

Ukey Hooky

Learn to Play, Make New Friends, Have Fun!

Newsletter 2; January 2024 (quarterly)

Welcome to the 2nd Newsletter. I hope everyone had a good Christmas and New Year. It was good to have a break for a couple of weeks but I'm also glad that we're back again, ready to do more strumming.

Local Hero



On **29th October** 2023, **Tom** did an Open Mic spot at the Acoustic Café in Falkirk. Thanks to **John** for uploading a short video of the event on our Facebook group. I think we would all agree that Tom sounded great, and is a natural performer.

Christmas Showcase



Thank you to everyone who took part in the Christmas Showcase, and to those who came along to watch us perform. This was our fourth Showcase since the group started in June 2022.

We usually do two showcases a year, and tend to keep them fairly low key and informal as they are mainly for new players to gain experience in playing in front of an audience.

However, as the group is starting to grow, we can start looking towards performing at different events.



New Members

A very warm welcome to our new members; Dennis and Doreen Franks, and Mark Dunn who came along to watch us play at the Christmas Showcase, and then decided to join the group. It's great to have you on board, I hope you enjoy the Tuesday Strumalongs, and being part of Ukey Hooky.

Monthly Open Night for New Players

Recently, we started doing open nights for New Players once a month to encourage new players to join the group however, as the group is now starting to grow the Open Nights are currently on hold for the time being. For new players who are interested in joining the group they are welcome to come along and join in with the Strumalong any Tuesday from 7pm. The 'New Players' page on the website also provides some basics for anyone starting out on their Ukulele Journey.

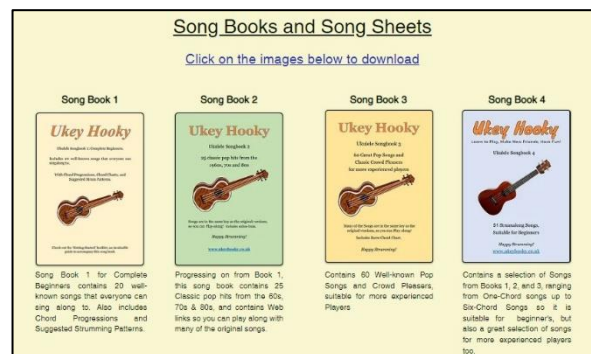
And for new players who would like to join the group but feel they're not quite ready they can sign up for the 'Complete Beginners' Course through the Website. The online course has 8 step-by-step videos guiding students from complete beginners to competent strummers. The full course is only £20, and also includes group membership. One-to-one sessions can also be booked through the Website for anyone looking for dedicated one-to-one tuition to help build confidence before joining the group.



And let's not forget, YouTube has loads of tips, guidance, and tuition from different tutors around the world so there's plenty out there to help new players learn the basics and build confidence.

Website Update

Ukey Hooky members can now download all 4 Song Books and Newsletters from the Members page. There have been some issues with logging into the Members section, and some people may not be able to access it straight away.



Currently, when a new member logs in I receive a notification that they have signed in, and then I need to approve them so they can access the members section. After they are approved they should be able to log in and access the members page automatically. If you pay the annual membership online, you should be able to access this area straight away.

I will be working on the site over the coming weeks to make it easier to access.

Top Tip; Managing Difficult Songs

Sometimes, when we learn a new song it can turn out to be more difficult than we may have anticipated, and it can feel a bit overwhelming. However, unless the song contains loads of chords we are not familiar with it is usually just one or two sections of the song that we are actually struggling with.



“But I only have 5 Fingers!”

I have found the best way to deal with this is to look at the section, or sections that you are struggling with most, and practice **only that bit** a few times over until it starts to get easier. Then have a go at playing the full verse or chorus that contains the ‘tricky’ bit you have just practiced.

Most Songs are made up of a few Verses and a Chorus, and once you master the first Verse, you should (in most cases) be able to play the other verses too. And same with the Chorus; once you master it, you will be able to play it every time it appears in the song. Sometimes there is a middle eight or small section of the song that is different from the verses or chorus. If this is the section you are having difficulty with, the same rule applies; practice it a few times until you get it.

So, if you want to master that tricky song you’ve been avoiding, simply break it down. Identify the ‘tricky’ bit and practice it over a few times and you will soon be able to play the full song.

Money Collection and Drumbeats



A huge thanks to **Lorraine** and **John** who did the money collection on 9th Jan, it was very much appreciated. It would be really helpful if we can have a few more people to take it in turns to do the money collection. It is very straightforward, and I will show you what to do.

John has also kindly helped out with the drumbeats a few times and if anyone else would like to have a go just let me know and either John or myself will show you what to do. Again, it is very straightforward.



Open Mic Section

The open mic section part of our Tuesday Strumalong seems to be working well. It’s been great to see a few players have a go. We haven’t had this section a few weeks prior to the Showcase as we were rehearsing the Christmas Songs. However, we can now include it again as part of the Strumalong, from 7.45-8pm.

Open Mic Section (cont'd)

As a reminder, and for anyone who is new to the group, the Open Mic section is an opportunity for anyone to have a go at playing any song, or bits of a song either Solo, or with one other player to accompany you. It's a good opportunity to build confidence in playing in front of other people, or to try out something new. The golden rule is, when someone is playing in the Open Mic section everyone else should put down their Ukulele. Whenever we have a Ukulele in our hands it can take a lot of will power to resist giving it a few strums, but can be off putting for someone who is taking part in the Open Mic.



However, the Open Mic section is not just for playing a song, or a few bars of a song, it's also an opportunity to share anything Ukulele related and have a bit of a group chat and socialise.

Looking Ahead

New Performance Group



Over the past few weeks a new performance group has started to emerge from the Tuesday Strumalong. Those who arrive before 7pm may have noticed some of us are already in full swing, rehearsing.

I don't want to say too much about it at this stage other than we are working towards creating something a little bit different, which we shall reveal in due course. Watch this Space!

We rehearse from 6pm – 7pm. So for the Strumalong, if you arrive *after* 6.50pm that would be great, thanks.

Mini Ukulele Festival



As some of you may be aware, I am planning a Ukulele Event for the end of June this year. It's going to be a one day event for Ukulele groups across the Central Belt to come together and take part in a range of activities; Workshops, Jam Sessions, Open Mic, Performances, and an Evening Concert.

It will also be open to the general public to encourage new players to get involved and make connections with the Ukulele groups around Central Scotland.

Mini Ukulele Festival (cont'd)

We have already had the go ahead from Camelon Community Centre to run the event here, and over the past few months I have been in contact with some of the Ukulele groups I would like to invite to take part, and everyone so far is very interested and keen to take part.

I will be visiting each of the groups over the next couple of months and should have a better idea in a few weeks how many people will be taking part in the event.



As this is the first time I am organising this, it won't be a huge event. I am only expecting about 5 or 6 Ukulele groups to take part but hopefully it will be enjoyable and fun, with plenty opportunities for everyone to take part, and to meet some of the other groups. And all going well, it will hopefully be an annual event.

There will be an entry fee of £5 or £6 for anyone who would like to take part but is Free for Ukey Hooky members, as long you have an up-to-date Annual Membership.

Details of the event will be available on the Website soon: www.ukeyhooky.co.uk



I am looking for volunteers to help organise the event.

It will be a fairly small event compared to some of the Ukulele Festivals so volunteers wouldn't be expected to take on loads of responsibilities or to commit loads of your time to it. I have a Programme of Activities drafted up so a lot of the planning has already been done.

There will be monthly meetings where we will look at the programme of activities and discuss the main tasks leading towards the event; deciding on seating plans, ticket prices, what activities will take place in each room etc. And there will be an opportunity to visit some of the other groups who will be taking part in the event.

If you would like to get involved in helping to organise the event, just let me know at the Tuesday Strumalong or email me: info@ukeyhooky.co.uk

Happy Strumming

Brian