



Port Isaac's Fisherman's Friends perform at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards in London on Monday

PICTURE: BBC/MARK ALLAN

## Shanty singing gang take prestigious Radio 2 folk awards by storm

BY JACKIE BUTLER

It was a loud and proud night for Fisherman's Friends and their loyal Westcountry supporters when the nine-man shanty singing group from the picturesque North Cornwall village of Port Isaac took to the stage at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards in London.

There were whoops and cheers from the crowd as the

ensemble of lifelong pals received the Good Tradition award from Northern songstress Kate Rusby, who described their sound as "a big, fat slice of heaven".

"They are fantastic ambassadors for folk music and they totally deserve every accolade that comes their way," Kate told the gathered throng – a roll call of the great and good of the folk, roots and acoustic

music world – as well as the thousands tuning in to the live broadcast on radio, online and on digital TV.

Accepting the weighty trophy on behalf of the group, frontman Jon Cleave put some of the "blame" for their phenomenal success over the last 12 months on the shoulders of record producer Rupert Christie, "for finding us when we weren't even lost". Their

gold-selling album *Port Isaac's Fisherman's Friends*, released last year by Universal, became the first ever collection of traditional folk tunes to debut in the mainstream top ten album charts.

Jon also acknowledged the FFWAGs – the Fisherman's Friends' wives and girlfriends – who had travelled up from Cornwall to join in the celebrations.

The gang – Billy Hawkins, Jon Cleave, brothers Jeremy, John and Julian Brown, Peter Rowe, John McDonnell, John Lethbridge and Trevor Grills – performed a huge and rousing a capella rendition of the traditional *South Australia*, leaving the stage triumphant and to rapturous applause.

For the full story of the Folk Awards evening see Saturday's Westcountry Life with the WMTV