



THE HISTORICAL HARP  
SOCIETY OF IRELAND  
Cumann Cláirsí Stairiúla na hÉireann

## Scoil na gCláirseach–Festival of Early Irish Harp 13–17 August 2020

### VIRTUAL ONE-to-ONE COACHING Tutor areas of interest and subjects offered

Individual coaching sessions are available Thursday 13 to Monday 17 August inclusive. You choose which (and how many!) of the tutors you would like to study with, and what general or specific area you wish to work on.

You will need to check in with your tutor in advance (any time from now) to sort out the logistics of when you meet. The virtual coaching operates on a flexible timetable organised with your tutor/s. Just bear in mind, when scheduling a coaching session, that our talks, workshops and concert footage take place each day 2.00 p.m. to c6.00 p.m. Irish time on youtube.

You will pay your tutor directly. One-hour sessions are likely to be c €50 but will vary from tutor to tutor; please contact them for their rates. Email us at [info@irishharp.org](mailto:info@irishharp.org) if you have any questions; we will be glad to help.



*Scoil coaching before Covid-19... Siobhán Armstrong with Luisa Trigilio, at Scoil na gCláirseach 2018, Kilkenny. Photo: Pat Moore*

# Siobhán Armstrong

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[siobhan@siobhanarmstrong.com](mailto:siobhan@siobhanarmstrong.com)

A session with me can be all-playing (learn a tune), all-talking (discuss something) or anywhere in between.

We can work on TECHNIQUE (sort out problems; learn healthy ways to make sounds you like), MUSICAL PHRASING (a particular interest of mine!), METHODOLOGY (how to get from A to B in reconstructing fresh music from fragmentary written sources), Though, to be fair, I generally touch on some or all of these in every session. I use the earliest available sources for the music I play and teach, most usually the field-notebooks of Edward Bunting, who transcribed directly from the last harpers but also early printed sources from Ireland, England and Scotland. You can bring relevant material you want to work on or you can choose from the following areas. Any amount of musical literacy may be helpful but is not essential. Please email me at [siobhan@siobhanarmstrong.com](mailto:siobhan@siobhanarmstrong.com) if anything isn't clear or if you have any questions. Here's what I like to coach in Irish music:



## 37vj 'ègpwvt { "

Latin plainchant from late-medieval Irish manuscripts: reading the neumes, singing, playing.

## 38vj 'ègpwvt {

The oldest surviving Irish song airs, elegies, tuning preludes and variation sets.

English Renaissance music by Cormac MacDermott, (a royal Irish harper), Dowland and Campion.

## 39vj 'ègpwvt {

The *port* harp repertory in seventeenth-century Scottish lute manuscripts, inc. learning to read the tablature. Clan marches.

The evocative song airs of the Connellon-brother harpers from Co. Sligo.

Original harp versions of the great laments: Limerick's Lamentation, Wild Geese etc.

'Figured bass': the European way of improvising music and accompanying melodies.

Music from the English courtly entertainments known as Masques.

Popular dances and ballads from the vast English source, Playford's Dancing Master

## 3: vj 'ègpwvt {

Songs and instrumental music composed or played by

Turlough Carolan (inc. his lower-hand idiom)

Cornelius Lyons

Dennis O'Hampsey (inc. his lower-hand idiom)

Hugh Higgins

Arthur Ó Néill

Echlin O'Kane and others.

Variations sets

Handel and Corelli as played by some Irish harpers

Reconstructing the music of the late 18th- to early 19th-century Irish harpers, from the Bunting manuscripts, with a focus on particular, individual harpers.

# Simon Chadwick

[Simonchadwick.net](http://Simonchadwick.net)

[simon@simonchadwick.net](mailto:simon@simonchadwick.net)

For 2020 I am offering classes which focus on developing a traditional Irish harp playing style and repertory, through studying well-known and less-known tunes from the tradition.

For the past year, I have been working through Edward Bunting's live transcriptions from the harp tradition-bearers in 1792 and 1796 preserved in [MS29](#).

I am happy to work through some of them with you to show you my process:

- How to distinguish between the initial live transcriptions from harpers, the tunes copied by Bunting from other books and manuscripts, and Bunting's classical piano 'improvements'
- How to understand Bunting's transcription process
- How to analyse the 'dots' to come to an understanding of what the harper played while Bunting was listening



I am following Sylvia Crawford's new method of playing, using the fingering systems given in Bunting's 1840 book, which allow an easy and fluent expression of the tune without needing to look at the strings.

I have also been thinking about traditional style and idiom, both from the harp transcriptions and also from other traditional music (e.g. pipes, fiddle, song)

We could discuss:

- The music of Carolan
- Learning traditional harp tunes by ear, from listening to archive recordings of singers, fiddlers or pipers
- Looking for traditional Irish harp tunes, style and idiom in Bunting's manuscripts
- New ideas on bass and ornamentation
- Finger-tip playing styles (without long fingernails), like the majority of the old Irish harpers in the 1790s
- Tuning, stringing, technical aspects related to harp setup.

I'm also very happy to consider any personalised requests you may have of particular things to study. Email me on [simon@simonchadwick.net](mailto:simon@simonchadwick.net) to discuss your requirements.

# Sylvia Crawford

[Sylviacrawford.net](http://Sylviacrawford.net)

[sylvia.crawford71@gmail.com](mailto:sylvia.crawford71@gmail.com)

Over the past year I have been working on a new method of playing. This is a development of ideas which arose out of my study of Patrick Quin, from whom Edward Bunting collected three of the first tunes traditionally taught to harpers.

This new method encompasses treble- and bass-hand fingerings, along with damping and implied harmony, ornamentation etc. The method is based on my new interpretations of the table of fingerings which Bunting published in his 1840 collection.

This new system teaches the principles of fingering in a very practical, hands-on way, using recurring fingering motifs in a variety of contexts. It also develops a strong aural and spatial relationship, and incorporates strategies for moving around the harp without having to look at the strings.

Possible subjects for an online session could include: fingering principles, finger movements and recognising recurring motifs, OR an introduction to underlying pentatonic structure, scales and chords in old Irish harp music. I am happy to discuss any of these subjects theoretically or to introduce you to the concepts practically, through learning a tune. This could be one of the first tunes taught to harpers, a tune collected from Patrick Quin, one of Bunting's field transcriptions taken down directly from a different harper, or other harp repertory from another source.

I'd be very happy to share any of my ideas with you. If you are interested in arranging an online session with me, please get in touch in advance so I can prepare content and materials to meet your specific needs.

[sylvia.crawford71@gmail.com](mailto:sylvia.crawford71@gmail.com)



# Ann Heymann

<http://www.annheyman.com/>  
[heyman@clairseach.com](mailto:heyman@clairseach.com)

From a piano / pipe organ background, I migrated to traditional music and became 'hooked' by Bunting's 1840 descriptions of the ancient Irish harp; eventually I found an early *Castle Otway* harp (built by Jay Witcher). Wanting to emulate Denis O'Hampsey, I grew long fingernails, and with the harp on the left shoulder I proceeded to learn from the 'old master' (my harp). Since 1976, my husband Charlie and I have toured widely, and I continue to discover more about the cláirseach, its traditions, history and music. Back 'then' I was very much on my own, and I'm so very grateful to the HHSI, students, colleagues and friends that this revival is now thriving!

## AREAS OF INTEREST

### Uj ct lpi 'O { 'Crr t qcej 'y kj 'Qvj gt u'

Private Tuition: For a number of years, I've been regularly teaching students via Skype. The format actually requires more feedback from the student and, rather than just saying "Do it like this", I'm forced to better articulate subtleties of technique, which in turn has enhanced my understanding of what it is that I'm doing or not doing. Consequently, my own approach is improving (or so I think) and I am finding inspiration and joy in teaching and coaching students of all levels. However, I'm interested in students who play (or want to play) with fingernail technique, with harp on the left shoulder and and *comhluighe* tuning i.e. unison tenor strings of G & g, following the lead of Denis O'Hampsey.



### Ct vluke't guctej 'wulpi 'vj g'èñ k ugcej <'

- to partner with Bardic poetry & Gaelic song
- to re-create cláirseach *ceol mor*
- to create idiomatic, historically-informed arrangements of Irish and Scottish harp repertoire
- in the performance of plainchant
- to interpret medieval Welsh harp technique and music

### Ct vluke't guctej 'lpvq''

- the *telyn rawn* (the medieval horse-hair harp of Wales)
- the Gothic bray harp to perform music from the Robert ap Huw manuscript
- tuning practices

### Guvgtle't guctej ''

- Irish harp (and related traditions) in mythology, poetry & iconography

# Andrew Lawrence-King

<http://www.TheHarpConsort.com/Events>

## [Direct Link for Scoil Coaching](#)

Select **Rt kcvg'Nguqpu'Qpikpg** (first item on the menu)

Select **Ucpcf ctf 'Nguqp** (as many as you want)

Click **Xlgy 'Uggevklpu'**

Scoil discount!

Type 'SCOIL2020' into the **GP VGT'F KCEQWP'VEQFG** box.

*This will give a €30 discount on the standard ticket, reducing it to €50. Scoil participants may find that they are eligible for other discounts on this page, which would give them an even better price.*

This discount is active now, and will remain in force until a few days after the end of Scoil 2020.

My teaching strategy is to help you progress from whatever your current standard might be, by applying historical principles and my personal experience to the practical challenges of the piece at hand. I encourage you to make music in a holistic and 'juicy' way, in which specific techniques and dry information are integrated into a rich musical texture, right from the beginning. Period priorities include Tempo and Rhythm, Rhetorical phrasing, Ornamentation and Variation, Realising the bass, principles of Historical Fingering. Practical questions include Tuning & Temperaments, How to Practise, Flow versus Performance Anxiety, and Ornament-playing. I love giving beginners a great start, just as much as I enjoy coaching international-class soloists. Perhaps you are somewhere on that spectrum...

[YouTube Channel Playlist: Historical Irish Harp](#)

Blog Articles:

<https://andrewlawrenceking.com/2014/09/09/historical-technique-for-early-irish-harps/>

<https://andrewlawrenceking.com/2013/09/02/the-shake-irish-harp-ornament-of-the-month-1/>

<https://andrewlawrenceking.com/2013/10/20/irish-harp-ornament-of-the-month-2-the-cadential-shake/>

<https://andrewlawrenceking.com/2014/02/05/irish-harp-ornament-of-the-month-3-the-triple-shake/>

<https://andrewlawrenceking.com/2014/04/08/irish-harp-ornament-of-the-month-4-striking-upwards/>



# Eibhlís Ní Ríordáin

[Eibhlis.ie](http://Eibhlis.ie)

[eibhlisnr@gmail.com](mailto:eibhlisnr@gmail.com)

## Ct gcú'qhlkpvgt guv'

- Finding and learning songs from archival sources
- Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century harper/composers songs and their interpretation (on both voice and harp)
- Sean-nós song, particularly from the East Munster Déise area of southern Ireland

## Cttcpi kpi 'lupi u'dqvj 'lucp/p»u'èpf 'j ctr 'lupi u'hqt 'j ctr 'èpf 'kqlæg''

I will be focussing on songs with harp accompaniment. With a highly practical emphasis you will learn Irish language songs from the Bunting manuscripts and / or from the oral tradition. My aim in the week is to teach and encourage you so that you will get the tools and confidence to sing and play a harp song that you will enjoy 'polishing' at home!

In the sessions with me, I will teach you a song and we can focus particularly on: pronunciation, translation, vocal technique (i.e., breathing, phrasing, ornamentation, intonation etc).

As you learn the song, we can examine various relevant technical and stylistic elements of both traditional Irish language singing i.e., *sean-nós* [= 'old style'] singing, and seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European art-music singing. You can also learn how singing the harp song can, in numerous ways, inform your harp playing (e.g., in phrasing, 'word-painting' etc).

In additional sessions with me you can choose to learn a harp setting of the song you have just learned (the setting will be provided), or, with my help or that of another Scoil tutor, you can work towards composing your own harp accompaniment.

Time permitting I can work with you on more than one song of your choice.

I also teach Beginner early Irish harp.



# James Ruff

[Jamesrufftenorharper.com](http://Jamesrufftenorharper.com)

James can be contacted through his website.



**Rqt wu** (*Puirt*) attributed to Ruaraidh Dall (Supair Thighear Leoid, Port Atholl, Da Mihi Manum, Is Eagal Leam am Bàs, Port Gordon). Working with sources, transcribing, arranging, fingering.

**Rqt wu** (*Puirt*) from the Scottish MacLean-Clephane MS. Working with the source, transcribing, arranging, fingering, style.

**Cl u' d' { 'Hpi cn** from John Bowie's 1789 Collection of Strathspey Reels and Country Dances: transcribing, arranging, fingering, style.

**Vj g'Pgzv'Ugr**: for beginning / intermediate players – posture, exercises for finger strength, speed and rhythm, tips on how to tune the harp!

**Y qt n'pi 'Y l'j 'O gf l'gxcid' O cpwuet k' wu** <Irish & Scottish medieval plainchant for harp (and voice too!). Reading neumes, transcribing & arranging, fingering, also practical help for plainchant with the harp (chants for St. Bridget, St. Patrick and St. Colmcille from medieval Irish and Scottish sources).

Working From Archive Fiddle Recordings (Denis Murphy & Pdraig O'Keefe): the O'Neill and O'Donnell Laments and more – transcribing, arranging, fingering

**Gf y ctf 'Dwp' d'pi ' ( 'Vj g' Cpelgpv' O wle' qh' k' g' r' pf**: working with manuscript sources, transcribing, arranging – especially working with bass hand, fingering, techniques for practicing. Could focus on specific Irish harpers (Hugh Higgins, the Connellan brothers, Denis O'Hampsey). Special possibility of working with the Cornelius Lyons variation sets on Irish tunes as played by Denis O'Hampsey: *Eibhlín a Rún, A Chailíní, a bhfaca sibh Seoirse?* and *Lady of the Desert*. (Latter two by Cornelius Lyons)

**Vj g' O wle' qh' Vwt m' wi j 'Ect q' r' p**: working with sources, transcribing, arranging in this beautiful blend of early Irish and baroque style, fingering, techniques for practicing.

Singing in Scottish Gaelic: working with the sounds and rhythms of the language, practicing with texts from historic Gaelic songs and applying these to their tunes. Including Songs of Mary MacLeod: Fuaigheall, Cumha Iain Garbh; Medieval songs: A Mhairead Òg, King Orfeo (Child Ballad in Scots & Norn!), Medieval Fenian Lays: Laoidh Fhraoich in forms collected by both Tolmie & Matheson. Songs of Sileas na Ceapaich inc. Alasdair a Gleanna Garadh.

**U'pi l'pi 'lp' Ueqw' l'uj 'I cgrle' t'v' j' g' J' c' tr**: Sources, transcribing, using rhythms of the language to help arrange for the harp, techniques to help integrate self-accompaniment with the clarsach. Repertoire as above.



