

The Balladeer

Acoustic Routes Newsletter

September 2026 — Aotearoa New Zealand

Celebrating community, music, & 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 Spring newsletter. There are so many music events around Wellington this September – we've tried to include all the folk themed ones in the Music noticeboard. See what's been happening in our folk community, what's coming up, and a few stories from the people who make our sessions special.

Inside: *AR SPECIAL SGM "Platter Lunch; Jam Session; Sing & dance-along"*
on 4 October, please save the date! Along with other upcoming AR events and news, and the Music Noticeboard with upcoming events across the wider motu...

ACOUSTIC ROUTES SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

2pm Sunday 4 OCTOBER
Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane

Platter Lunch from 1-2pm

***Followed by Jam Session; Sing & dance-
along***
with special invited guests

**PLEASE SAVE THE DATE – IT'LL BE A
GREAT AFTERNOON**

AR Monthly Concert: Another concert of two halves; featuring the Andrew London Duo, and Hill-start

Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane, Monday 21 September, 7:30pm

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

Andrew and Kirsten London

The Andrew London Duo features songwriter and raconteur Andrew London performing a mix of new and classic original songs. His musical partner Kirsten London will accompany him on bass guitar and vocals, and perform her own solo material. Together, they create an energetic performance filled with songs inspired themes of confrontation, frustration, provocation, and mild inconvenience. We're looking forward to having them perform at Acoustic Routes playing "folky country swingy Kiwiana" in their inimitable way!



by

Hill-start



Hill-start is the musical collaboration of Porirua couple Jo Moir (Hobnail) and Simon Harding (Obediah). Simon (vocals, guitar & mandola) and Jo (vocals & fiddle) have been singing together since they fatefully met at the Plimmerton Open Mic 7 years ago. The Hill-start sound features Simon's authentic Americana tinged vocals, and Jo's weaving fiddle lines and blended harmonies. They play simple songs that pack a punch, following the old maxim of "three chords and the truth". Simon & Jo

craft their own versions of songs from favourite artists including Jason Isbell, Shane Nicholson and Gram Parsons, with the odd original song sneaking its way into the set. Hill-start brings you songs of heartache, love, and other nonsense. In recent times, Simon and Jo have been enjoying the challenge of playing more often outside of their own living room, with warmly received performances at Winterlude, Mainly Acoustic and Ohau House Concerts.

🎵 More Acoustic Routes Events

📅 **AR Plimmerton Open Mic** - Thursday 10 September 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 Monthly Sing-around** - Monday 14 September 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.

📅 **Acoustic Routes Social Club** - Wednesday 16 September, 1:30pm, Upstairs in the Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane. Monthly third Wednesdays.

With **Don Burnham and SarahD**



Don Burnham has spent most of his life behind a guitar, singin' and pickin' from campfires to concert stages - he was born in San Francisco, California. In 2005 Don was inducted into the Western Swing music Hall of Fame. As well as being Don's singing partner here and in San Francisco, SarahD has sung on our stage before with Mary Livingston (a few years ago!). For their first time performing at Acoustic Routes, Don and SarahD will sing Don's original songs plus old favourites. Expect to hear and sing along to some authentic 'Americana' tunes.

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 donation for the musicians requested.

📅 **Newtown Acoustic Sound's Open Mic** - Sunday 27 September 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.



1 **ACOUSTIC ROUTES SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING and jam, sing & dance-along, SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER**

Kia ora Acoustic Routes members

An Acoustic Routes Special General Meeting will be held on Sunday 4 October at 2pm, upstairs at the Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane, Johnsonville. Please do come along if you can – the club really needs your presence, support, interest and input.

There'll be food to share and after the meeting (which will be short if enough people put their hands up) you can join in a Jam Session, Sing & dance-along, with invited

guests. We'll let you know who the guests are soon, but here's a hint – think guitars, banjos, fiddles, mandolins, royalty and vegetables! It will be good and you're not going to want to miss out! Bring your instruments, voices and dancing shoes!

This year we need your support more than ever. Constitutionally, our president is required to step down after six consecutive years in the role, which means, sadly, that Ruth Birnie has to step down from the committee at this time, and a new president must be elected. Ruth is committed to the club and will be available to support the new incumbent and help with their transition into the role, as will others who have been involved in the longer term.

At the recent AGM we were unable to elect a committee for the 2026-2027 year. The existing committee agreed to carry on until we can hold a Special General Meeting, at which time we will, hopefully, elect a new committee. We have a new treasurer waiting in the wings, but we still need a new president and secretary along with a few new members on the committee. It's a special opportunity to add some 'oomph' to the club!

It's not a significant time commitment – we meet once a month over snacks and drinks to book musicians and plan the club's activities. We currently have three main events each month, which need to be publicised and which require at least one committee member to be present to set up, host and run. Club members who are not on the committee often help.

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 for and interest in folk music, energy and ideas are what's most needed.

For more information about standing for committee, or to volunteer to stand for committee, please contact a committee member - contact details are on page 8.

If we don't elect a new committee, the next step according to the constitution is to wind up the club. I don't know about you, but I'd be quite sad about that. It's only 57 years old – not retirement age yet!

Janette Munneke for AR Committee

PS. By the way, next month it is the anniversary of the formation of the Wellington Folk Centre (a.k.a. Acoustic Routes). See over for a little pop of history, if you're interested!

📖 Four hundred committee meetings and 13 million words

Prior to October 1969, there were two folk clubs in Wellington, the Wellington Folk Club and the Port Nicholson Folk Club. At some point it was proposed that the clubs should join and form a new organisation to act as an umbrella for all folk activity in the area. According to this item from a very early issue of the Balladeer ...



From an article by Frank Fyfe written in 1970 and reprinted in the Sept 1980 Balladeer

a reality." Wellington Folk Centre Incorporated was formed from members of Wellington Folk Club and Port Nicholson Folk Club at a meeting held in Wellington on October 12th. The idea is that this new organisation act as an umbrella for all folk activity in the city, and to this end, Port Nicholson went out of independent existence as from October 19th.



The first Wn. Folk Centre

Four hundred committee meetings and thirteen million words have finally born fruit with the opening, on January 4th, of the long awaited Wellington Folk Centre.

Then on January 4th the following year, 1970, the organisation moved into its new premises and became a physical centre.

Situated in an old house at 41 Palmer Street (a house with a long history of involvement with the folk scene - past tenants include Frank Sillay, Paul Trenwith and Dave Jordan) the centre is run by the Wellington Folk Centre Incorporated, a body formed last year with the merger of the old Wellington Folk Club with Port Nicholson Folk Club. This new body aims, so it seems, to bring most folk activity in Wellington under the Palmer Street roof and thereby ensure, in so far as this is at all possible, that the rental (\$18.00 per week) is met.

From the Sept 1980 Balladeer, quoting from an article by A Durak in Heritage Jan 1970

The September 1980 issue also acknowledges the presence of another folk club, the Kapiti Folk Club, which used to meet at the home of Joan Prior, 31 Bassett Road. Folk music does have a history in Johnsonville! This -----> is from "Joan's Jottings".

Janette Munneke

— KAPITI —

Which just leaves 'Kapiti'..... Kapiti Folk Club was started some years ago to provide an audience for traditional singers whose material was not then readily acceptable elsewhere. Times have changed thankfully, and anyone wishing to air 56 verses (outer Mongolian version) of Little Matty Groves feels quite free to do so (and frequently does) why then do we still meet? To be honest I sometimes wonder, but once a month anything from 3 to 20 people gather round my fire to sing and listen, eat scones, drink coffee and catch up on the latest gossip.

🚩 Also coming up in October: WELLYFEST!

With only eight weeks to go before the festival starts, it was great to get some details from the Wellyfest team this week – the guest list is out, and **earlybird tickets** are now available for purchase.



Keep your eyes peeled for more artist details, and other info coming up over the next few weeks.

Purchase tickets here: <https://events.humanitix.com/wellington-folk-festival-2026/tickets>

Want to come and experience the magic of Wellington Folk Festival, give something back and get some money off your ticket? Submit a volunteer enquiry form at the link below and the Wellyfest team will be in touch.

<https://wellingtonfolkfestival.org.nz/volunteer/>

To get the latest news hot off the press, make sure you're following the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Wellyfest>

- or sign up to the mailing list on the website: <https://wellingtonfolkfestival.org.nz/>

About our August Concert and Social Club, and Special Thanks to Ruth Birnie

The Laldy/Owen Hugh Monthly A/R concert and the Social Club

We've had a couple of what I think of as perfect folk concerts this month. First a lovely mix of traditional tunes and songs and self-penned numbers in the traditional genre with very satisfying choruses to sing along to on Monday night with Laldy and Owen Hugh. Laldy even brought their three-year-old dancer who reminded us what joy there is in throwing one's whole heart and being into enjoying the music. It was great to see Owen again and good to know he's back after a bit of a hiatus. As always, one of the best things about the concert was enjoying it in good company and singing along with an audience of great voices, even if the numbers were on the low side.

The Social Club event with guests Deb and Jenni Harding (and surprise guest Mike Harding) was another opportunity to hear (and sing along to) some wonderful traditional and more modern songs with great harmonies. Unsurprisingly this was one of our best-attended Social Club events, and the guests were followed by some great numbers in the sing-around afterwards.

At this point I'd like to offer my heartfelt thanks to Ruth Birnie for her steadfast efforts in bringing us such a wonderful array of guest artists for our concerts and our Social Club meetings. It's not always easy finding people who are available, haven't been on before recently, are ready to perform and willing to travel. And then there're the times we've had cancellations due to the weather or illness, but Ruth has always managed to make things happen, with great results!

By Janette Munneke

Useful Resources

Notice: The Wellington Sea Shanty Showdown - for high school students

Pōneke Shanty Club and The Walker Traditional Folk Music Trust invite you to enter, the first ever Wellington Sea Shanty Showdown! Gather a crew of fellow Wellington Region-based high school students and record (video) yourselves singing TWO sea shanties unaccompanied (a capella). Instruments are not permitted; the judges are looking for the group singing energy that kept a ship's crew working together in the days of old.

Final date for entries is October 1, 2026.

For more info and details on how to enter, go to <https://www.walkertradtrust.co.nz/>

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.

To find more information about the club, and get notifications of the latest news and events, go to the website, <https://acousticroutes.org.nz/>, follow us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/wellingtonfolkclub>, and/or join our Facebook Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/347362439094076>. Members of the Facebook Group can post their own events and comment on posts.

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. If you haven't already joined for the year July 2026-June 2027, **subs are due**. You can join and pay your sub online or at the door on concert nights. 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

Community notes

Although he wasn't a member of Acoustic Routes, we wanted to acknowledge our sadness in hearing of the loss of NZ folk music aficionado Sammy Leary in August. I had the great pleasure of hearing him lend his voice and playing to telling some stories of Aotearoa's past at Auckland Folk Festival earlier this year. Such a loss to the folk scene and much more so to his friends and loved ones. Sending condolences to all those close to him.



It's a pretty poor photo and had I known it would be my only opportunity I might have tried again, but I hope wherever his spirit is wandering now, it is in equally bright and colourful surroundings.

Janette Munneke

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

Baby Grand Piano looking for a loving home...

"My name is Florence. I recently lost my husband to cancer and am now preparing to move into a smaller home. I own a beloved Yamaha baby grand piano (model GC1) that, unfortunately, I cannot keep due to space constraints.

I would be delighted to find a new home for the instrument—with someone who will truly appreciate and care for it. This could be a music lover, a music student, or a teacher, but also a church congregation, a school, or a social organization.

If you or anyone you know is interested, please contact me directly at:

Email: floreshawn001@gmail.com

This piano holds many precious memories for me, and I would be very grateful to know that it continues to bring music and joy to others.

Thank you for your time and interest.

Warm regards,
Florence Shawn"

Performance opportunity, Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane, Johnsonville

The Johnsonville Club is seeking expressions of interest from musicians who would like to perform at the Club on a Sunday afternoon from about 3pm to 6pm. No payment, but an opportunity to play music in a pub setting. They're hoping to draw more people in as it's usually fairly quiet on a Sunday at that time, and give musicians some exposure and experience.

There's a sound system with a voice mic but you'll need to bring your own if you need any more than that. There's parking on site. <https://www.jclub.co.nz/>

Please contact Nicole Stephens at the Johnsonville Club for more information and to book in to play. E: manager@jclub.co.nz | DD: 04 939 1352 | M: 027 242 1823

 **Los Manuelitos and Cindy Muggeridge**, Thunderbird Cafe, Featherston St, Friday 4 September, 5.30-7.30pm

 **Katelyn Henshall with Jeline + Ari Leason**, Vogelhorn Upstairs, 93 Mornington Road, Brooklyn, Friday 4 September, 8.00pm

 **Jan Preston Boogie Duo**, Days Bay Pavilion, Saturday 5 September, 7.30pm

 **Harvest Moon**, Days Bay Pavilion, Sunday 6 September 6.00-8.00pm

 **Hina: Descending Dreams – the Duet Tour with Dave Kahn**, The Undercurrent, 118 Tory Street, Sunday 6 September 5.30pm

 **The Earthen Collective; Half Moon; Tim Thorpe + Barry**, Mainly Acoustic Music Club, Mayfair Cafe, 116 Main Street, Upper Hutt, Tuesday 8 September 7pm

 **Wellington Calling Open Mic featuring Elyssa Vulpes with Catherine Ireland**, The Undercurrent, 118 Tory Street, Saturday 12 September, 7.30pm

 **Dani with Andrew Kerr, Charlie Davenport, Giacomo Caleffi, Elliot Vaughan, & Emmie Ellis**, The Undercurrent, 118 Tory Street, Thursday 10 September, 7.30pm

🎵 **Robyn Lynn and the T Gs**, Thunderbird Cafe, Featherston St, Friday 11 September, 5.30-7.30pm

🎵 **Tessa De Lyon with Stan Antonio**, Vogelmorn Upstairs, 93 Mornington Road, Brooklyn, Friday 11 September 8.00pm

🎵 **The Wooden Box Band**, The Undercurrent, 118 Tory Street, Saturday 12 September, 7.30pm

🎵 **The Broken Heartbreakers**, Vogelmorn Upstairs, 93 Mornington Road, Brooklyn, Saturday 12 September, 7.30pm

🎵 **WBS Old Time Jam Session**, Alfred Memelink Artspace Gallery, 223 The Esplanade Petone, Sunday 13 September 2pm

🎵 **Diminished**, Thunderbird Cafe, Featherston St, Friday 18 September, 5.30-7.30pm

🎵 **Ali Whitton and the Lost Birds**, Vogelmorn Upstairs, 93 Mornington Road, Brooklyn, Friday 18 September 8.00pm

🎵 **Rufus Mundy** plays Hilltop, Upland Road, Kelburn, Saturday 19 September 7pm (last gig before Daylight Saving starts) Teas, coffee & snacks provided. BYO.
www.hilltophouseconcerts.co.nz/upcoming-gigs/



🎵 **Medena Ensemble x- Fill Circle, Aotearoa's Bulgarian Folklore Vocal Led by Tui Mamaki**,
St Peters on Willis, 211 Willis Street, Te Aro, Sunday 20 September, 3pm

🎵 **Andrew London + the Swing Voters**, Days Bay Pavilion, Sunday 20 September 6.00-8.00pm

🎵 **Cut the Power**, Thunderbird Cafe, Featherston St, Friday 26 September, 5.30-7.30pm, for "an acoustic, rootsy set of enjoyable, funky-vibed and accessible songs"



🎵 **Rag Poets**, Days Bay Pavilion, Sunday 27 September 6.00-8.00pm

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/

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MainlyAcoustic/>

- NOTE: Lift generously offered to Acoustic Routes members/supporters to attend monthly Mainly Acoustic concerts from Ngaio (or nearby) to and from Mayfair Cafe, Upper Hutt. Call Bill Dashfield 0221 923 326

🎵 **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

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

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

🎵 **Wellington Bluegrass Society**

- **WBS Society Nights** – Abandoned Taproom, Petone. Fourth Thursday each month, 7pm. See the Wellington Bluegrass Society website for more details <https://wellingtonbluegrass.net.nz/>
- **Old Time and Bluegrass Music Sessions** – Memelink Artspace, 223 The Esplanade, Petone. Second Sunday each month. Contact: Andrew Bicknell, (04) 477 0069, <https://wellingtonbluegrass.net.nz/>

🎵 **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

🎵 **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 so much 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. Hope to see you at the next event, and especially at the Special General Meeting. 😊

Ngā mihi nui

Your Acoustic Routes Committee