

The Balladeer

Monthly newsletter of Acoustic Routes, Wellington's folk music club

Acoustic  Routes

www.acousticroutes.org.nz

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This newsletter can be printed out from a pdf located on the website <http://acousticroutes.org.nz/news/the-balladeer/>

1. AR Winter Singaround Special – Your chance to star! Tawa Community Centre, Monday 17 June, 7:30 pm

June is a big month for the stars – June 21 is the Midwinter Solstice (and the shortest day) and towards the end of June, the cluster of stars we know here as Matariki (the Pleiades) will rise in the sky, giving rise to the beginning of the Māori New Year. We'd like to invite you to celebrate whatever part of that may be important to you in a singaround with a cosy hygge-style* ambience at the Tawa Community Centre.



Note we have changed both the venue and the date so as not to clash with other events that may be scheduled at this time. Our usual singaround at Johnsonville on the third Monday is cancelled for this month.

Bring your songs, poems or tunes with a wintry, starry and/or Matariki theme and let's warm up the winter's night together. To keep it cosy there won't be a sound system, and to keep it safe, there won't actually be an open fire!

If you'd like to participate by performing a number or two, please contact Ruth on 0274 515 486 to register.

We're looking forward to seeing you there. We may even have some seasonal refreshments to share!

Entry: \$7/\$5 for AR members. Cash only (no eftpos facilities).

Parking on site or catch the number 60 bus or the Porirua train.

* According to the *Scandinavia Standard*, hygge embodies a feeling of comfort, contentment, and well-being through simple and everyday experiences. It encompasses a range of feelings and experiences related to cosiness, togetherness, and an appreciation for life's small pleasures ...

2. Open Mic, Plimmerton Boating Club, 10 Moana Road Plimmerton, Wednesday 12 June, 7 pm

The Open Mic is still happening, almost as usual, until Roy returns.

Please note: no pre booked spots this month, put your name up when you get there.

Spread the word.



3. Newtown Open Mic upstairs at The Office, 124 Riddiford Street Newtown, Sundays 9 & 30 June, 5:15 – 8pm



Newtown Acoustic Sound's "Open Mic", upstairs at The Office Bar in Riddiford Street, Newtown.

Contact: kevin.ikin@supermail.co.nz, or newtownacousticsound@gmail.com

4. No AR monthly singaround this month

Instead, please sign up for or come along to our singaround Winter special on Monday 17 June at Tawa Community Centre.

Normal service will resume in Johnsonville on Monday 15 July, 7:30 pm at the Rimu Room, Johnsonville Community Hub, 33 Johnsonville Road



5. AR May concert review

Review—May concert: Alan Downes, opened by Downundermutts and Madillionette (by Helen Dorothy)

NZ Music Month!! And what better way than to host some of our own musical members in a concert that covered all bases—thought-provoking originals through to real mood-lifters, with a waft of 'blue smoke' and plenty of wit. All up, we had a "country good time" on a chilly evening in our "windy city nestling snugly in the hill".

Downundermutts had us smiling before they'd even started—their crisp, embroidered shirts and warm smiles hovering by the condenser mic as they balanced Pete's acoustic

guitar and Cathy's upright bass and fiddle in the 'mix'. Together they delivered a set of songs reflecting their 20 years in Aotearoa, amongst them a Maori hymn, a Kiwi classic singalong, and originals about life before (the 1957 Tornado in Kansas City) and after their migration where "the bottom of the planet [is now] the top of [their] world". Sandwiched in it all was a cover of Blue Smoke and a pop quiz with a kiwi prize for whoever knew the composer and singer. A winning combination of husky and bright vocals, solid bass work, Americana style guitar licks, and a pitch-perfect yodel!

Watching blood family on stage is enthralling—there's a unique harmony and ease that is hard to describe. No surprise then, the **Madillionettes** sailed through their set of originals in relaxed style, showcasing Jude's lyrics and the skills Joe has developed on his various instruments. A tune called 'Squidgings' (names like that just hook you in!) was a little adventure on mandolin and fiddle. Next, a "cracker of a song" (audience), a moving conversation between mother and child caught up in the Tarawera eruption. Then a fast-paced co-write featuring a multi-tasking Jude on guitar and kazoo. 'Woolshed' was nostalgic and clever ("muster our hearts", a place to spin a yarn) and Joe's accordion solo well-constructed. Turns out he has jazz influences, which explains his impressive sound. A lovely set packed with imagery.



Our headline act, **Alan Downes**—always a treat! Making the trip down with his guitar from the Hawkes Bay back blocks for this concert was so worth it because we never tire of this 'country boy's' take on rural life. Now several albums down the track since he first tentatively showed up at Mojo Invincible Open Mic on Willis St all those years ago, he is on a roll, churning out his song-stories like nobody's business. Except it is our business...his collection is a treasure chest, and we hold each song up to the light to study, marvel at. They are wistful. They are witty. Wonderful documentations of daily life in days gone by that we, somehow, all relate to. Alan's set bursts with songs about "stubborn old dudes" of horses, second-hand automobiles, 'Diamond Nights' in a Hastings bar, "that ol' Shag dog" (it's always his fault), and of course the 'Neighbour's Wife'. There were poignant songs too: a soldier's 'Redemption' ("a moment when the shadows bring the evening on and sunshine finds another place to

fall"), and 'Mother's Beer' providing a way for those who spend the day "sorting tricks of nature out" to share their heavy loads. Then it's back to the quirky, a Christmas gathering wrapping things up with "who's gonna take Mama home tonight", and "dancing styles extended" in the Woolshed. His punchy ballads don't need any musical embellishments. He's a master at his straight-up, as-it-is delivery. Brilliant!

Our May concert was dedicated to our long-standing member Roy McGuinness—we wish him all the best in his recovery journey ahead.

6. Obituary: HUGH MACDONALD

On 28 May 2024 we lost a National Treasure. Hugh Macdonald, film director, passed away after a long illness. Hugh was neither a musician nor a singer but he enjoyed attending folk and bluegrass concerts and became a good friend to many of our musicians. In 1965 he compered the concerts at the first Wellington Folk Festival. He listened with a discerning ear and knew instinctively which of our performers should be filmed for posterity.

Hugh started his film career at The National Film Unit in Wellington, making documentary films for the Pictorial Parades which were shown as shorts, before the main feature, in cinemas. After the Film Unit closed down, Hugh continued to make documentaries with his own company Hugh Macdonald Films. He was an extraordinary and dedicated film maker who felt duty bound to document New Zealand's history because he felt that if he didn't do it no one else would.

He and folksinger Dave Jordan collaborated on the documentary "This Is New Zealand" which was shown at Expo 70 in Osaka. Many more documentaries followed often featuring music by New Zealand

folksingers including the Hamilton County Bluegrass Band "live" at the Wellington Bluegrass Society.

His last film was a full-length feature about Sheila Natusch, the writer, illustrator and scientist who lived in Owhiro Bay. This was the last of a legacy of wonderful documentaries that he has left for us, and for future generations.

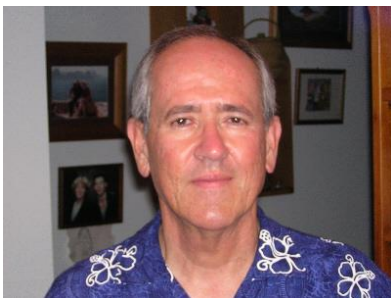


Photo courtesy of The Big Idea, 2015
<https://thebigidea.nz/stories/screentalk-hugh-macdonald>

MOGGIE GRAYSON

29 May 2024

Farewell Bob Large



Bob Large, photo from his webpage on kiwifolk.org.nz

Sadly we have lost another member of the New Zealand folk community this month. Bob Large, from Auckland, and known to many around the country, passed away last week.

A memorial event for Bob will be held on Sunday 16 June at 1pm, upstairs in the New Zealand Maritime Museum, Corner Quay and Hobson streets, Viaduct Harbour, Auckland.

7. Balladeer music noticeboard

Where you can advertise your music-related items—lessons, instruments, gigs, band members wanted, etc.

a) 'Songs of the Sea', Undercurrent, 118 Tory Street, Thursday 20 June, 7.30pm

A short concert by **Ladybird**, Mary Livingston and Sue Chamberlain. We invite you to an evening of folk songs, poems and tales, with original close part harmonies and instrumentation. Mary and Sue will be joined by guest appearances from musician Joe Coleman and spoken word by Anne Chamberlain. Doors open at 7pm and the concert starts at 7.30pm. Tickets \$15 from www.eventfinda.co.nz

b) Rumour has it that The Kist (including friends of Acoustic Routes Jude Madill and Pat Higgins) is also playing at Undercurrent this month – as you may know, The Kist's music is rooted in Irish traditional, Gaelic, Te Reo, Americana, old-time, and includes some original songs. 7pm Saturday 8 June, with support act Helena Faust. See more about these and other Undercurrent events at <https://www.facebook.com/undercurrentbookswellington>

c) Up Close and Personal Plimmerton presents Helen Capes, 21 Gordon Road, Plimmerton, Saturday 22 June 7:30pm



Helen's voice and the Northumbrian smallpipes – a magical combination. This ex-pat 'Hexhamshire Lass' has played festivals and clubs across Britain and Australia as well as New Zealand. Songs and tunes delivered with that classic Northern England humour, and the plaintive sound of the smallpipes, evoke a sense of place with a musical sensibility not often enough heard these days. Based on a strong respect of tradition, Helen delivers a

diverse repertoire that is as engaging as it is charming.

\$20.00 per person. BYO drinks and a small plate to share for supper. Feel free to arrive from 6.30 to mix and mingle.

To book, text Annie 027 459 9376.

d) Songs 6021, The Moon Bar, 167 Riddiford Street Newtown: Sundays 2 & 16 June and Thursday 13 June, 7pm

Thursday 13 June Thirsty Thursday featuring: Mercura, Mahesh Sukhalal, George Young and Danica Bryant

Sunday 16 June Songwriters' Showcase TBA

Doors open at 5:30 pm, Music from 7 pm. \$12 from Eventfinda or \$15 at the door.

Songs6021@gmail.com

Songs6021 on Facebook and Instagram

e) Fig Tree Cottage in Greytown - Winter Special for Acoustic Routes Members

Escape to the country with this special offer of \$80 per night including breakfast (minimum two nights). Fig Tree is a warm, comfortable one-bedroom cottage that can sleep up to four (using the sofa bed in the living room) and is dog friendly. Available

June, August, September. Check it out on Facebook or AirBnB then book direct with Janette WG 02102361951.

8. Want to perform?

The AR Committee would like to hear from you if you are interested in performing at our events, including support acts for our monthly concerts. Contact us at performers@acousticroutes.org.nz.



9. About AcousticRoutes

Acoustic Routes (Wellington Folk Centre Incorporated) is a club for people who enjoy playing and listening to folk and acoustic styles of music.

The fourth Thursday of the month generally features a concert, usually with a visiting artist and support acts from amongst our membership. Check the website or the Balladeer for updates about the venue. Members get priority access to performance opportunities and can have input into the club's activities. To join, email treasurer@acousticroutes.org.nz.

Acoustic Routes publishes this newsletter (The Balladeer) at the start of every month, and also an acoustic gig guide for the Wellington region (Acoustic Routes update). You can [subscribe online](#), or contact publicity@acousticroutes.org.nz.

10. Acoustic Routes contacts

President: Ruth Birnie president@acousticroutes.org.nz

Correspondence: Anne McGregor secretary@acousticroutes.org.nz

Treasurer/Membership: Sue Ikin treasurer@acousticroutes.org.nz

Balladeer: editor Philippa Boy balladeer@acousticroutes.org.nz

Acoustic Routes update email: Anne McGregor

secretary@acousticroutes.org.nz **Performance opportunities:**

performers@acousticroutes.org.nz

Postal address: PO Box 27-191 Marion Square, Wellington, New Zealand.

Website: www.acousticroutes.org.nz

11. Other regular folk events/contacts in the region – please check websites or email for updates

Ceol Alba Scottish Music Club

When: 4th Friday of the month, 7.30 - 9.30pm. A club for playing and/or listening to (mostly) traditional Scottish music. Sheet music supplied or downloadable
Where: Lower Hutt
Cost: \$5 per night
Contact: Lynne Scott, 04 565 0164 lynne@scott.gen.nz

Levin Folk Music Club

When: 2nd Friday of month, 7.30 pm, blackboard concert plus guest artist.
Entry: Members \$5, Non-Members \$10, Children \$3 (includes supper)
Club Night: 4th Friday of month, 7.30 pm \$2 Koha.
Where: Horowhenua Scottish Society Hall, cnr Bartholomew Rd and Middlesex St.
Details: Website: www.levin-folk-music-club.org.nz

Mainly Acoustic Music Club

When: (Mostly) every 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm
Where: Mayfair Cafe, 116 Main Street, Upper Hutt
Contact: Mary Khalil 021 02314505 mary.khalil@xtra.co.nz
Club committee email: info@mainlyacoustic.co.nz
Website: https://mainlyacoustic.co.nz/coming_attractions/

Morris dancing: Dave Barnes <http://www.morrisdancing.org.nz/>

Poneke Shanty Club

When: 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month 7-9pm
Where: The Welsh Dragon Bar, 10a Cambridge Terrace, Wellington
<https://www.facebook.com/PonekeShantyClub/>

Pukerua Bay Folk Club

When: 1st Thursday of the month, 8pm (no club night in January)
Where: 9 Donlin Rd, Pukerua Bay
Contact: Murray or Julie Kilpatrick, (04) 239 9951, musicianmurray@gmail.com

Trad Singing Session with Dave Barnes hosting

When: 2nd and 4th Monday of the month, from about 6.45pm
Where: The Welsh Dragon Bar, Wellington. This session celebrates unaccompanied singing in traditional style. Fine beer and food to be had at the bar.
Contact: Dave Barnes david.barnes@xtra.co.nz

Wellington Bluegrass Society

When: 3rd Friday of the month, 8pm
Where: 54 Richmond Street, Petone
Contact: Contact: Andrew Bicknell, (04) 477 0069, bluegrass@xtra.co.nz
<https://wellingtonbluegrass.net.nz/>

Wellington Scottish Fiddle Club

When: Varies, but mostly monthly around the first Sunday
Where: Depends on who is hosting it this time! A club for learning tunes in the traditional "by ear" style, it welcomes fiddlers of all levels.
Cost: Mostly free
Contact: Iain Matcham 04 568 8635, email iain@jumbletree.com