Newsletter of the Bush Dance & Music Club of Bendigo Inc.

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Coo-ee!

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Newsletter contribution deadline is Tuesday 4th November before the Friday Mail-out.

Next Bendigo East Hop – Saturday October 18th *8pm at Bendigo East Prog. Hall Lansell St.* Admission. *Members $5 Non-members $8 and Children under 16 Free A Plate of Supper to share is always appreciated* and enjoyed.

Next General Meeting Wednesday October 22nd 7.30pm

Club General Meetings will be held at a **NEW VENUE** . On the 1st October Bendigo Neighbourhood House moved office to the Strathdale Community Hall in Crook St and as the office is not very big they will be using another venue for their meeting rooms, functions etc. This venue is the Kennington Play Group Centre and is at the opposite end of Crook St, go past the Kennington Pre School on the left then it is the Kennington Play Group turn in at the car park and you are there. If you are coming from Bendigo via Condon St turn left into Crook St and then right into the car park.

October Birthdays Kerrie Norris 2nd, Mary Budge 15th, Doug Pearse 16th, Rosemary Simms 17th, Annette Coutts 18th , Aub Bell 19th , Lachlan Budge 29th, Ron McFarlane 31st .

Reports from the **September General Meeting**

1 The **Dinki Di Ball.** As with every year it was a great night with 137 lucky door tickets. There was discussion whether dance brackets should be 2 or 3 although no definite view was taken, other than some pointing out three brackets does give beginners or novices the chance to watch one round before getting up, following the dance as best as possible on the 2nd round and consolidating on the 3rd. The supper was great, there were more slices left over and more cream cakes appeared to have been wanted. There were no sausage rolls left and on whole the catering was said to be 'pretty good', I'd say it was excellent. The MCs did a great job and everything ran smoothly. The picnic the following day was up to par with beautiful weather and about 65 to 70 in attendance, the bush walk was again popular and the traditional set of Lancers followed and the Melbourne folk mustered up sets for Margaret's Waltz and the Posties Jig. The musicians were

noticeably 'tired', it had been a long hard night for them.

2 **Rankin's** will be booked for our Christmas **Party** on Sat. 13th Dec. at the Sedgwick Hall and the price has been set at $27 a head. The Menu in the next Newsletter.

3 **Club dances for 2015** will remain for the months from February to November.

4 A special **Australia Day Concert** is to be held at Goornong Soldier's Memorial Hall from 7pm on Saturday January 24th and the door charge will be $10, no concessions. The theme will be a celebration of the **Centenary of the Anzacs** and a live recording is to be made in preparation of a special CD. The club has agreed to assist with supper and in cleaning up afterwards and the **Bendigo Historical Society** is likewise to be involved and will be the producers of the CD and possibly a DVD of the night's entertainment. It is hoped the audience will be augmented by some good singers as this will be incorporated in the performance of some of the popular songs such as Tipperary, Pack Up Your Troubles, Keep the Homefires Burning and Let The Rest of the World Go By. Emu Creek will provide some of the entertainment and it is hoped to have a group from the Symphony Orchestra play the 'Songs of the Allies Lancers' to which our dance team will perform. It is also hoped to have a local brass band play Waltzing Matilda, a piper to kick off with the Battle of the Somme and Will Ye No Come Back again and there will be several special period songs performed such as 'For Auld Lang Syne Australia Will Be There and 'This Bit of the World Belongs To Us. Ted Egan has donated his recording of the Rose of No Man's Land dedicated to the nurses so it can be included on the recording. Eric Bogle has also granted permission for the inclusion of 'And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda' and No Man's Band, Wongawilli 'The Year of the Drum' based on the roll call for volunteers at Mannum in S.A; Mannum suffered the highest number of casualties in WW 1. Martyn Windham Reed from England, a very popular singer in the Australian folk scene has also forwarded his track of 'Farewell to Anzac' for inclusion.

Once the CD has been finalised and pressed there might be a simple jam session type concert held on Anzac Day to launch the production. Approaches will be made to local RSL groups.

5 **Saturday October 25th** has been set aside at Sedgwick Hall from 1pm for **filming the balance of the 'bush dances'** for You Tube footage on our website. Some **young people** from Kyabram, Axedale and Melbourne will be joining the locals so that a good cross section of age groups is possible. The list of possible dances has been circulated to BDMC members and Matt Harriage who is co-ordinating the Melbourne contingency of young folk.

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TSDAV functions coming up: - The **TSDAV** conducts a series of monthly dance workshops, under the name of - **"Dancing at the 11th Hour"** and continues for this year. Dates are the **1st Sunday of the Month**: - the next being **2nd November** at the Eleventh Hour Theatre Hall cnr Gore & Leicester Sts Fitzroy 2.00-5.00 pm. Enquiries Norm Ellis 9888 5332 or http://tsdav.vicnet.net.au/

Retirement Village Dance Displays Report

If you are interested in helping, your support would be very welcome and appreciated, please contact Margaret Dean 5439 6246 or Julie Manypeney 5439 6317 for details.

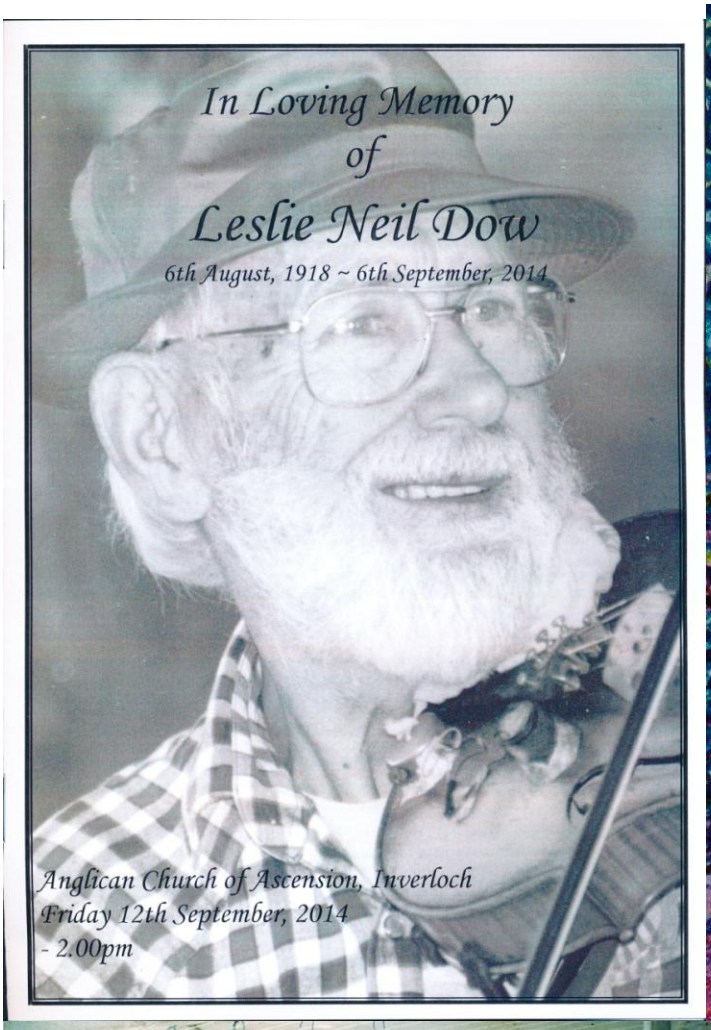
Saturday Nov. 8th at Victoria Heights, 1.30 for a 2pm start, dancers are needed for this, please contact Julie.

Friday 14th November - St Laurence Court Kangaroo Flat. 1.30-2.30pm

Maldon Folk Festival

The usual old time bush dance will be held in the Progress Hall from 8pm till 11pm and everybody is welcome, it is a great family night. The Wedderburn Charming Emus will be the band and support from club members as 'head dancers' is very welcome and of considerable help. If those intending to come along to help in this way could contact Mary or Peter by the October General Meeting Peter will endeavour to obtain free admission.

Vale Les Dow



Les and Glenda Hunter, Wedderburn Oldtimers, and on the right at Kalbarri Western Australia, LR Campbell Holmes, Glenda, Trevor Holt, Peter & Les.

It is with great sadness that I was to learn of the passing of Les Dow at the Maldon Centre for the Aged on Saturday 13th of September. Les was one of nature's greatest gentleman and a gifted musician. I first met Les and Helen Dow at a folk dance at Sedgwick Hall not long after our dance club had been formed. It was some kind of Mandurang based festival of which my memory fails, but perhaps to do with orchids. At any rate Les had a family dance orchestra which they called the Caledonian Goldfields Band for the occasion and they required an MC/Caller and had been put in contact with me. They played for this event at least two years running with the musicians consisting of Les leading on violin and supported by sons Murray on piano accordion and Nicholas on flute, daughter Carol on melodica and wife Helen (known as Bette then, her tea name) on lagerphone. There was also a banjo player and I recall the excellent dance music chordal vamp strum. Norm Ellis had come up with a dance he called 'Fiddlers' Fancy' which started with the Virginia Reel, but during the cast off, added the Waves from the Waves of Tory. It was a great dance and I programmed it, however it went on and on and therefore taxing for the musicians; Les indicated disapproval to me, also of course knowing the correct individual dances through his active association with the VFMC. I think I crawled out of the situation by explaining I was not related to Norm and unaware of the protocols. Well I was fairly green in those days, apart from being a Field Naturalist. Harry Gardner recalls Les was active in the VFMC around the 1980s and was the lead melody player when he joined Theyortabe Band, later known as Barcoo Band. He gave a very positive lead and participated routinely in Club playing events. Les was noted for his pure silvery tone on the fiddle.

A real friendship struck up with Les and Helen and I was to enjoy their company over many years with get togethers at Nariel and at Brucknell Folk Gathering. I remember a wonderful session and lunch with the VFMC and friends at their home at Wattle Glen. When they moved to Inverloch I stayed over a couple of times for a wonderful musical weekend and sometimes Peter and Pat Sutton from Wilson's Prom Lighthouse joined us.

When Lionel Collision violinist of the Wedderburn Oldtimers passed away, I suggested the band invite Les to join and that was instantly taken up. At this stage for Les from Inverloch, there was extensive travel involved and Les bought a little property and house at Heathcote as a stopover between the two. We also had many coach trips with the Oldtimers and at lunch stops while the hosts set up the trestle tables with sandwiches, cakes and Chateau Cardboard, several of us would play music for about 20 minutes to entertain the guests, and sometimes passing townsfolk. There was one occasion when a local popped his head round the corner, it was Dooley Chapman's nephew, he had instantly recognised and been drawn to the sound of the concertina (the late Dooley was a famous Australian concertina dance musician). On another occasion where the coach had pulled up, there was a house with a ladder against the wall. Les climbed up and sat on the roof playing his violin. He announced 'I'm the fiddler on the roof'! This was part of the never ending floor show – show going on all the time and Les's incredible sense of humour. He was always up to something to entertain. At my book launch he was flirting with mum and to her amusement dropped his party pie in his violin case while playing the fiddle at the same time. I can remember at a motel at Deniliquin entering the Wedderburn boys room, Les the centre of attention, crouched on the floor in his undies (hadn't got dressed yet) applying powder to his privates and mushrooms of talc ascending into the air like an atomic bomb. Everybody was in fits. Les went as 'the late Mr Dow' as he was always running late. He was an eccentric and very forgetful, I can remember departure time at our cabin at Colac Colac, Les had systematically laid his clothes and food and other positions in a trail from his bunk through the door to the boot of the car. His empty suitcase was in the boot and everything neatly folded

and put in the case, one by one as things were gradually ticked off and collected along the trail from the bunk to the car.

Les would sometimes disappear in the middle of playing; he might be doing little exercises on his wrists or arms to combat arthritis. In a former band he was reputed to be found behind the piano doing push-ups, and Ray Mundy in his characteristic drawl said – "It's alright Les, you can get up, she's gone!"

I don't think I've ever heard a violin played with such a sweet tone as by Les, and we were fortunate to have his solo item, the Irish jig 'Smash the Windows' (Roaring Jelly) on the 'Oldtimers in Concert CD' and this was played as a mark of respect at the service; as the minister said, it's not often you get to play at your own funeral.

Jack Condon, stroviol player with the Oldtimers once picked up Les's violin and played a tune, Les in an instant grabbed Jack's stroviol, stood in the middle of the dance floor and played it back to Jack, who had a short temper and oscillated between various shades of white and purple at being upstaged. Les of course was such as brilliant player and the stroviol with its megaphone was very directional and projected the sound full blast back at Jack on stage.

More to Les's humour, he told me when he was a lad, he and friends would walk down the street, or into a store, with alarm clocks hidden down the front of their shirts or jumpers, and these set to go off at various moments, as they nonchalantly walked around straight faced as if nothing had or was happening. It wasn't them!

Les's daughter Carol wrote a little page about her dad which she handed around after the service, here are some of the points she made. Dad was born in St. Kilda in 1918, the third of four children. His mother, Edith, married Ernest Dow (a German whose original surname was Dau) and engine driver, but he walked out on her when she was expecting their fourth child and when Les was just two years old. Life must have been tough back then; she survived by working in a factory, taking in washing and giving piano lessons. Les was in his early teens when his mother married her childhood sweetheart, Sinclair Baird, who proved a much better bet. Les's mother went to live with her new husband on his property at Reedy Creek, and Les was left in Melbourne to look after his younger sister. Les was classically trained to play the violin, won an Eisteddfod and came second in the State's violin examinations.

"*Dad met Mum at a dance in South Melbourne and the married in 1940. During WW2 Dad was based in Geelong while he was in training camp and would go AWOL and hitch a ride to Melbourne to see Mum. During the war he was a paymaster at a POW camp for Italians. He got on well with them and really appreciated their love of music. I suspect he felt closer to the Italians, who were supposed to be our enemies, than he did to the army.*

In 1949, they managed to build a house in Ringwood East; there was no electricity and the road was a muddy cart-track. They had four children who just fitted into their little house and then, when Murray, the youngest, was seven, Nick arrived. Mum used to say Nick had been Dad's 38th birthday present – he was born in May – nine months after Dad's birthday in August. Les and Helen had to buy a bigger house in Ringwood, even though they didn't have a bigger bank balance, but they managed.

By the time Nick was fourteen, Les and Helen were getting bored with life in suburbia and decided to go travelling around Australia. This was well before the term 'grey nomad' had been coined. They had to fund their travels by taking jobs along the way and ended up at a cattle station" (Anningee Station Central Mount Stuart) (In my interview of Les and Helen for the National Library Helen states that the station Aboriginals were not allowed to drink tank water, only bore water, and mentions many other inconsiderate non-privileges.

E.g. children were not encouraged to attend school at nearby Tea Tree Well, …… they learnt to write rude comments on the tanks. The snobbish attitudes were not only limited to Aboriginals, as Helen was amazed that in such a remote location visiting station ladies were treated less than warmly unless of considerable social standing.)

"*All through his life Dad enjoyed playing with other musicians. He formed his own group, THE DOGWOOD ITCH, with two of his sons and started a band from some rather variably-talented people through the local neighbourhood house. He was a very active member of the Victorian Folk Music Club. For many years he played with the Wedderburn Old-Timers and was known as a living legend of the folk music scene. He was a fiddler not a violinist, he would say.*

*In later life Mum and Dad moved to a hobby farm at Smith's Gully, on the outskirts of Melbourne. Dad loved it, but as they grew older the work around the farm became too much for them. They bought a house at Inverloch and were very happy there. Dad played music with the various locals, including the lighthouse keeper (***Peter** and **Pat Sutton***) at Wilson's Prom and played his violin during church services here in Inverloch.*

In talking with Les's older daughter Sue, I was explaining how Les must have got into trouble for referring to Helen as 'she'. So he then started calling her 'her'. Sue, responded, Yes, 'She who must be obeyed', I retorted, no 'her who must be obeyed', as Les would say it. I think both Helen and Les, but perhaps more so Helen had healthy diets and she may have tried to keep Les on track. While away, I remember him with some spaghetti, but he washed the tomato sauce off because it had preservatives and dyes. But later, you'd catch him eating a pie. "Don't tell her!"

At the service the eulogy was wonderful and the thing that came through and through, and particularly from the grandchildren Tess Dow, Paul's daughter and Sue's daughter Renay, was what a wonderful quiet and caring person Les was. They looked forward to every visit and holding Grandpa's hand as he took them on a stroll through the bush and onto the beach. He never raised his voice or lost his temper. When he felt a little advice was needed, he'd pick a quiet moment, gently lower his voice and offer a brief but straight to the point helpful comment. Greatest lesson Tess pointed out she'd learned.

Les continued to live at Inverloch after Helen passed away, but eventually a problem occurred. When driving into Melbourne to visit family, he stopped for some reason, perhaps for a meal, and then couldn't remember where his car was, or even how to get back home. His one concern, he knew his precious violin was in the boot. Les was moved into Seahaven Lodge at Inverloch, where he continued otherwise in good health and playing violin at every opportunity. Harry Gardner and I went down on several occasions and joined Les in running a session to entertain the residents. When daughter Sue moved to Harcourt more recently, Les was transferred to Maldon close-by. Although in his last year, he didn't know any of us, he still enjoyed the company and the music, particularly at our Bush Concert. He continued playing his violin to nearly the end.

In the words of the song old friend 'So long, it's been good to know you!" Ed.

Vale Suzanne Hodge

It hasn't been a good year for musicians, Bob Ballentine in January followed by Denis O'Keefe, Campbell Holmes, Les Dow and now Suzanne Hodge of Corryong.

Most of you won't know of Suzanne, but she was an old-time dancer and dance musician with the Corryong Accordion Band and provided much social history on dances at Thougla Valley which is the next one over from Nariel. I did place an article of Suzanne's in our newsletter of Jan. 2013. She also handed on some extra tunes;

her grandfather Arthur Byatt's Set Tune and a Varsoviana and Shoe Black Waltz and provided much information to Harry Gardner and myself for our pending reprint of 'Music Makes Me Smile' on the dances and tunes of the Upper Murray centred around Nariel. Joe Byatt, whom I have mentioned as a really good dancer with Beat Klippel and filmed dancing the old Nariel couple dances as well as the lovely 'chain-on' technique in the Waltz Cotillion, was Suzanne's Uncle. Suzanne could also play her grandfather's Schottische; this still played by the Nariel Band, and proudly played it for me two years ago on her grandfather's concertina. Suzanne regularly played her button accordion and when with the Corryong Accordion Band vamped along on the piano.

Suzanne had a battle in the last couple of years with bowel cancer and is survived by her husband 'Darkie' (Reg) and their three sons and grandchildren. I attended the funeral in Corryong exactly a week after Les's and her rendition of Arthur Byatt's Schottische and his set tune was played as we left the church. Another person like Les who got to play for their own funeral. At the hall later I was to meet George Cadman's daughter for the first time as well as George Klippel's daughter and had the pleasure of Barbara Klippel's company throughout the day.

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Spring Dance Weekend7th – 9th November 2014 **PARKS HALL COMMUNITY CENTRE Portarlington**

(1.5 hrs drive SW of Melbourne, 20 mins past Geelong. Melways 239 F2)

Live music with Matthew Robertson,

Duncan Smith and Julia Arnold

Dance Programme

Friday night: Welcome Dance and Registration

with drinks and nibbles

Saturday night: Social Dance - "Roaring TWENTIES"

Workshop Programme

Saturday/Sunday: 6 dance workshops, 1 music workshop,

Dancers' request session

***For Information**: Marion Stabb - (03) 9439 7100 George Ansell - (03) 9890 5650*

Website: tsdav.vicnet.net.au

Bush Dance & Old Time Dance References via the National Library of Australia's Trove & Digitised Newspapers

Please note that in copying from original sources apparent spelling mistakes etc. are included as this is a nominated procedure. Sometimes (sic) is placed after the particular word or quote to indicate it is quoted exactly as in the original, warts and all. Ed.

Hobart Town Courier Saturday 27th March 1828

At ten went to the Ball. No, that will not do - Here then you have it, à la Morning Pott. This evening the spacious apartments recently erected in the Barrack-square, were thrown open by the Officers of the 40th Regiment, to a numerous and fashionable assemblage of their friends, for a splendid Ball and Supper, to hold most of the principal inhabitants had received cards. The rooms filled soon after 10 o'clock; and quadrilles and Spanish dances were kept up during the whole night with great spirit. The Mess room was appropriated to dancing. It was brilliantly illuminated and the floor was well and very tastily painted. In one part of the room was a handsome transparency. At the upper end were the present colours whilst over the transparency were placed the old and venerable relics of those, which formerly accompanied the regiment to so many fields of glory. The Band was placed outside, in a balcony, at one end of the room. In the larger of the rooms adjoining, were three or four card table; the other was a refreshment room; and a third apartment was used as a cloaking room. At half-past 12 the two large rooms below stairs were thrown open for the supper, which was of the most 'elegant description. These rooms were tastily decorated with shrubs and wreaths of flowers, and the stair-case leading to the rooms was completely arched over and ornamented in a similar manner. The arrangement of the whole reflected the greatest credit upon the hospitality of the regiment, and the taste of the managing committee.

Cairns Post Sat. 17th Aug. 1929 Old Time Dancing Lessons Trocadero, Next Tuesday

The Trocadero announces next Tuesday as the first of a series of learners' nights with tuition of all the good old time favourites by Mr. T. P. Smith. Besides the novice learners those who can already do most of the old time dances will be interested in the return of the Boston and Military Two Steps, Maxina, also the Doris, Veleta, La Rinka and Argentine Waltzes which Mr. Smith intends teaching as time permits. Those wishing to learn the old time dances should not fail to come along to the first night, when the first steps in the various dances will be explained.

Brisbane Courier Tues. 9th Sept. 1930 THE TROCADERO.

The programme at the Trocadero this week includes popular, club, and formal nights, and on Friday night old time dances will be introduced. This night should be a most popular one with the older folk, as they will be quite at home in the schottische, waltz, the valetta, barn dance, maxina, polka, country dances, and others. It is the intention of the Trocadero management to make every Friday night, in future, an old time dancing night. Dancing lessons are being conducted by Miss Buchanan and Mr. Webber, who are anxious to meet those wishing to learn the correct steps in all the latest dances. For the old time dancing next Friday night, the Trocadero management requires a master of ceremonies, and applications from qualified persons are invited. Tomorrow night the10th heat of the Australian Dancing Championship will be decided, and on Thursday night the following clubs will hold social evenings: Ivy Tennis Club, Iona Tennis Club, Kingsdown Tennis Club, and the Alastis Tennis Club.