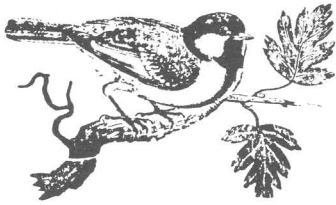


Ali's Corner



First of all, congratulations to the Editors for a very classy and interesting *Bulletin*. More power to your elbow!

As Ian Robb mentioned in his "Ontario Report" in the last issue, there are several non-commercial clubs operating in this area, all presenting a fair amount of traditional folk music. Four of these, the Cuckoo's Nest in London, Fiddler's Green and Mariposa Mainland in Toronto and the Queen's Bush in Owen Sound (a name of some historical accuracy, we are assured) form the basis of a southern Ontario circuit where traditionally oriented folk music can be heard. All of these clubs exist largely to present professional or semi-professional performers in a concert setting of varying informality, but since they are all run by and for enthusiasts, who find the exercise a good way to hear their favourite music, rather than a quick way to a fast buck (dream on!) it would be surprising if there were not a number of offshoots involving the regulars in a more active way. With the exception of Mariposa, all have regular singers' nights, encouraging club regulars to constantly find new material, and bringing new singers to the fore. Dance has long been a part of both Fiddler's Green and the Cuckoo's Nest. Both clubs have Morris teams which grew out of their membership (and in the case of London, Rapper and Longsword teams as well). New teams have since grown up in both these cities, showing that this form of folk dance continues to thrive. The teams have regular "Ales" where they get together, and, amongst other things, actually dance.

Country dancing is also going strong. Fiddler's Green holds monthly dances with Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, and there are regular English and Contra Dances as well. In London, the club has run a number of highly successful country dances, including a co-production with l'Association Française de London, featuring Eritage from Montreal. In an attempt to be more self-reliant, a group of musicians, including one late of the Saint John Folk Club and another recently arrived from Thunder Bay and the Summer Solstice Festival Staff, have formed a country dance band, and recently play-

ed for their first dance (successfully, I may add. At least, no-one stopped and looked perplexedly at the band at any time).

David Gallop, who runs a dance group at Trent University, is running a dance weekend with tuition May 22-24. If you're interested, contact him at 1595 Rockland Rd., Peterborough, Ont. K9J 6R8.

The popularity of country dancing in recent times illustrates a belief I have always held. People enjoy things they can get involved in - a bit trite perhaps, but our most popular events are those where there is lots of community singing or dancing. But before I go overboard, and join those who think that the sole function of a folk club is to be a sing-around; those dreadful hootenannies where everyone got to bring a guitar and mess up everyone else's presentation; I should say that the visiting performer is highly important, both for entertainment and innovation. Certainly, a good club should cover both ends.

If you'd like to have a clear idea of what's happening in folk clubs across the country, well, read the *Bulletin* of course, but after that, you should turn your attentions to a great number of club magazines and newsletters which circulate among clubs, providing a very valuable source of information and communication. Here are some that I receive. Most are available on a subscription basis, for a nominal dollar or two.

The Cuckoo's Nest Newsletter: contact: Sheila Duncan, 372 Cedar Ave., London, Ont. N6G 1E7.

Summer Solstice Festival Newsletter: contact: Suite 17, Zeller's Block, 214 Red River Rd., Thunder Bay, Ont. P7C 1A6.

The Saint John Folk Club Rag: contact: Chris Lobban, 176 Germain St., Saint John, N.B. E2L 2G3.

The Calgary Folk Club Newsletter: contact: P.O. Box 262, Bragg Creek, Alta. T0L 0K0.

The Underground - Voice of the Oldtime Country Music Club of Canada: contact: Bob Fuller, 1421 Rue Gohier, St. Laurent, P.Q. H4L 3K2.

Northern Lights Festival Boreal Newsletter: contact: 176 Larch St. Suite 304, P.O. Box 1236, Sudbury, Ont. P3E 4S7.

The Victoria Folk Music Society Newsletter: contact: 539 Pandora St., Victoria, B.C. V8W 1N5.

The Southside Folk Club Newsletter: contact: 15016 - 62 St., Edmonton, Alta. T5A 2B5.

The Bytown Connection: contact: The Bytown Live Entertainment Association, P.O. Box 4655, Stn. E, Ottawa, Ont. K1S 5H8.

Rocky Mountain Folk Club News: contact: 1928
14th Ave. N.W., Calgary, Alta. T2N 1M5.

The Fort Frances Folk Society Newsletter: con-
tact: Liz Foulds, Box 488, Emo, Ont. P0W 1E0.

The Grafton St. Cafe: contact: 1579 Grafton
St., Halifax, N.S. B3J 2C3.

The Georgian Bay Folk Society/Summerfolk: con-
tact: 949 2nd Ave. E., Owen Sound, Ont. N4K
2H5.

Lastly, if, like me, you believe that a song is not a song until it's sung, you might be interested in the following sources of traditional folk music records:

Canadian Spaces, 350 Queen St. W., Toronto, Ont. M5V 2A2.

Hand Picked Music, P.O. Box 269, Echo Bay, Ont. P0S 1C0.

I realize that this article reads more like the Yellow Pages than anything else, but I feel that it is very important to accept that the strength of folk music in Canada (and most other places for that matter) lies in the clubs, and the strength of the clubs lies in the regulars, who mostly go along because they find the music entertaining, and the social life good. Isn't that where it all started? Plus ça change.

- Alistair Brown