

A conversation with Cecil Trainer

Ward MacDonald 14 March 2018

On a Wednesday in late January, I stopped into Andrews of Stratford to take in a Queens County Fiddlers practice. I arrived late and hoping not to cause a distraction, I decided to sit in the foyer outside the main room. From the comfort of the couch I could hear the group of 20 or 25 fiddlers offering their beautiful rendition of The Lovers' Waltz. I quickly grabbed my phone to record some of the piece, when to my delight I was joined by an old friend, Cecil Trainor. Cecil is a member of the QCF and a life member of the Society. As we started to chat and laugh, I forgot that my phone was still recording. By a fluke of luck, I was able to capture a few short stories from Cecil, a few bits of wisdom and perspective that I was thankful to have. I've roughly transcribed the some of the conversation below.

Cecil: I was watching this series on television, it was an old, old show. There was bank robbers and the old narrow gauge train was in it. This fellow drove up on horseback to this hotel, he got off the horse's back and he had a white bag. See back years ago, when you went to go fiddling and took your fiddle, you took the pillow case. Well it was the clean thing you see. Well that's what he got off the horse's back with, a white pillow case, and he took the fiddle out of the case, and you should have seen it, it was the prettiest thing I'd ever seen. Years ago if you were going to a wedding or going to play, you'd take the fiddle in a pillow case -- you wouldn't put it in a potato bag!

Ward: How old are you Cecil?

C: I'm 84, in a month's time I'll be 85. Oh I had a good life, see it's 50 some years since I drank. I've often said to people, said to the wife, "I've put in a good life. I've done what I wanted to do. When one job I'd be at, if something happened, I'd go on to another one."



FIDDLIN' AROUND

I've learned more about the fiddle in the last ten years than I did in my whole life before that.

W: Do you listen to much fiddling, do you have recordings?

C: Oh yeah, I have some Cape Breton ones there. I don't take care of them, I lose them in the car or the truck. I play our own here [referring to Queens County Fiddlers - Ages], I get a tune on that and I beat it into the house and to grab the fiddle.

W: Do you read the music too Cecil?

C: Yeah, but I screwed that up. I did learn it back in Faber's time, I learned it and I could play, I couldn't play fast though, then my ear took over and I didn't bother with the notes. I can pick up the book [now] and I can't start the tune. Unless it's just a slow air, I'll get it going, I can read it you know. Oh there's so much music around now.

[The conversation then turned toward a tune that Cecil couldn't remember the name of, but he described it as a great dance tune.]

C: I like to dance to it, it's got great time, my feet won't stay quiet! You know I've learned more about the fiddle in the last ten years than I did in my whole life before that.

W: What about the last ten years has been different for you?

C: I got to know the fiddle more, I got to understand music better. I got more value on tunes and more value on fiddle, it went up these last years. I can pick up a fiddle now and I can hear something good and I can hear something bad. If I was sitting beside someone playing a

tune I never heard before, I could play parts of it.

[Cecil then began describing how he has taken up step dancing in his eighties, and as luck would have it, the fiddlers playing in the background rolled into Brenda Stubbert's Reel.]

C: There's the tune right there.

W: Brenda Stubbert's by Jerry Holland. That's the one you can't keep your feet still for?

C: Yeah, that's the one. I'll tell you how I started this. The funny part is, when I started dancing I could use my left foot as well as my right one. I carried that [hidden skill] around for about 50 years. I could have made a good step dancer. There's nothing to stepping, if your feet will work, it's no harder than a tune. But anyway, Brenda Stubbert's, I thought a lot of that tune, I always did. It's kind of a pet tune.

The Island Fiddler

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"Square dancing: the original social networking."

Youth Scholarships

The PEI Fiddlers Society is now accepting applications for the Bishop Faber MacDonald Scholarship which provides youth between the ages of 10 and 18 the opportunity to attend a fiddle camp of their choosing. The scholarship, which is open to youth Island-wide, will cover an amount up to full tuition and is open to traditional style fiddlers who have been playing the fiddle for at least three years. Applications are available on the PEI Fiddlers Society facebook site or at www. peifiddlers.com. Application deadline is Friday, April 20th, 2018. For more information, contact Jennifer Garrity at jlgarrity@edu.pe.ca or 902-894-3142.



Prince County Fiddlers



Cathy Campbell

The Prince County Fiddlers continue to perform at local Seniors Residences and recently we performed at the Summerside Legion. We are very excited to

return to the Britannia Hall this May to host a concert in celebration of National Fiddle Day. Last year was our first time performing at the hall and the venue was perfect. We received a lot of positive feedback and the audience said we were welcomed back anytime so we have been busy creating a program which will include several special guests. Step dancers Samantha MacKay and Veronica Murray will dance throughout the program. Fiddler Jason Campbell will play some lively tunes for these gals while they kick up their heels. Amelia Parker, a talented young fiddler from Nova Scotia, will play with us and grace us with a few solos. MacKenzie Wright will join us on stage as one of our newest member of the Prince County Fiddlers. Mary Smith will be travelling from Rustico to join us on fiddle and guitar and Kevin Arthur will be our guest singer. Our two-hour concert starts at 7:30pm with doors opening at 7pm. Tickets can be purchased that evening at the door. Please spread the word and we sure hope to see some familiar faces at Britania Hall in Tyne Valley on Saturday, May 19th.

At this time, our group would like to express our deepest sympathies on the passing of Prince County Fiddlers Member, Ivan Day. Ivan began playing with a group called Bows and Strings before becoming one of the founding members of the Prince County Fiddlers back in the late 70's. Ivan was a guitar player and accompanied many great fiddlers through the years and was closely associated with the late John Gauthier, founder and leader of our group. It is important to recognize accompanists for the role they play in a group. Ivan's wife Audrey played the bass guitar for us as well. Together they were a solid foundation for our music. Besides the guitar, Ivan also played the fiddle. He loved the fiddle!! In 1968, Ivan Bowness recorded him playing a tune called "Paddy on The Turnpike". This recording, as well an interview that Ken Pearlman did in 2006 with Ivan, can be accessed on the Bowing Down Home site. Rest in peace dear friend. We are grateful for your commitment to old time fiddle music.

We practice Monday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30 at Community Connections Inc. located at 701 Water Street West in Summerside. Everyone is welcome!



Acadian News



Dorothy Griffin-Farish

Bonjour! Greetings!

How wonderful to see Spring 2018 approaching after a very unusual winter season marked by quick changes in weather and temperature. Because the 'flu' was very popular over the winter months, musical events that had been scheduled for manors and seniors' residences were often cancelled or re-scheduled to a later date.

The Friday Night Jammers continued through the winter, weather permitting. Attendance varied. Some younger musicians occasionally come and join the group, adding extra enthusiasm and spirit. The Mardi Gras Gala, organized by La Belle-Alliance, took place Saturday, February 24th and featured a five-course Cajun meal and numerous artists, among whom were a trio from Louisiana formed by musical artists Joel Savoy, Jesse Lege and Kelli Jones; Julien Robichaud; and Emmanuelle and Philippe LeBlanc.

Acoustic music jams, organized by the Acadian Musical Village and the Evangeline Bluegrass Festival, are held every Sunday at Acadian Musical Village, Abram-Village, until May 6th, except for April 1st.

Amand Arsenault and Friends, which include John Eudes Gallant, Norman Arsenault, Edward Arsenault, Amand Arsenault, and Dorothy Farish, continue to entertain at seniors' homes and manors in the area.

That's it for this time! Cheerio!

Saturday Setups with Island luthier Adam Johnson



Beginning on March 24th, fiddlers will be able to bring their instruments in for a check-up and setup at Brìgh Music Shop on Saturdays.

~ quality musical instruments and fine teas ~



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PH 902 626 8161 BRIGHMUSICANDTEa@GMAIL.com ♥ 育 ◙ Adam Johnson will change fiddle strings, adjust pegs to ensure they aren't slipping, do cleaning and conditioning of the fingerboard and tightening of yolk as needed for \$60. Guitar setups also available.

Instruments can be dropped off at Brigh Music & Tea at 93 Water Street in Charlottetown during regular business hours on Monday through Saturday from 10am to 5pm and Sundays 12:00noon to 5pm. Fiddles or guitars will then be ready for pick up by Monday of the following week. Brìgh Music & Tea is a welcoming shop and culture hub locally owned and operated by Island musicians Mary MacGillivray and Cian O'Morain. Brigh means 'essence, meaning, strength, vitality and soul' in both Scots and Irish Gaelic and is a reflection of the pair's deep cultural roots. Mary (Island born and raised) and Cian (Ireland born and raised and now living in PEI) grew up with a lot of music making and tea drinking happening in their families and communities and Brigh is a natural continuation of these things they love. Brigh sells quality musical instruments, recorded music of Eastern Canada, Ireland and Scotland as well as loose leaf tea and tisanes by the bag or cup. They are happy to special order fiddle supplies and carry a selection of fiddles and strings as well as other quality instruments for adults and children.

For more information, please phone (902) 626-8161.

Queens County Fiddlers



Carolyn Drake

The Queens County Fiddlers have been having a relatively quiet winter season, partly due to some icy roads, which led to cancelling a few practices.

We also had to move one of our practices from Andrews of Stratford because of restricted access to the facility in flu season. However, we enjoyed a great practice upstairs at the Pourhouse at the Old Triangle. It's always nice to have a change.

As it is every year, several members have also headed south to enjoy nice weather, and while we are hoping they are having a nice time, we always miss them on Wednesday nights. We had a meeting after one of our winter practices to make a few plans for the coming year. These will be expanded on at our upcoming annual meeting, which will likely be held sometime in March. Members are reminded to watch their emails for the time and place.

We've just passed our one-year anniversary of recording "Ages". Hard to believe how fast time can go by. There are still a few CDs remaining. Anyone who would like to purchase one is encouraged to contact our president, Tammy MacEachern, or check out our Facebook page. Members of the group were saddened to hear about the death in February of longtime member Paul Cheverie's mother, in Ottawa. June was also a sister-in-law to Father Charlie Cheverie. Our thoughts are with the family. Be sure to get out and enjoy any good music that comes your way as the spring weather approaches. And watch the local media to find out when the Queens County Fiddlers will be taking the stage next.

Kenny Chaisson's 70th Birthday

Rannie MacLellan



Eastern Kings Fiddlers



Anne M. McPhee

The community Christmas dinner held in Souris for the first time was deemed a great success despite one of our only storms. With snow accumulating v seniors reluctant to venture onto

rather quickly and many seniors reluctant to venture onto the roads, meals were soon packaged up and delivered to the various nearby seniors' apartment buildings and with 75 volunteers on hand to serve meals and assist attendees, over 200 means were served in no time. It was a great community initiative and the hall is already booked for Christmas 2018. Others were provided with transportation. It was great to see and hear the songs of Mike O'Connor after his brush with a serious medical issue earlier in the fall. Hats off to the many volunteers who made this event happen and thanks to Melvin Ford for his vision and coordination skills to put an initiative like this in motion.

The Kitchen group has had another growth spurt with at least a dozen fiddlers participating each week along with Al Ryan on Keyboard. We have been delighted to welcome guest fiddlers from town most Monday nights including Cheryl Edmunds, Nathalie Arsenault, Trevor Dunphy and this week Tomas Harrington, an accomplished performer who has been appearing regularly at the Copper Bottom Brewery in Montague. Other regulars include Kevin and Kenny Chaisson and Francis Stewart. Amy Swenson participated one night while delivering the newsletters. And there is lots of room for more.

One new initiative has been to upload our common tunes list and notations on to the peifiddlers.com website so anyone can familiarize themselves with our tunes before coming out. Most guests are happy to find our set list posted on the website once again bringing fiddlers together from across the Island. One guest was beaming from ear to ear after our practice and said, "I hope you realize how lucky you are to have what you have here." Well we certainly do realize it and appreciate every single member of our group and anyone who wants to join us.

Our next project is to get the audio files posted on the website with our music. Thanks to Al Ryan and his fancy recording device, the process has begun. Once our fearless leader, Darren Chaisson, is satisfied with the sound we produce, we hope to upload some MP3 files in the near future so check in soon under 'The Chapters' heading and 'Eastern Kings Fiddlers' to find our music and watch for some audio files.

In the meantime, I'm sure everyone is getting ready to get their Irish on with St. Patick's Day being the highlight of the month of March. Irish fiddler, youth member Zoe O'Regan, informs me that her schedule is filling up fast with a number of gigs already booked to celebrate St. Patrick's Day in the Town of Souris so keep your eyes on local media postings and social media to be sure you get in on the fun.



Jennifer Campbell Q & A

Anne M. McPhee

In January 2018, Jennifer Campbell was announced as the new Executive Director the College of Piping and Celtic Performing Arts in Summerside. The Island Fiddler chatted with her about her vision for the future.

Q: What is your background in the PEI music industry?

A: I started out young volunteering with my dad, Mac Campbell for Radio ECMA when it came to PEI. As soon as I graduated University, I was offered a position as Volunteer and Community Outreach Coordinator for the East Coast Music Association, I moved to the role of



Artist Relations Manager shortly after that.

In 2014, I was offered the position of Executive Director of Small Halls Inc. which puts on the PEI Mutual Festival of Small Halls every year in June. I am currently the chair of the board of directors for Music PEI.

Q: What is your favourite thing about the trad music scene in PEI?

A: What I love about the trad music scene on PEI is that you will never experience the same thing twice. Every show is different and that is exciting. As well, the Trad community is so collaborative and very welcoming.

Q: What drew you to the Executive Director role with the College of Piping?

A: The sound of the bagpipes holds a special place in my heart. The challenge of a new job in a new community and all the potential that exists within in the College really drew me to the job.

Q: What things excite you most about your new role with the college? Are there any new initiatives or projects you already have in mind for the organization?

A: The most exciting thing about the new role is that everything is new. The College just built a truly beautiful Celtic Performing Arts Centre, which will house our brand new summer production "Great Scot!" which is produced by a Gemini award winning producer. As well, the Centre will be a year round facility so there are so many exciting initiatives to come.

Q: Who was the most influential person in your music related career?

A: This is tough question because there are more than one: Su Hutchinson, Maggie Clarkin, Wayne O'Connor and Shelley Nordstrom (all of whom I worked with at ECMA) were instrumental in where I am today and I can't thank them enough for believing in me so early on in my career and for their continued mentorship and support.

Q: How would you define 'success' for the College of Piping moving forward into the next five years?

A: For the College of Piping to continue to thrive and build upon the legacy that already exists around the school and to start a legacy for the Celtic Performing Arts Centre.

Q: What are three things you believe set PEI apart culturally and musically from the rest of the country?

A: The talent is astonishingly good for a place the size of PEI, the sheer drive that people have for their careers and passions and the love and support of the communities across the island.

Southern Kings Fiddlers



Anne Swenson

The Southern Kings Fiddlers have taken the winter off, but many members have been enjoying fiddle and hootenanny classes at Murray

Harbour Community School, and Francis Stewart has been playing with the Rollo Bay "kitchen group" Monday nights at Souris High School. I dropped in on a practice there a couple weeks ago and they were playing a Kevin Chaisson tune I had not run into before, "Peter and Doreen Chaisson's Reel", which is now on the PEI Fiddlers website under Southern Kings, as I will be introducing it in April to our group.

Some of us have also been out playing for seniors around the area. With Madison Howe and Kenny Chapman on fiddle and mandolin, and Wayne Maclean on guitar, I have played twice at Gillis Lodge. We played an hour and a half of lively tunes old and new, and got a lot of toes tapping and one lady who has been dancing for 75 years did some nice steps to St. Anne's Reel. I had the pleasure of having 6 students play at the Kings County Music Recital Feb. 25th, and for the first time we had two brothers, Alex and Darren Jackson play a duet, and also Justin Comeault played a duet with his father Francois. This year I have several families learning to play fiddle together, which is extra fun for the teacher.

My project this winter has been to get the sheet music for the tunes that Southern Kings Chapter plays that the Queen's County Chapter does NOT (since you can access those tunes on the Queen's County list already) on to the PEI Fiddlers Website. With the help of Steven Garrity, I have put almost 100 tunes on our site. In the process of doing this, I have discovered two things- first, it is amazing how much the repertoire does differ between various areas of our little island, signifying to me what a rich and deep fiddle tradition we are so fortunate to have here. I still have at least 50 more tunes to do up in Muse Score and put on the site.

If you are keen to check the list out, go to the PEI Fiddlers website and click on chapters, then click on Southern Kings and scroll down beyond the photo to the list of tunes. Note that quite a few have harmony parts which are fun to try!

The second thing I discovered about the website is that the midi player function which enables you to hear what the sheet music sounds like is presently not working! This is not a good situation for a musical website. So let's get busy and find out what is necessary to get the entire site up and running. Then





I guess I will have to figure out how to put the sound bites on for all our 150 plus tunes.... always learning something new is good, I guess.

Southern Kings Fiddlers will be back to our biweekly practices sometime in April, always held at the Rural Development building on Main St. and Brooke St. in Montague (use the side entrance on Brooke) from 7-9 pmon alternate Monday nights. Please call me at 902-962-2273 or email me at gagliano31@hotmail.com to confirm our starting date in April.

Reasonable Bow Rehairing

Bridges, sound posts & pegs adjusted or replaced, Gluing problems fixed

Private Fiddle Lessons for all ages Amy Swenson, MA

Member, Strathgartney Orchestra Southern Kings Fiddlers 902-962-2273 gagliano31@hotmail.com

Safely Home



Maurice O' Shea September 4, 1918 to March 4, 2018 Maurice was born in Iona, PEI. He was a World War II veteran, worked in the aviation industry his entire career, and was an avid fiddler and bagpiper.



Ivan Day April 23, 1933 to February 24, 2018 Ivan was a fiddler and guitar player from Summerside and was a founding member of the Prince County Fiddlers.

Melody Required for Michael's Song!

Well known singer/songwriter, multi-instrumentalist and entertainer Michael Pendergast has written a song, but he needs a fiddle waltz to go with it! He's looking for a tune to carry the sentiment. Have a look at the lyrics and get your creative juices flowing! To find out more or to submit your tune, contact Mike at pendymusic@gmail.com



The auctioneers voice at the end of the day said here's an old fiddle that someone can play. The strings are still tight and sound right when you pluck it still my wife says I can't carry a tune in a bucket. With a chuckle and snorting he started the bidding but I saw little interest from where I was sitting. There was only one hand in the air at the time and the hand that was raised was the one that was mine.

So the fiddle I acquired with a case and a bow I paid at the exit and off I did go. Arrived at my car and opened the door when a voice from behind me said "pardon me sir". Standing just off with his hat in his hands an old-timer spoke from an awkward stance. You got a good deal on that fiddle today you'll see what I mean if you'll just let me play. I gave him the case which he laid on the ground he took out the fiddle and turned it around. 'Yes... it's the same one", he then whispered low put it under his chin and picked up the bow. And then from inside it a tune strutted out one that had hidden for years without doubt. So I stood in the parking lot nodding in time as the old-timer played on that fiddle of mine.

He played.....

The waltz that he played had me lost in a trance memories of courting, a first wedding dance. A christening, the soothing of new babies cries family reunions and tearful goodbyes. I heard a beginning, a middle, an end the shape of a long life with twists turns and bends. When the tune was completed, I opened my eyes But his spirit no longer stood there in disguise.

So all the way home as I drove past the shore I hummed what he'd played me until I was sure. That the tune in my head, every note was complete and the fiddle was safe in its case on the seat. So don't see a fiddle when you look onstage just think of the man who lived well to old age. For the tune that I play is not one of my own but the gift of a fiddler whose name is unknown.

Tune....

Weekly Events - Spring 2018

For a complete list of Festivals, Events & Ceilidhs on PEI, visit the following sites, or check local listings.

www.tourismpei.com/pei-festivals-and-events,

www.ceilidhs.ca, www.buzzon.com

| Saturdays 3:00-6:00pmKitchen PartySummerside LegionSummerside902-436-Saturdays 5:30-7:30pmMatinee ShowsOld Triangle Irish AlehouseCharlottetown902-892-Saturdays 8:00pmBelfast CeilidhBelfast Rec CentreBelfast902-659-Saturdays 8-11pmPig & WhistlesKaylee HallPooles Corner902-838- | Saturdays 5:30-7:30pm Saturdays 8:00pm Saturdays 8-11pm | Matinee Shows Belfast Ceilidh Pig & Whistles | Old Triangle Irish Alehouse Belfast Rec Centre Kaylee Hall | Charlottetown Belfast Pooles Corner | 902-854-2324 902-687-2546 902-361-2337 902-629-1494 902-675-4282 902-368-8449 902-569-2732 902-964-2536 902-658-2290 902-940-6702 902-368-1233 902-652-2053 902-393-2264 902-569-2471 902-687-2396 902-832-5200 902-739-3334 902-854-3300 902-436-5532 902-964-2586 901-854-3300 902-436-2091 902-892-5200 902-892-5200 902-838-4399 902-838-4399 |
|---|---|--|--|---|--|
| Saturdays 8:30pm Kitchen Party de Cuisine Village Musical Acadien Abram-Village 902-854- | Saturdays 8:30pm | Kitchen Party de Cuisine | Village Musical Acadien | Abram-Village | |

Upcoming Special Events

| Annual PEI Fiddlers Jam | April 14 | BIS Hall | Charlottetown | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------|--|
| Fiddle Doo | May 5, 2-6pm | Murray Christian Centre | Kensington | | |
| Rollo Bay Fiddle Students & Kitchen | | | | | |
| Group Family Night Concert | May 14, 6:30pm | Souris Regional School | | Souris | |
| PEI Mutual Festival of Small Halls | June 10-23 2018 | Various Venues | www.smallhalls.com | | |
| | | | | | |
| Special Guest Performances | | | | | |
| A Celtic Spring Fling | April 13, 7:30pm | Trinity United Church Charlottetown | ticketpro.ca | | |
| Feat. Paul McKenna Band with Cassie & Maggie MacDonald | | | | | |

April 20 & 21, 7pm Old Triangle Charlottetown

902-892-5200

Ian MacDougall

...weekly events continued

Sundays 3pm - Tunes on Tap - Copper Bottom Brewing, Montague - free admission

| | Colin Grant (Cape Breton) & Ward MacDonald Zakk Cormier & Ward MacDonald | April 29 May 6 | Cynthia MacLeod Cian O'Morain, Mary MacGillivray & Colin Jeffrey |
|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| April 1 | No Tunes on Tap - Special Event 7:30pm - The Fretless! | May 13 | Kenny Chaisson, Thomas Harrington & Ward MacDonald |
| April 8 | Richard Wood, Aaron Crane, Ward MacDonald | May 20 | Thomas, Nick, Taylor & Ward |
| April 15 | Thomas Harrington, Nick vanOuwerkerk, | May 27 | Rannie MacLellan, Ward MacDonald & Kevin Chaisson |
| | Taylor Johnson, Ward MacDonald | June 3 | Tim Chaisson (special session to follow) |
| April 22 | Hailee LeFort (Cape Breton) & Ward MacDonald | April 1 | The Fretless 7:30pm tickets: copperbottombrewing.com |
| | | | |

SESSION ETIQUETTE *Tips for the enjoyment of all!*



