

My Folk Family:

Maggie Culver



Hello, my name is Maggie, and I live in a small village in Leicesershire. For the first 26 years of marriage, my life centred around bringing up 2 children, and my social scene was motor bike rallies, race meetings and club meetings. At the age of 54, my husband and I were driving through a village near to where I live, and we saw a sign outside a pub which said "FOLK MUSIC ON SUNDAY 8.30. We decided to give it a try, and that was my very first introduction to "Folk Music" .

It was a very relaxed and friendly atmosphere, and we were made to feel most welcome. The organisers were a trio who did a few songs, and then people took it in turns to do a spot .I thoroughly enjoyed the whole evening, but unfortunately my husband wasn't keen. For me. the seed was sewn, I just wanted more; little did I know just how much it would grow.

A few months later I went to my 1st Folk Festival "The National Folk Festival" held at Sutton Bonnington Nr. Loughborough (1994) I didn't know anybody, but the music was wonderful. I remember seeing Vin Garbutt on stage, and people wearing T - shirts with his name on, and also Martin Carthy- neither of whom I 'd ever heard of.

There was a very large lounge/bar where people gathered to drink and chat. and this particular year, there were a lot of Irish visitors, some of whom got together in small groups in the lounge and played "tune sessions"- I'd never heard Irish music before-but it "blew me away" - it was just magical – also in the bar, groups of singers got together to share songs. I saw a bodhran for the first time, and immediately went to the craft fair and bought one together with an instruction tape by Stefan Hannigan.

Also in the lounge/bar, I encountered a Banjo player; what's that instrument"?-
"It' s a 5 string Banjo" he said, and promptly played and sang me a tune. It
turned out that he was born in Ireland and came to England when he was 15,
and lived locally. It was an incredible week end and one I will never forget. I
bought a Chieftans tape and practiced by bodhran playing every day.

I continued to visit my 1st folk club, and also another one not too far from where
I live. It was there that a week or so later, that the Banjo Player turned up; we
got chatting and he told me about more folk clubs in existence, which of course,
I went to. I subsequently learned to play penny whistle, and began singing
unaccompanied. To cut a long story short, we became friends, and visited many
folk clubs and festivals all over he country, including Ireland and Scotland.

24 years later I'm on my own, still going to folk clubs, singing and playing,
though not travelling far these days. 10 years ago I started learning to play the
flute, and I am also just starting the concertina. Last year at the Moira Furnace
Folk Festival, I ran 2 works shops for tin whistle, beginners and improvers and
had a total of 32 people which pleased me greatly. My folk music friends are my
family, where I feel I belong,

In search of Duende: Penny Waterhouse