

An CRUITIRE



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The cover photo was taken by Kieran Cummins at Cairde na Cruite's annual harp festival
An Chúirt Chruitireachta in An Grianán, Co. Louth, July 2015

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An Cruitire is the newsletter of Cairde na Cruite and is issued annually on the first week in December.



Cairde na Cruite Events

An Chúirt Chruitireachta 2015



The 30th anniversary of An Chúirt Chruitireachta 2015 was memorable for many reasons with Irish and international participants and artists celebrating for the first time in Ireland the collaboration between Irish and Colombian harpists. The programme of events celebrated the richness of the Irish Harp tradition through workshops, concerts and classes. A wonderful group of harpists registered for the week from all parts of Ireland and the world.

An intense media campaign prior to the festival, with numerous radio and newspaper features helped to have our evening concerts enjoyed by the largest audiences to date.

The concerts provided a unique opportunity for audiences to experience innovative and memorable harp performances. Brilliant harping combined with leading Irish singers and instrumentalists created a stimulating and inspiring mix of styles and interpretations.

The already hectic schedule of the week was even more intense with the addition of three TV crews. The two that have been aired to date are TG4's "HUP", a half hour programme about the 2015 festival and a feature by IRISHTV (which can be viewed at 17 minutes into the following clip <http://www.irishtv.ie/louth-matters-56>).

Evening Concert Highlights

- The festival's opening concert featured Triona Marshall, harpist with the Chieftains and on guitar/accordion, Tim Edey making sheer wonderful and ebullient music.
- Ceiliúradh Cruite: Ireland meets Colombia featured our wonderful festival team Kathleen Loughnane, Dearbhail Finnegan, Kim Fleming, Gráinne Hambly, Anne-Marie O'Farrell, Máire Ní Chathasaigh, Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, Cormac de Barra and Seosaimhín Ní Bheaglaíoch joined by Colombian harpists Hildo Ariel Aguirre Daza, Sergio Aguirre Nicolas Gomez, Wilmer Alejandro Lopez Algecira and the local magical fiddle player Zoe Conway with John McIntyre on guitar. This eclectic mix made the concert a very memorable and stimulating experience.
- Concert with Sligo flute and harp duo Michael Rooney and June McCormack provided a raw-nerved virtuosic performance.
- Voices and Harps concert with Cormac de Barra, Moya Brennan, Éamonn de Barra and Aisling Jarvis provided a full house with the extraordinary music and skills which have brought them international acclaim.
- Gala Concert – The Heartstring Quartet. As we celebrated our 30th festival it was very fitting that the virtuosic harpist Máire Ní Chathasaigh, who has been such a key figure in the revival of the Irish Harp and a tutor at the festival every year since 1985, should take centre stage for the gala concert. Joined by Chris Newman, Nollaig Casey and Andy Watt (filling in at the last minute for Arty McGlynn), they delivered a powerful and passionate performance.





Triona Marshall (Harp) and Tim Edey (Guitar)



Colombian harpists (R to L): Hildo Ariel Aguirre Daza, Wuilmer Alejandro López Algecira, and Sergio Nicolas Aguirre Gomez



Zoe Conway (Fiddle) and John McIntyre (Guitar)



Michael Rooney (Harp) and June McCormack (Flute)



Éamonn de Barra (Flute), Moya Brennan (Harp), Cormac de Barra (Harp) and Aisling Jarvis (Guitar)



Chris Newman (Guitar), Máire Ní Chathasaigh (Harp), Nollaig Casey (Fiddle) and Andy Watt (Guitar)

Afternoon Sessions

The afternoon sessions included tutors and visiting artists in both lectures and performances. Focus on Youth Concerts continued this year with stunning performances from Fleadh Cheoil winners Niamh McGlynn and Alannah Thornburgh. Lectures by Aibhlín McCrann on the history of the Irish Harp and by Helen Davies on the life of Tralee harpist Joan Frances Denny presented a treasure of harping knowledge. “Taking the Mystery out of Session Playing” with Gráinne Hambly was a very welcome start to the week and set the tone for the après concert sessions while Dearbhail Finnegan’s “Learn the tune/ Dance the dance” had both fingers and feet working! It was intriguing to have Hildo Ariel Aguirre Daza demonstrate and explain the intricacies of the Llano Harp in his workshop. The highly polished ensemble from the Athenry Harp School, which included harpists from the age of 6, firmly established in our minds that the future of the Irish Harp is in very safe tiny hands with great credit due to their director Úna ní Fhlannagáin.

Open Day

It was wonderful to have our leading Irish Harp makers Eala Harps, Killarney Harps, Callan Harps along with representatives from International Harp makers Salvi Harps and Clive Morley Harps. Festival tutors were available to demonstrate the harp to curious aspiring harpists in the ‘hands on harp’ event. In addition to the usual harp session, this year we featured a ‘pop-up’ student concert, which thanks to the good weather was held outdoors in the beautiful courtyard setting.

Buíochas

Participants, tutors, artists, sponsors, staff at An Grianán, student supervisor Rachel Duffy, the Committee of Cairde na Cruite and in particular Orla Belton, Kieran Cummins, Caitríona Rowsome and Helen Price.

We are very grateful to our principal sponsors An Chomhairle Ealaíon/The Arts Council, RTÉ Lyric FM, Create Louth, Salvi Harps and Communiqué for their continued and substantial support.

Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, Festival Director



Above Left: Colombian harpists (R to L): Hildo Ariel Aguirre Daza, Wuilmer Alejandro López Algecira and Sergio Nicolas Aguirre Gomez



Above Centre: Úna ní Fhlannagáin presents a 'harp-themed' cake to Áine Ní Dhubhghaill to celebrate Cairde na Cruite's 30th Harp Festival on behalf of the Athenry School of Music



Rachel Duffy and Caitríona Rowsome



Orla Belton and Áine Ní Dhubhghaill



Open Day 'Pop-up' Concert



Afternoon Session with Athenry Harp School



Afternoon Workshop with Gráinne Hambly

Cairde na Cruite's Spring Concert

The Pearse Museum, St. Enda's Park



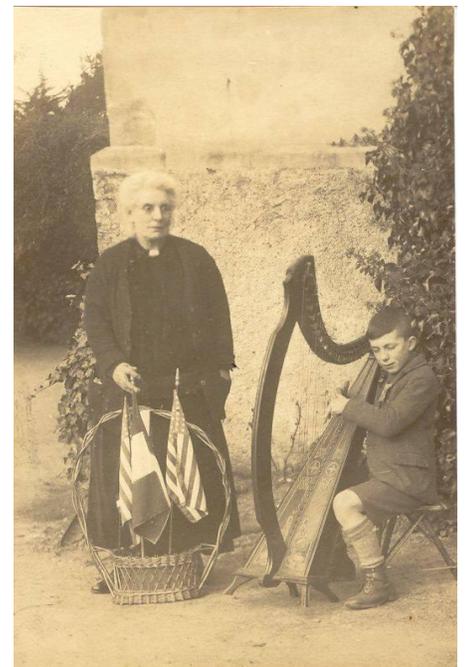
On April 26th 2015, Cairde na Cruite held its Spring Concert at the Pearse Museum in St. Enda's Park, Rathfarnham. This annual event gives harp students a chance to play in front of an audience in an informal and relaxed setting. A spectacular afternoon of performances by harpers Gráinne McGrath, Síofra Ní Dhonechú, Lauren Walshe, Jasmine Ní Chinnéide, Niamh Coughlan, Kara Lord Bissett, Jessica Burke, Sadhbh O'Byrne, Megan Jones, Emer Ní Scolaí, Andrew Jones and Cormac O'Brien were introduced by Áine Ní Dhubhghaill and Helen Price and delighted all in attendance. Debut performances, duets and song with harp accompaniment resonated once again in the beautiful hall of Pádraig Mac Piarais' school. Old favourites ranging from Brian Boru's March and Bonaparte's Retreat to music by Carolan, Scarlatti and the more contemporary Hozier were part of a wonderful and varied repertoire from this promising group of talented harpers.



Many thanks to Director Brian Crowley and the staff at St. Enda's for welcoming and facilitating this annual event for the sixth consecutive year.



A couple of days before Cairde na Cruite's 2015 Spring Concert, The Pearse Museum and St. Enda's Park made available the following information of historical interest and accompanying photo: The image to the right is of Mrs. Pearse (Pádraig Pearse's mother) and Joseph Mallin playing the harp. The young boy in the picture – Joe – was a pupil in St. Enda's and was the son of the executed 1916 leader, Michael Mallin. He later became a Jesuit priest and taught in Hong Kong where he still lives. He was brought to Kilmainham Gaol as a babe-in-arms to bid farewell to his father. He is the only surviving person who was in the Gaol in 1916.



Top Right: Harps at the ready for Cairde na Cruite's 2015 Spring Concert

Right Centre: Members of Cairde na Cruite's committee at its 2015 Spring Concert in the Pearse Museum (L to R): Kieran Kummings, Helen Price, Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, Orla Belton and Caitríona Rowsome

Bottom Right: Mrs. Pearse and Joseph Mallin (photo courtesy of St. Enda's Park and the Pearse Museum)

Cairde na Cruite's Christmas Concert

Foras na Gaeilge, BÁC 2



The Cairde na Cruite annual Christmas concert was held in Foras na Gaeilge headquarters in Merrion Square on Sunday November 29th. The concert was preceded by the AGM which included a lively debate on the future of the Irish harp and the 2016 calendar.

A very full house with standing room only was treated to a festive harping feast. The concert started with three harpers from County Meath – Mary Horgan, Patrick Horgan and Ciara Finnegan – who played an entertaining and diverse programme of tunes ranging from music of the early harpers to a contemporary American piece. Next to follow with a confident first performance was Alice Gardiner from County Kildare. Dubliner Emer Ní Scolaí who featured on the recent TG4 “HUP” programme about An Chúirt Chruitireachta, was accompanied by her two sisters Sorcha (on whistle) and Caoilfhionn (on concertina) and gave a very accomplished family trio performance. The concert concluded with a large group of harpers from County Louth and beyond, under the expert direction of Deirdre Malone. Solos in the group were played by Elizabeth Sheils, Rachael Dooley, Grace Donnelly, Hannah Hendry and Fionnuala Donnelan who played an enchanting mix of slow airs, dance music, a Scottish contemporary piece and finished to rapturous applause with “The Carol of the Bells”.



Seasonal refreshments concluded the celebration with soft drinks, mince pies, mulled wine and tons of *milseáin* (sweets) to cheer the young harpers on their way home. Many thanks to all who helped so generously behind the scenes and to all the performers and their families who contributed to make such a memorable event. *Gabhaimíd ár mbuíochas freisin le Foras na Gaeilge a thugann fáilte iontach dúinn gach bliain.*

Áine Ní Dhubhghaill

Regular Events with Cairde na Cruite

Spring Concert: Held annually each Spring at the Pearse Museum in St. Enda's Park, Rathfarnham. The 2016 dates will be published on cairdenacruite.com in the New Year.

An Chúirt Chruitireachta: International harp festival that takes place annually in An Grianán, Termonfechin, County Louth, from the last Sunday in June to the first Friday in July. The 2016 event will take place from Sunday 26th June to Friday 1st July 2016.

Christmas Concert: Held annually in Foras na Gaeilge, Merrion Square, Dublin 2. All are welcome!

Harpers meet at the National Gallery of Ireland

More than 35 harpers from all over Ireland gathered in the National Gallery in Dublin in mid-October at the invitation of the Arts Council for a presentation on his findings from Toner Quinn, the author of the Arts Council's commissioned research on the Harp in Ireland. The report, which was ground-breaking and unique in its scrutiny of the many sided world of the Harp was welcomed enthusiastically by the gathering which was chaired by the Council's Traditional Arts manager, Paul Flynn, assisted by staff member Catherine Boothman who has done a superb job on liaising with harpers all over the country in the past year. Harpers expressed their thanks for the team's interest and commitment. The report will be published shortly and will be issued to participants.



Aibhlín McCrann, Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, Sheila Larchet Cuthbert, Gráinne Hambly and Elizabeth Hannon.
Photo Credit: Maxwell Photography.

Toner described his approach to his research which included an extensive on-line and paper survey of harpers, followed up with phone calls and interviews in some cases. By the end of summer 2014, he had become a familiar figure at all the harp festivals and events and was very taken with the variety of instrument, style and music that he encountered. While he pointed out that the survey painted a picture at a particular point in time, he stressed that its findings were important in terms of showing trends, how things are developing and where people would like to see things going. He noted that the data could also help inform frameworks to guide development.

Arising from the discussion and Toner's research findings, three key issues were highlighted: a national harp stakeholder forum, a national centre for the harp and the need to support indigenous harp making.

It was agreed that the Traditional Arts team in the Arts Council would facilitate the initial development of a national harp forum. Stephanie O'Callaghan, one of the Arts Directors in the Arts Council, noted that in her experience, ambitious goals for sectoral development had the tendency to be less sustainable if initiated by the Arts Council, but that they had more strength and vitality when initiated by a sector – those artists and others directly involved in the particular discipline or practice, and where the Arts Council was responding to ambitious ideas.

There was animated discussion about the possibility of a national harp centre with harpers acknowledging that an independent framework offering different kinds of supports was badly needed, as the voluntary nature of many of our activities was becoming steadily less sustainable. Participants spoke about the ideal location for a national centre, with the findings of the *Report on the Harping Tradition in Ireland* pointing to a Dublin base for national prominence. Some raised the

potential for national scale development and impact by locating a national centre elsewhere in the country.

Access to affordable harps and the making of indigenous instruments were discussed with points raised about market demand, the pressures on Irish harp makers; how choosing harps is a very personal thing; harps speak in different ways to different harpers and the extent to which harp rental schemes in themselves can fuel demand for purchase and for learning the harp.

Many participants agreed with a point raised that harp organisations were restricted to relying on the Arts Council's Festivals and Events Scheme as a way to engage with the Arts Council for financial support. Areas mentioned where harp organisations needed investment included a database for managing harp hire, managing sale and circulation of publications; support for festival and event planning and administration as well as lobbying and advocacy.

The meeting concluded with agreement that the Arts Council would liaise with harp organisations to facilitate initial meetings and communications to establish a national harp forum. The Arts Council would also reflect on the issues relating to the strategic development of harp-making in Ireland.



Harpers at the National Gallery of Ireland. Photo by Maxwell Photography

Comments from the floor:

'Congratulations to Toner Quinn. When I say that I am learning all the time, I really mean that. It is astounding the interest in the instrument now. The interest and the standard of playing are extraordinary. Thank you for putting all that down – we have a lot to work with!'

Sheila Larchet Cuthbert

'Visibility came up quite a bit in the report. It is really important that the richness of harping would be visible. That is where a harp centre would be effective.'

Kathleen Loughnane

'Fifty years ago Sheila came to Newry to teach, and I was one of the students to survive!!! Subsequently we set up a school in Newry, which you cannot do without instruments. We had a belief that the harp is for everybody, not just those who can afford it. We ended up with 60 harps for lending. Do not underestimate the seeds that you are sowing!'

Eithne Benson

Aibhlín McCrann

News and Events

Crater on Planet Mercury named after Irish Harpist Turlough O'Carolan

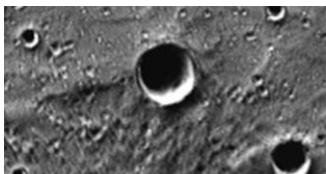


Image of the Carolan Crater near planet Mercury's north pole taken by the Messenger satellite while in orbit around the planet. Credit: NASA
More information can be found online in an article dated 29th April 2015 at: <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/science/crater-on-mercury-named-after-irish-harpist-turlough-o-carolan-1.2194073>

Archive Material

Cairde na Cruite would like to thank Denis Ryan, at the suggestion of his daughter Gráinne Ní Riain, for contributing material to the society on 12th March 2015 that may be of interest to its members. The material in question are notes and a powerpoint presentation from a talk he gave some time ago on Turlough O'Carolan. In this material he outlines the man, and his historical significance, through the diversity of his patrons, and the historical setting in which he lived.

Harp Hire

Cairde na Cruite's harp-hire scheme enables aspiring harpers to borrow a harp for a trial period of 6 months up to a maximum of one year. The society currently has six harps out on hire. If you are interested in hiring one of these harps, please contact our harp hire coordinator.

Phone: 01 6586224 or by **Email:** harphire@cairdenacruite.com

New Lever Harp Exam Syllabus

A broad range of harp pieces by Irish composers and arrangers are included on the new Trinity College London lever harp exam syllabus. A pdf can be downloaded from the following link:

<http://www.trinitycollege.com/site/?id=1054>



Feis Ceoil 2016

The Feis Ceoil runs from 5th to 18th March 2016. Details of the many harp competitions, syllabus, prize funds and closing dates can be found online at www.feisceoil.ie

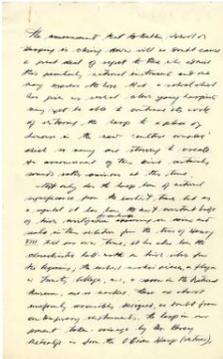
Harp's Role in Storytelling

The harp continues to play a role in our living tradition of storytelling. At the recent Yarn Storytelling Festival in Bray's Mermaid Arts Centre, harper Anne-Marie O'Farrell joined Nuala Hayes, Pat Speight and Jack Lynch to celebrate the wonderful legacy of Kerry seanchaí Eamonn Kelly.

Edinburgh International Harp Festival

EIHF is a major annual harp event and a favourite of harpers from all corners of the globe. EIHF 2016 runs from 1st-6th April. Among the harpers scheduled to give concerts, classes and workshops at the 2016 international event (and celebrating the release of their new album, *Harp To Harp*) are Anne-Marie O'Farrell and harmonica player Brendan Power. www.harpfestival.co.uk

UCD Archives early C20th document citing closure of Dublin Harp Society



On November 19th 2015, as part of #exploresearchives week UCD Archives included on its facebook page, an image of the first page of a draft untitled article by Irish-language poet Liam Seosamh Gógan (1891–1979) concerning the closure of the Dublin School of Harping, and the history of the harp in Ireland generally (UCDA LA27/531).

The UCD Archives page relates to us the following information about Gógan: “A graduate in Celtic Studies from UCD he was elected to the provisional committee of the Irish Volunteers in 1913. He resigned his position in 1915 after his participation in a failed attempt to secure arms in the USA. He was employed as assistant keeper of antiquities in the National Museum of Ireland in 1914 but was suspended from this post when he was interned in Frongoch, Wales, after the 1916 Rising because he refused to take the oath of allegiance on his release. He returned to the museum 1922. He became keeper of the art and industrial division in 1936, where he remained until his retirement 1956.”

EXPO Milan 2015



The underpinning theme of the Ireland Pavilion at EXPO Milan 2015 – “Origin Green” (an initiative by the Bord Bia) – is “Ireland’s promise to the world to be a leading source of sustainably produced food and drink for generations to come”. The Irish exhibit which ran over the course of six months to October, promoted the traceability of Irish food and high-standard environmental credentials. Its aim: to let the world know what Ireland is doing around sustainability, with culture, with tourism and the Wild Atlantic Way.

At the EXPO Ireland had the opportunity to sell and promote what it does best – food, hospitality and tourism. This year was Cormac de Barra’s fifth EXPO, where he played the harp in Milan for crowds of up to 8,000 international visitors a day. Cormac was joined by a number of visiting harpers who performed for shorter durations during the course of the six months in Milan.

Association of Irish Composers

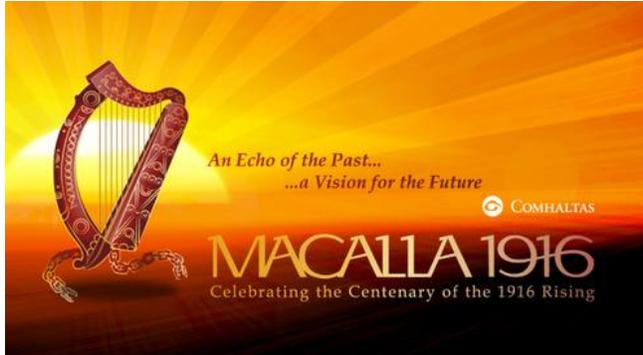


On 31st May the Association of Irish Composers collaborated with Music@thedrawingroom to feature the harp in its concert series, Irish Composers on Irish Music. Anne-Marie O'Farrell gave a recital on pedal and Irish harp in the atmospheric space at no. 12 Henrietta Street (pictured left). The recital included the premieres of Gráinne Mulvey's *Exploration*, Mary Kelly's three *Aislingí* and *Chromatétude* by Anne-Marie. Seldom heard repertoire was also played including James Wilson's Harp Sonata, *In the Deep Heart's Core* by Frank Corcoran (whose 70th birthday is being marked with musical events this month in Dublin) and *Triptych* by Brian Boydell, commissioned in the 1980s by the late Teresa Lawlor.

The following link includes a video produced by the Association of Irish Composers of Anne-Marie explaining the composition of her piece *Chromatétude*: AICNewMusicJournal

1916 Centenary Celebrations

MACALLA 1916



The Comhaltas 1916 Programme of Events can be viewed online at www.macalla1916.ie and include MACALLA 1916, an Orchestral Suite of Music composed and conducted by Michael Rooney reflecting on Ireland's history: from famine times, through the Easter 1916 Rising to the present day. Michael Rooney, a native of County Monaghan, is widely respected as a composer and harper and is a regular visitor to Cairde

na Cruite's annual summer festival in Termonfechin. Over the past fifteen years, Michael has composed seven suites of music, including The Battle of the Books Suite, The Famine Suite, The Millennium Suite, The De Cueller Suite and BORÓIMHE.

2016 Programme capturing Musical Ireland of 100 years ago

In February and March 2016 in Ireland and the USA, Anne-Marie O'Farrell will collaborate with soprano Áine Mulvey in a programme which captures the musical atmosphere of Ireland one hundred years ago. It includes settings of Pádraic Pearse's *The Mother* and *I See His Blood Upon the Rose* by Joseph Mary Plunkett. The concert features music by composers flourishing in Ireland at the time, such as Carl Hardebeck, who supported the work of Pearse, Vincent O'Brien who taught James Joyce, Herbert Hughes (founder of the Irish Folk Song Society in London) and John F. Larchet, director of music at the Abbey Theatre at the time of the Rising and the emerging Irish state. Contemporary connections leading to the music of today are shown in the music of T.C. Kelly, Seán O Riada, Seóirse Bodley, and music from *A 1916 Trilogy* by Anne-Marie O'Farrell, AEPE Composer in Residence at Mary Immaculate College. The latter is a set of three songs with harp, to poetry by Seumas O'Sullivan, Thomas MacDonagh and Dora Sigerson Shorter, which will receive their premiere during this collaboration.

2016 Irish Cultural Festival Stuttgart

As part of a week-long festival celebrating Irish music for the anniversary of 1916, the 2016 Irish Cultural Festival Stuttgart at Kursaal Bad Canstatt will feature Aylish Kerrigan, mezzo soprano and artistic director on 26th March at 4pm. Traditional and contemporary Irish music will be played on Irish harp, flute and uilleann pipes. Featuring Eimear MacCarrick and Justin McGuire, dancers, Fintan Vallely, flute, Gerry O'Connor, fiddle, Tiarnan O Duinnchinn, uilleann pipes, Anne-Marie O'Farrell, harp.

New Publications

Sisters of the Revolutionaries: the story of Margaret and Mary Brigid Pearse

Mary Louise O'Donnell and Teresa O'Donnell have recently written a book on Patrick and Willie Pearse's sister Mary Brigid. At the turn of the century, Mary Brigid was quite a well known harpist and harp teacher. She taught at St Enda's (Scoil Eanna), Rathfarnham and performed regularly at Gaelic League meetings. Their book 'Sisters of the Revolutionaries: the story of Margaret and Mary Brigid Pearse' is due to be published in February 2016. To coincide with its launch, and to mark the centenary of 1916, the O'Donnell's have been engaged to give a series of lectures which focus on the Pearse sisters Mary Brigid and Margaret. All events are free but require tickets, details as follows:

Lecture: 'The Pearse family of 27 Great Brunswick Street'

Date: 28 January, 2016, 6.30pm

Venue: Pearse Street Library, 138-144 Pearse Street, Dublin 2. Tel: [01-6744888](tel:01-6744888)

Lecture/Recital: 'Sisters of the Revolutionaries: Margaret and Mary Brigid Pearse'

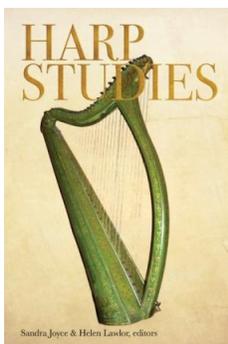
Date: 23 February, 2016, 11am

Venue: Coolock Library, Barryscourt Road, Dublin 17. Tel: [01-8477781](tel:01-8477781)

Lecture/Recital: 'Sisters of the Revolutionaries: Margaret and Mary Brigid Pearse'

Date: 28 March, 2016. See: <http://1916.rte.ie/>

Harp Studies

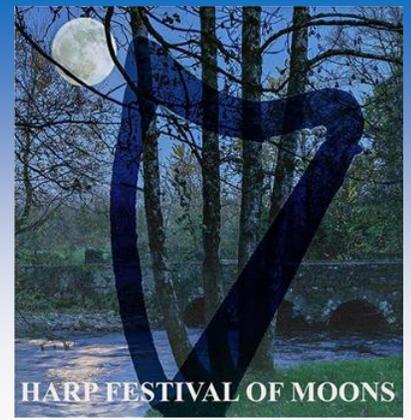


Due in Spring 2016 is *Harp Studies*, a new book published by Four Courts Press and edited by Sandra Joyce and Helen Lawlor. *Harp Studies* presents new research on the Irish harp with perspectives from the disciplines of ethnomusicology, musicology, history, arts practice, folklore and cultural studies. Themes explored in this volume include iconography, reception history, diaspora, identity, spirituality and politics. Taking an expansive view of the harp through history and music, these essays individually engage with the variety of ways in which the harp has been interpreted and implicated in Irish culture, politics and music from the 9th century to the present day. Contributors include

Ann Heymann (ind.), Paul Dooley (UL), Colette Moloney (Waterford IT), Sandra Joyce (UL), Harry White (UCD), Mary Louise O'Donnell (ind.), Ruán O'Donnell (UL), Adrian Scahill (MU), Helen Lawlor (DkIT), Thérèse Smith (UCD), Eibhlís Farrell (DkIT), Michelle Mulcahy (UL), Anne-Marie O'Farrell (DIT, QUB).

New Concerto for Harp

A new concerto has been added to the harp repertoire in Anne-Marie O'Farrell's transcription of Astor Piazzola's Bandoneon and Guitar Concerto, *Hommage a Liege*. She performed it with guitarist, John O'Shea and the Limerick Sinfonia conducted by John Davis in St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick on 17th October.



Yeats 150: Harp Festival of Moons

This year, 2015, we are celebrating the birth of W B Yeats one hundred and fifty years ago. There have been many fascinating events taking place far and wide, but one of the most interesting projects has been the Harp Festival of Moons. In this blue moon year, we are honouring W B Yeats' connection to Ireland's coinage with its image of the harp, and his use of the moon in so much of his poetry, with harp music performance on all thirteen of the full moons. The year's first full moon concert was on January 5th at the poet's birthplace in No. 5 Sandymount Avenue in Dublin and the final, and thirteenth event, will take place on December 25th in Drumcliffe Churchyard, Co. Sligo, where he is buried.

On October 27th, I was one of the musicians who took part in the Harp Festival of Moons in Thoor Ballylee, once owned by my Grandfather W B Yeats. I have many fond memories of swimming in the river that runs beside the Tower and of family picnics on the top floor. Thoor Ballylee was recently reopened to the public after being closed since 2009, and I was delighted to see it looking so well.

A great night's entertainment had been arranged for the packed out audience. The evening began with a reception, during which sisters Karina and Nicola Cahill entertained us with flute and harp music. After some introductory remarks from Rena McAllen and Senator Fidelma Healy Eames, Áine Ní Shioradáin started the concert off with songs and harp music from "Abhráin Mhuigh Seóla" and followed that later on in the programme with an a cappella version of Joni Mitchell's arrangement of W B Yeats' "The Second Coming" and some slip jigs on the harp.

The poet Michelle O'Sullivan read some of her poetry, and in between Michelle's beautiful poems, I played Gráinne Yeats' arrangements of Carrickfergus and Baltiorum. After I had read two of W B Yeats' poems, one of which was a translation to Irish by Dolores Stewart of "He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven", we were joined onstage by Karina and Nicola Cahill for a rousing version of "Down by the Salley Gardens". Senator Susan O'Keefe, Chair of Yeats2015, rounded off the evening with some words of thanks to the organisers and performers.

Earlier in the day as I drove to the concert it was raining very heavily, but by late afternoon the rain had stopped and there was a clear, starry night. The Tower looked its best in the moonlight, and after the concert many of us went up the spiral staircase to the very top of Thoor Ballylee from where the views over the moonlit countryside were magnificent. Even the protected bats living in the Tower, who usually fly down to the ground floor during evening events, were nowhere to be seen. It was a privilege to be invited to take part in the Harp Festival of Moons and to have an opportunity to play Aibhlín McCrann's beautiful harp in Thoor Ballylee, a place that holds so many memories for me.

Caitríona Yeats



O'Carolan Harp, Cultural & Heritage Festival



Harpers from near and far attended the 2015 O'Carolan Harp, Cultural & Heritage Festival in Nobber, County Meath. The festival ran from October 2nd to 4th and included participants from Italy, Australia and Japan. This year was its largest attendance to date, with eighty four harpers registered for its workshops. This annual program of events runs over the course of a weekend and includes a festival opening and wreath laying ceremony, harp exhibition, music sessions, instrumental workshops, harp competitions, historical tour, festival recital, Aifreann Traidisúnta (Traditional Mass), lecture, recital and a closing Céilí. Further information on the O'Carolan Harp, Cultural & Heritage Festival is available online at: www.carolanfestival.com



2015 Harp Competition Results

Under 10

1. Niamh Byrne
2. Rachel Dooley
3. Ciara Finnegan

10-12

1. Emer Ní Scolaí
2. Emma Benson
3. Clodagh O' Brien

12-15

1. Mary Horgan
2. Lillian Glynn
3. Donnchadh Hughes

15-18

1. Caoimhe Fitzgibbon
2. Martina Carecci
3. Siofra Thornton



Senior

1. Kerri Mullen

Harps a Wonder

1. Paola Creeoric, Martina Carecci, Doralice Ulaincell ("Giotundo d'arpe" trio)



Photographed top right: Mary Horgan (Winner 12-15) with Dearbhail Finnegan
Middle: "Giotundo d'arpe" from Italy (Winner Harps a Wonder)
Right: Kim Fleming, Tatiana Donis, "Giotundo d'arpe" and Gráinne Hambly



Monaco World Harp Festival



This year, I was honoured to be invited to perform at the Monaco World Harp Festival in October. The committee of this one-off festival had decided they needed to add some diversity in their programme of pedal harp competitions and concerts, so asked myself and piper / flute player Colman Connolly to give a workshop on Irish traditional harping.

My experience of the festival began with a soundcheck in the fabulous Prince Rainier III Auditorium. The multi-storey venue has floor-to-ceiling windows which look onto the marina, so we merrily did our 'One two, one two' routine against a backdrop of massive cruise ships and yachts making their way in and out of the harbor. Upon concluding, we sat down in the exhibition space to discuss the setlist.

As we sat in the harp exhibition space, a woman wandered in and started to play. I couldn't help but notice how good she was; she had incredibly good tone and was beautifully musical. I must confess, I got a little insecure as I continued to listen.... I couldn't help but think to myself "Wow, I can't imagine what the overall standard of harping is like in pedal harp if the average participants are as good as *this!*" I felt as intimidated as Benandonner must have been when introduced to the 'baby' of his foe, Fionn Mac Cumhaill – the 'baby' actually being Fionn himself in disguise!



Prince Rainier III Auditorium

A few minutes later, I found out that anonymous woman who had sat down to play the harp, seemingly at random, was none other than the doyenne of pedal harp, Cathérine Michel. No wonder I'd been impressed; in metaphorical terms, Cathérine Michel is a giant in the pedal harp world. This experience set the tone for the amazing three days which followed.

The next morning saw the start of the competitions; over 80 students participated in six different categories over the two days. Colman and I were light relief in the middle; we performed on Saturday afternoon to a crowd of around two hundred people. We consciously incorporated some

simple dance steps, rhymes etc. to keep the younger audience members' attention, bridge the cultural gap, and make it fun. We were met with great enthusiasm from the audience, so hopefully Ireland will get a few more cultural tourists in the future!



Colman Connolly and Úna ní Fhlannagáin

As well as competitions, this festival placed a heavy emphasis on harp ensemble performance. The festival was launched on Friday with a harp ensemble performance by the local music school, the Academie De Musique of Monaco. On Saturday evening, there was a concert of four different harp ensembles, from France, Italy, and Monaco. It was fascinating to see the different approaches to structure, conducting,

repertoire, and arrangement, from contemporary harp ensemble pieces by Bernard Andrés, to well-known classical numbers like “The Blue Danube”, and “Hit the Road, Jack”. The harp ensemble concert incorporated at least 60 students, and felt really inclusive and joyous, which contrasted sharply with the typically tense atmosphere of a competition. I think harp ensemble performance is an area that could be worth exploring for Irish harp teachers.

On Sunday we were treated to a morning concert by Alexander Boldachev. This Russian prodigy is now 25, and gave a truly phenomenal performance. At least half of his pieces were transcribed / arranged by him, and proved him to be an excellent young composer. He achieved an amazing array of colours on the harp, notably in “The Demon” by Anton Rubinstein, and “Fantasie on the Themes from Scheherazade” by Rimksy-Korsakov. My personal favourite was his performance of “The Music Box” by Anatoly Lyadov, and the improvisation he performed as his (second!) encore. The performance was a tour de force; I thoroughly recommend seeing this young harpist in concert!



Finale Concert, Monaco World Harp Festival



Xavier de Maistre, Cathérine Michel and Úna ní Flannagáin

The finale concert was the Philharmonic Orchestra of Monte Carlo, with soloist Xavier de Maistre and special guest Cathérine Michel. The orchestra was fabulous in its own right, but of course the real stars of the show were the harp soloists. Xavier de Maistre is the only person I have ever seen make a full-size concert pedal harp look *small*. He throws it back on his shoulder and rocks to and fro like it's a plaything! He's a tall man, but of course, the real reason the harp looks like a toy in his hands is that he's so deeply expert in the instrument he really is *playing* it, almost in the sense of a game rather than an instrument. His playing is so assured and precise that one can just lie back and listen with utter abandon, confident that this artist will bring you on a beautiful journey and bring you safely back home again. Of course, Cathérine Michel just 'nailed it' as a performer; her stage presence was immense, and the musical sensitivity between her and Xavier, her past student, was beautiful to behold. After the finale, the audience gradually filtered out into the Monte Carlo night, dazed and amazed by the beauty we had witnessed throughout the weekend.

My deepest gratitude to the committee for my invitation, and to L'Instrumentarium in Paris, France, who sponsored Colman and I to attend.

Úna ní Fhlannagáin

Muckross Harp Trail



MUCKROSS HOUSE

Ar Shlí na Cruite: Muckross Harp Trail 2015

Now in its third year, Sounding Strings, *Making Music Together* at the Muckross Harp Trail 2015 was a tremendous success. It was a harp-filled weekend with a difference, set in the unique and scenic surroundings of Muckross House and Traditional Farms and featuring the Irish harp in a number of different settings for local visitors and visitors from farther afield. The two-day celebration showcased the Irish harp through a combination of harp master classes, sessions, harp trail and concerts. The Gala Concert included performances by some of the foremost figures in the Irish harping scene, alongside young harp ensembles from Limerick, Meath and Kerry.

Harpers from throughout the country took part in harp master classes at Muckross farmhouses with tutors Dr. Janet Harbison, Kathleen Loughnane, Holly Geraghty, Marina Cassidy and Deirdre Granville. Many of the students were returning to the event and stated that it was a 'not to be missed' event on their calendars especially because at Muckross, they got 'great tuition, great food, got to hear great harpers and got to visit the various animals and pets at Muckross on their breaks'. Varying standards of harp proficiency were addressed. There was a particular focus on ensemble playing during the workshops as a backdrop to the launch of the Kerry Harp Ensemble as well as traditional Kerry tunes and music of the ancient harpers. The workshops were celebrated at an exhibition concert, where students and teachers showed their skills as well as individual performances from some of the award winning senior students.



The gala concert on Saturday 26th celebrated the official launch of the Kerry Harp Ensemble at Muckross Schoolhouse which moves the festival to a further phase of its development, as it establishes links with harpers right around the county. The very special evening of harp music featured the newly formed *Cruitirí na Ríochta's* inaugural performance under the leadership of Deirdre Granville and Marina Cassidy. Dr. Janet Harbison and *The Irish Youth Harp Orchestra* closed the first

half of the concert with some vibrant ensemble playing, Dearbhail Finnegan and *The Meath Harp Ensemble* concluded the event with a standing ovation for their performance of *The Chronicles of Meath* composed and conducted on the night by Vincent Kennedy. The work was in seven movements with a specially transposed part for Irish harp solo performed by Dearbhail, and was a

spellbinding sensory experience. Aibhlín McCrann presented the memorable night and attendees included Minister Jimmy Deenihan and Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann Úachtarán Ann Finnegan.

The addition of a coffee concert to Sunday September 27th events proved a fantastic move for the festival as audiences were able to hear the harp in the unique and intimate setting of Muckross House's beautiful courtyard overlooking its spectacular gardens. The informal session included performances from Dr. Janet Harbison, Dearbhail Finnegan, Robin Slater, Kathleen Loughnane, Marina Cassidy and Deirdre Granville and was enthusiastically received by the audience, many of whom were visiting from overseas.

Attendees of the festival then followed the Muckross Harp Trail, *Ar Shlí na Cruite*, where harpers, in true troubadour style, took their harps on their backs and travelled to the traditional farmhouses on the estate for an afternoon series of harp sessions. General public admission to the Traditional Farms was free for the Trail event, which meant visitors who had never seen or heard harp before were treated to the dulcet tones of the harp in the most authentic of settings. It also gave visitors on the harp trail an opportunity to try their own hands on the harps with willing help from the harpers in the different cottages.

We were very grateful to the Arts Council DEIS fund for its support, to the Board and Trustees of Muckross House and Traditional Farms, to Killarney Harps for their loan of instruments for the festival and to Toddy Doyle and his staff without whom the event could not have happened. It was a privilege for all of us to perform in such a beautiful setting.

Deirdre Granville

Photo Credits: Valerie O'Sullivan



Harp Days in Denmark



The interest in the harp is growing apace in Denmark, and for the past nine years the Danish Chamber Players have hosted an annual harp day for young harpers at their headquarters in Lolland, southern Denmark. The ensemble is based at a beautiful old manor house, Fuglsang, which has a long association with music – Edvard Grieg and Carl Nielsen were both frequent guests as they were close friends with the de Neergaard family who owned the house.

Mette Franck, harpist in the Danish Chamber Ensemble, felt it would be good for her pupils to meet with other harp students and so the idea of a harp day was born. Pupils travel from all over Denmark to this beautiful setting, and the three teachers are Mette, Anne Marie Hoest and myself. We always choose a theme for the day – we have had an Irish music day, a day with folk songs from around the world, a film music day, and this year we concentrated on Nordic music, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Carl Nielsen’s birth.

The students are divided into three groups, according to ability, and each group works with an individual teacher. We also always have two tunes arranged for all levels of ability, so the participants have an opportunity to all play together. We work from 10.30am – 4.30pm (with breaks!) and the day finishes with a concert at 5pm for parents and local people.

Music is sent out in advance, but we also teach a couple of tunes by ear on the day itself.

We have averaged an attendance of 25–30 players every year, nearly all lever harps and an occasional pedal harp. All are welcome and it’s always a day of “serious fun”.



One of the most famous Danish folk ballads is “Harpens Kraft” (the power of the harp), something very much in evidence once a year at Fuglsang.

Helen Davies

Harp 2015: 15 memorable moments

Discussing Toner Quinn's ground-breaking research on the Irish Harp at the Arts Council harp gathering – the first contemporaneous record since the historic Belfast Harp Festival, 1792.

Listening to the lilting strains of Connellan's *Bonnie Jean* played by mother and daughter duo – Kathleen Loughnane and Catriona Cannon – at Catriona's marriage to Stefano.

Celebrating the inaugural performance of the Kerry Harp ensemble led by Deirdre Granville and Marina Cassidy – where they were joined by the massed forces of Janet Harbison's harp orchestra and the Meath harp ensemble, who captivated with their performance of *The Chronicles of Meath*.

Revelling in the velvety tones of actor Barry McGovern recounting a scene from James Joyce's *The Dead*, illuminated by Cormac De Barra's equally evocative harping at the Dún Laoghaire Mountains to Sea Festival.

Sitting in a candlelit Copenhagen venue on a dark snow-filled night last week, while Scottish harper Rachel Hair made Manx music come alive.

Watching a musical crow strut and caw his version of The Rolling Wave to the great amusement of an enthusiastic audience in the autumnal sunlit courtyard setting of Muckcross House in Killarney, where Deirdre Granville, Kathleen Loughnane, Dearbhail Finnegan, Robin Slater and Janet Harbison performed in a pop-up concert.

Enjoying Anne-Marie O'Farrell's contemporary music for harp at *The Drawing Room* series.

Hearing the shimmer of more than 60 harps at the thirtieth anniversary of An Chúirt Chruitireachta, at An Grianán, and reliving it during the beautifully made film about the festival on TG4 a short time ago.

Being blown away by the virtuosity of harper Fergal McCartan, as he performed a version of Seán Maguire's Mason's Apron at the Keadue Harp Festival.

Showcasing the best of harp talent at the Willie Clancy Summer School in Milltown Malbay.

Marvelling at Úna ní Fhlannagáin's Suzuki harp orchestra at An Chúirt Chruitireachta, and enjoying the 30th birthday cake they made especially for the occasion afterwards.

Listening to Helen Davies perform the music of John Thomas, Welsh Harpist to Queen Victoria, and enthral her audience with a riveting account of the life and times of Joan Francis Denny, the Tralee pedal harpist who was John Thomas's second wife.

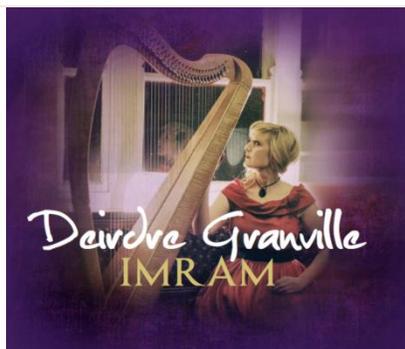
Flying to the Fleadh in Sligo where the harp tension was high and the competition intense.

Observing *Sibling Revelry* with Máire, Nollaig and Mairéad Ní Chathasaigh's new release and dynamic playing at the Bandon Walled Harp Festival.

Celebrating Yeats150 with the Harp Festival of Moons; a year-long festival of live harp recitals on every full moon this past year. As it's a blue moon year with 13 full moons instead of 12, you can still catch one of the events!

Aibhlín McCrann

New Albums



IMRAM ~ Deirdre Granville ~ Own label

Debut Album by West Kerry native Deirdre Granville (harp, vocals).

Guest musicians are Steve Cooney (guitars), Gerry O'Beirne (guitars & u-bass), Aoife Granville (flute), Cuan Granville (bodhrán & snare-drum), Brendan McCreanor (low-whistle & uilleann pipes) and Tony O'Flaherty (bass & accordion).

Recorded and mixed by Tony O'Flaherty in Killarney.

Available from: [Claddagh Records](#)



SKORSA: The Riddle of the Earth ~ Susan Grace Bates ~ Own label

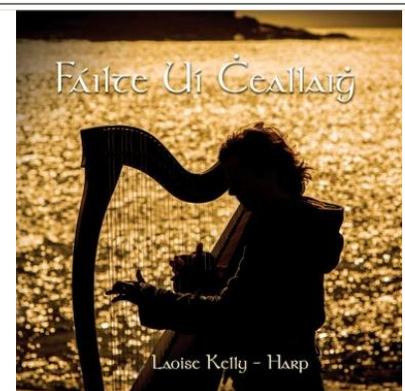
Debut Album by Antrim native Susan Grace Bates (harp, vocals).

Guest musicians are John McSherry (whistle), Dónal O'Connor (fiddle), Ross Martin (guitar), David Foley (bodhrán), Pauline Scanlon (vocals) and Kerry Bryson (cello).

Produced by John McSherry and Dónal O'Connor.

Recorded and mixed at Redbox Recording Studios, Belfast.

Available from: [Susan Grace Bates](#)



Fáilte Uí Cheallaigh ~ Laoise Kelly ~ Own label

Solo Album by Westport harper Laoise Kelly.

Inspired by the Kelly Clan Rally in Westport, and by the many unique tunes connected with Kellys of one kind or another from the 17th Century to the present day. Includes tunes composed by Turlough O'Carolan for his own Kelly patrons, while other Kellys feature in the titles or as composers / collectors of this eclectic mix of tunes. A newly composed air by Laoise Kelly features as the closing track.

Available from: [Claddagh Records](#)



Sibling Revelry ~ The Casey Sisters ~ Old Bridge Music

Debut album from the distinguished Casey-Ní Chathasaigh sisters of West Cork. Máire Ní Chathasaigh, Nollaig Casey and Mairead Ní Chathasaigh (harp, vocals, fiddles) have teamed up to collaborate on this album of first-class musicianship. Co-produced, recorded and mixed by Chris Newman at his studio in Ilkley, Yorkshire and joined on three tracks by Arty McGlynn on guitar. For more information visit www.thecasesisters.com

Available from: [Claddagh Records](#)

HARP to HARP

Brendan Power Anne-Marie O'Farrell



HARP to HARP ~ Brendan Power & Anne-Marie O'Farrell

Brendan Power (harmonica) is joined by Anne-Marie O'Farrell (harp) on this album of Harp to Harp. The sound of the harmonica, also known as the 'mouth harp' or 'blues harp' or simply 'harp' blends beautifully on this album with three harps of a different kind: a small steel-strung traditional Irish harp, a mid-size Lever Harp, and a large concert Pedal Harp.

Recorded by Brendan Power at his studio in Canterbury, England. Available from:

<http://www.brendan-power.com/HarpToHarp.php>

Reviews

SKORSA: The Riddle of the Earth ~ Susan Grace Bates ~ Own label

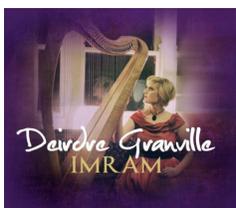


Recorded in Redbox Recording Studios in Belfast this debut album is an impressive soundscape showcasing the many talents of 21-year-old Antrim singer and harper Susan Grace Bates. SKORSA: The Riddle of the Earth combines Bates' natural flair for composition with an eclectic mix of airs hand-picked by Susan from near and distant shores (Ireland, Scotland, Norway, Sweden and Estonia). The result: a coherent collection of disparate tunes that

delight and engage the listener from its first track 'Cavers of Kirkcudbrigh' to its final 'Farewell'. The album was produced by traditional musicians John McSherry and Dónal O'Connor who also guest on the album along with musicians Ross Martin, David Foley, Pauline Scanlon and Kerry Bryson.

Review by Caitríona Rowsome

IMRAM ~ Deirdre Granville ~ Own label



IMRAM (an early Irish word meaning "voyaging") is the eagerly awaited debut album of West Kerry multi-instrumentalist and singer, Deirdre Granville. Celebrating Deirdre's own journey in music to date, IMRAM features music ranging from traditional Irish airs and song to newly composed works by writers on both sides of the Atlantic. It also includes a selection of own compositions and a vocal of 'An baile atá lámh leí siúd'. In this album Deirdre

plays on three lever harps by eminent contemporary harp makers, Larry Fisher, Larry Egar and Tim O'Carroll (Killarney harps). From the opening polkas penned by Steve Cooney in memory of the late Páidí Ó Sé through to the final set, "The Border Crossing" which anticipates the musical path Deirdre would like to explore in the future, IMRAM is an album showcasing creative energy, vibrant warmth and musical dexterity. Guest musicians include Steve Cooney, Gerry O'Beirne, Aoife Granville, Cuan Granville, Brendan McCreanor and Tony O'Flaherty.

Review by Caitríona Rowsome

Notices



Baby Joy

Congratulations to Aisling Ennis
on the birth of
Xander Budi Tomkin
born on 13th March 2015
and already loving his music!



Wedding Bells

Congratulations to Cairde na Cruite's secretary, Helen Price on her wedding to Bartley Clibborn on 21st February 2015.

Wishing you both a long and happy life together.

Nóirín Plunkett (1985–2015)

Cairde na Cruite was saddened to hear of the untimely passing in July 2015 of Nóirín Plunkett. Nóirín will be fondly remembered by the harping community for her lively presence and sense of fun at Cairde na Cruite events in which she took part during her teenage years. The society extends its deepest sympathy to her parents Bernie O'Callaghan and Patrick Plunkett of Mount Merrion, Co. Dublin and to her siblings Eoin and Rosie.

Joan Rimmer (1919–2015)



It is with sadness *An Cruitire* notes that Joan Rimmer, pioneer of ethnomusicology, author and legend of Irish harp research, passed away in April 2015 at the age of 96. In the harping world, Rimmer is perhaps best known for her Journal Articles, most notably "The Morphology of the Irish Harp" and her book *The Irish Harp* which forty-six years after it was first published, remains essential reading for enthusiasts of Irish harp history. TheGuardian.com posted an obituary for this remarkable woman on 24th April 2015. [Read obituary](#)

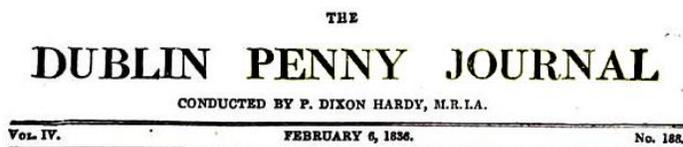
Victor Salvi (1920–2015)



Cairde na Cruite was saddened to hear of the death of Mr. Victor Salvi – harpist, harp builder, philanthropist – who passed away on Sunday 10th May, at the age of 95.

Renowned for the instruments his company built in Italy since the 1950s, Salvi has left a legacy that will endure in the exquisite craftsmanship, tone and quality of his iconic harps for which the harping world at large is immeasurably grateful. [Read obituary](#)

Castle Fogarty and The O'Ffogerty harp



CASTLE FOGARTY.

The Dublin Penny Journal was a newspaper published once a week between 1832 and 1836 by editors J. S. Folds, George Petrie and Caesar Otway. It later appeared as a series of published volumes. The content dealt mainly with Irish history, legend, topography and Irish identity and it often carried woodcut illustrations and maps, relating to the subject matter.ⁱ

On February 6th 1836, The Dublin Penny Journal, Vol.IV, published an article of peculiar interest which included engravings of both Castle Fogarty and a harp that survives to this day known as the O'Ffogerty harp (also spelt O'Fogarty, O ffogerty). It reads: "Castle Fogarty,

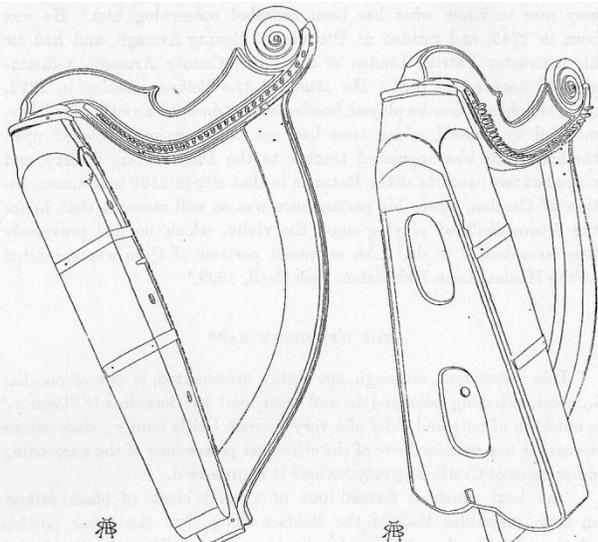
situated in the county of Tipperary, the seat of James Lenigan, Esq. (*also called Lanigan*) is one of the handsomest castellated houses in Ireland. Mr Lenigan is now the heir and representative of the Milesian family of O'Fogarty, ancient lords of the territory of Elieogarty, now the barony of that name. This family suffered much for its attachment to the House of Stuart. Cornelius O'Fogarty was a captain in the army of King James the Second and distinguished himself in his service. This gentleman was an eminent musician and his harp resembles much that in the museum of Trinity College, erroneously called the harp of Brien Boiromhe. (*Also called Brian Boru, King of Munster*)".ⁱⁱ

The O'Fogartys were a prominent family in Thurles, County Tipperary in the mid 16th century. By the end of the 17th century the family was resident at Castle Fogarty.ⁱⁱⁱ An eminent musician and gentleman harper named Cornelius O'Fogarty (1661–1730), proprietor of Castle Fogarty, played the O'Ffogerty Harp. Cornelius, chief of his clan from Ballycahill, Thurles, fought for King James II in the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 and took part defending Limerick city during the siege of Limerick. He was a close friend of Fr. Edmund Cormack, one of the last Cistercian monks of Holycross Abbey.^{iv} A fire in 1922 reduced the castle to a ruined condition, though one tower was rebuilt subsequent to the devastation.

Fortunately, the 17th century O'Ffogerty harp escaped the fire of 1922. It is believed that the family had it in safe-keeping during the Irish Civil War. It has survived in the private ownership and care of Cornelius's descendents ever since. In January 1986, a formal agreement regarding storage of the O'Ffogerty harp was made between Charles Ryan and Tipperary County Library in Thurles, County Tipperary. A letter on file from Martin Maher, the County Librarian to Mr. C. F. Ryan on 26th November 1986 states that the harp would go on display the following weekend.^v



Wood engraving depicting the O'Ffogerty harp in *The Dublin Penny Journal*, Vol.IV, February 6th 1836.



THE O'FFOGERTY HARP.

Illustration of the O'Ffogerty harp in *The Irish and The Highland Harp*, 1904 with footnote 'The writer is indebted to Lieut.-Colonel John Vivian Ryan-Lanegan, D.L., of Castle Ffogerty, for allowing this Harp to be photographed for the purpose of illustrating this work'. vi

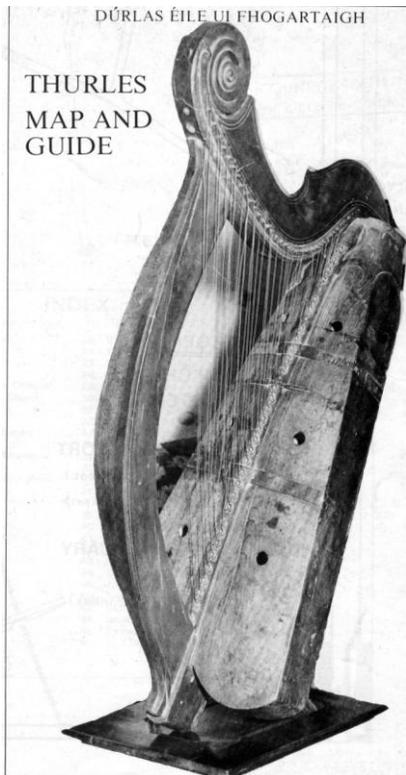


Illustration of the O'Ffogerty harp with strings from a map of Thurles.



THE O'FFOGERTY HARP

The O'Ffogerty harp as shown in *The Irish and The Highland Harp*

A plate of gold (now missing) once adorned the right side of the harp's upper front pillar on which was engraved the following words in Irish "This is the harp of Cornelius O'Ffogerty". Its harmonic curve, as described in *The Irish and The Highland Harp*, terminates in 'a finely carved scroll'.

In *The Morphology of the Irish Harp*, Joan Rimmer (1919–2015) writes that the O ffogerty harp, in private hands, is a fine example of a large low-headed harp of 35 strings. Made out of smooth, silky willow its condition is testament to the skill of its unknown seventeenth-century maker. She records with detail that it weighs fifty-five pounds, has a fore-pillar height of 76.2cm.; neck length of 69.2cm.; box length of 94cm.; width 41.3cm. at the bottom and 15.2cm. at the top; depth 9.8cm. at the bottom, 13cm. in the middle and 14cm. at the top; box thickness around 1cm; longest string 95.2cm. and shortest 6.3cm. Rimmer continues her appraisal by stating that the lowest string on the O ffogerty enters the box right under the base of the forepillar which is channeled to allow it to pass.^{vii}

Being a harper, it is interesting to consider what airs Cornelius O'Fogarty might have enjoyed playing on the O'Fogarty harp in his lifetime. Perhaps he sang Irish songs with his own harp accompaniment or had in his repertoire works by harper-composers of his time such as Thomas Connellan (c.1640/1645–1698) or Turlough O'Carolan (1670–1738). Included below (which may be of interest to readers) is a version of one of my favourite Connellan pieces: 'The Jointure and Jigg'.^{viii} Festive banquets hosted by O'Fogarty – an eminent musician and gentleman harper – were sure to delight all in attendance in the great hall of his Castle Fogarty abode.

Caitríona Rowsome

The Jointure and Jigg

NOTES

ⁱ en.wikipedia.org [accessed 17.11.2015, 15:30]

ⁱⁱ The Dublin Penny Journal, Vol.IV, February 6th 1836

ⁱⁱⁱ landedstates.nuigalway.ie [Search term: Lenigan (Castle Fogarty), accessed 17.11.2015, 15:00]

^{iv} thurles.info [accessed 17.11.2015, 15:15]

^v Tipperary County Council Library Service, The Source, Thurles, County Tipperary [16.11.2015]

^{vi} Robert Bruce Armstrong, *The Irish and The Highland Harps*, 1904, pp. 79-81

^{vii} Joan Rimmer, *The Morphology of the Irish Harp* in "The Galpin Society Journal" vol XVII, 1964, pp. 43-44

^{viii} See also 'Stary ghed ma lousa Uoem' from Neal's *A Collection of the most Celebrated Irish Tunes*, 1724. Facsimile edition, Irish Traditional Music Archive, 2010, pp. 83,102

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