

Traditional Fiddle Workshop @ Strachur



Newsletter
Feb/March 2016

Registered Scottish Charity No. SCO33935

Dates for your Diary

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Classes stop for
Easter 21/23
March. Restart
18/20 April

Tuesday 19th April.
Fiddlers to
entertain in Village
Hall.

We have been
invited to entertain
the Friendship
Group on this day,
from 2 p.m.

If you wish to join
us please contact
Evie.

Park Hotel- Easter
Folk Programme.

Various events from
Fri 25th - Sun 27th
March. See local
press for details.

Highlands and
Islands Music and
Dance Festival -
Oban. April 29th -
May 1st

Huge event with
some excellent
fiddle contests on
the Friday evening
and all day Saturday.
See John K for
details of fiddle
events.

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Editor's Musings.

Welcome to the February/March Newsletter. The opinions expressed here are those of the editor and do not necessarily reflect the views of our committee or membership, though I'd hope that generally we are all in accord with what we are doing as members of LFW (@ Strachur)!

The Workshop continues to develop, with recent events offering opportunities to our members both in tuition and in playing for an audience. Elsewhere in this edition you can read of some of those activities in which members have been participants. My thanks to Kathy and Evie, who have provided us with accounts of their workshops, and a heart-felt plea to those others who have as yet not contributed: no matter what your event has been, I'm sure there are plenty of us who would enjoy sharing your experiences.

I hope too that through the newsletter you might feel that you can express your views or offer suggestions as to how you might like to see the Workshop progressing. In our present format we can go through a year's tuition without meeting up with players from other classes, and I think it could be valuable for all of us to meet up at odd times throughout the session for a wee open session, playing the tunes we have been learning and picking up tips from each other. Those times we do meet in special workshops seem to be very enjoyable days, and those of us who have played to audiences have generally enjoyed the experience, whether it be at local or national mod competitions, or events such as the very recent concert in the hall on Saturday 19th March, which saw our Juniors and adults combining to give a very encouraging recital which I think really highlighted the progress of all the players. I know, as one who shelters behind a guitar on most occasions, that I enjoyed my debut on fiddle at this concert and my thanks to Kathryn for telling me that I was going to be playing not only guitar but fiddle!

We are always trying to find ways of getting new members. Come-and-try sessions have not attracted many newcomers; open workshops with various tutors are more successful and I know some of you also play or are learning other instruments. Maybe we could think about forming small mixed-instrument groups among ourselves to give a variety to what we play? I'd enjoy hearing your thoughts on this or indeed on any other suggestions you might have on how we might build the membership and move forward in our playing.

In the meantime, have a great Easter break and we'll begin again in the week beginning 18th April.

Celtic Connections

Ukulele Workshop

On Saturday, 16th January a couple of us set off to The Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow to participate in 'Celtic Connections'. The morning event was a 'Come and Try Ukulele' with Glasgow Fiddle Workshop tutor, Finlay Allison, who ran a workshop here for us not so long back.

There were fifty participants in the workshop and each one of us was provided with a uke. Finlay was brilliant. Before long he had us all playing chords of C, A minor, F and G7 to the tunes of 'Give Peace a Chance' (John Lennon), 'Next to Me' (Emili Sande) and 'Land of a Thousand Dances' (Wilson Pickett).

The ukulele has made a huge revival across the world and no wonder. It's a great wee instrument and what fun to play! We even had the opportunity to purchase it, which we did! No excuses now not to further our playing.

Evie

(And no excuse for you not to be offering a new slant on our future concert repertoire, Evie. A wee uke selection would be a welcome addition and great instrument for a singalong! - John)

Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas Workshop

Jan 23/24

This two day workshop was aimed at intermediate to advanced string players (fiddle, viola, cello and bass) and was based on the fiddle music of Scotland and beyond. The goal was to explore playing traditional music in a group, with emphasis on arrangement ideas and the techniques that give traditional music its particular flavour. The workshop also looked at how to put fiddle tunes together to form a medley or a larger piece of music.

All tunes were taught by ear, but music was available

Kathy said that the first tune they learned was written by one of Alasdair's students (an 11 year old boy) at one of his fiddle camps. There was also a jolly Swedish tune celebrating the Old New Year and 2 Shetland tunes and one other. A rousing sea shanty completed the set.

Link to youTube Video: <https://youtu.be/062xH-E5vAQ>.

Junior Workshop – 13th March

Sunday 13th March 2016 had at last arrived. The Fiddle Workshop hosted a day of music and games for a dozen young fiddlers. Boys and girls aged 8 to 12 from all parts of Cowal and as far away as Mid-Argyll took part in this excellent workshop

And no wonder they travelled so far! Finlay Allison, senior tutor of Glasgow Fiddle Workshop, Graham MacKenzie (Cowal Schools Fiddle Tutor) and Mairi Voinot, an up-and-coming talented musician were their tutors for the day.

The youngsters were grouped according to ability and spent the day with their tutors. By listening and watching the tutor play the tunes phrase by phrase, they were soon playing the complete tune. Some even learned harmonies to go with them. Learning in the traditional way, by ear, these tunes will be embedded in the youngsters' memories.



Evie

Adult Workshop – 13th March

Running alongside our very successful Junior Workshop we had an adult session in Strachur Memorial Hall. Tutor Finlay Allison from the Glasgow Fiddle Workshop took the group of ten fiddlers and worked on three tunes during the course of the day.

Beginning with an old Gaelic favourite, "The Eriskay Love Lilt", Finlay taught this in the unusual key of C, enabling the lower registers of the fiddle to be used and taking the players away from the more usual open keys we tend to play in! He also gave advice on using vibrato to enhance the sound of the longer notes.

We moved on to a Strathspey and got to grips with the Scotch Snap, that note combination of semiquaver followed by dotted quaver which is the hallmark of the Strathspey and peculiar to this particular musical form. Only Scottish music has the Strathspey

The third tune was the retreat pipe march "I See Mull". Here Finlay stressed the feel of a good pipe march, to get drive into the tune. We then worked on combining the three tunes into a set.

At the end of the afternoon the adults joined the juniors, who had been working on the same tunes, and an impromptu concert was performed for the parents of all the junior participants. A great day was had by all, and we look forward to many more like this.

John

Information & News

Hall Concert - Saturday 19th March.

LFW members, adult and junior, performed a mixed set at the fund-raising concert held in the Memorial Hall on Saturday evening. The juniors first performed as a group, followed by a duet accompanied by Kathryn, then the adults played two sets of tunes, 4/4 marches then a set of waltzes, and finally juniors and adults combined to play a very upbeat number, Bowing The Strings! Great fun was had by all, and the audience clapped along enthusiastically!



Committee Contact Details

Chairperson; Evie Campbell
evie.campbell@fiddleworkshop.co.uk

Treasurer; Teresa Hunt-Earle
thuntearle@hotmail.co.uk

Secretary; John Kelly
john.kelly@fiddleworkshop.co.uk

Class room etiquette

Hope you are all enjoying the classes and getting plenty of practice! Summer term resumes week beginning 18th April 2016, usual times and venues. Just a wee reminder about playing by ear. Learning by ear means learning by listening then copying. Looking is also important. When we are listening to the tutor playing a tune or phrase students need to hear what is being played. It is easy to get caught up in one's attempt to play a tune without heeding what others are doing. This frustrates our aim of playing by ear as a group. Please listen to others, and keep an eye on what they and the tutor are doing, and enjoy. Thanks.

Chairman

Fiddle Maintenance

LFW member John Kelly offers a fiddle maintenance service, reasonable rates - also free advice! John can be contacted by email jkargyll@gmail.com

Tell us your news

Are there any sessions, folk pubs, forthcoming events, or photos that might be of interest? Send to Evie or John by email.

Copy date for next newsletter
April 30th 2016.