



Annual Report 2022-23

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The Clarsach Society

Annual Report 2022-23

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Office Bearers, Trustees & Staff

(at 30th June 2023)

President	Isobel Mieras MBE																														
Vice-President	Maggie Cunningham, President An Comunn Gaidhealach (ex-officio)																														
Executive Council	<table><tr><td>Charles Hope</td><td>Convenor</td></tr><tr><td>Màiri Macleod</td><td>Gaelic Adviser</td></tr><tr><td>Jayne Jones</td><td>Argyll Branch</td></tr><tr><td>Frances Younson</td><td>Bristol & WE Branch</td></tr><tr><td>Wendy Stewart</td><td>D&G Branch</td></tr><tr><td>Catherine Dowell</td><td>Edinburgh Branch</td></tr><tr><td>Gwen Yorke</td><td>Glasgow Branch</td></tr><tr><td>Cheyenne Brown</td><td>Highland Branch</td></tr><tr><td>Mairi Macleod</td><td>Isle of Lewis Branch</td></tr><tr><td>Felicity Merchant</td><td>London & SE Branch</td></tr><tr><td>Irene Watt</td><td>NE Scot Branch</td></tr><tr><td>Gill Martin</td><td>Northumbrian Branch</td></tr><tr><td>Gill Beeley</td><td>Transpennine Branch</td></tr><tr><td>Mary Evans</td><td>Wales Branch</td></tr><tr><td>Flora Bramwell</td><td>Wire Branch</td></tr></table>	Charles Hope	Convenor	Màiri Macleod	Gaelic Adviser	Jayne Jones	Argyll Branch	Frances Younson	Bristol & WE Branch	Wendy Stewart	D&G Branch	Catherine Dowell	Edinburgh Branch	Gwen Yorke	Glasgow Branch	Cheyenne Brown	Highland Branch	Mairi Macleod	Isle of Lewis Branch	Felicity Merchant	London & SE Branch	Irene Watt	NE Scot Branch	Gill Martin	Northumbrian Branch	Gill Beeley	Transpennine Branch	Mary Evans	Wales Branch	Flora Bramwell	Wire Branch
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Gill Beeley	Transpennine Branch																														
Mary Evans	Wales Branch																														
Flora Bramwell	Wire Branch																														
Elected Members	Helen Foster, Calum Macleod, Isobel Mieras, Neil Wood.																														
Hon. Secretary	Mary Scott																														
Hon. Treasurer	Andrew Melville																														
Administrator	Sheena Walker																														
National Office	Studio G43, Out of the Blue Drill Hall 36 Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh EH6 SRG 01315540212 office@clarsachsociety.co.uk																														

Standing Committees

(at 30th June 2023)

Finance and Administration Committee

Charles Hope (Convenor)
Mary Scott (Hon. Secretary)
Andrew Melville (Hon. Treasurer)
Màiri Macleod (Elected Member)
Calum Macleod (Elected Member)

EIHF Committee

Mary Scott (Co-ordinator)
Isobel Mieras (Joint Artistic Adviser)
Patsy Seddon (Joint Artistic Adviser)
Rachel Hair
Katie Harrigan
Stephanie Harrison-Boond
Charles Hope (ex officio)
Annette Lambourne
Calum Macleod
Màiri Macleod
Mary Macmaster
Neil Wood

Music Committee

Màiri Macleod (Convenor)
Mary Scott (Hon. Secretary)
Charles Hope
Isobel Mieras
Charlotte Peterson
Toni Russell
Gwen Yorke
Heather Yule

Honorary Members

Hon. Life Members	Anne Macdearmid, Elizabeth Matthews, Isobel Mieras
Hon. Life Associate	Prof. Edward Witsenburg

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The 84th Annual General Meeting of
The Clarsach Society- Comunn na Clàrsaich
will be held on Monday 8 April 2024 at 7pm
at George Watson's College

AGENDA

1. OPENING

- 1.1. Apologies for Absence
- 1.2. Welcome from Charles Hope, Convenor of The Clarsach Society

2. AGM2023

- 2.1. Approval of the Minutes of the 83rd AGM, 10 April 2023

3. AGM2024

- 3.1. Matters Arising
- 3.2. Hon. Treasurer's Report (Andrew Melville)
- 3.3. Election of Office Bearers & Trustees

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

5. MEETING CLOSE

- 5.1. Date of AGM 2025

Convenor's Foreword



On the bookcase behind me is "The Classic Poems of Robert Burns". In one of them, there is the line "the best-laid schemes o' Mice and Men gang aft agley." And, he was right. Last year, I wrote that we were appointing two administrators - and we did. Sadly Ulrike, who many of you might have met at the Festival, has decided to leave us. However, Sheena is still looking after us and our interests and we have just recruited Siannie Moodie as "Festival Administrator" to cope with the additional workload that the EIHF creates. Siannie worked for us as a Festival Assistant for the last two years, so should manage to pick up the reins quite easily.

Even amongst the volunteer side things haven't gone totally to plan. The (National) Executive Committee still has a couple of empty seats and we are, once again, short of a Vice-Convenor. I

understand that many branches also have empty seats, but this is not restricted to the Clarsach Society. Post-Covid, many organisations find themselves in the same situation. To those of you who would like to help the society further, please contact either myself or Mary Scott - our Honorary Secretary - to talk about it. We would wish for more members to become involved in running the Society - at both local and national level. It isn't necessary to live near Edinburgh to become involved. Even before the pandemic, the F&A committee met over the internet and for Executive Council meetings, travel expenses are refunded.

Harp Hire continues apace. Elinor Evans, whom I mentioned last year, went on a course at Starfish to help her look after our stock even better than she managed in the past. Do remember that now when you hire an instrument, it comes complete with insurance cover. This makes life much tidier as trying to claim for damage to a instrument returned from hire had become almost impossible. It has also made life better for the branches since they also benefit from Jack Hayward's 'standard' rate.

Charles Hope, Convenor

Argyll Branch

Branch Officers:

- **Convenor:** Ania Zwozdiak
- **Secretary:** Alicia Chapple
- **Branch Rep.:** Jayne Jones

Contact & Links:

argyllbranch@gmail.com

Branch Website

The Argyll Branch has forged ahead this year with a full programme of monthly workshops, led by the wonderful and very patient Ingrid Henderson. We've missed playing together and now make time in the day to revise old favourites as well as learn new pieces.

We also planned a number of 'Come and Try' events and as a result, we have welcomed some new beginners to the branch and hope to follow this up with another event later in the year.

We also managed to hold a residential weekend and with three days of tutoring, we came away with new pieces, plus a whole new set of accompanying skills. Thank you Ingrid for your encouragement and expert tuition!

Alicia Chapple, Secretary

Bristol & West of England Branch

Branch Officers:

- **Convenor:** Julia Hammersley
- **Secretary:** Catherine Dack
- **Branch Rep.:** Frances Younson

Contact & Links:

clarsachbristolandwest@gmail.com

Branch Facebook Page

We have discovered a new venue for meetings this year and have had a couple of enjoyable workshops there, led by Julia Hammersley, including our annual Christmas get together, where we learned some new festive tunes and revisited old favourites, as well as enjoying lunch together.

This year, things have been quieter on the meetings front than usual, owing to the Convenor and Secretary being very busy, but we hope to get more dates in the diary soon.

Our hire harps have been almost continuously on loan throughout the year, including our two recently acquired Salvis. The revenue they've brought in allowed us to sponsor a workshop at the Edinburgh International Harp Festival.

Catherine Dack. Secretary



Bristol & West of England Branch Christmas workshop.

L to R: Julia Hammersley, Clarissa Rymer, Rosemary Saunders, Frances Younson and Hattie Lupton.

Dumfries and Galloway Branch

Branch Officers:

- **Convenor & Branch Rep:**
Wendy Stewart
- **Secretary:** Lyn Walby

Contact & Links:

wendyharp@hotmail.co.uk
lyn.walby@uwclub.net

“Small but beautifully formed” could be our line for the D&G Branch. We have around 20 subscribing members, but only average 6 for playing sessions. We range in ages from teens to 90+, from drivers to not-any-longer drivers, and from beginners to competent through to don't-practise-enough players. But we all enjoy playing together, and very much appreciate the arrangements our wonderful Convenor, Wendy Stewart, brings for us. Wendy has also provided extra Zoom sessions for our more distant members.

During the year we had our regular monthly playing sessions, mostly in the Dumfries area, with one “outreach” in Kirkcudbright. Driving remains a worry to me, both because a number of our members are no longer happy driving in the dark, and because we would like to be more environmentally friendly, but we do try to car-share as much as possible. We were to be part of a songWave concert in December, but owing to a misunderstanding, this became background music. In December we did have background music at the Kirkcudbright Galleries on a Sunday afternoon, which was very generously received by the visitors.

We remain endlessly grateful to Wendy for her generosity and skilful teaching, among her other varied performing engagements.

Lyn Walby, Secretary

Edinburgh Branch

Branch Officers:

- **Convenor:** Morag Philips
- **Secretary:** Laura Jones
- **Branch Rep:** Catherine Dowell

Contact & Links:

clarsac.edin.secretary@gmail.com

Branch Facebook Page

I recall my Mother used to say “ the years pass more quickly as you get older “ and I thought that what a strange thing to say. Now, I understand. It certainly seems like only a few weeks since I wrote my previous annual report. However, on reflecting on the past year, it is clear that as a branch we have packed a lot in!

I suspect the highlight for many was the fact that we have returned to our full range of pre Covid activities with all our regular live events once again featuring in our calendar. We enjoyed an excellent evening of music at The Young Performers concert in August, a variety of music, solos and pieces by Na Clarsairean at the Open Platform in October and then rounded off 2022 returning to The Queens Hall for our Harps of Gold Christmas concert. Neeps, tatties and music featured in January at our Burns Bash, and then rehearsals commenced for our concert at EIHf in April.

As a branch we are fortunate to have four fantastic “resident tutors”, Isobel Mieras, Margaret Collin, Rosemary McKerchar and Ellie Evans who arrange the music for all our performances.



However, It's not all been about performing. We have also enjoyed sessions with guest tutors Charlotte Petersen, Ellie Hetherington, Karen Marshalsay, Wendy Stewart and Fiona Rutherford. We visited Bamburgh in September for a great day of music with the Northumberland branch and in June we hosted an evening for harpists on a trip to Scotland with Sunita Staneslow. We ran two Come and Try sessions and also organised follow on

classes for new players who attended the adult beginner class at EIHf. As a result of both we are delighted to have a number of new members.

How quickly a year passes when you're having fun with your harp!

Morag Philips, Convenor

Glasgow Branch

Branch Officers:

- **Convenor:** Sam MacAdam
- **Secretary:**
- **Rep.:** Gwen Mairi Yorke

Contact & Links:

harpsglasgow@gmail.com

[Branch Facebook Page](#)

This year we have continued our regular workshops with a wide range of visiting tutors, and forged links with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland harp department!

We very luckily received funding from the Creative Scotland Covid Recovery Fund to deliver a concert and a come and try session. One of the members of the come and try session loved the clarsach so much that she is now a member of the society and bought her own harp. The concert was performed by Gwen Mairi (who performed her Douxe Noells) and we had Keziah Thomas perform her arrangement of Vivaldi's Four Seasons. The concert was a huge success, and we sold some of our branch books as well!

In the spring we had four of the current students on the traditional harp course at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland along with their tutor to deliver a workshop for us. Afterwards, they performed an informal concert - which was spectacular!

Looking ahead, we're very lucky to have Ben Creighton Griffiths perform a concert with The Transatlantic Hot Club as part of his UK tour, and also deliver a workshop for us as our September workshop.

Happy harping!

Sam MacAdam, Convenor

Highland Branch

Branch Officers

- **Convenor:** Cheyenne Brown
- **Secretary:** Kirsty North
- **Rep:** Cheyenne Brown

Contact & Links:

highlandbranch.cs@gmail.com

[Branch Facebook Page](#)

[Branch Website](#)

In autumn 2022, the Highland Branch started the term with an online workshop with Sunita Staneslow, then in-person workshops with Karen Marshalsay and Sara Evans. Sara drove all the way from the Pyrenees and also treated us to a duo concert with her partner on double bass. We also had our annual Christmas workshop with Cheyenne Brown and Isbel Pendlebury. In 2023, we continued our workshops with Jennifer Port, Siannie Moodie, Wendy Stewart and Fraya Thomsen. In March, we culminated all these amazing tunes into a fabulous concert at the RNI Chapel. The concert also featured children's and adult's ensembles who had recently performed at the Inverness Music Festival.

The branch also ran several 'come-and-try' sessions with Emma Wright and Cheyenne Brown, hosted in Inverness, Dingwall, Evanton, Kingussie, Aviemore and Grantown as well as at the Inverness Gathering and Belladrum Festival.



With support from the Creative Scotland Covid Recovery Fund via the Clarsach Society, we have released our first ever Highland Branch tune book. The 18 featured pieces have been collected from those currently and historically involved with the branch. As the Clarsach Society itself was formed in 1931 in Dingwall, it is wonderful to have this collection of tunes reflect the Clarsach Society's Highland origins. These books are available for purchase!

Kirsty North, Secretary

Isle of Lewis Branch

Branch Officers:

- **Convenor & Branch Rep:** Màiri Macleod

Contact & Links:

gaelic@clarsachsociety.co.uk

It has been a challenging couple of years for our branch, but I am glad to say that we are emerging from the fog and finding our way again as a group. We started with our AGM in September where we only had our minimum quorate present and we were unsure how to proceed. I, reluctantly, became our convenor, temporarily, as well as being the committee member in charge of Harp Hire & our Branch representative, but I would be overjoyed to find someone who would take over the convenor role for us on a more permanent basis as I really cannot do the role justice with my various commitments on and off the island already.

We are very grateful to the Creative Scotland Covid Recovery Grant from the Society which funded our first group of 3 workshops to get us going again. After we reached out personally to some old friends, we were so excited to see historical members returning into our fold. Since then we have enjoyed a further 5 workshops together in our new venue at St. Peter's church hall, which is a little smaller but a more central location. Harp hire payments have been keeping us going and it is encouraging that our accounts are so healthy despite our numbers still being quite low.

Some of our youth members have had very productive years.

- Fiona Langley achieved 2nd place at the Perth Mòd, performed at the Glasgow Concert Hall with the Harris girl-group Alt at the Celtic Connections festival and had an inspirational time at the Michael Rooney youth outreach workshop at the EIHf before she rushed off to sing with NYCOS – she's a very busy girl! She also combined her skills for the first time, singing with clàrsach accompaniment at the Harris local Mòd in June.
- Isla is developing her confidence and joined the Teen Fèis with her Clàrsach for the first time this year in July, alongside her piping skills.
- Charlie surprised herself by learning to play the clàrsach up to Grade 3 standard in one year, achieving a B in her Nat 5 music exam. She now looks forward to taking her Higher music exam next year.
- Mairi Anna Binns has completed her 2nd year at the Junior Royal Conservatoire of Music, this time as a Pedal Harpist in the Classical Department. She has thoroughly enjoyed her tuition from Sharron Griffiths and now looks forward to moving to Italy as she prepares to start tuition with Anna Lorro at the Luco Marenzio Conservatory in Brescia. She also achieved a Merit in her Grade 5 Theory exam and pushed herself forward to be the Edinburgh Youth Orchestra's only harpist this year at their Easter & Summer courses with their most recent performances in Edinburgh, Glasgow & Paisley. Mairi Anna assures me however that her clàrsach playing will never be left behind and will be taking her Norris with her to Italy. We wish her all the best for the future within the music industry, in whatever form that takes.

Màiri Macleod, Branch Convenor

London & South-East Branch

Branch Officers:

- **Convenor & Branch Rep:**
Felicity Merchant
- **Secretary:** Anne Chorley
- **Treasurer & Harp Hire:**
Charles Hope

Contact & Links:

secretarylondonse@clarsachsociety.co.uk

[Branch Facebook Page](#)

[Branch Website](#)

Our membership levels have remained steady over the last year. We have added to our stock of hire harps, supported the Edinburgh International Harp Festival and Harp on Wight (where we had a stand publicising the Clarsach Society and our branch), jointly organised a residential weekend at Benslow Music taught by Steph West and Elinor Evans, ran a day workshop in Berkshire with Steph West and Sally Whitaker, and continued to run local playing afternoons. We are looking forward to this year's residential course in October at Benslow Music with tutors Lauren Scott and Steph West, and a Carols with Harps event in December in Hampshire.

Felicity Merchant and Anne Chorley, Convenor and Secretary



North East of Scotland Branch

Branch Officers:

Convenor & Branch Rep:

Irene Watt

- **Member Secretary:** Alliso Bremner
- **Events Secretary:** Abeer Eladany

Contact & Links:

nesclarsach@gmail.com

bremnera521@gmail.com

email: abeer.eladany@abdn.ac.uk

www.facebook.com/ClarsachNEScotland



The NES Branch is a vibrant, active branch of the Clarsach Society. Our members are spread throughout the Grampian and Angus Regions so are widespread. Our flagship annual events include our Harp Retreat in March, 2 Tea Concerts July and Dec, 2 Harps of Gold Charity Concerts in December. Other events include a concert at Bennahar Camp Hill Community to support their open day, European Folk Day, playing for Care Homes and a Concert in Strathdon.

Workshops included Stonehaven Folk Festival, SCAT collaboration Come and Try, and Lucie Hendry. Special Projects comprised Arduithie School Project which was a week of tuition in traditional music, and also a Collaboration with SCAT (Scottish Culture and Traditions) to provide regular tuition in Clarsach and bring the Branch and SCAT together in a mutually beneficial way to promote the Clarsach in the NE of Scotland.

Current Members – 43
Ensemble Meetings-8
Special Projects 2

No of clarsachs owned 29 Performances – 12
Branch Meetings 12 Workshops – 3



Irene Watt, Convenor

Northumbrian Branch

Branch Officers:

- **Convenor:**
Margaret Thompson
- **Branch Rep:** Gill Martin
- **Secretary:** Morag Pugh

Contact & Links:

clarsachnorthumbria@hotmail.com

[Branch](#) [Website](#)

Our year started off at Bamburgh with the joint meeting with the Edinburgh Branch. 25 members attended and we had a very enjoyable day.

Our monthly Saturday morning meetings continue to be well attended and are attracting new members. We have two other monthly meetings when we learn new music and rehearse for performances.

Our December meeting is always popular. 22 members attended last Christmas and we had a happy morning playing Christmas music and enjoying coffee and mince pies!

We have had two courses this year. Savourna Stevenson visited us in October, followed by Rachel Hair in June. Two very different courses which were very much appreciated. Harps Northumbria have been out and about playing throughout Northumberland. We joined forces with the Bridge Singers on March 1st to present a selection of music from Wales.

Playing at Felton for the Felton Music Festival is now a regular event. A lady from Exmouth told us we were the best thing she'd ever heard!!

I would like to thank all of the committee for their hard work this year. We have lots to look forward to in the coming year.

Margaret Thompson, Convenor



L to R: Deborah Bearder, Gill Martin, Fliss Edmunds, Morag Pugh, Margaret Thompson, Jacqui Deans.

Transpennine Branch

Branch Officers:

- **Convenor & Branch Rep:**
Gill Beeley
- **Secretary:** Claire Dale

Contact & Links:

transpennineharps@gmail.com

Branch Website

Branch Facebook

Another full year of harping

Transpennine Harps continues to thrive with 55 – 60 harpists from across the M62 corridor and beyond.

Highlights were our sessions with Anne-Marie O'Farrell and Lauren Scott. Our programme is inclusive as possible, catering for many tastes and all abilities. We enjoyed playing together in one room again, but we are mindful that we have members who enjoy our online sessions from all corners of the country – and of course one of our tutors is based in Toulouse.

We have several groups – Classical, Slow Strings, Old Malton and Tamsin’s Troubadours, Lucy@TPH and small groups playing for specific events such as accompanying a local choir. Our online festival in November was a great success, thanks to Lucy Nolan and Tamsin Dearnley.

Harp hire remains buoyant, with all seven harps out at present.

We can list everything we have done, which is quite considerable! What we cannot do as easily is to convey the great sense of companionship, support and fun we have as a group. Our lead tutors, Tamsin Dearnley and Lucy Nolan, have built up a great rapport with and between us, as well as encouraging us to do more than we ever thought we could as harpists, whatever our level. They have our grateful thanks for all that they do for us.

Claire Dale, Secretary



Wales Branch

Branch Officers:

- **Convenor & Branch Rep:**
Mary Evans
- **Secretary:** Peggy Bishop

Contact & Links:

mary@lewislewis.co.uk
secretary.clarsachwales@gmail.com
[Branch Facebook](#)

We have had a busy year with workshops, with Nia Jenkins in November, and Robin Huw Bowen in March. Bill Taylor came down to give a concert in June, which several of our members attended, and then we had a workshop with him on the Sunday. In August we had Elinor Evans.

We meet in between workshops to revise the music they teach us.

In June a few of us played at the Botanic Gardens with Shelley Fairplay, that is always a lot of fun.

We are working together to incorporate different styles of music to suit everybody's taste. There are a few tutors on the list for the future, and we are hoping to go and play more in public again.

Peggy Bishop, Secretary



Wire Branch

Branch Officers:

- **Convenor:** Pamela Nairn
- **Branch Rep.:** Flora Bramwell
- **Secretary:** Marianne McGhee

Contact & Links:

wirebranch@gmail.com

As with the past year, most of our activities took place online, including monthly workshops and a multi-session course, as well as an in-person playing session.

We held eight monthly online workshops between September 2022 a June 2023, along with a playing session in Edinburgh in December 2022. We offered classes for both elementary and intermediate players, and we looked at quite a variety of historical and traditional tunes. These included a modern air, 17th-century coronation tunes, a Renaissance dance tune, a Medieval Danish song, and two ancient Gaelic airs.

Wire Branch members from across the world joined our fourth annual online courses in playing music from the Robert ap Huw manuscript, containing the oldest harp music from anywhere in Europe. The courses, split for elementary and intermediate players, took place in six sessions between January and May 2023, with the two groups playing contrasting pieces directly from the original tablature.

Bill Taylor, Treasurer

www.wirebranch.co.uk



Members of the Wire Branch at a playing session in Edinburgh, December 2022: Alejo Rodriguez, Alasdair Macleod, Marianne McGhee, Toby Hawks and Bill Taylor.



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Rent £60/month



Ravenna 34
34 strings, A - C
£3200 Inc VAT

I P £270
Rent £90/month



Ogden 34
34 strings, A - C
£3700 Inc VAT

I P £330
Rent £110/month



Mia 34
38 strings, A - C
£2625 Inc VAT

I P £210
Rent £70/month



Una 38
38 strings, C - C
£3770 Inc VAT

I P £330
Rent £110/month

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The 42nd Edinburgh International Harp Festival

April 7-11th 2023

It was with some trepidation that the organising committee decided to make this year's Festival mainly in-person with a small number of courses offered online. The hope was that more people were ready to attend in person, but we were still mindful of those who could not make the journey for various reasons to Edinburgh, but still wished to take part in the Festival. Our best comparison while reviewing numbers was with the last pre-pandemic Festival in 2019 which was a 5-day Festival. This year's was a 4-day Festival and in fact the percentages attending, especially taking courses, compare well which is very encouraging. As always, those attending brought huge enthusiasm to the Festival making it a very joyful and successful event.



Ailie Robertson

There were 8 concerts, 4 in the evening and 4 in the afternoon with the return of the popular ceilidh on the Monday evening. Our Friday evening opening concert featured Ailie Robertson who must have felt very much at home at the heart of the Festival in her native Edinburgh and in her old school. Also performing that evening was Kim Robertson from USA who generously invited Sunita Staneslow to join her in a set, completing what was a great opening concert.

Saturday afternoon saw the winner of the Iain Macleòid Young Composer Award, Anna Eggesberger from Germany, perform her winning piece, followed by Eva Curth, also from Germany, playing music by the French composer, Bernard Andrès for pedal harp and Clarsach. In the evening Ireland's Michael Rooney treated us to his Musical Memories with both traditional and contemporary music. This was followed by a visit to Scandinavia in the company of Erik Ask-Upmark and his wife Anna Rynefors playing Nordic music on a variety of instruments: harp, sackpipa, harjedalspipa, nyckelharpa and voice.

On Sunday afternoon, Neil Wood played both gut and wire strung harp, demonstrating a wide range of styles and techniques in a programme of traditional and contemporary Scottish music. Now resident in Scotland, Gwen Màiri drew on her Welsh roots, blending the old with the new in her performance of music and songs in her own particular style.

There were more beautiful songs in the evening, as singer Ruth Keggin from the Isle of Man and Scottish harpist Rachel Hair skilfully blended voice and harp in songs from the Manx tradition. The second part of the concert introduced us to Hospitalfield House

which, along their recently restored Grecian harp, inspired Gillan Fleetwood's suite, *Music from Hospitalfield House*, performed by Gillian (clarsach), Laura Wilkie (fiddle), Suz Applbe (cello), Mikey Owens (brass) and Tim Lane (percussion). Filmed images of various parts of the house were screened throughout the performance.

One of our aims as a Festival is to encourage and include new young talent and, on Monday afternoon, soloist Grace Stewart Skinner charmed us with her own compositions and arrangements, reflecting her traditional Scottish roots. In complete contrast, 30 players from Music Generation Ireland Collective, led by Deirdre Ni Bhuachalla, swept us along in a joyful and energetic performance of music specially composed and arranged for them.



In the evening these young players relaxed along with other students, performers and enthusiasts, dancing to the music of *Young Frances Gardner* at our ceilidh ---with some surprise cameo performances and never to be forgotten new dances.

Tuesday afternoon's concert celebrated the Joy of Making Music Together. HARPA, a seven strong group from USA, played music rooted in many traditions and now very much their own. Led by Eva Curth the Festival pedal harp class played music they had studied by Bernard Andr  s and na Cl  rsairean, the orchestra of the Edinburgh Branch of The Clarsach Society, performed *Changing Seasons*, a suite of 3 traditional Scottish tunes and Anne Macdearmid's arrangement of Vivaldi's *Winter*, in which they were joined by HARPA.

Our closing concert was opened by duo Rachel Newton (harp and voice) and Lauren MacColl (fiddle) in a moving performance of *Heal and Harrow*, a tribute to the many women in the 16th and 17th centuries accused of witchcraft, for which they were persecuted and executed. The music, based on their stories as told by author Mairi Kidd, was illustrated by striking visuals compiled by Alison Piper.

Lune Bleue Trio, Erwan B  renguer (Guitar) Jean-Marie Stephant (drums) led by harpist Clotilde Trouillaud from France, provided a wonderful jazz –filled finale to the Festival in a melange of mixed emotions, improvisation and glorious sound.

If the concerts are our showcase to the world, our programme of 35 courses for every stage from absolute beginners to more advanced players is the backbone of the Festival. All except our 2 weekend courses, ran over the 4 days of the Festival. All our guest performers offered courses on their own particular genre or expertise, supported by many of the excellent teachers we are so fortunate to have in Scotland. Irish, Breton, Nordic, North American, Manx, Welsh and World music were covered as well as a myriad of varying aspects of Scottish music. Students of both pedal and lever harp were introduced to the delights of the music of contemporary composer Bernard Andr s, encouraged to sing to their own accompaniment, learn the mysteries of choosing the right chords for arranging, brush up their technique, use the harp in storytelling or discover the secrets of learning by ear.

Expert on the wire strung harp, Bill Taylor, offered the chance to come and try the particular techniques of playing the resonant Highland harp. To include those unable to come to Edinburgh this year, 6 of these courses were delivered by Zoom.

Our hour-long workshops, with 3 each day and 2 on the final day, gave students an opportunity to informally learn more about particular styles of music, to gain insights into the history of the harp in Scotland and Ireland, to sing together or take good care of their harps.

For those seeking relaxation between classes and concerts, we also offered Come and Try Yoga sessions with Clara Hyder, Gaelic tasters with Mairi Macleod and massage with Tana Collins.



There were 2 additional Outreach Events. These were specifically designed to bring in young players of school age and teenagers. The first was pre-festival 4-day course taught by Isobel Mieras and Elinor Evans, followed by a performance of *Our Beautiful Planet*, using poems written by some of the young performers and specially arranged music. 27 young players aged between 6 and 17, from in and around Edinburgh, Aberdeenshire, Yorkshire, Dublin and Hong Kong took part. Mod prize-winner Cara Conway was a guest

performer, supported by An Comunn Gaidhealach. The course and concert were supported by The Royal Celtic Society.



The second event, organised by Neil Wood, took the form of a very successful workshop for more than 30 teenage players from all over Scotland given by Michael Rooney, who guided them through ornamentation, variation, arrangement techniques and chordal patterns used in traditional Irish music. Free of charge to participants the workshop was supported by the Tasgadh Creative Scotland fund, administered by Fèisean nan Gàidheal. The workshop encouraged young people and

their families to attend the Festival who may not have otherwise done so.

Our Open Platform during lunchtime encouraged some excellent performances enjoyed by those who found their way to the Gathering Space to relax and listen.

We were delighted to welcome so many exhibitors to the Festival. Potential buyers were able to try out the various instruments and chat to the makers. The repair service on offer was much appreciated.

Lunches, evening meals and some snacks were available and, in consultation with the caterer, a wider range of meals, teas and coffees is planned for next year.

Thanks to a great team of helpers led by Charles Hope, we were able to run our own bar in the Gathering Space. This contributed to the success of the ceilidh and late-night sessions as well as providing interval drinks for the evening concerts.

We are deeply grateful to all our sponsors and supporters: Camac Harps, David and Brenda Lamb, The United Kingdom Harp Association, Salvi Harps, the Harp Studio, Jack Hayward Insurance, Institut Francais, Lyon and Healey, Pilgrim Harps and, not least, Branches of the Society.

Without the stewards who volunteer and help in so many ways, we could not run the Festival. Sincere thanks to all of them. If you have never done so, please consider joining the team next year.

The organising team has enjoyed and appreciated the enthusiastic support of our two administrators, Sheena Walker and Ulrike Pearce - Lorenz in the preceding months of preparation and at the Festival.

EIHF 2024 5 - 9 April
Isobel Mieras

Pan Celtic Festival 2023

I would like to thank The Clarsach Society for giving me the opportunity to attend the Pan Celtic International Festival in Carlow this year. It was an enjoyable and exciting experience, and I met lots of new people.

The festival began with the opening night concert, which was amazing and gave a taste of what was to come over the next few days. Throughout the festival, there was so much to see and do. I enjoyed looking around Carlow, which was full of life with people from all over. The program of events was very varied. I got to see multiple concerts, hear interesting talks, watch competitions, and take part in ceilidhs and club nights. The Scottish club night was particularly fun, featuring ceilidh dancing, excellent performances, and songs for everyone.

For me, one of the highlights of the trip was the international song contest. It was like Eurovision – but better! It was such an exciting competition to watch, and all the performances were amazing. The Scottish entry was a beautiful song that made us all proud. Another festival highlight was the parade of nations. It was great fun to parade the streets of Carlow with bagpipes and highland dancing leading us as we waved our Scottish flags up high. It seemed as though the whole town had come out to watch. Over the week, I realised there's so much more to the Pan Celtic than competitions. I did take part in a competition, and I was happy with how I played, although I found the standard very high. I was intrigued to see the different harps being played. I had my clarsach, a Welsh competitor played a triple harp, and one of the Bretons had a much smaller lap harp.

As a Gaelic speaker, it was very interesting hearing the languages of the other Celtic nations. I found I could understand a fair bit of Manx, as there's lots of overlap with Scottish Gaelic. Welsh, on the other hand, was so different. It was challenging trying to pronounce the colours when we were taught a song at the Welsh club night!

Overall, I had a great experience and enjoyed the friendly, welcoming atmosphere of the Pan Celtic International Festival. Many thanks again to The Clarsach Society for sponsoring me to attend this year.

Sorcha Thompson



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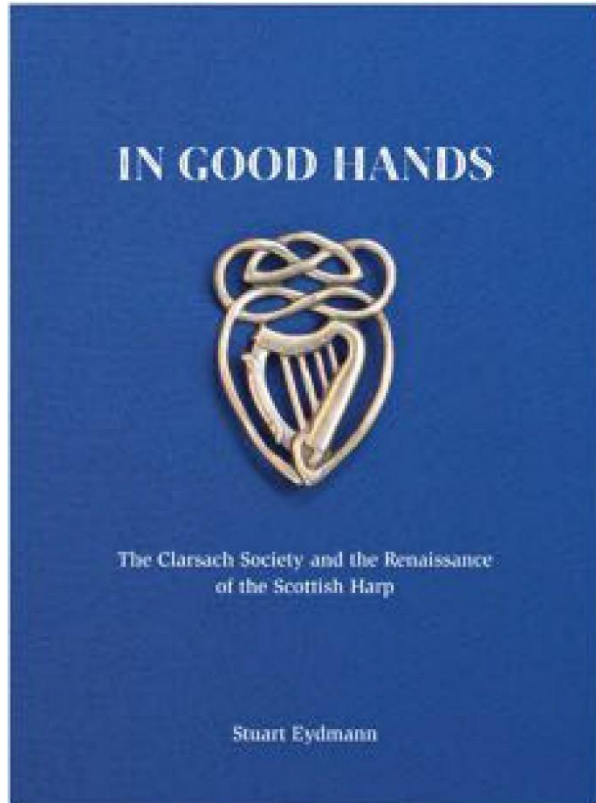
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Finance & Administration Committee

Something that those who have helped with the EIHf 'get-in' or 'get out' will have known, we stored an incredible amount of stuff in a space rented from the Colinton Castle Sports Club. The Club has now closed so we needed to find a new home for all our equipment. At present we are renting self storage space (at a significant cost) for EIHf equipment and the rest, mostly archives, has ended up in our Out of the Blue office. This has been possible since Sheena and Ulrike have mainly been working from home. However, we'd like to find a single space for everything including harps waiting to go out on hire. Edinburgh based members of the committee, of which I, sadly, am not, have spent a fair bit of time both sorting through our archives and looking for another venue for the Society's office. If anyone knows of anywhere that might be available, please let us know,

Charles Hope, Convenor of the F&A

Music Committee Report

The Music Committee meetings have become hybrid this year with some members meeting in person and the remainder “Zoom-ing” in, continuing the habit created over the last number of years by developing the need to be as flexible as possible when some members aren’t able to travel. We met on the 19th November 2022 and again on the 13th May 2023.

The winner of the Iain Macleòid Young Composer Award 2022 was Anna Eggersberger. We were delighted to have Anna in-person this year to perform live at the 42nd Edinburgh International Harp Festival. Her very moving and diverse piece was performed on the Saturday afternoon concert alongside Eva Curth, a fellow German but performing on both the lever and the pedal Harp. Perhaps you could follow in the footsteps of Anna and the 11 previous winners? Be creative, be brave, just start writing and you never know where it might take you. The prize money has been increased to £1000 and the age limit is now up to 30 years old. The premiere performance will be during the next EIHf 5th-9th April 2024.

We were delighted to hear that the Pan Celtic festival started up again, with a new Chair of the Alba committee at the helm – Mòd Gold Medallist, Riona Whyte. With Riona’s help, we were able to send a Society rep once again; Sorch Thompson competed in Carlow and had a brilliant time by the sounds of it. The performance opportunities created for the Alba representation over there were second-to-none and many videos and photos were streaming live on facebook which was brilliant to see the group being embraced by our other Celtic nations.

The Royal National Mòd was held in Perth in 2022 with around 30 competitors in 12 different competitions. Some competitions were entered more than others, with the Solos still being the most popular competitions. Unfortunately, there were no junior entries for the Composition competition, which is an Open competition, for any age and ability but I would like to encourage all players to consider it for the future. No manuscripts are required so you do not have to submit anything in advance so if you had the slightest interest about using some inspiration for an Original Composition, just enter by the deadline and you’d have until the October to finish your piece – can’t say fairer than that! You can even add your voice into the deal too, as long as you use the Gaelic language. It was wonderful to see a buzz around again after a 3-year hiatus but it was still a quiet day in comparison from previous years and for that reason we decided ahead of time NOT to hold an evening event after the competitive element of the day finished. We hope it won’t be too long again before the competition numbers increase. Any competition which isn’t entered for a number of

consecutive years would be at risk of being cut, which has happened over the last decade and my worry would be that it would continue to happen so please support these competitions as teachers, students and audience members. The Paisley Mòd dates are from 13th-21st October with the Clàrsach day being the Wednesday 18th October 2023 – see you there!

Don't forget to apply for our Bursaries (previously known as the Annual Scholarship). The maximum support awarded will be £500 to help with clàrsach hire, lessons or courses with Scottish content. Applications close on November 1st each year and are specifically aimed at supporting members of any age & level, who are facing financial hardship, especially helpful during these uncertain times we face.

Last but by no means least, we were delighted to launch **2 NEW folios** at the EIHf this year – The long-awaited **Introductory folio** which is full of Gaelic music aimed specifically at pre-Grade 1 players, with the Mòd Introductory competition in mind. Teachers, students and parents alike will appreciate the content of this folio as it has a wide-range of Gaelic pieces for beginners of any age. In stark contrast, **The Dynamic Scottish Harper's Companion** is for the more advanced player, post Grade 5, who is looking for a challenge, specifically within the realm of our Scottish repertoire. It features new compositions and arrangements. Both folios can be found on Creighton's Collection's website so please take a look & our full list of Folios can be found on pages 39 & 40. Each branch has also been sent 1 copy of each so please ask your local committee if you'd like to see it first before buying online.

Màiri Macleod, Music Committee Convenor

Royal National Mod 2023

Juniors

CL01-Self-accompaniment	1 st Maria Monk, Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu 2 nd Eilidh Smartt, Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce
CL02-Introductory	1 st Sorchà Spencer, Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce 2 nd Cara Thompson, Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce 3 rd Jocelyn Earl, ESMS
CL03-Elementary:	1 st Shreya Saul, Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu 2 nd Eilidh Smartt, Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce 3 rd = Hunter Williams, Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis 3 rd = Alexandra Brandt, Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce
CL04 – Intermediate 1	1 st Ava Williams, Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis 2 nd Zorka Mitrovic, Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce
CL05 – Intermediate 2	1 st Hazel Brandt, Sgoil Chiùil Baile Dhùn Èideann 2 nd Fiona Langley, Sgoil Sir E Scott
CL06 – Advanced:	1 st Cara Conway, Sgoil Chiùil Acadamaidh Dhùghlais 2 nd Maria Monk, Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu 3 rd Maeve Dhòmhnallach, Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu
CL07 – Recital class	1 st Shionka Kamikaji-Inkster, St. Mary’s Music School
CL08 – Duets Under 13	1 st Hazel Brandt & Zorka Mitrovic, City of Edinburgh Music School & Àrd Sgoil Sheumais Ghillesbuig 2 nd Jocelyn Earl & Cecilia Brown, ESMS
CL09 – Duets ages 13-18	1 st Cara Conway & Zoe Drysdale, Sgoil Chiùil Acadamaidh Dhùghlais

Seniors

CL100 – Elementary	NO ENTRIES
CL102 – Intermediate/Advanced	1 st Barbara Brandt, Dùn Èideann
CL104 – Duets	NO ENTRIES

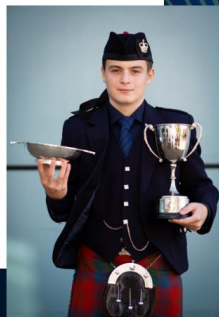
Open

CL105 – Composition	1 st Barbara Brandtm, Dùn Èideann
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Each year The Clarsach Society offers bursaries to encourage promising players at any level who have limited resources, financial or otherwise. Bursaries up to five hundred pounds are awarded for use towards attending an approved course with Scottish content (e.g. Edinburgh International Harp Festival), tuition or alternatively the award can be the use of a harp provided free for one year. Any member of The Society, with the exception of trustees, may apply.

2022 Bursaries

Having made a few changes to the Bursary scheme, 2022 saw five applicants awarded £500 and two applicants awarded the use of a clarsach for one year. Here is a taste of how the award benefitted the players.

The financial award meant that I could have one to one lessons from my tutor and access group learning to improve my technique. This has been a great experience for me and now I am hooked. Thanks for the opportunity. - **Kara Rowe**

Martha has benefitted greatly from the bursary for her clarsach hire this year. She has been able to practise at home between lessons each week and has made really good progress throughout this year. She won first place at the local Mòd in Glasgow and has entered for the national Mòd. Having the clarsach has also enabled her to have lessons at Fèis Thiriodh this Summer and she was able to perform at the final concert as well as entertain at the local care home. We are really grateful for this bursary and the opportunity to hire the clarsach as it has really inspired her. - **Martha Campbell**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the Bursary which has made my desire of learning to play the Harp achievable. I have also had a couple of lessons with a local Harpist but unfortunately started having a few issues with my back which made positioning a bit uncomfortable for a time but I'm pleased to say I am getting better so hope to resume the lessons very soon. - **Debbie Owen**

Thank you so much for your support, which has enabled me to continue learning this beautiful instrument. Like any other freelance musicians at the time, my finances were severely impacted during the pandemic, and I am very grateful for this opportunity, which I would not otherwise have had, to learn a new skill and expand my understanding of the clarsach with a view to arranging traditional music for it along with my first instrument, the viola. Thank you. - **Philip Darcy**

Jemma was delighted to be awarded the bursary last year and has been working hard since November 2022 on the RCS Grade 5 Clarsach exam pieces. The bursary received was used to pay for her private harp lessons and she's making very good progress. She took part in the Inverness Music Festival and competed in the Clarsach advanced category and came first in her group. She also played in the Primary Harp Ensemble and the group did an amazing job and was awarded the shiny trophy! - **Jemma Sinclair**

The bursary has been of great benefit to Lucy. She was able to attend the Easter Feis Ross with her clarsach and enjoyed playing in a group. The money will also allow her to have lessons for her to take advanced higher music this year and also to attend the residential Feis in October in Ullapool. She is very grateful to the clarsach society for the opportunities that the bursary has given her. - **Lucy Robertson**

Calling Composers

Win £1000 and a premiere at the
Edinburgh International Harp Festival 2024



The Iain Macleòid

Young Composer Award 2023

Open call for composers aged 16-30 to present an original piece of music of 8-10 minutes for clarsach (lever harp) or wire strung harp

Deadline: 27 October 2023 Details: www.clarsachsociety.co.uk

The Iain Macleòid

Young Composer Award 2023

The Young Composer Award is an annual composition competition, issued by The Clarsach Society. In 2018, the award was renamed The Iain Macleòid Young Composer Award, in memory of the late John Macleod, who served as Vice President of and Gaelic Adviser to The Society over many years.

Composers aged between 16 & 30 years of age are invited to submit an original piece of music lasting no longer than 10, and no less than 8 minutes, suitable for either:

- a) Solo clarsach (lever harp) or wire harp
- b) Clarsach (lever harp) or wire harp and up to 3 other instruments and/or voices

The composition should be for the standard-sized lever harp: 34 strings with a range from C two octaves below middle C to A three octaves above middle C.

The award is £1000 plus a premiere performance at the Edinburgh International Harp Festival 2024.

Competition Rules:

1. All entries must be received by 5pm on the closing date of Friday 27 October 2023.
2. The work must be the unaided work of the entrant and be an original composition. It must not have been previously performed, published or disseminated in any way.
3. The full score in pdf format plus recording of the composition in MP3 format must be submitted together.
4. The recording must match the score.
5. The composer's name should not be stated on the score or MP3 file.
6. Entrants under 18 years of age must have permission to enter this competition.
7. The successful entrant must also be willing to write a short report on winning the award for publication in the Society's Annual Report and on its website.
8. The copyright of the music shall remain with the composer.
9. The cost of the premier performance only, including travel costs for musicians involved (limited to travel within the UK) will be met by Edinburgh International Harp Festival.
10. The composer must be available to perform their composition at the Edinburgh International Harp Festival in April 2024, date of concert TBC.
11. In the case of a non-harpist submitting a work, it is the composer's responsibility to find the artist(s) to perform the work at the premiere performance.
12. The judges' decision will be final.

2022 Winner: Anna Eggersberger



I felt greatly honored to have been chosen as this year's winner of the Iain MacLeòid Young Composers Award; The experience of performing my winning piece 'The Suite of Spices' at the Edinburgh International Harp Festival 2023 was like a dream come true. Composing is one of my favourite aspects of being a musician, therefore writing the suite for the competition and sharing it with audience of harp enthusiasts was a great pleasure. With my piece I wanted to explore the boundaries between tradition

and innovation on the lever harp. I feel very passionate about this particular piece as I managed to incorporate so many different ideas. I made great memories at Edinburgh International Harp Festival 2023, particularly because everyone at the festival was so welcoming and passionate about what they do. I personally found the experience of entering and winning the Iain MacLeòid Young Composers Award very inspiring and it definitely made me grow as a musician and composer. I would like to thank everyone who was involved in organising the festival and the award ceremony, I appreciated the support and the warm welcome I received. I wish to give special thanks to The Clarsach Society for providing such opportunities for young musicians.

Anna Eggersberger

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Folio 19	Solos and Songs - arr. various	CS	£6.00
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Folio 23	Party Pieces AM	CC	£10.00
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Folio 29	Eight Songs of Love and Longing - arr. IM	CC	£10.00
Folio 30	“Clarsumbria” - arr. & comp. Janet Bennett	CC	£10.00
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