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Newsletter Number 41 — September 2026

HELLO — AND A SMALL CHANGEVER

I'm John, and from this issue onwards I'll be putting the newsletter together and looking after the mailing list. It's a privilege to be picking up something that has already run to forty issues, and I'd like to start by thanking Joy for everything she has done to keep us all informed, month after month. I'll be leaning on her, and on all of you, as I find my feet.

Nothing about the newsletter is changing in any fundamental way. It will still arrive monthly, it will still tell you where the music and dancing is, and it will still carry John Dotchin's splendid masthead at the top. What I would like to add, gently and over time, is a bit more of the *story* of what we do — where our tunes and dances come from, what the Dales sounded like a century ago, and what our neighbours across Yorkshire are up to. You'll find the first attempts at that further down.

Most of all, **this newsletter is only as good as what you send me**. If you know of an event, if you've been somewhere worth telling people about, if you have a photograph, a memory, a tune with a story attached, or a correction — and there will be corrections — please do pass it on. Nothing is too small!

SESSIONS RETURN TO THE BUCK INN — SUNDAY 11 OCTOBER

Our regular sessions come back to **The Buck Inn, Buckden, BD23 5JA** on **Sunday 11 October, 2–5pm**.

From there they run on the **second Sunday of the month through to March 2027** — so the next two are **Sunday 8 November** and **Sunday 13 December**, both 2–5pm.

Come and join us to sing, play, recite or listen.

There is no Collective session in September — October the 11th is our first of the new season. Plenty to be going on with in the meantime, though: see below.

PHOTOGRAPHS, VIDEO AND SOCIAL MEDIA — ENTIRELY YOUR CHOICE

One of the things I'd like to help with is getting word of the Collective out to people who don't yet know we exist. We're a warm and welcoming crowd, and there are people out there — younger players especially, and folk who've just moved into the dale — who would love what we do if only they knew about it. The most effective way to show them is to let them see and hear it: a short video of a session in full flow says more than any amount of description.

So at the session on **Sunday 11 October** I'm going to ask whether people would be happy for me to take some photographs and a little video, to share on **Facebook and Instagram** pages I'm setting up for the Collective. Please do join the group on Facebook and share if you can .

www.facebook.com/groups/dtmdc/

If you are happy to take part, do let me know, and I'll get some footage that shows what we're about.

LOOKING BACK: THRIDDINGSFEST 2026

ThriddingsFest returned for its second year from **1 to 9 August**, with nine community events spread across the county — Huddersfield, Goole, Bradford, Buckden, Burley in Wharfedale, Batley and Leeds. It is a festival of the Ridings, loosely modelled on the Eisteddfod, celebrating Yorkshire in words and music. Two of those nine were ours, or as near as makes no difference.

Our own session — The Buck Inn, Buckden, Sunday 2 August

The Collective marked Yorkshire Day with a special afternoon session in the courtyard at The Buck Inn. The afternoon traditional songs, dialect readings and the music of the Dales, in a Dales country inn, which is about as fitting as it gets.

Topic Folk Club's "Yorkshire Neet" — The Castle, Bradford, Thursday 6 August

The Topic — which bills itself as the oldest continuously running folk club in the world, and which turns **70 this October** — gave over its regular Thursday club night to a "Yorkshire Neet. On Thursday August 6th — one of the Thriddingsfest 2026 events was hosted by the Topic Folk Club at the Castle pub in Bradford 's City Centre. Yorkshiredness in many guises, was celebrated by young and old, by those who are Yorkshireborn and by a number of us offcumdens. Twenty or more contributors brought songs, poems, and stories to share, some in local dialect, some in Southern accents, a couple in Punjabi. There were a number of references to back-to-back, houses, privies and ginnels. and accompanying sounds from guitars, cello, harmonica and a harmonium. The idea for Thriddingsfest came from the 19th century Yorkshire dialect writer Fred Moorman who was keen to emulate the Welsh Eisteddfod. Thanks to Vicki Waner & Collin Speakman who have set the ball rolling for the Three Ridings, 150 years on. *Joy Leach*



OUT AND ABOUT: SEPTEMBER IN THE DALES

A quieter month than some for us, but there is a great deal going on around the dale if you fancy a night out.

Sessions and singarounds

Wed 2 & Wed 9 Sept — Singaround at The Green Dragon, Hardraw, near Hawes, DL8 3LZ, from 8.30pm. First and second Wednesdays of the month. Tel 01969 667392.

Mon 21 Sept — Skipton Folk Unplugged, The Narrow Boat, 38 Victoria Street, Skipton BD23 1JE, 7.30–10pm. Third Monday of the month, and a singers' night through and through.

Concerts and gatherings

Sat 5 Sept — Bob Fox & Stu Luckley, Reeth Memorial Hall, Swaledale. Doors 7.30pm, 8pm start. £20 in advance, £22 on the door. A reunion of the pair behind "Nowt So Good'll Pass" — a considerable treat.

Thu 10 Sept Cohen Braithwaite Kilcoyne, with support from Lilian 7pm at The Castle, Bradford BD1 2LU. Doors at 7pm, music 7.30pm to 9.45pm <https://wegottickets.com/f/24741>

Sun 13 Sept — Hardraw Scar Brass Band Contest, in the gorge behind The Green Dragon at Hardraw. Bands have competed in that natural amphitheatre since the 1880s. Do ring ahead to confirm before setting off.

Wed 16 Sept — "Three Acres and a Cow", Settle Victoria Hall, 7pm. The history of English land rights and protest, told in folk song, story and poem. Right up our street.

Fri 18 – Sun 20 Sept — Grassington 1940s Weekend. Vintage dances at the Town Hall on the Friday and Saturday evenings, tea dances on both afternoons, and brass bands about the village. Note that the Saturday night and both tea dances were already sold out when we checked.

Sun 20 Sept — Eabhal, Settle Victoria Hall, 7pm, £19. Gaelic and English song with a fine trad band behind it.

Thu 24 Sept Emily Slade 7pm at The Castle, Bradford BD1 2LU. Doors at 7pm, music 7.30pm to 9.45pm <https://wegottickets.com/f/24741>

Sat 26 Sept — Accrington Pipe Band and the Boomerang Band, Settle Victoria Hall, 7pm.

Tue 29 Sept — Andy Irvine with Quilty, Settle Victoria Hall, 7.30pm. Irvine of Planxty and Patrick Street needs no introduction from me.

And just over the line into October

Sat 3 Oct — Leveret, Reeth Memorial Hall. Doors 7.30pm, 8pm start. £20 advance / £22 door. Andy Cutting, Sam Sweeney and Rob Harbron, playing English traditional music about as well as it can be played, and taking requests all night.

Sat 3 Oct — Topicfest, Darley Street Market Courtyard, Bradford BD1 3AW 11.45am to 5pm

Sat 10 Oct — John Tams, Reeth Memorial Hall — sold out, but the hall is keeping a waiting list.

Settle Victoria Hall has by some distance the best folk programme in our area at the moment. Box office 01729 825718. Ticket prices weren't published for every night, so it is worth a phone call.

FURTHER AFIELD: LEEDS, BRADFORD, OTLEY AND WHARFEDALE

The big one

Fri 18 – Sun 20 Sept — Otley Folk Festival, its 35th. Venues all round the town: the Parish Church, Otley Common, The Black Horse, The Labour Rooms. Jez Lowe & The Bad Pennies, Martin Simpson, John Spiers & Jackie Oates, Bryony Griffith & Alice Jones, Katie Spencer, Duncan McFarlane Band and a good many more, plus beginner-friendly slow sessions and pub sessions throughout.

Weekend tickets were advertised at £70 early bird, but the booking page was showing a waiting list when we looked. Worth checking before you make plans.

Clubs that meet every week

Wednesdays — Otley Folk Club, The Black Horse, Otley. Doors 7.45pm, music 8–10.30pm. Singers' nights £1; guest nights from £5. John Connolly on 9 Sept, Malcolm Connell on 30 Sept.

Thursdays — Topic Folk Club, The Castle, 20 Grattan Road, Bradford BD1 2LU. Doors 7pm, 7.30pm start. It bills itself as the oldest continuously running folk club in the world, and who are we to argue. Cohen Braithwaite-Kilcoyne on 10 Sept, Emily Slade on 24 Sept; singers' nights on the 3rd and 17th, £1 on the door.

Mondays — Folk at the Grove, The Grove Inn, Back Row, Holbeck, Leeds LS11 5PL, 8–10.30pm. Singers, musicians and spoken word, with Monkeys Fist as guests on 14 Sept.

Fridays — Bacca Pipes Folk Club, Riddlesden Institute, Scott Lane, Keighley BD20 5BU. Open 7.30pm, singing from 8pm. Singers' night on 4 Sept and Jez Lowe on 11 Sept. No bar, so take your own.

Dancing

Sun 20 Sept — Addingham Ceilidh Club, Addingham Memorial Hall LS29 0PD, 7–9.30pm, £5. Beneath The Clock playing, with callers taking turns. This one is their postponed summer social, so it runs a little longer and there are refreshments.

Concerts

Sat 12 Sept — The Tannahill Weavers, Otley Courthouse, 8pm, £18.

Thu 24 Sept — Leveret, City Varieties Music Hall, Leeds, 7.30pm, £24.

Fri 25 Sept — Fara, Otley Courthouse, 8pm, £21. Orkney fiddle, and rather wonderful.

THIS MONTH IN FOLK

The horn at Bainbridge — our own September date

Wensleydale has a September start-date of its own. At Bainbridge the forest horn was sounded across the green every night from the feast of Holy Rood — reckoned locally as the last week of September — until Shrovetide, to guide travellers safely in out of the Forest of Wensleydale. The *Victoria County History* recorded in 1914 that “the old custom of blowing the forest horn at Bainbridge at 10 every night from Holyrood to Shrovetide lingers to the present day.” The office ran in the Metcalfe family for generations. The nightly blowing has sadly now lapsed, but the horn itself is still kept at the Rose and Crown.

Monday 7 September — the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance

Not Yorkshire, but the great September date in the English folk calendar. On Wakes Monday, six Deer-men, a Fool, a Hobby Horse, a Bowman and Maid Marian carry six sets of reindeer antlers around the Staffordshire parish from eight in the morning until dusk. Robert Plot described the custom in 1686. In 1976 one of the horns was radiocarbon-dated to around 1065 — which means the antlers were already ancient when Plot saw them, and must have been imported, reindeer having long since left these islands.

4 September 1998 — Lal Waterson

Elaine “Lal” Waterson died on 4 September 1998 at Robin Hood’s Bay, only ten days after her diagnosis. Born in Hull in 1943, she sang with her siblings Mike and Norma as The Watsonsons, whose unaccompanied harmony singing changed the shape of English folk in the 1960s. She was also one of the tradition’s most original songwriters: *Bright Phoebus* (1972), made with Mike and arranged with Martin Carthy, Ashley Hutchings and Richard Thompson, is now reckoned a landmark English record. A Yorkshirewoman through and through.

FROM THE ARCHIVES: AN INNKEEPER’S FIDDLE BOOK

In 2002 a small, battered notebook came up at a saleroom in Leyburn. It measures about seven inches by three and a half, runs to fifty-two pages, and is inscribed over and over in a confident hand: **Wm Calvert’s Book**, 1812.

William Calvert, born in 1780, was a Dalesman through and through — born at the Streethead Inn in Bishopdale, and later keeping an inn himself at Harmby near Leyburn. His book holds fifty-two fiddle tunes: thirteen reels, eleven jigs, eight country dances, eight hornpipes, seven airs, two slip jigs, and one each of march, strathspey and allemande. There are psalm and hymn tunes in there too, because a Dales fiddler played for the chapel as well as for the barn. Several tunes carry fingering marks, so we know exactly what he had under his hands.

And here is the detail that makes it. Inside the front and back covers, jotted in among the reels, are **his accounts for grassland rents** — some of them for substantial sums. Music at one end of the book, hay meadows at the other. That is a Dales musician’s life in a single object, and it hasn’t changed as much as you might think.

Chris Partington transcribed the whole thing into ABC notation in 2003 and the manuscript has since been scanned, so anyone can now read a Wensleydale innkeeper’s dance repertoire, page by page, for nothing. It is free at imslp.org.

FUTURE MUSIC OR DANCE EVENTS IN AND AROUND THE DALES

Should you have any events you would like us to flag up, do send them to me and I’ll put them in. They can also be posted on the website at www.dales-music-and-dance-collective.org.uk.

PLEASE SEND NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS TO: dalesmusic@thinkingfree.co.uk

OUR WEBSITE



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OUR FACEBOOK PAGE



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Musicians, Singers, Dancers, Poets, Story Tellers and Listeners interested in the music of the Dales.