

The Balladeer

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



www.acousticroutes.org.nz

Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane, Johnsonville
(up behind the former Collective Community Hub)

February 2026: In this issue

1. **AR Monthly Concert**, Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane, **Monday 16 February 7.30pm**, featuring **Vikki Clayton**, with support acts **Jo Sheffield, and Duo Nigel Parry & Tamara**
2. **Acoustic Routes Social Club**, Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane, **Wednesday 4 February 1:30 pm**, featuring **Portable Panic - Jenny Kilpatrick & Tony Ricketts**
3. **Open Mic** at Plimmerton Boating Club, **Thursday 12 February 7pm**
4. **AR monthly Singaround, PLEASE NOTE No Singaround this February**
5. **Newtown Acoustic Sound** Open Mic at The Office, 124 Riddiford Street, **Sunday 22 February 5:15–8pm**
6. The Joan Prior Award
7. About Acoustic Routes
8. Want to perform?
9. Acoustic Routes Contacts
10. Balladeer Music Noticeboard
11. Other regular folk events/contacts in the region

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

1. AR monthly concert featuring **Vikki Clayton**, with support acts **Jo Sheffield**, and duo **Nigel Parry & Tamara**, Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane, Monday 16 February, 7:30



London-born **Vikki Clayton** has been immersed in music since childhood and later trained at the Trinity College of Music. A teenager in the folk-club scene, she fell hard for English traditional song, while keeping a love of rock and prog in the mix - an influence you can still hear in the breadth and drive of her performances today. She came to wider attention with cult folk-rockers Ragged Heroes, and her (unintentional) vocal resemblance to Sandy Denny led to invitations connected with Fotheringay and Fairport Convention circles. Vikki has released eight solo albums and appears on many other recordings, with guest collaborators including John Giblin (Simple Minds), Martin Barre (Jethro Tull) and Liam Gnochey (Steeleye Span).

She's also sung alongside folk greats such as Richard Thompson, Ralph McTell and John Martyn. Now a global citizen between NZ, Cyprus and the UK, Vikki continues to sing with a sweet, clear voice, her distinctive guitar style, and a set that can move from laughter to tears - and back again - fast.

Photo Credit: Gerard Hudson

Jo Sheffield has been part of the Wellington folk scene since 2020, after moving to Upper Hutt from Levin. She's an integral member of all-girl Eagles cover band **The Eagals**, and along with Phillip Hope, formed singer-songwriter duo **Hope and the Hobo**. Until Phil sadly passed away in 2025, the duo played locally and further afield for several years.

Jo released a solo album of her own songs in 2023 entitled "Gypsy Mind" and has also been involved in compilations with other singer-songwriters. Her compositions are quirky and thought-provoking and combine influences from UK Folk, contemporary and alternative singer-songwriters, americana and blues. She is currently working on an AV show. Expect self-accompanied arrangements and topics covering a wide variety of Jo's own influences and life experiences.



The Duo - Nigel Parry & Tamara.

Nigel Parry is synonymous with Soulful Folkiwi Music. As well as People's Choice at Wellington Folk Festival, Nigel is an award-winning songwriter.

Tamara has been involved with the Wellington folk scene for a few years, singing mostly unaccompanied. You may have sung with her at one of the late night trad sessions at Wellyfest.

We're really looking forward to hearing them perform together as a duo.

2. Acoustic Routes Social Club, Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane, Wednesday 4 February, 1:30pm

Our first event for the year, the Social Club, features singer and multi-instrumentalist Jenny Kilpatrick and singer-songwriter Tony Ricketts.

They've been playing music together off and on for decades, stealing the name **Portable Panic** from their company. Between them their musical interests and experience include British Trad and old pop songs and playing with **Easy St** and Celtic band **Tattie Jock** (Tony), **The Madillionaires** (both), **The Eagals** and **The PJs** (Jenny), among others. They're currently rehearsing for some booked North Island gigs featuring Tony's own songs. They'll be doing a couple at the Social Club, as well as some old favourites of theirs and hopefully yours too. In the second half, we'll go around the circle and you're welcome to lead a song or tune if you wish. All welcome; bring instruments and voices. \$5 charge for the musician.



3. Open Mic, Plimmerton Boating Club, 10 Moana Road Plimmerton, Thursday 12 February 7pm

Hosted by Roy McGuinness.

Please note: no pre-booked spots - put your name up when you get there. Spread the word.

Plimmerton Open Mic is Monthly second Thursdays.



4. AR Monthly Singaround, Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane, Johnsonville – no Singaround in February

Please note we've booked the upstairs room at the Johnsonville Club to hold our singarounds on the **second Monday of the month at 7:00pm, starting on 9 March, 2026**. The format will be as it is currently but in the evening, i.e. bring songs, tunes or poems to share, or just come to join in.

The first one (at least) will be hosted by Janette Munneke. No charge for entry. Feel free to purchase tea, coffee, drinks and snacks at the bar.

Thanks to those who gave us feedback about the proposed change of time and date. We're still keen to hear from anyone who'd like to take a turn at leading the Singaround occasionally. If that's you, let Ruth Birnie know on President@AcousticRoutes.org.nz.

5. Newtown Acoustic Sound's Open Mic, Upstairs at The Office, 124 Riddiford Street, Sunday 22 February 5:15 – 8pm



Newtown Acoustic Sound's "Open Mic", upstairs at The Office Bar in Riddiford Street, Newtown, in association with Acoustic Routes, organised by Janine Mitchell with back-up from Kevin Ikin.

Please note, from February, the Open Mic will be held on the last Sunday of the month only.

Contact:

janinemitchell04@gmail.com,
kevin.ikin@supermail.co.nz,
or newtownacousticsound@gmail.com

6.



The Acoustic Routes Joan Prior Award is offered to encourage younger musicians in their folk music journey. This year we offered a prize of \$500 and asked applicants to provide a proposal for how they would spend the money to further their involvement in folk music. We decided to split the award money between two applicants, a solo artist and a duo.

They are:

- **Noah Martin**, who is studying Composition and Jazz Performance at Te Kōkī NZSM. He is keen to develop his solo performance skills, and his dream is to become a full-time touring musician, blending the genres that inspire him, including folk music. He will put the money towards a planned "acoustically-driven tour/concert series" in the next year.
- **Dillon Jo**, a singer/songwriter duo that "writes ballads with a focus on harmonies and storytelling". The duo members, **Georgie Levien and Betty Smith**, only started making music together a year ago and describe themselves as an indie/rock/pop band. With their new backing band, they've wasted no time in putting the money from the award towards making the music video for their second single, "Shiver", which you can see here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_8juSE9FDIg

Congratulations to Noah, Betty and Georgie! We wish them well for the future.

7. About Acoustic Routes

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

Our main monthly event is **every third Monday** except in January, October and December. It generally features a concert, usually with a visiting or local artist and support acts from amongst our membership.

Other regular (monthly) events include an informal Social Club with a booked guest, held in one afternoon a month, and a Singaround where attendees can participate. We also support two Open Mic Gigs: the Newtown Acoustic Sound at the Office Pub in Newtown, and the Open Mic at the Plimmerton Boat Club.

Our venue for the third Monday event, Social Club and Singaround is the Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane, Johnsonville, Wellington, which has parking and a bar, and a lift for wheelchair access.

Membership: Members get discounted entry and a say in the club's activities. The membership year is from July to June. To join, go to <https://acousticroutes.org.nz/join-us/>. Payment online is appreciated.

Note that membership is currently discounted as there is only half a year to go, so if you haven't joined up yet, you might like to do it now to take advantage of the knock-down price!

Acoustic Routes publishes this newsletter (The Balladeer) at the start of every month, and an email update about acoustic gigs in the region later in the month. You can subscribe online on this webpage - <https://acousticroutes.org.nz/news/> or contact publicity@acousticroutes.org.nz.

8. Want to perform?

The Acoustic Routes 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. 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: Anna Macfarlane balladeer@acousticroutes.org.nz

Acoustic Routes updates: 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

10. Balladeer Music Noticeboard

Where you can advertise your music-related items—lessons, instruments, gigs, band members wanted, etc. To place a notice, please email balladeer@acousticroutes.org.nz

- **A (Very) Late Sea Shanty Society Christmas, Abandoned Tap Room, 38 Fitzherbert Street, Petone, Friday 30 January 2026, 7:30 – 10:30pm**
- **Alex Seel and Jon Sanders (UK), Saturday 31 January 8:00pm**, hosted by **Wellington Bluegrass Society** at the **Abandoned Taproom, Petone**. \$30 / \$25 members or children.



"Make no mistake, the audience raved about the sheer scope of musical interplay and different genres... Sanders with his jazz-tinged Irish, Arabesque and world music solos ... accompanied masterfully by Seel's impressive guitar... The audience loved Seel's folk, pop and blues influenced songs and duos with Sanders." - *RheinZeit, Germany*

See the Wellington Bluegrass Society website for more details and for tickets.
<https://wellingtonbluegrass.net.nz/event-detail/>

- **Andrew London, Days Bay Pavilion, 611B Marine Drive Sunday 1 February 6-8pm**
- **Ali Whitton, Bill Hickman & Geoff Kunac, Songs at Vogelmorn, Thursday 5 February 7pm** Windswept folk and alt country.



- **Wellington Bluegrass Society, Old-time Music and Bluegrass jam/Banjo session**, Sunday 8 February 2-5pm, Memelink Artspace, 223 The Esplanade, Petone. Contact andrewbicknell2018@gmail.com

- **Scott Cook and Pamela Mae (Can), Abandoned Taproom, Petone, Sunday 8 February, doors open 7pm, show starts 7:30pm. R18, GA, tickets \$20.**
"Whip-smart, bone-achingly lovely, socially committed songs presented with a bold, elegant directness..." Marc Jacobs, Notional Space, Vancouver. Put this in your calendars – they wowed us at Auckland Folk Festival! Tickets available on Under the Radar.

<https://www.undertheradar.co.nz/ticket/31160/Scott-Cook---NZ-Tour.utr>



Balladeer Music Noticeboard (continued)

- **Mainly Acoustic Music Club, Mayfair Cafe - 116 Main Street, Upper Hutt, the first for 2026 - Tuesday 10 February 7:30-10pm**
Featuring **Los Manuelitos, Richard Johnson, Nycki Proctor, and Gary & Donna Creary** www.mainlyacoustic.co.nz/contact-us

NOTE: Lift generously offered to Acoustic Routes members/supporters to attend monthly Mainly Acoustic concerts

From Ngaio (or nearby) to Mainly Acoustic Music Club most 2nd Tuesday of the months, 7.30pm Mayfair Cafe, 116 Main Street, Upper Hutt

Bill says, "I've space for 3 (or 4 at a pinch). No cost - it's an electric car and I'm going anyway". Ring Bill Dashfield 0221 923 326

- **Nicola Mitchell with Mikey Muggeridge and Jo Moir, Valentine's Day House Concert at Hilltop, 17 Upland Rd, Saturday 14 February 7pm for 7.30**
Nicola's playlist "for the smitten, slightly bitter & the happily single".
Tea, coffee & snacks provided. BYO anything more you'd like.
www.hilltophouseconcerts.co.nz/upcoming-gigs/



- **Elias Bartholomeo (Aus), renowned finger-style guitarist. Wellington Bluegrass Society @ Abandoned Taproom Petone, on Saturday 14 Feb, 8:00pm.** Details and booking link to come on the WBS website.
<https://wellingtonbluegrass.net.nz/>
- **Burgin, Kerr & Norman, Greytown Up Close & Personal, Studio 73, Greytown, Sunday 15 February 4pm** Country, Folk, Americana & Blues
- **Hobnail, Days Bay Pavilion, 611B Marine Drive, Sunday 22 February 6-8pm,** combine folk, Celtic and country influences, add superb musicianship and songwriting and blend it all for a dazzling ride.
- **Zonnis (Can), folk inspired roots rock cabaret. Wellington Bluegrass Society @ Abandoned Taproom Petone, Thursday 26 Feb, 7:30pm.** More details and booking link to come on the WBS website.
<https://wellingtonbluegrass.net.nz/>
- **Matt Joe Gow House Concert, Hilltop, 17 Upland Rd, Saturday 28 February 7pm for 7.30.** "His world-class songs show once again he is essential listening." www.hilltophouseconcerts.co.nz/upcoming-gigs/
- **Could you accompany a singing circle / jam band?** Acoustic Routes member Seann Paurini is looking to set up a singing circle of varying experience and mixed ages and is seeking someone who can play by ear and pick up whatever a singer is singing, for up to 1.5 hours once a week at the Johnsonville Library. The focus is on pre 21st Century music and intergenerational chitchat / friendship together in a public setting. He would offer a \$20 donation to the accompanist. If interested, please contact Seann on seann.paurini@gmail.com

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: Fiona Armstrong-McIntosh 0211205961 fionastrongmc@gmail.com
Club committee email: info@mainlyacoustic.co.nz
Website: https://mainlyacoustic.co.nz/coming_attractions/

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

Pōneke 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, 8:00pm (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 Monday of the month, from about 6.45pm – *possibly restarting Feb 2026*
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 – Society nights

When: **4th Thursday of the month**, 7:00pm – *starting up again in 2026*
Where: Abandoned Taproom, Petone (check website for the latest info)
Contact: Andrew Bicknell, (04) 477 0069, bluegrass@xtra.co.nz
www.wellingtonbluegrass.net.nz/

Wellington Scottish Fiddle Club – for learning in the "by ear" style

When: Varies, but mostly monthly around the first Sunday
Where: Depends on who is hosting it each time. All levels welcome.
Contact: Iain Matcham 04 568 8635, email iain@jumbletree.com