

ANNUAL REPORT

Glasgow Folk-music Workshop



CHARITY NUMBER: SCO29502

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Introduction

Glasgow Folk-Music Workshop (GFW) <https://gfw.scot/> formally Glasgow Fiddle Workshop was founded in 1992 currently based in Glasgow Kelvin College, John Wheatley Building, Glasgow. GFW is a self-financing organisation with charitable status governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of volunteers. We celebrated our 25th Anniversary in 2017.

Over the years the organisation has undergone a significant transformation and increase in membership, now offering tuition in numerous instruments and song. It continues to thrive as a leading Community Music Group, teaching and promoting largely traditional Scottish music to juniors and adults.

However, on 16th March 2020 the GFW Board made the decision to close classes due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The pandemic has affected everyone in the UK, imposing a lockdown requiring people to stay at home. Nevertheless, sterling efforts were made by tutors to provide on-line music tuition and opportunities for members to continue to play and learn music during the lockdown period, using a variety of online technologies such as Zoom.

Thanks

The success of GFW is attributable to the efforts and hard work of the following individuals/groups to which thanks are due:

Board of Trustees

Volunteers who ensure the governance of GFW; maintain the website <https://gfw.scot/>; and organise various social and extra musical activities for members with the assistance from GFW tutors.

In particular, the work of our Director of Finance, Ronnie Melrose must be highlighted, who carefully monitors the GFW finances, and Rita Warrilow who works with various suppliers to create GFW merchandise such as t-shirts, badges etc. for sale, helping to raise vital funds and instilling a sense of community within GFW.

Administrator

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

Senior Tutors

- Nigel Gatherer
- Finlay Allison
- Daniel Thorpe
- Alan Shute

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

Tutors

Our tutors offer learning and teaching approaches encouraging new members to learn to play a musical instrument from scratch and support more confident and regular learners to increase their repertoire and technique. Many of our GFW tutors are highly skilled performers in the Scottish traditional scene. (Appendix 1 – Tutors).

Members

Our members who attend GFW classes and volunteer at the various social, musical and fundraising events throughout the year.

Although GFW continues to attract new members and beginners, there are loyal members who have continued to attend classes and events for many years.

Membership/Classes – September 2019

GFW offers a comprehensive range of music classes from beginner to advanced level with a wide range of musical instruments available (Appendix 2 – Instruments). GFW offers music tuition on Monday and Wednesday evenings for four terms from September to June. (Appendix 3 – Term Dates 2019-20). Membership numbers continue to rise slowly with an average of 421 members across the 3 terms and a maximum of 476 enrolments for term 3, an increase of 96 on the previous term.

Initiatives

New Song Class August 2019

In August 2019, a song class was made available at GFW, which proved to be very popular with 21 members enrolling.

Free Junior Classes Pilot – Term 3, Feb 2020

Prior to GFW Term 3, the Board approved a pilot scheme to increase the number of junior members, with a focus on attracting learners from the local area. GFW contacted two primary schools located near Glasgow Kelvin College, offering free junior music lessons and instrument hire for a term. This generated some interest but with the closure of GFW in March, the disruption has resulted in GFW being unable to evaluate the pilot at this time.

Additional Support – Beginner Fiddlers, Term 3 2020

In February, twenty-seven absolute beginner fiddlers joined GFW. This was the largest number of beginner fiddlers at one time and required 3 classes. In recognition of the challenges of learning to play the fiddle from scratch, GFW decided to pilot extra support by way of a half hour class prior to the start of normal classes, to retain and encourage this group of learners. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 this initiative barely got off the ground (Appendix 4 – Beginner Fiddle Support).

Additional Musical Activities Offered to Members

- Warm-up sessions 7-7.30pm prior to start of classes
- Repertoire Class 6.30pm prior to start of classes
- Very Slow Session (VSS) every second Tuesday now in Islay Inn 7.30 – 9.30pm
- Slow Jam, a faster paced session held monthly on Thursdays in The Botany 8 – 10pm

Partnership Working

GFW works with other organisations/local festivals who wish to promote Scottish traditional music and /or provide members with the opportunity to play music outwith classes. It also provides an opportunity for GFW to promote and publicise classes to new members. These include:

- South Side Festival Open Air Ceilidh (May 2019)
- West End Festival 2 x Open Air Ceilidhs (June 2019)
- Central Station Promotional Session (October 2019)
- Celtic Connections Instrument Workshops (January 2020)

It is unlikely that any of these events will take place in 2020

Social Events

Christmas Dinner (Islay Inn)

Our annual Christmas dinner with a pub music session afterwards was attended by over 50 members.

Burns Supper (Islay Inn)

Our annual Burns Supper was delayed until February due to clash of events in January. Over 40 members attended and enjoyed this traditional event followed by a music session.

End of Year Sessions

Every year at Christmas and summer there is a celebratory end of term session for members, giving each class a chance to play their 'party piece' and demonstrate their progress. During the End of Year Session, GFW carry out fundraising activities to raise money for local charities.

Fundraising

This year GFW members contributed £300, which was donated to two local charities:

- East Glasgow Salvation Army
- Lodging House Mission

Response to Covid-19

Payment of tutors

With classes closing on 16th March 2020, GFW lost three weeks of its third term. Since GFW tutors are freelance there was no obligation to pay them for this period. However, Board members discussed options for tutor payments and it was agreed that if a substantial number of members were willing to forgo a partial refund of their fees for the remainder of the term, it would be possible for a one-off payment to be made. A letter was sent to members via email and the response was sufficiently positive to allow tutors to be paid. Tutors expressed their thanks and gratitude.

Classes during Covid-19

Thanks are due to senior tutors and tutors who continued to offer the slow session and warm up sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays using Zoom. The take up was excellent. Moreover, many tutors continued to offer tuition to their classes remotely. Arrangements were made to highlight this on the GFW website, and a tutor meeting took place to encourage tutors to continue offering classes to members and provide advice on technology where needed. The VSS and the Slow Jam was combined and is now available every second Thursday.

Conclusion

It is not possible at this stage to be sure whether classes will recommence physically in Glasgow Kelvin College for the new session in September 2020. If not, it is fully expected that tutors will continue to offer classes online.

Appendix 1 – GFW Tutors

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

Tutors	Instrument
Amy Allison	Ukulele
Bernadette Kellermann	Fiddle
Douglas Lawrence	Fiddle
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
Ian Murray	Ukulele
Jenn Butterworth	Guitar
John Carmichael	Accordion and Ceilidh Band
John Newman	Guitar
Katherine MacLeod	Whistle and Mixed Instrument
Martin O'Neill	Bodhran
Mike Bryan	Guitar
Laura Beth Salter	Mandolin
Ross Clark	Ukulele
Rua MacMillan	Fiddle
Sandie Forbes	Fiddle
Sarah Alexander	Accordion
Sarah Markey	Whistle
Sean Gray	Guitar and Mixed Instrument
Steve Fivey	Ukulele
Trish Strain	Cello and Fiddle

Appendix 2 – Instruments

Instruments Classes:

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

Junior Instruments Classes:

- Fiddle
- Guitar
- Whistle
- Parents Class

Appendix 3 – GFW Term Dates 2019-20

TERM DATES 2019-20

2019

TERM 1 MONDAYS	TERM 1 WEDNESDAYS
26 August	28 August
2 September	4 September
9 September	11 September
16 September	18 September
23 September	25 September
7 October	9 October
21 October	23 October

(NO CLASSES - 30th Sept, 2nd, 14th 16th Oct)

TERM 2 MONDAYS	TERM 2 WEDNESDAYS
28 October	30 October
4 November	6 November
11 November	13 November
18 November	20 November
25 November	27 November
2 December	4 December
9 December	11 December

2020

TERM 3 MONDAYS	TERM 3 WEDNESDAYS
17 February	19 February
24 February	26 February
2 March	4 March
9 March	11 March
16 March	18 March
23 March	25 March
30 March	1 April

TERM 4 MONDAYS	TERM 4 WEDNESDAYS
20 April	22 April
27 April	29 April
4 May	6 May
11 May	13 May
18 May	20 May
1 June	3 June
8 June	10 June

(NO CLASSES - 25th and 27th May)

Cancelled due to Covid-19

Appendix 4 – Beginner Fiddle Support

Additional Support for Abs Beginners Fiddle Group

Learning to play fiddle as a beginner can be a bit of challenge due to the complex physical demands of playing. It can take a long time to maintain progress and **GFW** wants you to stay on board and persevere.

So over and above term-time lessons at Kelvin College, **GFW** proposes, over and above normal classes,

- to offer a clinic prior to regular classes in Room MF 15 starting at 6.30pm. This is a 'drop-in' class. You can get tuned up ask about problems /concerns and have a practice of the tunes you are learning in class etc.
- to create a voluntary 'WhatsApp' group for you to meet informally or for you to share problems with other learners
- to offer additional events and activities targeted at beginners over Easter and summer breaks
- to institute a page on the website for Absolute Beginners with materials, sound files etc on website in coordination with Absolute Beginners Team...