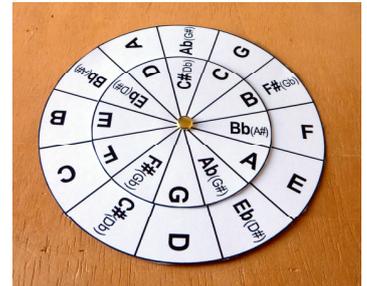# _The Transposing Wheel_

All songs are written in a particular 'key' which, in most cases, is the first chord of the song (or if not then almost definitely the last one). So if the song starts with a G chord and finishes on a G chord then it's a safe bet the song is written in the key of G.

Most of the time this is fine but sometimes you'll want to change the key of the song. This can be because the key doesn't suit your voice or because the chords are too tricky to play and this is where the Transposing Wheel comes into play - a triumph of simplicity in a digital age.

Assembling the Transposing Wheel

In best Blue Peter fashion, print or copy the sheet onto thick paper or card (laminate for best results) and cut out the 2 circles. Make a hole in the centre of each of them and then place the smaller one on top of the larger and use a split paper clip through the middle holes to join them together. You can put a bit of tape over the split paper clip at the back but just make sure the top wheel can rotate

...and here's one I made earlier:

Using the Transposing Wheel

Firstly choose the main chord (or key) of the song you want to transpose, which is usually the first chord, and locate it on the inner wheel. Now rotate the wheel so that the chord is opposite the new chord (or key) on the outer wheel. Then, <u>without moving the wheel</u>, locate the next chord of the song on the middle wheel and read off the new chord.

As an example let's use the first line of The Beatles ' Let It Be'. The chords Eb, Bb, Cm and Ab are a bit of a stretch on the uke so we want to transpose it from the key of Eb to the key of G so the chords are easier to play and in this case easier to sing.

To start with we locate Eb on the inner circle and rotate the inner circle so the Eb is opposite the G on the outer circle. Now (without moving the circle) we can read off that Bb is opposite the D, C opposite the E and Ab opposite the C. We've now transposed the song from the key of Eb to the key of G and we have a new set of chords that are much easier to play.

Original Key: Eb   Bb   Cm   Ab
            When I find myself in times of trouble, Mother Mary comes to me
  New Key: G   D   Em   C
            When I find myself in times of trouble, Mother Mary comes to me

Note: Any suffixes to a chord like a 7th or minor _(m)_ stay the same, so in this example Cm _(C minor)_ becomes Em _(E minor)_. The flats _(b)_ and sharps _(#)_ don't change of course as they are chords, so if there had been a Bbm7 the new chord would be Dm7.

The Transposing Wheel is a really handy bit of kit and allows you to experiment with different keys and turn songs that may seem difficult to play into easy chord versions.