

The Balladeer

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

Acoustic  *Routes*

www.acousticroutes.org.nz

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

May 2026: In this issue

1. **AR Monthly Concert**, Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane, **Monday 18 May 7.30pm**, featuring **Sage Plus, Dean Murray and Bruce Carey**
2. **AR Monthly Sing-around**, Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane, **Monday 11 May 7pm**
3. **AR Open Mic** at the Plimmerton Boating Club, **Thursday 14 May 7pm**
4. **Acoustic Routes Social Club**, Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane, **Wednesday 20 May 1:30 pm**, featured guest **Peter Berry**
5. **Newtown Acoustic Sound** Open Mic at The Office, 124 Riddiford Street, **Sunday 31 May 5:15–8pm**
6. AR Community News
7. About Acoustic Routes
8. Want to perform?
9. Acoustic Routes Contacts
10. Upcoming national folk events
11. Balladeer Music Noticeboard
12. 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 Sage Plus, Dean Murray and Bruce Carey, Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane, Monday 18 May, 7:30



Sage Plus is a trio, with well-known guitarist and singer Murray Kilpatrick and vocalist Sue Rose, along with Susan Ellis on fiddle and sometimes cello. Murray and Sue have been playing music together for over twenty years, and you're bound to have heard them performing together as Sage around Wellington and beyond. They have an eclectic repertoire based on their various musical interests, including some self-penned material – not just

NZ music but Wellington music!

They often invite Susan to play with them, adding her experience as a fiddle and cello player from her involvement in a number of groups, within and outside our folk scene for many years, including the Jimmy Cook band, making the trio Sage Plus.

Dean Murray

Dean started out learning music at school and returned to it after a 26-year career as a school caretaker. He has performed at venues like the Levin Folk Music Club and Firebird, and collaborates with Carylann Martin and Steve Poulton. He's also involved in crafting his own instruments, including guitars and amplifiers, and has even planted Tasmanian hardwood trees for future instrument-making.



In the early 2000s, Murray released his debut album, *Yeah Nah*, recorded at Muddy Boots Studio in the Akatarawa Ranges. The album featured collaborations with a wide range of musicians including Colleen Trenwith and Andrew London. He later joined the band Henpicked, releasing three albums over seven years.

Over the years he has penned over 150 songs! Come and hear a small selection of them on Monday 18 May!

Bruce Carey



Like Dean, Bruce's interest in music started in his primary and secondary school years, when he played violin. After a very long break from music, he now uses guitar to develop songs on a wide range of topics – but continues to be interested in trying to capture events from New Zealand history – and in particular, stories of heroism, injustice and tragedy – or connections to his family. For this set he will focus on some of his

Wellington-based stories.

Entry: \$20/\$15 for AR members. Cash only (no EFTPOS facilities).
See page 7 for details about the venue.

2. AR Monthly Sing-around, upstairs at the Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane, Monday 11 May 7pm

Come along and share your latest musical learnings, finds, creations, or favourites with a listening audience. Held on the second Monday of most months, it's now in an evening slot this year to enable people who work during the day to come along. It's only on a trial basis, and it's a matter of use it or lose it. The sing-around concept doesn't really work unless there are enough people wanting to share their music!

So, if you're ready to move from the bedroom or the kitchen or wherever you make your music at home and take a step towards the spotlight, do come along and show us what you've been working on. We look forward to hearing it! (And there's no charge.)

3. AR Open Mic, Plimmerton Boating Club, 10 Moana Road, Plimmerton, Thursday 14 May 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 held Monthly second Thursdays.



4. Acoustic Routes Social Club, Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane, Wednesday 20 May, 1:30pm - featuring Peter Berry



Peter has a wide range of music and musical styles, from opera to bawdy ballads, but on this occasion, as it's NZ Music Month, we've asked him to share some of his favourite New Zealand songs. They'll likely include the likes of Dave Jordan and Peter Cape, and maybe some old tramping songs that we used to sing in the back of the tramping club truck as we headed out to the ranges. Good for singing along with!

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.

Please Note: *The Social Club meetings are now held on the third Wednesday of the month 1.30pm.*

5. Newtown Acoustic Sound's Open Mic, Upstairs at The Office, 124 Riddiford Street, Sunday 31 May 5:15 – 8pm



Newtown Acoustic Sound's Open Mic is held the last Sunday of each month upstairs at The Office Bar in Riddiford Street, Newtown.

In association with Acoustic Routes, organised by Janine Mitchell with back-up from Kevin Ikin.

Contact:

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

6. AR Community News

Congratulations are in order for Anna Macfarlane and Hilltop House Concerts on reaching five years of house concerts at the lovely venue in Kelburn this month. A fantastic achievement! To celebrate, the effervescent Turkey the Bird is playing there on 16 May. For details see <https://hilltophouseconcerts.co.nz/upcoming-gigs/>

Also we offer slightly belated congratulations to Andrew Bicknell and Wellington Bluegrass Society for reinstating the WBS Society Nights in March after a year off due to venue issues. WBS Society Nights are now held on the fourth Thursday of the month, usually at the Abandoned Taproom, see the website for latest information.

<https://wellingtonbluegrass.net.nz>

What I did on my holidays – well, during the Easter break, at least – I had the pleasure of attending Hamsterfest for the first time in, oh, about 25 years! It was a lovely event in a very civilised venue (with chairs and tables and flushing toilets!), with a great mix of musicians, including Wellingtonians Ron Craig and Portable Panic Plus, both of whom did lovely sets in the opening concert, and Pamela Gerrish-Nunn, who performed two songs in a blackboard concert with aplomb. Other highlights for me included getting to play in the festival orchestra, a song-writing workshop by Beans (a lot of thought and prep put into that), a stunning performance of Bob McNeill's "Last time I saw him" by Chris Penman and Bob, and just every time Paul Brown opened his mouth and sang – especially the songs of Dundee workshop. A painless and glorious way to learn about history! And altogether a magical way to spend an Easter weekend. Janette Munneke

Deep vocals and dad jokes

It is with much sadness we remember Steve Kohler, who passed away on Thursday 30 April. He was a loyal supporter of so many of us and our local music endeavours; playing regularly at Newtown Acoustic Sound and the AR Sing-arounds, and playing and singing in the retirement home gigs with Heart n Soul. His lovely deep vocals finely balanced us girls, and his dad jokes added a giggle or two. We will miss him and we send condolences to his family and friends and his Amigos group. He leaves a large gap for all of us. Janine Mitchell

7. About Acoustic Routes

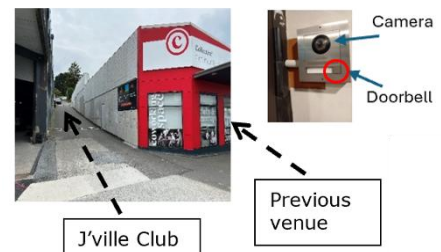
Acoustic Routes (Wellington Folk Centre Incorporated) is a club for people who enjoy playing and listening to folk and acoustic styles of music.

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

Other regular (monthly) events include an informal Social Club with a booked guest, held on the third Wednesday of most months in the afternoon, and a Sing-around on the second Monday evening of most months where attendees can participate. We also support two Open Mic Gigs: the Newtown Acoustic Sound at the Office Pub in Newtown, the last Sunday of each month, and the Open Mic at the Plimmerton Boat Club – on the second Thursday of the month.

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

The restaurant is not open on Monday nights when we usually meet but you can order bar snacks and drinks at the bar. If you want an alcoholic drink and are not a member of the Johnsonville Club, you will need to get a member to sign you in as a guest. You may need to press the doorbell to access the building.



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. Upcoming national events

Ceol Aneas, King's Birthday Weekend, 29 May to 1 June 2026 - Nelson
Festival of traditional Irish music, song and dance

Go to <https://irishmusic.org.nz/> for more information and to register.
Adult: \$260 Adult Earlybird: \$220 Junior: \$100 Afternoon Workshops: \$65

11. 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

- **Dani Trio & Andrew Kerr Solo**, Thunderbird Cafe, Featherston St, Friday 8 May 5.30pm Dani's smokey chamber pop, followed by Andrew's folk/Americana flavour
- **Mainly Acoustic Music Club**, Mayfair Café, 116 Main Street, Upper Hutt, Two Double Acts Featuring the **Stefan Kingston Brown Trio & Steve McDonald**. Tuesday 12 May 7:30-10pm 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 and from Mayfair Cafe, 116 Main Street, Upper Hutt. Call Bill Dashfield 0221 923 326
- **Bill Lake's Slow Bake** at Vogelmorn, Vogelmorn Bowling Club, 93 Mornington Rd, Friday 15 May 7.30pm with Alan Norman and Steve Hemmens – Blues & country folk with some swing
- **Celebrate Five Years of Hilltop with Turkey the Bird**, Upland Road, Kelburn, Saturday 16 May 7pm, Teas, coffee & snacks provided. BYO. www.hilltophouseconcerts.co.nz/upcoming-gigs/
- **Bob McNeill with special guest Emily Roughton** (Auckland), Vogelmorn Upstairs, 93 Mornington Road, Brooklyn, Wellington, Saturday 16 May, 7.30 pm. Tickets \$25 on sale now at <https://www.bobmcneill.net> & [Under the Radar](#). Beautifully-written songs and exquisite guitar playing, paired with the gorgeous stylings and fiery tune playing of a virtuoso violinist.
- **Wellington Calling Open Mic**, The Undercurrent, 118 Tory Street, Te Aro, Thursday 28 May 7pm, six minutes each with microphone, guitar and piano provided. Feature act **Noah Bryn**
- **Sean Kelly and The Super 8's**, Upper Hutt Music Festival, Whirinaki Whare Taonga, 836 Fergusson Drive, Saturday 30 May 8pm, Irish Folk music and stories, with old movies
- **The Warratahs**, Upper Hutt Music Festival, Whirinaki Whare Taonga, 836 Fergusson Drive, Saturday 31 May 8pm, One of Aotearoa's most iconic bands, The Warratahs hit the stage with their signature home grown country roots-driven sound.
- **NZ Music Month events at Johnsonville and Tawa libraries** – a varied programme of music written and/or performed by Wellington musicians and community groups. Johnsonville Waitohi Hub, mostly Thursdays from 3.30-4.30pm; Tawa mostly Saturday mornings 11am. More info on the Wellington Libraries events website: <https://wellingtoncitylibraries.trumba.com/>



Balladeer Music Noticeboard (Regular events)

Look out for these events – they're probably on even if we haven't been advised of the particulars for the month in question. Check using the contact details to be sure.

- **Acoustic Music Evenings**, Niom Bistro, 169 Riddiford St, Newtown, Saturdays at 6-8pm
- **Wellington Bluegrass Society**
 - **Old Time and Bluegrass Music Sessions** – Memelink Artspace, 223 The Esplanade, Petone. Second Sunday each month
 - **WBS Society Nights** – Abandoned Taproom, Petone. Fourth Thursday each month.
 - See the Wellington Bluegrass Society website for more details <https://wellingtonbluegrass.net.nz/>
- **The Hanging Ditch**, 14 Leeds St, Te Aro, third Sunday of the month 4 – 6pm, hosts a gig where you can listen to professional Irish music for free with some tasty cocktails and snacks. A closed invite session with the guests changing every week. If intermediate players would like to give playing a try, contact Em Griffiths at: emceltic2@gmail.com Gigs held **3rd Sunday monthly**.
- **Songwriters Showcase at Moon**, 167 Riddiford St, Newtown, third Sunday of the month, 4-10pm. Open Mic from 4pm, show starts 7pm. For more info, see the Facebook page *6021 Songs* or email a query to 6021songs@gmail.com
- **Wellington Irish Society**, Wilton Bowling Club, last Friday of the month 7pm
Wellington Irish Society will be headquartered at the Wilton Bowling Club with a regular "Irish Night" on the last Friday of each month, celebrating its music, culture, stories, and community spirit. <https://www.wellingtonirish.nz/>

12. Regular folk events/contacts in the region – please check websites or email for updates

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

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/>

Wellington Traditional Tunes Session

When: **Every Tuesday, from 7.30pm** (1st Tues, Slow Session for one hour)

Where: The Welsh Dragon Bar, Wellington. Fine beer and food to be had at the bar.
1st Tuesday slow session aimed at beginners, followed by regular session.

Contact: <https://wellingtonslowsession.wordpress.com/>

Wellington Bluegrass Society – Society nights

When: **4th Thursday of the month**, 7:00pm

Where: Abandoned Taproom, Petone (check website for the latest info)

Contact: Andrew Bicknell, (04) 477 0069, <https://wellingtonbluegrass.net.nz/>

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

Morris dancing: David Barnes <https://sites.google.com/site/nzmorrisdancing/>

Mainly Acoustic Music Club

When: **(Mostly) every 2nd Tuesday of the month** 7:30-10pm

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/

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 Kōha.

Where: Horowhenua Scottish Society Hall, cnr Bartholomew Rd and Middlesex St.

Details: Website: <https://wellingtonbluegrass.net.nz/>