

Night to celebrate legendary Capricorn Records



After 35 years, Capricorn Records will leave the Warrnambool landscape later this month..but not without a send-off.

[dropcap style="color: #a02f2f;"] T [/dropcap]he closure of Warrnambool's iconic Capricorn Records later this month will not pass without an encore.

A limited-ticket, public tribute to the iconic record shop – which opened 35 years ago when records were still records- is being planned for **Saturday night, September 20** at the Ozone Room, Warrnambool Hotel.

The tribute will be hosted by the **Warrnambool Spinners**, which is a fluid but enthusiastic collection of locals loyal to vinyl records who regularly get together to spin selections from their collections and dance until the early hours.

Capricorn Records owner **Mick Fitzgerald** is a Spinner, but he had no idea the tribute night was being planned and, to those who know Mick, he is not one for leaping into the limelight –

unlike one of the people he physically resembles, Mick Jagger.

But as one Spinner told *Bluestone*, this tribute is not actually about Mick, it's about Capricorn Records.

The shop has been integral to the local live music scene and in broadening the musical tastes of those who grew up buying the "latest Top 40 single" and coming away with, at the very least, subliminal exposure to the Rolling Stones, Dylan, Van Morrison or whoever else was being played on the shop turntable at the time.



The Capricorn Records shop windows reflect its wide-ranging collection of stock: if you can name even half these faces, you are a potential Spinner in the making.

[dropcap style="color: #a02f2f;"] M [/dropcap] how times have changed, but Mick knew the writing was on the wall.

When *Bluestone* – before we were *Bluestone* – visited his shop back in the early 2000s, he spoke about the emergence of mp3 players and digital music. Then along came streaming...

Capricorn eventually moved out of its Liebig St location, which was previously Kris Kerr Records (and is now Kathmandu), into the much smaller Koroit St store.

But even that shop has proven too big for the seismic shift in how we buy and consume music. It is impossible to stop change, but it doesn't mean we can't mourn the passing of an era.

Capricorn Records will close on September 26.

[box] There will be only 100 tickets available to the Capricorn tribute night, at \$5 per head. As a Bluestone reader, you have early access to tickets before they are offered to the wider public. Simply email royreekie@googlemail.com and say you read it in Bluestone to reserve a place.[/box]

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Strummin' and a hummin' with the ukelele club



Love me, love my uke: Kevin O'Toole started the Warrnambool Ukelele Group with his partner, Annie Carmichael (at left – teaching beginners), in 2012: it now has more than 100 members.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color:#A02F2F"] I [/dropcap]t may look like a guitar that never grew up, but the plucky little ukulele has been enjoying a global surge in popularity that has reached all the way to South-West Victoria.

In fact the Warrnambool Ukulele Group (WUG) has proven so popular since it started with just eight people in 2012 that it now has about 120 members...and a waiting list.

Partners **Annie Carmichael** and **Kevin O'Toole** started the

Warrnambool group after living in Hobart for a time, where Annie learned the ukulele with the Hobart Ukulele Group that operated under the gorgeous acronym, HUG.

“You can do a lot of things with a ukulele,” says Kevin, who is also an accomplished guitar player.

“It is easy to learn, easy for beginners and you can then take it as far as you want to go: we have people who play everything from Bach to jazz to rock and roll,” he explains.



WUG members Victor Reid with his deep-voiced bass ukelele and Graeme Bell (left) with his eye on the chords.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color:#A02F2F"] W
[/dropcap]ith just four strings, the ukelele has a simple chord system compared to a guitar and, much like a harmonica, is the ultimate in portability at a cheap price.

Beginner ukeleles start at around \$75, but a seriously good quality ukelele can cost up to \$2000. They also come in three

varieties – soprano, concert and tenor – plus the less common bass ukelele, like that played so beautifully by WUG member **Victor Reid**.

The WUG members, however, are less concerned about fancy ukeleles than simply having a good time: no matter how well each person might play or sing.

Both beginners and seasoned players meet every Monday night at the Royal Hotel, on the corner of Timor and Fairy streets, where publican **John Bonney** has kindly let them take over a back room attached to the dining area.



It's sitting room only at the Royal Hotel when WUG members like Ian Brown break out their ukeleles for a night of singing and playing.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color:#A02F2F"] T
[/dropcap]he night starts with a half-hour lesson for beginners, followed by a 90-minute session of music and

singing from the official WUG songbook, including any specific requests from members.

It is at this point that anyone who happens to be eating in the Royal Hotel bistro is in for a treat. As they tuck into their counter meals, the back room erupts into a fusion of Irish-style pub singing, country-and-western ballads, foot-stomping, whistling and ukelele-playing fun.

The mood is infectious and almost enough to make even the most tone-deaf punter want to race out to buy a ukelele.

"It is all about having a good time, first and foremost, but if people are prepared to practice, they will also get better," Kevin says.

"We have a lot of members who have never played a musical instrument in their life, but, as a group, we are also getting better and better."

Like other ukelele groups around Australia, WUG doesn't take itself too seriously during its occasional public performances (that included the Koroit Irish Festival at the weekend) and members dress up in a fancy dress theme for each "concert".

"If nothing else, we are dressed very brightly, we are making a lot of noise and we are having a good time," Kevin says with a laugh.

"At the end of the day, if you have got a ukelele in your hand and your not smiling, then your not playing a ukelele."



WUG is a mixture of men and women players, with Anne Rea and Jan McCluggage among those enjoying the weekly jam session.

[box] You can find the Warrnambool Ukelele Group [website here](#). Interested people are encouraged to put their names on the waiting list, as openings do come up relatively regularly. You can hear WUG in action each Monday night from 7pm at the Royal Hotel, Timor/Fairy streets, Warrnambool. [/box]



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Framlingham gears up for 150th anniversary



Much-loved musician Archie Roach, who was born at Framlingham, will be among the headline acts at this weekend's 150th anniversary event. Image: www.blackarmband.com.au

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] D
[/dropcap]espite being less than 30km from Warrnambool, the **Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve** has often seemed like a million

miles away to many south-west Victorians who have never visited the area.

This week there is a significant opportunity to reverse that trend, when the reserve marks its 150th anniversary with an open invitation to visit the reserve and celebrate aboriginal culture as it exists today, and as it has done for the past 50,000 years.

The 150th anniversary will be celebrated with an all-day, free event on **Saturday (April 12) from 10am to 6pm** and include music by much-loved local musicians Archie Roach (who was born at Framlingham) and Shane Howard, plus performances by Kutcha Edwards, Lee Sonny Boy Morgan, Johnny Lovett and comedian Denise McGuinness among others.

The day will also feature historical talks and displays, plus a range of hands-on activities for kids and adults, including the tricky art of eel-trapping.



Aboriginal men and boys at the newly established Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve in 1867. This image has been reproduced from *A Distant Field of Murder*, written by historian Jan Critchett (1990).

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] T
[/dropcap]he Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve has a long, rich and complex history, beginning with its early days as an Anglican mission set up to “protect” the local Aboriginal people from the devastating impact of white settlement in the area in the 1830s.

At that time, about 1800ha of land was set aside, but was never actually owned by the indigenous people in the European sense of land ownership.

It wasn't until the 1970s that the Framlingham community – by then living on a much smaller area of land than was originally designated – was granted control of 237ha via the Aboriginal

Lands Act. The community later campaigned to regain rights to the Framlingham Forest and, after a long and hard-fought battle, won control over a further 457ha in 1987.

Although the history of the Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve is one that is ultimately traced back to the devastating impact of white settlement on indigenous Australia, the anniversary celebrations are all about honouring a proud community that has, against all the odds, kept its culture alive.

[box] **The Framlingham Aboriginal Community is 20 mins north of Warrnambool. Gates will open at 10am on Sat April 12, with an opening ceremony at 11am. Free entry.**[/box]



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Celts

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Take yourself back to 1987...

Let's go back to 1987 – a year when hair was worn high, Bob Hawke was our Prime Minister, Queensland Premier Joh Bjelke-Peterson stepped down after 19 years (!!), the West Coast Eagles joined the AFL, and Hawthorn star Buddy Franklin was *born*. (Yikes, that last one makes me feel old: Carol)

This week's Blue Tunes star was still making music, however, and still is.

On with the show...



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