

The Balladeer

Acoustic Routes Newsletter

October 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 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.

Inside: *AR SPECIAL SGM "Platter Lunch; Jam Session; Sing & dance-along"*
on 4 October, 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

***Music from Michael Muggeridge and
Cara Brasted; Jam Session and Sing &
dance-along***

**PLEASE COME ALONG – IT'LL BE A GREAT
AFTERNOON**

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

Kia ora Acoustic Routes members, supporters and friends

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.

We'll start with food to share from 1-2pm, 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 Michael Muggeridge and Cara Brasted. They'll be bringing their guitars, banjos, fiddles, mandolins, voices and energy! Be sure to bring yours too so you can join in, and maybe even dance!



The SGM will start at 2pm. 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 the 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 to elect 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. You can help prevent that from happening by coming along to the SGM and showing your support.

Janette Munneke for AR Committee

PS. If you've got a moment to go onto Facebook, and you're planning to come to the lunch, please hit 'going' on the event invite – it will help us with catering.

<https://www.facebook.com/wellingtonfolkclub>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/347362439094076>

🎵 Other Acoustic Routes Events this month

📅 **AR Plimmerton Open Mic** - Thursday 8 October 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 12 October 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 21 October, 1:30pm, Upstairs in the Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane. Monthly third Wednesdays.

With **Charlene Hillyard**

Bring your fine voices and/or an instrument to join in a song or two. Inspired by women artists like Derina Harvey, Dolly Parton, Emmylou Harris, Linda Ronstadt, Kirsty Bromley, Natalie Merchant and Karine Polwart, Charlene sings songs from different genres including folk, trad and country.



Charlene Hillyard

Charlene is a member of Wellington Batucada (a Brazilian drumming band) and

The Poneke Shanty Club, where she has also been inspired by Fishermen's Friends and The Longest Johns. Charlene will bring her guitar, ukulele and bodhran.

In the second half, we'll go around the circle and you're welcome to perform and/or lead a song or tune if you wish. All welcome; bring instruments and voices. \$5 donation for the musician is requested.

 **Newtown Acoustic Sound's Open Mic** - Sunday 31 October 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



Also coming up in October: WELLYFEST!

The countdown is on – only 3 weeks to go before the festival starts! Earlybird tickets are no longer available, but tickets still available at regular price through Humanitix website.



Keep your eyes peeled for more artist details, and other info coming up over the next three 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/>

🎵 Looking ahead to November

Celtic Caim, Wednesday 4 November, 1:30pm, Upstairs in the Johnsonville Club, 1 Norman Lane.



Next month we have a special extra Social Club featuring **Celtic Caim** who are Pauline Vallance from Ayrshire in Scotland and Heather Innes, who now lives in New Zealand. Together they're known for their "hauntingly beautiful harmony singing" which can be a cappella or accompanied by clarsach, flute, and/or bodhrán. Pauline's live performances have been described as "delightful and convivial on so many levels" and "hilarious and totally batshit"!

Their concert set is an eclectic mix of Celtic songs, and songs written by various songwriters including Robert Burns, Pauline's own songs and the occasional song written by Heather. Add to that a jig or reel

here and there performed on flute and bodhrán for you to get your feet tapping and it's bound to be a braw wee soirée!

Note some changes to the usual format – this is an extra Social Club meeting and will be held on the **first** Wednesday (not the usual third Wednesday) to fit in with Celtic Caim's tour schedule. It will start at 1.30pm as usual, but our guests will perform for an hour (longer than usual) before we take a break and then go around the circle. Entry is by donation, which will go directly to the musicians. We suggest a donation of at least \$10 if you can manage it – touring in NZ is costly!

Meanwhile you can also see them at The Undercurrent, 118 Tory Street, Friday 23 October, 7pm.

🎸 September Concert reviews

Hill-start and Andrew and Kirsten London

"Country's bugged, no offence". Anyone in the good-sized audience who rolled up for Acoustic Routes' September concert will remember that quotable quote from Andrew and Kirsten London. They were the second half act. More on that in a bit.

Opening the show for us at the Johnsonville Club: another duo, "Hill-start", who will be familiar to regulars at the Plimmerton open mic. That's where Jo Moir and Simon Harding met seven years ago and they've been performing together since. Most of their repertoire comes from the Americana cookie jar, but fresh-baked with their own special ingredients – Simon's singing and guitar enriched with Jo's lovely violin and vocals. They opened with one of the first songs they did together, Neil Young's "Powder Finger". Their set included songs by Shane Nicholson and Gram Parsons, amongst

others. Jo got a special round of applause for her own song, "Waiting Right Here", written for her two sons.

Now, back to the country being "buggered". With an election looming, some may put their own interpretation on the song title and chorus line: "Country's Bugged, No Offence". But Andrew London borrowed those memorable words and the rest of the lyrics more or less verbatim from the lips of a Canterbury farmer some years ago. Those who have seen Andrew and Kirsten perform, either as a duo or in some other combo, know what to expect: cleverly crafted songs, full of wicked wit, artfully arranged and delightfully delivered by one of the best and busiest acts in the business... and one of my favourites.

They gave us a generous baker's dozen of goodies from their huge repertoire, starting with a solo from Andrew, name checking a list of famous names in "Now You Give Us This". We heard several songs from the pair's latest album, "Set Me Up By the Bar" (but not by the toilet). A leafy suburban blues about getting on (or not) with your neighbours – "I Mowed My Neighbour's Berm Today". An advertising jingle for Trump, (bleach, anyone?)

A tribute song written by a musical mate, the late James Cameron of the Cattlestops. ("Waiting for the Sunrise in Martinborough"). Jo was called back on stage to add her fiddle to Andrew's chilling "Emily Bay", set in the former brutal British penal colony on Northfolk Island. The evening was wrapped up with a decidedly tongue in cheek tribute to Karori.

Joe Colman hit the high notes on sound, again.

Another memorable moment on this night was the presentation of **Acoustic Routes' Most Improved Performer Award to Lesley Wilson**, who's making her mark as a new player at Acoustic Routes events. And we all admired the fine job Murray Kilpatrick made of refurbishing the battered old trophy, first presented to Ron Craig more than 50 years ago.

Then time for fond farewells, and home for a cup of tea and putting to bed a head full of swirling words and images.

Kevin Ikin

Social Club – Don Burnham

In September we were also treated to a delightfully swinging set of authentic 'Americana' songs, some covers and some originals, with lots of opportunity to join in and sing along. Given the time of year, it appropriately left us with a spring in our steps! Janette Munneke



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



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

🎵 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

🎵 **CPG Quartet**, with special guest Ben Parker, Thunderbird Cafe, 154 Featherston St, Wellington, Friday 2 October, 5.30-7.30pm

🎵 **Wellington Calling Open Mic**, The Undercurrent, 118 Tory Street, Saturday 3 October, 7.30pm, featuring Don Mackay, all performers welcome, register to play by emailing openwandw@gmail.com

🎵 **Moon Goose**, The Undercurrent, 118 Tory Street, Sunday 4 October, 5.30pm

🎵 **Burgin, Kerr and Norman**, The Undercurrent, 118 Tory Street, Saturday 10 October, 7.30pm. Last local show of the year!

🎵 **Ukulele Night! Hutt Valley Ukulele Orchestra**, Days Bay Pavilion, 611B Marine Drive, Days Bay, Lower Hutt, Sunday 11 October, 6 – 8pm

🎵 **Songwriters' Showcase #116**, featuring Tom Kane, Brittle Star, and Goldenchild, Moon Bar, 167 Riddiford Street, Sunday 11 October, 7pm

🎵 **Mainly Acoustic Music Club**, Mayfair Café, 116 Main Street, Upper Hutt, Tuesday 13 October, 7:30-10pm Karen Clarke + Steven Hall, Portable Panic Plus and Rachel Hird. For more information - 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, Upper Hutt. Call Bill Dashfield 0221 923 326

🎵 **Sonia & Nigel's Aotearoa Homecoming Tour**
At Hilltop, Upland Road, Kelburn, **Friday 16 October 7pm**
Teas, coffee & snacks provided. BYO.
www.hilltophouseconcerts.co.nz/upcoming-gigs/



🎵 **Simple Animal**, The Undercurrent, 118 Tory Street, Thursday 22 October, 7pm

🎵 **Celtic Caim: Pauline Vallance and Heather Innes**, The Undercurrent, 118 Tory Street, Friday 23 October, 7pm

🎵 **sloer + Re:Ruby**, Vogelmorn Upstairs, Vogelmorn Precinct, 93 Mornington Road, Brooklyn, Friday 23 October, 8pm

🎵 **Moon Daughter plays The Shed**, The Shed, 46a Victoria Street, Alicetown, Lower Hutt, Saturday 24 October, 7-9.30pm

🎵 **The Shenanigans**, Days Bay Pavilion, 611B Marine Drive, Days Bay, Lower Hutt, Sunday 25 October, 6 – 8pm

🎵 **Butter Wouldn't Melt**, The Undercurrent, 118 Tory Street, Saturday 31 October, 6.30pm

🎸 **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/

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

