

Derbyshire Melodeon Playgroup IV and Thinking Outside the Box V
18th-20th October 2019



The Old Bell Hotel, 51 Sadler Gate, Derby DE1 3NQ
<https://bellhotelderby.co.uk/>

General Information

This leaflet explains both the non-profit making **Derbyshire Melodeon Playgroup** and Mel's more developed **Thinking Outside the Box V**. You could attend one or both of these events depending on your ability.

Derbyshire Melodeon Playgroup

This is our fourth annual Playgroup in Derbyshire. In a new home for 2019.

The Saturday Programme will last from 0930 hrs until the evening

The Playgroup is intended for players who:-

- Have never played a melodeon before (absolute beginners).
- Understand the rudiments but want to develop their skills and gain confidence in playing along with others (beginners).
- Are slightly more experienced than beginner level and want to further improve their skills and confidence and develop their session repertoire (improvers).

It will be informal – no advanced booking and you could just drop in, change ability group before or during the day or simply drop out at any time.

It will be a supportive and friendly environment – sessions are conducted at an appropriate speed and it will be more than acceptable to make mistakes without any criticism.

It will be non-profit making and cheap at no more than £16 - 25 per person – the cost of hiring the facilities, lunch and tutors' costs will be simply divided between those attending.

The aim is to stimulate your interest in playing the melodeon, encourage you to improve your skills and enhance your confidence so that you ultimately feel able to attend more advanced melodeon events (eg, Thinking Outside the Box, Melodeons at Witney, Melodeons in Wensleydale, BorderBox etc) and to participate in multi-instrument workshops at folk festivals and local folk music sessions.

Our highly skilled volunteer tutors will lead the workshop sessions for each ability level. A limited number of loan melodeons will be available for absolute beginners (just ask!).

Other Essential Background Information

In addition, there will be an opportunity to play with others in open sessions on Friday and Saturday evenings and at other times. In particular, there is one open session where beginners are encouraged to play their party piece without fear of making mistakes – they will probably never experience a more friendly and understanding audience because everyone is or has been in the same boat, including the tutors.

The event is designed for players of the D/G melodeon, so the tunes will be in the keys of D, G and Em. Players of other melodeons are welcome but they will need to adapt.

There will also be a practical session demonstrating how a melodeon works.

The event is held in our own private rooms of The Old Bell with easily accessible facilities, two bars, and restaurant rooms. We have use of The Tudor Bar on Friday and Saturday night for sessions and again on Sunday for Thinking Outside The Box V.

Meals for the weekend will be ordered in advance or on the morning of the Playgroup event. A menu will be distributed nearer the time for you to choose from. All dietary requirements can be catered for. The plan is to eat communally in the Ballroom, however we're in the heart of Derby city centre so there are plenty of other options available if something else takes your fancy.

There are a number of other Melodeon Playgroups in England. All of these Melodeon Playgroups are independent, unconnected and run by different people. We are adopting the same ethos as the other Groups.

Planning

After reading these notes, the following information would be very helpful if you're thinking of coming:-

1. You intend to attend the Playgroup (Saturday)
2. You intend to book a place on Thinking Outside the Box V (Sunday)
3. Your likely ability level; absolute beginner, beginner, improver or more advanced
4. If Absolute Beginner, would you like to borrow a melodeon?
5. If you require/can provide a lift either locally or from far away

Tutors

Three tutors will run the workshops, one for each ability level and lead the sessions. There will also be a practical session on how the melodeon works.

Details of our tutors and their workshops and sessions can be found below:

Mel Biggs - Absolute Beginners for Playgroup and Thinking Outside The Box V

Mel has been a supporter of the Melodeon Playgroup series since the original Evesham event in 2012. Having taught at all the Derbyshire Playgroup events, and helping Simon to organise 2018's event, it seemed appropriate to take over the lead organiser role when Simon decided to step down from the position in early 2019.

Renowned the world over for her perceptive, patient and mindful manner in teaching groups and individuals, Mel is a leading light in the world of melodeon teaching; both on and off-line. Having been teaching since 2009, Mel has an ever expanding toolkit of techniques at her disposal which she adapts to every new teaching scenario. You can expect a bespoke blend of learning-by-ear, call and response playing, analogies, visualisations and pattern recognition, tune deconstruction and notation in moderation. Her workshops are fun and inclusive. You'll leave with a smile on your face and new knowledge in your fingers!

Vicky Cooper - Beginners for Playgroup

Vicky is band leader for Silkstone Greens North West Morris and a relative newcomer to all things folk. She has previously taught at North East Playgroup, Derbyshire Playgroup and Melodeons at Wensleydale. She has a passion for encouraging others to take up the melodeon in the hope they love it as much as she does! She plays D/G and G/C melodeons, with a particular soft spot for French tunes.

Lewis Jones – Improvers ‘Simple Swedish Tunes’ for Playgroup

Lewis has been playing for around 10 years, and has played in around 8 morris sides of various styles in that time! He started by learning English/Morris tunes, until he picked up the nyckelharpa 4 years ago where he developed a keen interest in Swedish folk music. He says “There is something to Swedish box tunes that sounds quite sweet, and I hope to share that with people!” Lewis will be competing at the Zorn Trials next year in Sweden, a competition for Swedish playing. Lewis also plays in bands Fairfield and Town Musicians of Bremen.

Programme

Schedule – Friday 18th October

19:30 in The Tudor Bar: Steady Speed Session until 9pm lead by Mel. Then we’ll relax the brakes and see where the evening takes us! Feel free to play any type of instrument or just socialise and eat/drink. *NB the Tudor Bar is open to the public on Friday evening and space is limited so early arrival advised!*

Playgroup Programme - Saturday 19th October

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| 9.30 – 10.00: | Welcome, introduction, administration, refreshments, order lunch |
| 10.00 – 12.00: | Workshops Session 1
Mel with Absolute Beginners (Campion Room upstairs)
Vicky with Beginners (The Stables)
Lewis with Improvers (The Ballroom) |
| 12.00 – 13.30: | Lunch/social time - food served in The Ballroom |
| 13.30 – 16.00: | Workshops Session 2 – same format as Workshops Session 1 |
| 16.15 – 18.00: | Open Session - Party pieces led by Vicky. Melodeon Autopsy with Mel (or social/shopping time!) |
| 18.00 – until late | Evening Meal, open sessions, goodbyes, thanks and good nights! This final session provides an opportunity for informal gatherings and social activity just like Friday night. We’ll have use of The Tudor Bar (again, not exclusively) and The Ballroom for sessions. |

Thinking Outside the Box IV Programme - Sunday 16 June

Following the success of previous four TOTB events in Winster and Whittonstall, this is an additional workshop on Sunday from 0930 to 1630 hrs which is facilitated by Mel Biggs. This is entirely different in scope, objectives and costs to Mel’s workshops during the Playgroup.

In this edition of TOTB, explore how to bring music to life ‘off the page’. Learn how to take simple melodies from sheet music and give them dynamics, scope, breath and interest. Brush up on your ‘by ear’ skills and become more confident in creating simple arrangements, parts and chord variations. It is aimed at good beginners, improvers and more experienced players.

In contrast to Playgroup, some preparation in advance is essential for this event to run successfully. There will be a prep pack sent out one month before the event so participants can prepare.

Booking for the Playgroup

It is very informal. You do not need to book. You could just drop in.

You will not pay in advance. The organisers and tutors are volunteers. We will pay costs to tutors – this is only fair as they are kindly giving their time. The cost of hiring the facilities, lunch and tutors' costs will be divided between those attending and we will collect this money in cash on the day. From previous experience, it is usually no more than £16 - 25 per person.

Despite the emphasis on informality, it would be helpful to know whether you might come – see info on page 2. You could still change your mind, even at the last minute.

Please inform us of your intentions, including the answers to info on Page 2 by sending an email to Mel Biggs workshops@melbiggsmusic.co.uk. If you have any questions, feel free to phone Mel on 07969060394 (leave a message and she'll get back to you).

Our programme is offered in good faith, but the organisers reserve the right to make changes in the case of unforeseen circumstances.

Booking for the Thinking Outside the Box

Full payment of £50 will be essential upon booking to secure your place. Numbers will be capped at 20.

If you would like to attend, please email: workshops@melbiggsmusic.co.uk and let Mel know which ability level you fall into: good beginner, improver, intermediate, more advanced.

Please send payment **referenced with your name** to:

Nationwide 070806 01973077

Please note that refunds will not be available within 4 weeks of the event. Bookings are transferable if you can fill your place with a friend.

Venue, Travel and Accommodation

NEW VENUE FOR 2019

The Old Bell Hotel, 51 Sadler Gate, Derby DE1 3NQ

<https://bellhotelderby.co.uk/>

The Old Bell Hotel is Derby's oldest bar and restaurant. A 17th century coaching inn set in the heart of Derby's Cathedral Quarter. With more room for workshops and breakouts, we'll have exclusive use of the Ballroom and Stables throughout the weekend with use of The Tudor Room for sessions on Friday and Saturday evenings and TOTB on Sunday. There are a variety of drinks on offer, including real ale, lagers, ciders, gins and spirits as well as a wide selection of soft drinks. The food is incredible and all reasonably priced!

Refreshments (tea/coffee/biscuits) will be provided on both days (cost included). Saturday and Sunday lunches and Saturday evening meal will be ordered in advance either a week before or on the morning of (TBA). Some of us will be eating at The Old Bell on Friday night - please feel free to join us from 6pm!

Travel

The venue is located on Sadler Gate in Derby's historic Cathedral Quarter. Both of these areas are pedestrianised. There is no parking at the venue itself but there are city centre car parks close by. Here is a list of the nearest car parks to the venue:

- Parksafe Systems Ltd (Bold Ln, Derby DE1 3NT) 2 min walk. Likely to be pricey!

- The Assembly Room Car Park (Full St, Derby DE1 3AF) 3 min. Pricey!
- Ford St Car Park (Ford St, Derby DE1 1BX) 8 min. Pay and display.
- **Stafford Street Car Park (Derby DE1 1AU) 8 min. £3.50 all day (recommended).**
- **RCP Car Park (Agard St, Derby DE1 1DZ) 8 min. £3.50 all day (recommended).**

For trains and buses, Derby Midland Railway Station is located 1.4 miles south east of the venue. Buses 1, 1A and Skylink run every 7 minutes from Railway Station stop S1 to Derby Bus Station which is a further 7 minute walk to The Old Bell. Alternatively, every 30 minutes from Railway Station stop S1, bus 114 to Ashbourne will get you to Victoria Street stop S5, which is then a further 4 minute walk to the venue.

Accommodation

Hotels

Most people are booking into the Premier Inn, Derby City Centre which is a 3 minute walk from the venue. Also very locally are:

- Jurys Inn Derby, King St, Derby DE1 3DB www.jurysinns.com
- Cathedral Quarter Hotel, 16 St Mary's Gate, Derby DE1 3JR www.cathedralquarterhotel.com
- Holiday Inn Derby - Riverlights, Morledge, Derby DE1 2AY www.ihg.com
- Holiday Inn Express Derby Pride Park, Wheelwright Way, Derby DE24 8HX www.ihg.com

Caravan/Motorhome Sites

Due to the city centre location, camping and caravanning sites are located a short drive away. Here are some local options on the outskirts of Derby if you would like to bring your caravan/motorhome:

- Shardlow Marina & Caravan Site, London Road, Shardlow, Derby DE72 2GL <http://www.shardlowmarina.co.uk/touring-caravans/>
- Hill Farm Camping & Caravanning, Moor Lane, Barrow-on-Trent, Derby DE73 7HZ
07889 985328
- Four Oaks Campsite, Buckford Ln, Stenson, Derby DE73 7GB <https://four-oaks-camp-site.business.site/>

Resource Materials

We will communicate by email information about tunes from the tutors (if there are any) a few weeks beforehand, so that you are able to prepare for their workshops.

You will not be provided with materials for Mel's absolute beginners workshop. Absolute Beginners will not need it!

Final Message from Mel

Every effort has been made to find a new venue that gives us the space that The Burton Institute wasn't able to provide. As this will be the first time in The Old Bell after moving from Winster, there are bound to be a few teething problems. I hope very few! And I really spent a while thinking and searching for a venue that could provide historic atmosphere, good food and great spaces to play in. I'm really looking forward to meeting you and I hope you enjoy DEMP 2019 in our new home!