

The Balladeer

Acoustic Routes Newsletter

July 2026 – Aotearoa New Zealand

Celebrating community, music, and the joy of playing together

www.acousticroutes.org.nz | Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane, Johnsonville

Welcome / Nau mai, haere mai

Kia ora everyone,

A warm welcome to this month's newsletter. Here's what's been happening in our folk community, what's coming up, and a few stories from the people who make our sessions special.

SPECIAL NOTICE: Due to illness (get well soon ☺) – tonight's/2 July scheduled **Pukerua Bay Folk Club Sing-around** has been cancelled (for the first time ever!). Next one will be on the first Thursday of August.

Inside: Upcoming AR events and news, and the Music Noticeboard with upcoming events across the wider motu.

JOAN PRIOR AWARD

\$500 award for Wellington folk creatives & musicians
aged 18 to 25

***Now seeking applications for the 2026 award,
closing 9 August 2026***

- Supporting younger musicians and folk enthusiasts to share the benefits of folk music
 - Keeping the traditions alive

See the webpage for more info and the application process.

AR Monthly Concert: Black Eyed Susie Trio with support acts Stan Antonio and Princess and the Pea

Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane, Monday 20 July, 7:30pm

Entry: \$20/\$15 for AR members. Cash only (no EFTPOS facilities)

Black Eyed Susie Trio is a band born and bred on the Kapiti Coast, featuring the violin and guitar duo of Susan Colien-Reid and Ramon Oza, now joined by keyboardist Nick Brown. Susan has supported many artists including The Blind Boys of Alabama and Ramon is the slick funky blues guitarist with the husky voice who has played since he was 14 including drifting with the "Drifters" ... Susan and Ramon have played festivals, gigs and venues all over the North Island, and are now enriching their sound with the addition of Nick Brown on keyboards.



Expect to hear a fusion of Celtic and Blues Rock sound with originals and covers, including some trad folk numbers.

Princess and the Pea - Michael Muggeridge (guitar, mandolin, vocals) and Cara Brasted (fiddle, vocals) share a love of traditional and contemporary folk-american music, weaving together heartfelt harmonies and lively tunes. With folkie families hailing from the Taranaki region and Oregon, USA, they are members of local band Butter Wouldn't Melt. Cara also performs with her parents Rene and Bob in Wandering Thyme, while Michael performs with T-Bone, and with Jenny and Nicola Mitchell. This pair of beanpoles aim to have your toes tapping. Whether it's a driving fiddle tune or a tender ballad, they love sharing music that brings people together.



Stan Antonio - Phoebe and Alex grew up attending folk festivals (with their folkie parents) and have played around Wellington as part of various folk groups. They dabble in the realms of Americana, folk, and bluegrass, and have recently been writing music together. Their influences include classic artists such as Gillian Welch and Dave Rawlings, more contemporary artists such as Adrienne Lenker. They aspire to use the banjo as a force for good in this world, alongside close harmonies and acoustic guitar.

🎵 More Acoustic Routes Events

📅 **Acoustic Routes Monthly Sing-around** - Monday 13 July 7pm, upstairs at the Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane. Come along and share your latest musical learnings, finds, creations, or favourites with a listening audience. Monthly second Mondays.

📅 **AR Plimmerton Open Mic** - Thursday 9 July 7pm, Plimmerton Boating Club, 10 Moana Road. Hosted by Roy McGuinness. No pre-booked spots – put your name up when you get there. Spread the word. Monthly second Thursdays.

📅 **Acoustic Routes Social Club** - Wednesday 15 July, 1:30pm, Upstairs in the Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane. Monthly third Wednesdays. Featuring **Tony Fuell** who bought his first guitar at age 15 and took lessons from a British jazzman who had played with Django Reinhardt. But he only wanted to play rock 'n roll, so that didn't last long. Then at college, he fell into the Folk Revolution and became a folksinger. Now he describes his musical repertoire as "a bit of everything". Tony likes to keep up with new(ish) acoustic music and enjoys singing in a wide variety of genres. You may have seen him at Plimmerton Open Mic.



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.

📅 **Newtown Acoustic Sound's Open Mic** - Sunday 26 July 5:15 – 8pm, Upstairs at The Office, 124 Riddiford Street. Held on the last Sunday of each month, in association with Acoustic Routes, organized by Janine Mitchell with back-up from Kevin Ikin.

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



📅 **ACOUSTIC ROUTES AGM 16TH AUGUST - CALL FOR NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Kia ora Acoustic Routes members

The Acoustic Routes AGM is coming up on August 16th. Please save the date in your diary. This year a couple of long-term members are stepping down but will be available to support new members joining our Committee.

Our Objectives

Every month we run a meeting with wine/cheese/tea and coffee and tasty nibbles that our committee contribute to. This makes for a convivial atmosphere and we also take turns hosting the meeting.

At the meeting we look ahead to upcoming concerts/social club and singaround sessions. Artists contact us to perform and from our list of performers we decide on the order of the concert performers and how we will promote them. We have already planned for this year's performances and left a few gaps that can be filled by the new Committee. New members bring fabulous new ideas.

Time Commitments - We meet once a month and only a couple of hours are required each month to fill the role. Some things need more time but you won't be expected to commit to more than you wish to do.


Desired Skills - A keen interest in folk music and knowledge of artists and performers in New Zealand.

Possible Tasks - Helping on the desk to meet and greet members and take money at the Concert nights so the performers can be paid. Compering at a concert. Assisting the set up and pack down with help from the audience at Concert nights, sing-around sessions and social club daytime sessions. Promotion of Acoustic Routes events through any media or networks available to you. Help with other activities such as the Joan Prior Award.

Please note that all of these tasks can be learned "on the job". Your enthusiasm, energy and ideas are what's most needed.

Please contact the Committee if you would like more information.

Charlene Hillyard

 **Acoustic Routes subscriptions for the year 2026-2027** are due for renewal from 1 July. Please deposit the appropriate amount in the club's bank account. If there has been any change to your physical address, phone number or email address please notify the Treasurer. More info at <https://acousticroutes.org.nz/join-us/>

Community Stories – concert reviews

Review of 15 June AR Concert

It was a fairly wet and windy night as I recall (although we have had worse since!) but it was a warm and cosy concert. The Melling Station Boys opened the night for us with a lively set including a mix of old favourites, an original by band member Kevin Ikin (Country Life), and some more recent recordings by Della Mae, an American all-girl bluegrass band from Boston, USA, and The Crooked tree by Molly Tuttle.

Jude Madill, spellbindingly accompanied by Joseph Coleman on accordion and mandolin, sang a range of songs from her earlier repertoire, including *Halo round the moon* by Steve Earle, the simply beautiful lament *Laketown Blues* by Richard Inman, and *Only other person in the room* by Brennen Leigh and Noel McKay.

Frank and Erin treated us to singalong old favourites that had the audience participating in full voice, including *Ride me high*, and their encore *Love potion number nine*. These were interspersed with quirky or thoughtful ballads (*Greenville* by Lucinda

Williams, *Poor peoples' store* by Shinyribs and *Owensboro* by Natalie Merchant), and great instrumentals, covers and self-penned.

All in all, definitely a night worth braving the weather for!

Acoustic Routes Social Club meeting 17 June

Roy and Julian, a.k.a. the Shorter Blacks, performed a set of carefully-chosen songs generally with an Irish theme (surprise surprise!). They included *The dawning of the day*, *The ground she walked upon*, *Whiskey on a Sunday*, *The rare old times* and *Carrickfergus*. All beautifully sung by Roy and sensitively performed by Julian on guitar. So good to see these guys back singing and playing again.

Janette Munneke

Useful Resources

Notice: ANZFA Folk Music Awards 2026 – Album Submissions Open

Submissions are now underway for the 2026 ANZFA Folk Music Awards, celebrating the breadth and diversity of New Zealand folk music. Artists have until **midnight, 31 August 2026** to submit albums released between **1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026**.

Albums may be commercially released via streaming, download or physical media, and can range from home-grown bedroom recordings to professionally produced independent label releases. Kiwi artists living overseas are also eligible (terms and conditions apply).

Five awards will be presented:

- Best Traditional Album
- Best Original Album
- Best Kiwiana Album
- Best Americana Album
- Overall Best Folk Album 2026 (voted by ANZFA members)

Submissions cost **\$30** and involve uploading tracks in mp3 format via the ANZFA submission portal. <https://anzfa.org.nz/fma>

You do not need to be an ANZFA member to enter, but membership is required to vote in the final award selection. Finalists will be announced at the Wellington Folk Festival on **Sunday 25 October**.

Artists, labels and supporters are encouraged to spread the word far and wide through newsletters and social media.

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: Newtown Acoustic Sound Open Mic 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. (If you need the lift, it might pay to phone the venue to find out if it is operating.)



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.

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.

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.

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.

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

Balladeer Music Events 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

🎵 **Alan Downes & Janine Mitchell**, Thunderbird Cafe, Featherston St, Friday 3 July 5.30-7.30pm

🎵 **Hihi and the Stitch Birds**, Titahi Bay Café, 26 Whitehouse Rd, Friday 3 July, 7.30pm, Eclectic Folk Sounds

🎵 **Andrew London Album Launch**, Wellington Bluegrass Society, at the Abandoned Taproom, Petone, Friday 3 July 8pm, See the Wellington Bluegrass Society's website for more details and to book tickets. www.wellingtonbluegrass.net.nz/event-detail/

🎵 **Parcel of Rogues**, Lynott's Irish Bar, Blair St, Friday 3 July, 8pm, Nick Swan and Andrew Kerr play 'hits of the 1880's

🎵 **The Warratahs**, The Thistle Inn, 3 Mulgrave St, Thorndon Saturday 4 July, from 6.30pm

🎵 **Kelburn Viaduct Municipal Ensemble Jug Band**, Days Bay Pavilion, Sunday 5 July, 6-8pm, Great for sunsets, a meal and some dancing

🎵 **Imaginary Folksongs and Sweet Swing Suite**, The Undercurrent, 118 Tory Street, Te Aro, Wednesday 8 July, 7pm

🎵 **Rag Poets Matariki Concert at Hilltop**, Upland Road, Kelburn, **Friday 10 July** 7pm, Teas, coffee & snacks provided. BYO. www.hilltophouseconcerts.co.nz/upcoming-gigs/

🎵 **Ebony Lamb and Gram Antler**, Vogelmorn Bowling Club, 93 Mornington Rd, Saturday 11 July 7.30pm

🎵 **The Shenanigans**, Days Bay Pavilion, Sunday 12 July, 6-8pm

🎵 **Mainly Acoustic Music Club**, Mayfair Café, 116 Main Street, Upper Hutt, Tuesday 14 July, 7:30-10pm, Open Mic , Ten artists confirmed with two songs each. **Mainly Acoustic AGM on Monday 27 July** at the Upper Hutt Cossie Club. For more information - www.mainlyacoustic.co.nz/contact-us

🎵 **Robyn Lynn & the TGs**, Thunderbird Cafe, 154 Featherston St, Wellington, Friday 17 July 5.30-7.30pm

🎵 **Vicfolk Midwinter Ceilidh**, Northland Memorial Community Centre, Saturday 18 July, Doors from 6.30pm. Ceilidh dancing and socialising. Snacks provided. More info - <https://events.humanitix.com/vicfolk-midwinter-ceilidh-2026/tickets>

🎵 **Laldy**, Wellington Bluegrass Society Night, at the Abandoned Taproom, Petone, Thursday 23 July 7.30pm, See the Wellington Bluegrass Society's website for more details and to book tickets. www.wellingtonbluegrass.net.nz/event-detail/

🎵 **Dave Murphy & Janet Muggerridge**, Thunderbird Cafe, 154 Featherston St, Wellington, Friday 24 July 5.30-7.30pm

🎵 **Andrew London Trio**, Days Bay Pavilion, 611B Marine Drive, Sunday 26 July 6-8pm


🎵 **Black Eyed Susie**, Thunderbird Cafe, 154 Featherston St, Wellington, Friday 31 July 5.30-7.30pm


Regular Folk Music Events Noticeboard

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. To place a notice, please email balladeer@acousticroutes.org.nz


 **Wellington Traditional Tunes Session**, The Welsh Dragon Bar, 10a Cambridge Terrace, Wellington

- Every Tuesday from 7.30pm
- 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/>

 **Moon Jam Nites**, 167 Riddiford St, Newtown, Regular ... Every Tuesday night from 7.30pm. The evening starts off open mic, then moves into a full on jam towards the end. Sign up with your time slot. You can call upon many talented musicians to help play your slot. A full stage with electric guitar, bass, keyboard, drums, mics, lights and full support from our sound tech. Bring your own songs, poems, and friends (and make some new ones too)

 **Morris dancing**, David Barnes <https://sites.google.com/site/nzmorrisdancing/>
Mainly Acoustic Music Club, Mayfair Cafe, 116 Main Street, Upper Hutt

- (Mostly) every 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm - 10pm
- Contact: Fiona Armstrong-McIntosh 0211205961 fionastrongmc@gmail.com
Club committee email: info@mainlyacoustic.co.nz
Website: https://mainlyacoustic.co.nz/coming_attractions/

 **Wellington Calling Open Mic**, The Undercurrent, 118 Tory Street, Te Aro, Check with them direct for days and dates scheduled, as they're not held on set days nor monthly.
Six minutes each with microphone, guitar and piano provided.

 **Pukerua Bay Folk Club Sing-around**, 9 Donlin Rd, Pukerua Bay,


- 1st Thursday of the month, 8pm. For details, please contact musicianmurray@gmail.com
Tonight/Thursday 2 July's one is cancelled due to illness

 **Pōneke Shanty Club**, The Welsh Dragon Bar, 10a Cambridge Terrace, Wellington

- 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month, 7-9pm

 **Wellington Bluegrass Society – Society Nights**, Abandoned Taproom, Petone (check website for latest info)

- 4th Thursday of the month, 7pm
- Contact: Andrew Bicknell, (04) 477 0069, <https://wellingtonbluegrass.net.nz/>
- See the Wellington Bluegrass Society website for more details and to book tickets. <https://wellingtonbluegrass.net.nz/event-detail/>

 **Levin Folk Music Club**, Horowhenua Scottish Society Hall, cnr Bartholomew Rd and Middlesex St.

- 2nd Friday of the month, 7.30pm

- Blackboard concert plus guest artist
- Entry: Members \$5, Non-members \$10, Children \$3 (includes supper)
- Club night: 4th Friday of the month, 7.30pm, \$2 koha

🎵 **Ceol Alba Scottish Music Club**, Lower Hutt

- 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.
- Cost: \$5 per night
- Contact: Lynne Scott, 04 565 0164 lynne@scott.gen.nz

🎵 **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/>

🎵 **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

💜 **Closing Note**

Thanks for being part of our musical whānau. Whether you come along to perform or simply to listen and enjoy, your presence makes our community richer. See you at the next event.

Ngā mihi nui

Your Acoustic Routes Committee