was he in when younger? (4) Name at least two of his most famous songs. (5) At the age of 80 this year, what has Christy Moore been recently doing?

Answers to last quiz (1) Songs that often reflect loss, patriotism and conflict. (2) When Johnny Comes Marching Home (3) Eric Bogle (4) And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda, The Green Fields of France, No Man's Land (5) He Was Only Nineteen.

JULY BILLABONG BAND REPORT

No gigs have been played this month.

UPCOMING GIGS:

Saturday 13th September	Yarra Rd Primary School
Saturday 4th October	Under the Fern Tree market
Saturday 11th October	VFMC Woolshed Ball
Sunday 9th November	Maroondah Festival (to be confirmed)
Friday 20th February 2026	Waterford Valley Retirement Village
Easter 2026	Workshop (to be confirmed)
Easter 2026	Dance (to be confirmed)

- *Trevor Voake (Convenor)*

TWO MESSAGES FOR VFMC MEMBERS

Dear club members, From the first of September you will see a small increase in the cost of tickets purchased via Humanitix, as the transaction costs will now be added to the ticket price on checkout. This change will not affect the cash price of tickets at the door. More information will be available during the booking process.—President.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP:

To ensure compliance with the Club's amended Constitution and recently documented Club Rules, a Sub-Committee was formed to undertake a review of the Club's "Guidelines for awarding a Life Membership of the Victorian Folk Music Club". Following an in-depth assessment of this document, recommended amendments were presented to and approved by the Club's Committee on 16th July, and the revised document can now be viewed on the Club's website under the headings VFMC Information/Rules, Guidelines etc.

As members may recall, a beautiful visual shield was created earlier this year to record the names of the recipients of the Club's prestigious Life Membership Award, and this also is featured on the Club's website.

REGULAR FUNCTIONS AT OTHER VENUES (Check if On)

Newport Folk Club

Certain Friday nights at 7.30 pm plus other evenings, e.g. Tues Blues and Sunday 2 pm singalongs etc.
See website for up-to-date calendar.
https://www.nffc.org.au

Gippsland Acoustic Music Club

Barbara Brabets, 03 5174 7403
Local musicians and concert opportunities.
1st Sunday at 7:45 pm, Tyers Hall, Tyers
www.musicclub.org

Bush Dance and Music Club of Bendigo

Monthly bush dance at Bendigo East, third Saturday every month, at Holy Trinity Church Hall, Keck St, Flora Hill. Contact Mary Smith 5442-1153 or email secretary@bendigobushdance.org.au

Selby Folk Club

1st Friday every month, at 8:00 pm, Selby Community House, 1 Minak Rd Selby
https://selbyfolkclub.com.au/

Berwick and District Folk Club

Edward Nass / Christine Trimnell,
03 9702 1223 /0418 535 264
badfolk@optusnet.com.au
Featured artist 3rd Friday February to December, The Old Cheese Factory, 34 Homestead Road, Berwick Vic. 3806
https://badfolk.org/

Peninsula Folk Club

First Sunday of each month, at the Frankston Bowling Club on the corner of Yuille Street and Williams Rd, Frankston, from 6:30 pm on. Carparking, great facilities, no stairs.

peninsulafolkclub.org.au

Boite World Music Cafe

Therese Virtue 03 9417 1983
admin@boite.com.au
Friday & Saturday - March to November, 1 Mark St, North Fitzroy, www.boite.com.au

Creswick Folk Club

Second Friday, from 7.30 pm at the American Hotel in Creswick; and Fourth Friday, from 7.30 pm at the Old Station in Creswick.
Enquiries: Graeme: 03 5334 5551
www.facebook.com/creswickfolkclub/

Geelong Folk Music Club

Phil Lester 0401 992 237 or Marie Goldsworthy 0406 610 858. The club meets on the first Wednesday of most months at the Naval Association, 90 Skene St, Newtown, Vic, 3220.
geelongfolkmusic@gmail.com
geelongfolkclub.au

Fireside Fiddlers

For fiddles plus other string melody instruments, such as mandolins.

Every Monday evening at various venues. For further information, contact Denise Hibbs: 0402 050 524

Comhaltas (Collingwood)

Joan and Ray Mundy run a session on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month, starts 7.30pm. Supper. Maree: 9471-0690

Music on the Hill (MOTH)

Mornington Peninsula, First Friday of the month. International and local artists.
https://musiconthehill.com.au

THE VICTORIAN FOLK MUSIC CLUB INCORPORATED

INVITES YOU TO JOIN THE CLUB

Members of the VFMC are entitled to -

- The monthly Club Newsletter
- Concessions at Club events
- Discounts on Club publications
- Discounts on Club CD's
- Affiliation with other organizations

VFMC Postal Address

P.O. Box 215, Ringwood East, Vic. 3135

VFMC Website

http://www.vfmc.org.au

Contacts

Secretary

Peter Kernebone
Telephone: 0408 035 147
Email: secretary@vfmc.org.au

Session Co-ordinator

Don Fraser
Telephone: 0407 737 202
Email: sessions@vfmc.org.au

Family/Children's Bush Dance

Bill Buttler
Telephone: 0417 300 682
Email: dance@vfmc.org.au

Billabong Band Engagements

Trevor Voake
Telephone: 0427 784 296
Email:
billabongband@vfmc.org.au

I ……..……..….wish to become a member of the Victorian Folk Music Club Inc. and will

(a) Support the aims of the Victorian Folk Music Club Inc and
(b) Abide by the rules of the Victorian Folk Music Club Inc.
(For details see: - http://www.vfmc.org.au/Constitution.pdf)

Signed ……..

I wish to receive my Newsletter by:
(a) Email or/and
(b) Post
(Cross out whichever is not applicable)

Please post completed form to:
The Secretary
VFMC
PO Box 215
Ringwood East 3135 Victoria

Membership Type (please circle)

Metro	Single	$25
	Family*	$30
	Junior (u 18)	$15
	Student (full time)	$20
	Single Concession	$20
	Family Concession*	$25
Country	Single	$20
	Family*	$25

*Family – Parent/s & any children under 18

Name: ……
Address……
……
Email ……..
Phone/s……