

ANNUAL REPORT

2020 -2021

Glasgow Folk-music Workshop



CHARITY NUMBER: SCO29502

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Introduction

Glasgow Folk-Music Workshop (GFW), founded in 1992, continues to thrive as a leading Community Music Group, offering tuition in numerous instruments and song, teaching and promoting largely traditional Scottish music to adults and juniors. It is self-financing with charitable status, governed by a Board of Volunteer Trustees. The Board meets monthly with senior tutor representation to discuss membership, finances, events, and any issues that arise.

In March 2020 face to face classes at Glasgow Kelvin College, John Wheatley Building, Glasgow were closed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. This resulted in no teaching during the 4th term of last year. However during that period, many tutors started to offer online classes using Zoom technology.

Zoom Classes - September 2020 to date

During the summer of 2020, the Board decided to conduct a survey of members to gauge how much interest there would be in conducting Zoom classes, assuming that face to face classes were not possible. Our GFW tutors, Donald our Administrator and Board Members stepped up to the mark and organised and delivered a fully online schedule from September 2020. As lockdown continued we maintained this presentation of classes/sessions throughout the 2020-21 season. However some of our regular tutors were unable to teach using Zoom and adjustment were made to our programme.

Celtic Connections and Beyond

In previous years, GFW has supported Celtic Connections by running several Come & Try Workshops. However due to Covid restrictions, this international event was only able to take place online. This was a great opportunity for GFW. Now experienced using Zoom, with confident, talented tutors in association with Celtic Connections' world-wide publicity machine, GFW offered 18 Workshops over the three weekends of the festival; whistle, ukulele, 5-string banjo, fiddle, guitar, ceilidh band, cello, mandolin and tenor banjo and a Big Session. This was a great success and attracted over 800 attendees from Australia to Vancouver. Many of those who attended the workshops joined our classes as members in February 2021.

When online delivery started, it was observed that new members outwith our local area were accessing our GFW classes. This number was small from September to December, but following our January Celtic Connections workshops, our membership increased considerably from February to June. We now have almost 20% of adult membership beyond 30 miles radius from Glasgow, reaching across UK & Europe and as far as North America.

Our online classes have been a steep learning curve, but they have provided further opportunities to reach out and teach traditional music beyond Glasgow, plans which will continue next year.

Membership September 2020 – June 2021

As GFW moved to online classes in September, it was realised some of our regular members would be not be able to access the technology, and also that not everyone would be comfortable with this type of learning. We adopted a cautious approach, only allocating tutors when we had enough interest to cover the class costs. We also chose not to run Junior classes until we had clear guidance on online protocols for young people.

Adult Membership numbers changed dramatically after January workshops. Terms one and two September to December, averaged **290** members, (around **80%** of the previous year). Terms three and four, February to May averaged **402** members, with Term four at **374** members, being the highest ever.

GFW re-opened our Junior classes in February 2021, offering highly subsidised classes (£7 per term) in fiddle, whistle, guitar and ukulele. Twenty five of our junior members signed up, however, as yet, there has been little interest in ukulele.

Additional Musical Activities Offered to Members

- Warm-up session on Mondays with Nigel, 7 – 7,30pm prior to start of classes;
- Repertoire Class and warm up-up on Wednesdays with Finlay, 6.15pm – 7.30pm; and
- Sessions with Nigel and Finlay – <https://gfw.scot/gfw-sessions>.

We also offered Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas Workshop and online concert in April which had 33 attendees.

External Donations

This year GFW contributed £150 which was donated to Lodging House Mission.

GFW Website

The Board formed a sub-group to discuss and review our existing website and obtain responses from organisations willing to carry out an upgrade. Moreover the group also spent time examining the website and discussing what we might look for in a new website. Thanks to those members who responded to our website survey and provided interesting information about what they needed from a website like GFW. We are currently waiting for responses from developers. Watch this space!

Vote of Thanks

The success of GFW is attributable to the enthusiasm and hard work of the following to which thanks are due:

Board of Trustees

Volunteers who ensure the governance of GFW; maintain the website <https://gfw.scot/>; and who support GFW tutors in particular, the work of our Director of Finance, Ronnie Melrose who carefully monitors the GFW finances.

Administrator

Donald Higgins-Durnan who ensures the administration required for GFW runs smoothly.

Senior Tutors

- Nigel Gatherer
- Finlay Allison
- Daniel Thorpe

Our senior tutors teach classes; coordinate the delivery of lessons by tutors; develop and manage the curriculum; organise and support additional events for members over and above the regular classes from 7-9.30pm.

Tutors

Our tutors provide the expertise, teaching to offer skills, technique and repertoire, encouraging players to play a musical instrument or sing.

Many of our GFW tutors are highly skilled performers in the Scottish traditional scene. (Appendix 1 – Tutors).

Members

Our loyal members who have attended GFW classes for many years and of course our newer members.

Conclusion

At one stage in March 2020 the impact of Covid 19 and Lockdown caused some concern about the survival of GFW. However, with the hard work of Board Members, our Administrator and brilliant tutors our Zoom classes have enabled GFW not just to survive but thrive. This is such good news!

Of course, It is not possible at this stage to be sure whether face to face classes will recommence in Glasgow Kelvin College for the new session in September 2021. However even if we do offer some face to face classes, GFW will continue to offer classes online using Zoom. Although restrictions are gradually lifting, it is not yet clear whether face to face classes can resume in September. However, in recognition of the popularity of zoom classes, we plan to offer a mix of physical and online Zoom classes in late August/early September 2021. The Board of Trustees intend to attend a planning workshop to discuss these arrangements prior to the new session.

Members commented on the value of GFW classes/sessions especially during the dark days of winter and lockdown. Participants developed their musical skills, found a forum to chat, meet new people, raise their spirits and improve mental wellbeing.

In conclusion, during 2020-2021, GFW was able to offer a wide range of online classes teaching multiple instruments/song from beginners to advanced using our hardworking, experienced tutors; regular pub - like sessions encouraging members to practice, increase their repertoire and speed of playing. Moreover, we were also able to offer some online workshops, concerts and in June our first short outdoor event. Our enthusiasm and drive has brought GFW to the attention of players around the globe.

Appendix 1 – GFW Tutors Online

Senior Tutors	Instrument
Nigel Gatherer	Mandolin and Whistle
Alan Shute	Accordion and Harmonica
Finlay Allison	Fiddle, Ukulele, Guitar and Mandolin
Daniel Thorpe	Fiddle

Tutors	Instrument
Amy Allison	Ukulele
Andrew MacPherson	Whistle
Bernadette Kellermann	Fiddle
Brodie Smith	Ukulele
Callum Younger	Bodhran
Celine Donghue	Tenor Banjo and Fiddle
Emma Tomlinson	Fiddle
Fiona Cuthill	Fiddle
Garry McFadden	5-String Banjo
Graham MacKenie	Fiddle
Gordon Melrose	Ukulele
Hannah Rarity	Song
Jamie Smith	Fiddle
Jenn Butterworth	Guitar
John Carmichael	Accordion and Ceilidh Band
Katherine MacLeod	Whistle and Mixed Instrument
Laura Beth Salter	Mandolin
Mike Bryan	Guitar
Owen Sinclair	Mandolin
Patricia Strain	Cello and Fiddle
Rua MacMillan	Fiddle
Ryan Young	Fiddle
Sally Simpson	Fiddle
Sandie Forbes	Fiddle
Sarah Alexander	Accordion
Sarah Markey	Whistle
Sean Gray	Guitar and Mixed Instrument
Steve Fivey	Ukulele

Appendix 2 – Instruments

Instruments:

- Accordion
- Banjo – Tenor
- Banjo – 5 String
- Bodhran
- Ceilidh Band
- Cello
- Fiddle
- Guitar
- Mandolin
- Mixed Instrument
- Song
- Ukulele
- Viola
- Whistle

Junior Instruments:

- Fiddle
- Guitar
- Whistle

Appendix 3 – GFW Term Dates 2020-21

TERM DATES 2020-21

Term 1 Mondays	Term 1 Wednesdays
07 September	09 September
14 September	16 September
21 September	23 September
05 October	07 October
12 October	14 October
19 October	21 October
26 October	28 October
Term 2 Mondays	Term 2 Wednesdays
02 November	04 November
09 November	11 November
16 November	18 November
23 November	25 November
30 November	02 December
07 December	09 December
14 December	16 December
Term 3 Mondays	Term 3 Wednesdays
15 February	17 February
22 February	24 February
01 March	03 March
08 March	10 March
15 March	17 March
22 March	24 March
29 March	31 March
Term 4 Mondays	Term 4 Wednesdays
19 April	21 April
26 April	28 April
10 May	05 May
17 May	12 May
24 May	19 May
07 June	26 May
14 June	02 June