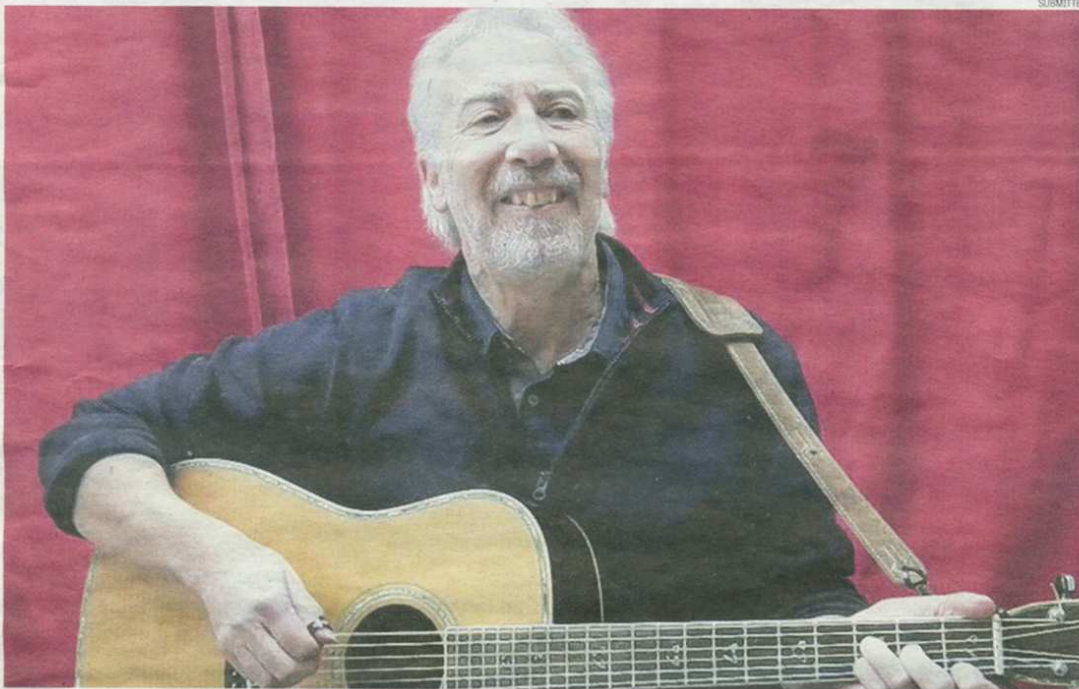


# Your News

Folk tutor to work with local musicians

SUBMITTED



Local musician Pete Castle will be running workshops from April 20

## Build a band project returns to arts festival

In the first of a series of interviews previewing Belper Arts Festival George Gunby speaks to Pete Castle

### Opinion

By **GEORGE GUNBY**  
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**P**ete Castle was born in Kent where his earliest music influences were Chuck Berry and the Rolling Stones. "I was about 14 when my parents bought me a guitar. I went to college in Wakefield where I discovered folk music. In 1978 I was teaching and threw it all in to become a professional musician. I haven't had a proper job since."

Pete introduced his "Build A Band" project to Belper Arts Festival in 2014. Such was its success that it's back for 2015 with the first rehearsal taking place on 20 April.

"Some years ago I was Folk Music Tutor at the WMA Summer School. They were always a very mixed group of students and I enjoyed it and wanted the opportunity to do

it again which Belper Festival gave me. I offer a load of songs and ideas and see which ones the participants take up. I'm also keen to get their input. A lot of it is down to luck - who comes, what they play etc. But, you make your own luck by manipulating the ideas which crop up and not neglecting those moments of inspiration when a brilliant idea flits by. I like working that way in the studio too, when recording... something happens by chance and you grab it."

Pete's talent as a storyteller cannot be underestimated and I was curious about his source material.

"You don't find stories - they find you!" he said. "I can hear a story, read a story and a few days later find it buzzing around in my head. Other times I find a fragment and turn it into a story. There are times though, when I set out, deliberately, to find a story about a particular thing or from a particular place. That is usually for a specific reason, a project or performance." Whilst much of his career has centred on tra-

ditional English folk songs, the 1990's saw Pete in a very different musical environment. "My daughter, Lucy, studied music at university and became interested in East European fiddle music.

She then started writing a Ph.D about the fiddle styles of a specific region of Romania called Maramures. As part of that she went and lived there and became 'apprenticed' to Ioan Pop, a singer, dancer and zongora player, (a zongora is a local instrument, a sort of adapted guitar) who was one of the leading traditional musicians in the area.

They had the idea of playing in England and needed a third person to make up the traditional trio so I was drafted in to play the doba - a drum. It worked brilliantly and we all enjoyed it - and, more to the point so did the British audiences!"

Pete has never abandoned the core of his work but over the years he has run a radio folk show and become a published author with his third book in the pipeline. He still edits a storytelling magazine,

"Fact & Fiction". "I've said I am semi-retired in that I don't go out of my way now to chase work but if the time comes when my fingers can't play the guitar, or when my voice goes and I can't sing, or when I can't remember words or stories then I'll be pleased to retire rather than embarrass myself! Ideally though, I'd like to go out with my boots on."

When I was doing the WMA Summer School another tutor, a classical pianist, gave a recital, played an encore, stood up and took a bow, and dropped dead. That's the way I'd like to go!"

Build a band rehearsals will be held at Number 28, the Market Place, Belper from April 20 at 7.30pm. For more information contact Pete Castle on steel.carpet@tiscali.co.uk or phone 01773 822829.

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