

FOSIL News & Views

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Malcolm Price (1939-2017) - forgotten first beatnik folk musician in Cornwall

Acknowledged as the first beatnik folk musician to visit Cornwall by veteran folkie Wizz Jones, Malcolm Price is almost forgotten these days. He was a pioneer of the flatpicking style of guitar in the UK and a huge fan of what we would call 'Americana' today, especially its early country roots. Melody Maker called him "the champion of old-timey music" and he was an inspiration to many.

Malcolm started his musical journey on harmonica, but this was soon traded for a guitar and he joined the new skiffle craze of the mid-fifties, playing in clubs around Kent. In 1957 he witnessed Ramblin' Jack Elliott and Derroll Adams at the Blues and Barrelhouse Club, Soho, run by Alexis Korner and Cyril Davies. The flatpicking guitar skills of Jack Elliott mesmerised Malcolm and he decided to try and learn the style himself (where the strings are hit with a pick or plectrum). He practised hard but soon realised that he would need much more time to develop the tricky technique - hence his plan to escape to the wilds of Cornwall, which would prove useful in many ways.

According to record sleeve notes Malcolm set off for Cornwall in the spring of 1957, with just his acoustic guitar. He found a deserted game-keepers cottage in the grounds of the (now Lost Gardens of) Heligan Estate to squat in. It was called Rose Cottage and became a regular place for musicians to use as a crash pad throughout the 1960s and beyond - the BBC filmed Malcolm here in 1958 and broadcast it on Huw Weldon's "Monitor" TV programme but sadly the tapes have since been wiped! Malcolm was in fact dodging National Service and asked his young girlfriend Carol, who had sung with him in the Kent clubs, to run away and join him in his Cornish hide-out, which she did and later married him. The couple led a very frugal life here for a couple of years, rehearsing a lot of country/ 'Americana' material, until they finally decided to do some gigs in the area. Wizz Jones remembers seeing them play an interval spot at a jazz club in Newquay (or possibly St Austell) during his first Cornish visit in 1959, which he said was very impressive both in technique and presentation.

Busking and the odd paid local gig had meant only just basic survival in Cornwall, so now the couple decided to try their luck abroad with Paris being the nearest beatnik hotspot. They busked through France and onto Belgium, where banjoist Derroll Adams was based, doing several gigs with him before realising that it was getting harder to cover the cost of a room every night, so a return to London was planned. The timing was quite good as by late 1959 the first folk clubs were emerging and there was now a chance of paid club work. They auditioned at a few venues and with Carol now playing an old auto-harp that had been found and re-conditioned, started to make a name as a duo.

A chance meeting at a party led to mandolin-playing grave-digger Mick North joining them to form a trio. The Malcolm Price Trio could now perform very authentic bluegrass and old-timey American folk music just like the Carter Family, which sounded very fresh to folk audiences. A Trio EP was recorded 4/12/62 (Oak 1963) followed by two Decca LPs (1964 and 1965) but the group disbanded after the break-up of Malcolm/Carol's marriage in 1964, forcing Malcolm to continue mainly solo.

A variety of broadcasting work also became important. This had started in 1963 when he hosted an all-network country and folk programme and was semi-resident on the ITV series "Hullabaloo". He was a compere on BBC Radio 2's "Country Meets Folk" in 1968, had radio spots in the USA as well as touring with huge country artists like Hank Snow, plus he even considered moving to New Zealand due to the amount of concert / TV work he was offered there. LPs were released along with UK gigs (including Pipers Club, Count House, Botallack, in 1969), but he finally decided to settle in Norway during the early 1980s. He very sadly died of cancer in Oslo on 9 August 2017. Ralph McTell said "Malcolm was one of the finest flatpicking guitar players I'd ever heard....he was also very funny and witty". Limited solo music by Malcolm can be found on Spotify/Amazon/Google Play, but Trio material remains elusive, apart from a rare track from 1963/64 which has recently become available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zo1r-bxzJ-g>

Phil Saward

PICKIN' ON THE COUNTRY STRINGS!

THE MALCOLM PRICE TRIO

THE COUNTRY STRINGS
ENGINE 143
COLUMBUS STOCKADE
BOWLING GREEN



The first recordings of The Malcolm Price Trio released as an EP on Oak Records in 1963

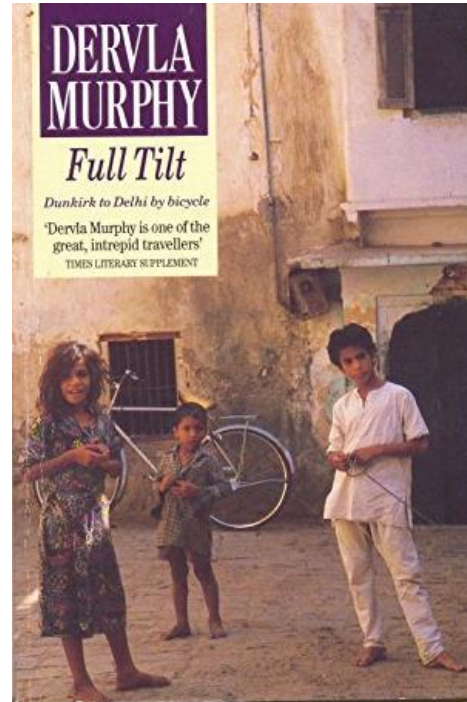
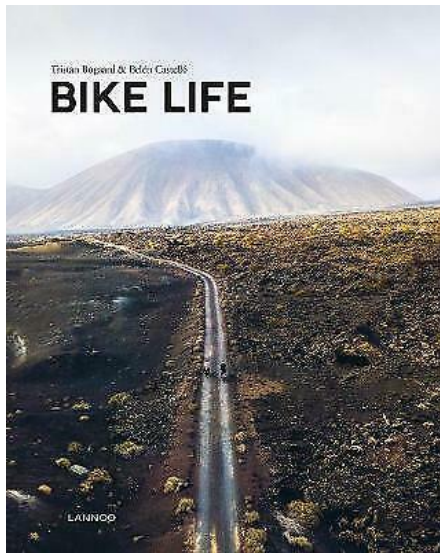
Malcolm's last UK LP release "The Bourgeois Blues" on Waterfront Records 1980



FOSIL Committee members are beginning to get itchy feet with some of us looking back on places we ventured to whilst others plan for trips we hope to make in the future. Margaret Notman has spent some time investing a different sort of travel book – travelling by bicycle. Margaret has written:

Tristan Bogard and **Belen Costello**, two Spaniards, have written a book called "**Bike Life**". The book, published in 2020, is about an epic bike ride clocking up 9,320 miles on a two-year journey that took them across seven countries and three continents: Europe, North America and Central Asia.

I am told that it is a stunning 'coffee table' book. For those unfamiliar with the term it is about certain people wanting to display books, usually large and colourful, so that they stand out and attract the eye but may not necessarily be read. However this book is a must for the avid traveller as well as the adventurous bike rider. It contains many visually stunning photographs, many tips offering practical advice and many anecdotes on places and people. It encourages you to be a weekend biker or to leap into the journey of a lifetime with a long trip. It is an inspirational book rather than an armchair book.



A rather different book written by **Dervla Murphy** in 1965 is "**Full Tilt: Ireland to India With a Bicycle**". This is about an overland trip through Europe, Iran, Pakistan and India. The journey was undertaken in 1963 by Dervla who was in her thirties and was a travel writer. At the time the trip was made it was not very common to travel either alone or as a woman - or on a bike. Her stories of travel could read as a novel. Her experiences of being attacked by wolves in the former Yugoslavia, intimidated by soldiers in Ethiopia and being robbed in Siberia are not for the faint hearted. Dervla is now in her eighties but has described the worst incident in her life as tripping over her cats at home and shattering her left arm!

Both books contain a sense of adventure and wonder in the world, and in Dervla's case without the use of modern technology. It is said that "Travel broadens the mind". But what one gathers along the way is the broadening of different cultures, languages, foods, the utter kindness of strangers and the sharing of human life on our ever-smaller planet.

Margaret Notman

If you want to travel whilst remaining in the comfort (and confinement) of your front room, then look at the following, which are said to be 'The Best Coffee Table Travel Books':



Jane Dews ST IVES LIBRARY 1991 – 2021

As Jane is shortly to retire, Janet Axten grabbed the opportunity to speak with her about her time working in the library.



Those of us who have been involved in some way with St Ives Library over the years are likely to recall a number of major changes that have taken place. We are now going to witness another – saying good-bye to Jane Dews who, for the last ten years, has been our popular and much-loved Library Manager. Jane recently has had, probably, one of her most challenging experiences - that of overseeing the transfer of St Ives Library from the ownership of Cornwall Council to St Ives Town Council. No re-organisation takes place without a certain amount of apprehension, but thanks to Jane, the transfer – including having to take on responsibility for the important work of the Visitor Information Centre – has gone remarkably smoothly. Under her direction, Jane and her staff have risen to the challenge.

It seemed the perfect opportunity to talk to Jane; to discover how she came to work in St Ives Library, recollect some of the people she has worked with and to remember the changes she has seen. I hoped too, to hear her thoughts on the future of libraries as well as the place of books in our lives. A few weeks ago, therefore, the two of us had a long chat. Jane's thirty years here have coincided with the time I have been living in St Ives, which has included my own involvement with the Library, both as a FOSIL committee member and the period of around six years when the newly opened St Ives Archive rented the reading room on the first floor. It was therefore particularly fascinating for me to recall those three decades through Jane's eyes.

Jane was born in Gillingham, Kent. Because her father was in the Navy the family travelled around quite a lot, finally settling in Portsmouth. She trained as a secretary and worked for a while at Portsmouth Dockyard. Then, in 1989, with her late husband Trevor, Jane and her three young children moved to Cornwall; a place Trevor had always dreamed of settling. In 1991 while living in Canonstown, she learned that there was a vacancy for a Saturday job at St Ives Library. Although she didn't have any previous experience, she had always loved books and, as a child, her ambition had been to work in a library. Her application was ultimately successful, and she joined the team of Greta Williams, Jenny Walters and Sue Whitehead. Pam Martindale, the Librarian, would visit a couple of times a week, while Liz Le Grice, the Art Librarian, would come in once a week. By 1997, after gradually taking on additional hours, Jane became a full-time member of staff.

She remembers that when she arrived, the libraries in Cornwall had recently been modernised; introducing a new electronic system for keeping track of the books. It was no longer necessary for everyone to have those little cardboard library cards. As far as the interior of the building was concerned Jane remembers that it was quite dark and old fashioned, with the main counter opposite the only entrance door, and little rooms on the ground floor; one being set aside for crime and large print. There were the two mezzanine floors – one for the children and the other for art books. On the first floor was the newspaper reading room, the reference library, office and staffroom.

While the St Ives Archive was in the building, the Library went through a major re-organisation. The then Head of Libraries for Cornwall County Council had pretty much bankrupted the library service, which therefore had to be restructured, with everyone re-applying for the jobs. Because the Council had to make savings to sort out the financial situation they found themselves in, the decision was made to reduce the wages budget by freezing staff pay for four years! A further restructuring linked St Ives and St Just libraries. The Manager at that time was Christina Carson and Jane, who was now responsible for IT training, provided computer lessons at both venues, while Christina would visit St Just once a week. A few years later all the managers were made redundant or re-located, including Christina. Those in charge were given the name of Senior Library Assistants, with one person responsible for all the libraries in West Cornwall. Then, more recently, the libraries were devolved to the Town Council and Jane was appointed Library Manager. At around that time, too, she married Tony Liddicoat, a Cornishman.

Jane remembers very clearly when the building was refurbished in 2006 and an extension created to provide a new main entrance. The staff and books were transferred to the Masonic Hall in St Andrew's Street. Because of a lack of space many of the books had to be stored in the large upstairs room, and the library itself was reached down some steps. She thought that the public area was very dark and dingey. The staff had to stay in this temporary accommodation for eighteen months; longer than planned, because additional work was found to be necessary; it was discovered that part of the Stennack River was running underneath. But Jane feels that, despite the restrictions, it was really important to continue to have a presence in the town, rather than closing for the entire period.

For a while, Cornwall County Council funded a literary festival called 'Wonderful Words', which took place every two years. The Council paid for a well-known writer to visit St Ives and give a talk at the Kidz R Us theatre. Jane recalls, in particular, Kate Adie, the BBC Correspondent who, for many years, reported from various war zones around the world. And there was Pru Leith, the cookery writer and author, who had to wait a while for her train to take her back to London. Jane, accompanying her to the station, recalls the pleasure of their having a glass of wine together at the Pedn Olva Hotel. She also remembers Michael Dobbs, who wrote the *House of Cards* trilogy, losing his glasses in the hall, and everyone hunting around for them. They were never found, and Jane wonders whether someone took them as a souvenir?

Jane has much praise for her colleagues. When the Tourist Information staff joined the team, she feels that they all slotted in and everyone has got on. And she is proud that so much good work has been done with FOSIL – all the wonderful events and the support from its committee members over the years. At the same time, in many ways, life has become easier. Her main frustration had been that if something went wrong with the building it was Cornwall Council's responsibility to put it right. She remembers: 'Someone would come up and look, and then they'd go away, and then a workman would come, and they wouldn't have the right thing, and they'd go away again.' Now if there is a problem that needs fixing with the building, usually someone from the Town Council appears very quickly; and if they don't, Jane walks around to the Guildhall and starts to hassle them!

I wondered whether the Library had changed very much over the years – other than structurally? Jane thought that when she arrived it was rather formal and quiet. Then, with an increase in children's activities the atmosphere became more lively and sociable and relaxed. She hopes that people feel it is a safe, friendly place. She also feels that it is an important community building; that people like to come to the coffee mornings and the various events and talks that, before lock-down, took place so regularly. She recalls people saying on many occasions, 'I remember when I came to the Library and you joined me, and you were so nice and friendly'. Helping people out is what she will miss most. The one thing she has disliked about being a manager is that she has had to spend quite a lot of time doing background work, and not able to be out front talking to the public.

Nevertheless, she worries that young people are becoming less literate and numerate because so much research is now done on-line. For many years there were regular visits from the local schools, especially Year 7 Groups, but this no longer takes place. The only time the Library gets involved with the schools is for the annual Summer Reading Challenge. St Uny, Nancledra, St Ives Infants and St Ives Junior Schools are all visited by the library staff to promote the Challenge, and then return when the certificates are handed out.

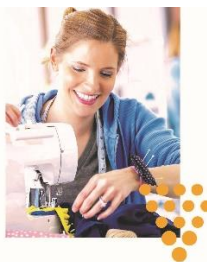
Jane wishes that more people appreciated the value of books. She thinks that people can be put off reading by being told that a certain book is rubbish. But she believes everything will teach you something; no book should be dismissed, as so much knowledge can be gained from them. She also believes that reading is escapism, especially now when so many people are stuck at home. 'You can escape in a book, can't you? You can take yourself away.'

Jane is so pleased that, except for the first lock-down last spring, the Library has remained open during the pandemic. Obviously, there are less visitors coming into the building because so many people are self-isolating, but those who want to read a book still have access and are able to order on-line. They really appreciate being able to come in and borrow a book, or have titles chosen for them. Books are also being home delivered by a volunteer with the Royal Voluntary Service, as well as by Jane herself and the other members of staff.

Finally, she believes it will be a sad day if we no longer have libraries, but she accepts that they will need to change. With her upcoming retirement imminent, Jane hopes the new role of 'Cultural Services Manager', which was advertised recently, is successfully filled - as the Library is still such an important part of the town.

Janet Axten – February 2021

Learning in Lockdown



Feeling lost in lockdown? Too much time to think?
Unsure of what the future holds?

If you are 19+ and unemployed or claiming benefits,
we want to hear from you. Take this moment to upskill.

Our Learner Led sessions are running online, aiming to
meet individuals' interests, including:

- Arts & Crafts • Cornwall Culture & History • Nature, Environment & Animals • Leisure • Communication Skills • Self esteem
- Employability Skills • Video calling tutorials

Find out more:

If you are interested in finding out more, please text your name and postcode to **07837 311 681** or follow this link to our enquiry form www.cornwall.gov.uk/locallearning

Jo McIntosh has 4 new courses starting **Monday 8th March** and places are still available on all of them.

They are:

Natural Dyeing -

<https://enrolonline.wea.org.uk/.../2020/CourseInfo.aspx...>

Handstitching for Pleasure -

<https://enrolonline.wea.org.uk/.../2020/CourseInfo.aspx...>

Beading for Beginners -

<https://enrolonline.wea.org.uk/.../2020/CourseInfo.aspx...>

Textile Collage -

<https://enrolonline.wea.org.uk/.../2020/CourseInfo.aspx...>

All the above courses are suitable for complete beginners and please contact Jo if you would like more information.

Poetry

Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday and Lent

This month's chosen collection of poems by the members and friends of St Ives Poetry Circle and Exploring Poetry focusses on Pancake Day. We hope you enjoyed eating your pancakes – however you take them.

Pancake stars

An over zealous flip of the pan,
sent the pancake spinning into orbit.
There it shines golden and glossy as a mini sun.
The pancake star, joining the Great Bear,
but keeping its distance so The Bear can't consume it.
It would spit it out dismissively, muttering 'small fry'.
And so it enters the celestial calendar,
reminding pancake lovers everywhere to take up the
challenge,
the slippery, flippery, wrist action nippery,
to join the worshipful company of pancake stars

Liz White

The Pancake

You must stir and mix the batter
And pour it in the pan,
Then choose a tasty filling
To remind you of your Nan.

Can you toss a pancake
And land it in the pan?
The trick is in the tossing,
It must miss the ceiling fan.

If you land it in the frying pan
You can race across the field
And win that prize for coming first,
Your credit status sealed.

You could make a light and tasty meal,
Set the table for your guest
Put bananas in the centre
And garnish with lemon zest.

Anne Wilcox

"Pancake Stress"

I always seem to get in such a mess!
It causes me such endless stress!
Egg shells end up in the yoke and the white,
The clouds of flour are an awful sight!

The mix isn't right as it hits the pan,
Causes the gloopy batter to bubble and scatter,
Just toss the flippin' thing me thinks,
An irregular pancake really doesn't matter!

Keith Parker

Ralf Thorgood's poem is Inspired by an old English children's game that you may have sung and skipped to in the school playground, in the manner of "Salt, Pepper, Mustard, Vinegar".

"Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Lent,
Never let the rope go E.M.P.T.Y."

All in together

Take hold
Take part
For the rope
Carries us
As one
To our fast

Take the rope
For the last
Of the pancakes
Have gone

All in together girls
This is fair weather girls
Fast
But never let the pot go empty

Ralf Thorgood

Pancake Haiku

Eggs flour milk hot oil
Frying pan ingredients
Sugar lemon cream

Fast beater

Better eat it now
Eliminate temptation
No pancakes in Lent

The storm before the calm

Last chance indulgence
Mardi Gras Fat Tuesday binge
Ashes tomorrow

Stephen Bales



Co-op Local Community Fund

Please remember - we are aiming to raise funds to purchase new chairs and a chair stacking system for the Greta Williams Community Room. **If you haven't already done so, PLEASE support us by following the links to register your support.**

Join online at coop.co.uk/membership or by downloading the [Co-op app](#).

Use the link to our cause / profile page:

<https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/51093>

St Ives Library and Information Service 2021

St Ives Library opening times **Monday – Saturday 9.30am – 4.00pm for Click & Collect Only**

A computer is available for your use – please book in advance

CAB is still running an appointment system

**Janet Axten Jane Dews Tricia Friskney-Adams Anna Martin Margaret Notman Gill Malcolm Phil Saward
Anne Wilcox**