



Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann

Province of Britain
Annual Report 2018



COMHALTAS

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Vincent Jordan, Uachtarán an Comhaltais

Fáiltím romhaibh go léir chuig ár gComhdháil, agus Bliain na mBall á gceiliúradh againn.

As we look back over the past year, I can sense the satisfaction of all the events that fall within the remit of the Provincial Council. The Echoes of Erin tour in February was an outstanding success, with the concert tour bringing Traditional arts around the UK. Liverpool, Glasgow, Settle, Tyneside, Leeds, Oxford, Leamington Spa, Welwyn Garden City and London all hosted the show.



In the summer, we all enjoyed the superb weather and a fabulous venue for Fleadh na Breataine at Sterling University. A vote of thanks and considerable praise is due to Frank McArdle and his team who organised the fleadh in Sterling.

During the year, members of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann became 'Dementia' aware through training and service delivery organised by the Provincial Council. I must say, a well thought out and worthwhile project.

We can look forward to a further Echoes of Erin Tour (I am informed that this is a brilliant concert, so look out for it in your area this month) and Fleadh na Breataine in the beautiful town of Kirkby Lonsdale in Cumbria. This will be a fleadh like no other, in the market town with its quaintness, and village atmosphere. I have attended a meeting in Kirkby with the fleadh committee and I was impressed to see two Kirkby residents on the committee, displaying a willingness to cooperate and contribute fully. Congratulations to Peter Fawcett (Northern Region PRO) for all his efforts and knowledge to bring the fleadh to Kirkby Lonsdale.

Finally, Thank you to all the Provincial Council for their hard work. Many congratulations on all the achievements and let's maintain and increase the membership of this wonderful organisation.

Gabhaim buíochas libh as bhur gcuid oibre, bhur scileanna, bhur gcuid ama agus eagna, tréithe a thacaíonn go mór linn agus sinn ag iarraidh ealaíona traidisiúnta na hÉireann a chaomhnú.



The story of Comhaltas na Breataine is exceptional and inspiring

Dr Labhrás Ó Murchú, Ardstiúrthóir CCÉ

The Annual Convention of Comhaltas provides the opportunity of assessing the achievements and challenges of the past and re-dedicating ourselves and planning for the future. The story of Comhaltas na Breataine is exceptional and inspiring. The contribution of thousands of people down through the years has once again emphasised the role and importance of the Irish diaspora in our cultural movement.



The extraordinary success of Comhaltas is attributable to the continuity of purpose and endeavour which the movement achieved. It succeeded in attracting the younger generation to its ranks.

The movement is right not to be complacent. We live in a changing and challenging world. We are well poised to meet such challenges and, indeed, we can be all the stronger for them. The challenges of our day are no more daunting than those which faced the founders of Comhaltas in 1951. If the mission of the founders now seems easier this could be attributable to the success which they achieved.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to all those who down through the years have contributed to the development of Comhaltas: visionaries, performers, teachers, adjudicators, administrators. They have brought happiness, a sense of race and pride in ourselves to Ireland and enriched the lives of the Irish community abroad. This is their monument and our goal.

Go raibh rath Dé ar bhúr saothar. Tá an Comhaltas agus náisiún na nGael go mór faoi chomaoin agaibh.



Teachtaireacht an Chathaoirligh *Chairman's Address*

*Is mian liom fáilte a chur gach éinne to ár cruinniú
bhliantúil an deireadh seachtaine seo.*

I would like to welcome everyone here to our annual convention in Liverpool and thank the Northern Region for their hard work in organising and hosting us this weekend.

Once again there has been considerable progress made in our province throughout the year. Our Project Officers have been particularly busy.

Our Comhaltas na Breataine website has been redesigned to make it more attractive, accurate and relevant. We have a new up to date Data Protection Policy, a refreshed Children and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and a new Comhaltas na Breataine podcast 'TradPod'.

We have initiated a dementia research project funded through our ESP application and piloted by Josie Nugent, a musician and music therapist who was living here for many years. We are aiming as a province to achieve a Quality Accreditation Mark through a program called StepUp. This will enhance our reputation and give us greater distinction and esteem as an organisation.

We are seeing the fruits of our labours in our education project with hundreds of schoolchildren being introduced to traditional Irish music, and we are hoping this will grow even more. We have hopes for a couple of new branches to be set up in areas where there are enthusiastic local volunteers, and we have finally seen the launch of our excellent Youth CD, Glúin Nua. We have continued to make strides in the promotion of the Irish language in our province, and the excellent Gaelic Voices festival is at the forefront

of the revival in London. We are also proposing a change to the way the Echoes of Erin concert is delivered.

These are just a few things I picked out and there are many more ongoing projects that there isn't room to list here. I would like to thank the four project officers for all their hard work throughout the year, but also the management team who meet and plan and supervise the business. *Go raibh mile maith agaibh.*

We had a fantastic weekend in the beautiful environs of Stirling University at the All Britain fleadh, and this year we go to the market town of Kirkby Lonsdale hosted by the Northern Region which while presenting challenges also offers opportunities for our development as an organisation. I would like to pay tribute to Peter Fawcett who has been catalyst, inspiration and motivator in bringing the fleadh to a new setting.

2019 has been designated by Comhaltas as Bliain na mBall – Member's Year. Each unit is encouraged to plan its own programme. This could involve keeping up to date with the recent changes in our membership, GDPR and Vulnerable Persons Policy, recruiting new members and training for existing ones, adoption from the An Ré Nua and much more. I hope you will take the opportunity to partake in these activities to help consolidate and strengthen our branches.

Finally, I would like to thank all volunteers for their dedication and hard work throughout the year and wish you all well in your activities for the coming year.

Imíonn an tuirse ach fanann an tairbhe!

*Mícheál MacCnáimhin
Cathaoirleach, Comhairle na Breataine*



Tuarascáil an Rúnaí *Secretary's Report*

As always 2018 has been a busy year for Comhaltas in Britain with music classes, workshops, performances sessions and céilí continuing to take place across the country. Our fleadhanna continue to be the main focus of activity for many young musicians who use this annual process to improve their musicianship and now increasingly their dancing and storytelling skills.

The Echoes of Erin Concert tour continues annually and is a much-needed link to those in the Irish community and beyond who 'don't play themselves' but have a deep love of Irish music and the connection to a community and the Comhaltas family this brings.

In addition to the success of many of our musicians at Fleadh Cheoil na Breataine and Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann we had 2 Comhaltas musicians as finalists for the BBC Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year, Benedict Morris and Sarah Markey. Benedict becoming the third Comhaltas winner of the competition in the last 6 years.

Comhaltas was recognised by the Scottish assembly and musicians from our Irish Minstrels branch performed at the Scottish parliament while in London our musicians continue to be called upon to support events at the Irish Embassy.

Partnerships have become a greater focus for us over the year, now more than ever we are engaging with Irish in Britain, GAA, Sound Sense, Liverpool Charity and Voluntary Services, English Folk Dance and Song Society even more. We also continue to work with several festivals across the country providing opportunities for our musicians to perform to a wide and varied audience.

We continue to place a high regard on our education program and have been developing a new school's package for non-specialist teachers to be able to take traditional Irish music into schools. This package has been successfully piloted and is poised to be rolled



out across the country in parallel with the ArtsMark and ArtsAward schemes as well as our own SCT examinations.

We are also pleased to say that one of our project officers, Paddy Callaghan achieved the TTCT teacher training course in Dublin, finishing with the highest teaching mark on the course.

Our flagship health and wellbeing project is being expanded. Following the success and development of our support for those living with dementia we are beginning to look at mental health as an issue for musicians and the wider Irish community and will be developing new policy and activity to help support those of all ages with mental health.

Behind the scenes the provincial council, management team and staff have devoted considerable time to strengthening and developing the infrastructure of Comhaltas in Britain, so we continue to be best placed to support the Irish community. Work on gaining recognised charitable status is progressing as to is our pursuit of a recognised quality assurance mark, diversifying our funding and training for staff and officers.

Looking forward we have an exciting year ahead with significant expansion and development of Fleadh Cheoil na Breataine as for the first time we are 'Taking over the town' in mirroring the provincial fleadhanna in Ireland we will be turning the town of Kirkby Lonsdale green for a weekend of Irish Culture with a true community festival of music, song dance and fun.

*Katie Garghan
Rúnaí, Comhairle na Breataine*

●●● *Tuarascáil na hÓige* *Youth Report*

2018 was a particularly important year for young people in the organisation as it was designated as “Bliain na nÓg” – the year of the youth.

Looking back to the All Britain Fleadh in June, hosted by Irish Minstrels CCÉ, the Fleadh committee organised a youth session. Attendance dipped in comparison to previous years, likely due to location. Despite this it was still a great success, and those who attended seemed to really enjoy it.



As in previous years, we were invited to perform on the Gig Rig at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, in Drogheda. I was unable to attend due to other commitments, and I’d like to thank Caroline Kay (Irish Minstrels) for stepping in and organising this performance on my behalf. We also had a group performing at the Overseas reception & concert, amongst groups from Europe, America, Japan and Australia. In attendance were diplomatic representatives of The United States, Japan, Shanghai and Turkey.

This year we managed to advance on previous years’ successes, with a huge 16 medals heading back to Britain from Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann. Massive congratulations go to all our medal winners detailed here. It is especially worth noting the success of St Roch’s U12 Grúpaí Cheoil, under the direction of Roisin Anne Hughes, who went on to win an Infinitime Music Award, and were invited to perform at the Scottish Parliament to mark the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Cara Conway	Irish Minstrels CCÉ	2 nd	U12 Fiddle
Cara Sharkey	Irish Minstrels CCÉ	3 rd	U12 Flute
Myles Macaulay	Irish Minstrels CCÉ	1 st	U12 Piano
		3 rd	U12 Piano Accordion
Ben Connolly	North London CCÉ	2 nd	12-15 Flute
Alex Morgan	East London CCÉ	1 st	12-15 Piano Accordion
Michael Dudgeon	Irish Minstrels CCÉ	2 nd	12-15 Piano Accordion
Rory Stark	St James the Great CCÉ	1 st	15-18 Whistle
		3 rd	Whistle SA
Malachy Arnold	Irish Minstrels CCÉ	2 nd	15-18 Harp
Joe McCann	East London CCÉ	3 rd	Mouth Organ
Brogan McAuliffe	East London CCÉ	2 nd	Senior Concertina
		3 rd	Senior Whistle
David Browne	Irish Minstrels CCÉ	2 nd	Senior Piano Accordion
Samuel De Santi	West London CCÉ	2 nd	Senior Accompaniment
St Roch's A	Irish Minstrels CCÉ	1 st	U12 Grupai Cheoil

In addition to Fleadh success, I'd also like to congratulate Benedict Morris (St Patrick's CCÉ) on being this year's recipient of the prestigious BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the year – a very worthy winner. Congratulations also goes to Sarah Markey (also St Patrick's CCÉ) for being amongst the 6 finalists also. It was great to see the Irish tradition alive in their selections, especially on such a public stage, and great to raise awareness of the work we do as an organisation in nurturing talent and keeping the tradition alive

Now in its 5th year, the Trip to Birmingham Trad Festival was another highlight of the festival calendar this year. Run by Comhaltas members, it has become a great opportunity to bring together young people from all over the country to see some of the finest exponents of Irish Traditional Music. The festival's open stage competition "The Molloy Award" – named after Anne and Pat Molloy, stalwarts of the Irish traditional music scene in Birmingham.

Moving on to the year ahead, as in previous years, I'd like to encourage all branches to ensure that they have filled their youth officer positions. It's vital that young people within the organisation have the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process at both branch and regional level. There are great resources put in place by the Ard Comhairle to guide young people in this role.

It has become apparent that we need to look at recruitment for our youth performance group. It has been increasingly difficult to get representation from all regions at our events and performances, not surprising when the group that we have been targeting were recruited back in 2015 for the start of the 'As yet untitled...' CD project. I'm sure there are lots of young people out there who are keen to get involved in various performance opportunities that come up throughout the year. If interested, then get in touch by email at youthofficer@comhaltas.co.uk.

Lastly, on a personal note, I'd like to offer my sincere thanks to the Provincial council and our project officers, especially Paddy and Patrick, not only for their unfailing support throughout the last few years, but also for nominating me for the Gradam na nÓg award. The awards were given to mark, "Bliain na nÓg" and to highlight and acknowledge the contribution of young people to Comhaltas, Irish culture and community service. I was honoured to receive mine from Michael Nevin at the Overseas Concert in Drogheda.

Go raibh maith agaibh,

David Browne
Oifigeach na nÓg, Comhairle na Breataine

Tuairisc Treoraí na Gaeilge ●●●

A chairde Ghaeil,

An príomh-imeacht a reáchtáil mé i 2018 sa chúige ná Seomra na Gaeilge ag Fleadh Cheoil na Breataine i Struiglea na hAlban i mí an Mheithimh.

Tháinig neart daoine ó gach cearn don tír chugam chun a gcéad blas na Gaeilge a fháil nó chun a gcuid Gaeilge a úsáid don chéad uair le tamaill nó díreach fá choinne comhrá i nGaeilge.

Chomh maith le sin bhí neart comharthaí dátheangach/i nGaeilge curtha suas.

Chomh maith leis na daoine fásta agus páistí a ghlac páirt i gcomórtais Amhránaíocht na Gaeilge, ghlac cúpla ball as Albain páirt sa chomórtas Scéalaíocht, sílim an chéad uair le cúpla bliain a bhí daoine sa chomórtas sin. Ghlac fear amháin acu, Mícheál Ó Grianna, páirt sa chomórtas sin ag Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann chomh maith.

Bíonn craobhacha éagsúla ag cur chun cinn úsáid na Gaeilge i mbealaí éagsúla m.s. na ranganna amhránaíochta ag Craobh St James The Great agus Irish Minstrels i nGlaschú agus rang na Gaeilge i New Stevenson/Motherwell ag Craobh Johnny Doherty.

Tá pleananna curtha i bhfeidhm, in éineacht le Conradh na Gaeilge Londain agus daoine eile, chun a lán imeachtaí Gaelach a bheith ann i rith Fleadh Cheoil na Breataine i mbliana i Kirkby Lonsdale. Tá súil agam go bhfeicfidh mé sibh ann agus go nglacfaidh sibh an seans chun giota beag (nó níos mó) Gaeilge a úsáid!

Déan teagmháil liom ar evind@hotmail.com / cnag_glaschu@hotmail.com / 07866453708 má tá ceist ar bith agat nó dá mbeifeá ag iarraidh caint faoi dheiseanna chun an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn i do chraobh nó réigiún.

*Evin Downey
Teoraí na Gaeilge, Comhaltas na Breataine*

A chairde,

The main event I took organised in the province in 2018 was the Seomra na Gaeilge (Irish Language 'Room') at Fleadh Cheoil na Breataine in Stirling in June.

Many people from across the country came along to either get their first taste of Irish, to use their Irish for the first time in a while or just for a chat in Irish.

In addition to this, there was plenty of bilingual / Irish language signage put up for the Fleadh.

In addition to the adults and children who participated in the Irish singing competitions, some members from Scotland participated in the Scéalaíocht (Storytelling in Irish) competition, I think the first time there were competitors in that competition for a few years. One of them, Mícheál Ó Grianna, also participated in this competition at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.

Different branches promote the use of Irish in a variety of ways e.g. the singing classes at the St James The Great and Irish Minstrels branches in Glasgow and the Irish language class in New Stevenson / Motherwell at the Johnny Doherty branch.

Plans are being put together, with help with Conradh na Gaeilge Londain and others, for arrange many Irish language events during the Fleadh Cheoil na Breataine this year in Kirkby Lonsdale. I hope I'll see you there and that you'll take the opportunity to use a little (or more) Irish while you're there!

Contact me on evind@hotmail.com / cnag_glaschu@hotmail.com / 07866453708 if you have any questions or would you like to talk about opportunities to promote the Irish language in your branch or region

*Teoraí na Gaeilge Report,
Comhaltas na Breataine*

Tuarascáil an Oifigeach Caidreamh Poiblí



PRO report



Comhaltas na Breataine has had yet another promising year. Our province has continued to demonstrate strong performances at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, with the pinnacle being St. Rochs U12 Grúpaí Cheoil winning the All-Ireland!

Promoting Comhaltas to new communities and organisations has been a highlight. This year the provincial fleadh will be run as a market town fleadh in Kirby Lonsdale. The views are idyllic, and it is ideally situated between the Yorkshire Dales and the Lake District creating a beautiful backdrop to the fleadh.

This year's Fleadh promises to be a great weekend with Comhaltas reaching out to new communities - hopefully establishing a legacy.

I have enjoyed and been privileged to have held the position of PRO for the last two years. However, I am studying for my Masters in Conflict Transformation and Social Justice at Queens University, Belfast and will not be seeking re-election. I wish my successor the best of luck and hope they enjoy being part of our Provincial Council as I have.

To my fellow officers go raibh maith agat for your support guidance and friendship.

Is mise le meas,

Ciarán Doolin
Oifigeach Caidrimh Phoiblí





Health and Wellbeing with Comhaltas in Britain

Comhaltas have worked extensively this year to further their understanding of many aspects of Health and Wellbeing and how through the use of traditional Irish music and arts we can further help and enhance lives throughout our membership. This is not just around physical health and wellbeing but also mental health, ranging from minor depression through to the other end of spectrum with dementia. We have worked closely with a number of specialist advisors throughout the year to help further our understanding of how to both help people suffering and also help to raise the awareness in the community.

There was a number of regional workshops available to our members titled “Dementia in Music”, delivered by Dr Mary Tilki. Following the success of this, we were able to use designated funding to do a feasibility study to find ways that Comhaltas can extend and further ourselves within Health and Wellbeing.

In January Music Therapist and traditional musician Dr Josie Nugent travelled to the UK to see first-hand some of the work being carried out by Comhaltas Project Officers and branches throughout the province. Dr Josie Nugent led music therapy sessions in Birmingham, Manchester, London and Liverpool with 65 dementia patients attending. Using this data and other information obtained from working alongside Project Officers, her own vast expertise and experience feasibility report is presently being prepared which will be used for pinpointing useful upskilling opportunities for



our staff and membership and to obtain future funding for our valuable work with dementia sufferers

Another aspect to our work Health and Wellbeing is Mental Health. We now have a Qualified Mental Health first aider in the Comhaltas UK Project Officer team. The link between musicians and mental health is prevalent and it essential that we are equipped to deal with mental health with equal importance as physical health. that we continue to work closely with agencies to deepen our knowledge. We aim to have youth Mental Health champions and ambassadors within each branch of Comhaltas in the UK to promote awareness and provide help and signposting for all of our membership.

Michelle O'Leary
Project Officer



Comhaltas Music in Schools ●●●

A more formalized approach to traditional music teaching in schools has been an aspiration of the Project officer team for some time. The initial seed, and encouragement for developing the idea came from line manager Jim Teevan, and builds upon the work of traditional Musicians that currently teach in schools across the province.

To Date, 3 successful Pilot projects have been run in Schools in Bedford and Luton, working in partnership with Music teacher and traditional musician Georgina Murphy Clifford, and the Luton Schools Music Hub. Approximately 250 children have experienced learning traditional music in school

Mrs Murphy Clifford has devised a scheme of works and detailed lesson plans that can be delivered by non-traditional music practitioners. The scheme meets all the current Government directives for school's music, in a format familiar to education professionals, and can be adapted by music teachers from a traditional music background.

The emphasis of the 12-week program is on learning fundamental musical principals through the Whistle, by ear.

It is hoped that participation in the project within schools, will encourage young learners and their families to seek out their local branch and music class, thus developing the branch and growing membership.

We would encourage and support branches in hosting welcome events in areas where the project is being run.

Comhaltas na Breataine can provide lesson plans, support material, backing tracks and training for anyone interested in delivering the program.

*John Devine
Project Officer*





GDPR

On 25th May 2018 the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came in to law across Europe. This new law was designed to give more ownership over a person's data and replaced the old Data Protection act of 1998. Compliance with GDPR legislation is important from a legal perspective, but also in terms of the repercussions of failure to comply, with fines which can run in to millions of pounds.

GDPR legislation created a real problem for our organisation in a number of ways. Firstly, as a membership organisation, it is by definition that we collect personal data on our members for our processes including membership and competition. The way this personal data was previously handled whilst being compliant with the DPA, was not in a way which was compliant with GDPR and these processes affected virtually all areas of Comhaltas activity. It is also worth noting that many of our data processors, are individuals who are of an older generation who do not always adapt particularly well to new processes and the understanding of why they are important.

In the run up to may, I created a new Data Protection Policy for the organisation and a help guide which outlined what the responsibilities were for each branch, and held workshops with branches who requested additional help to ensure their processes were compliant. I was also asked to assist with the drafting of guidelines and new processes for head office, and for other committees of Comhaltas in Britain including Meitheal and Music Sub-Committee.

I am delighted to say that the uptake of the new processes (of which the online membership is a key area) has been fantastic, and the way the organisation has adapted to this new legislation has been surprisingly straight forward.

I will of course monitor processes going forward and give guidance and assistance where necessary to ensure that Comhaltas in Britain is always compliant with legislation.

*Patrick Callaghan
Project Officer*

Archives ●●●

The Comhaltas na Breataine archives continue to go from strength to strength with improved displays at Fleadh Cheoil na Breataine and Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann where Drogheda provided one of the best venues for the archive display in recent years. The archive exhibition spearheaded by Britain now encompasses all four provinces in Ireland as well as contributions from North America and Britain making it an international display and a now well established and popular feature of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.

This history and legacy of over 60 years of Comhaltas na Breataine is varied and exciting. Without the contribution of many volunteers, musicians, singers, storytellers, officers and members, Comhaltas would not have achieved so much and not be a worldwide organisation today. It is fitting that 2019 has been designated “Bliain na mBall” in special tribute to our members and volunteers who continue to promote the ideals of Comhaltas and our Irish cultural traditions.

While our archive is made up of photographs, articles and video it is the personal stories, the experience of our community that the pictures represent which hold the real value of our archive. Each of us has our own collection of stories, memories and experiences which enrich the tapestry of the movement and our archive seeks to remember these stories for future generations.

Recent years have seen exciting developments in our archive work with the release of ‘Fawcett’s Fleadh’ our youth CD and Bill McEvoy’s history of Comhaltas in North America. A number of other tasks are in progress as we aim to expand our archives going forward especially in collecting the oral history’s of our members, young and old so we can show and share the richness of our community and the Comhaltas movement.



●●● The London & Southern Region

The Echoes of Erin enjoyed its second year at Hammersmith ICC and played once more to a packed house. There was an unexpected interval when one of the audience decided to put the smoke alarms in the disabled toilets to the test: the smoke alarms worked a treat. With everyone outside on the street we enjoyed an impromptu show and singalong with a couple of the liveliest of the performers.

In March, 3 of our young female musicians provided an excellent showcase of London Irish talent at the embassy for St Brigid's Day. None other than the president himself, Michael D, shook their hands, gave words of encouragement and showed his appreciation of their talents. Musicians from around the region again made a very significant contribution to the St Patrick's festivities in London, both in the parade and on the stage at Trafalgar Square.

The regional fleadh was held again at Nicholas Breakspear school and run by East London with commendable input from other branches in the region. The Gaelic Voices in May was well attended (despite it being on FA Cup Final Day) and continues to go from strength to strength.

A large number of families and musicians made the journey to the All Britain at Stirling University, meeting with a good degree of success. A very enjoyable weekend was had by

all in the beautiful Scottish countryside. Most of the successful musicians made the subsequent journey to Drogheda for the All Ireland and some of the best performances were suitably rewarded.

Music in South London continues to get stronger with John Devine running regular classes in Wimbledon.

High points of the autumn months included the Hastings fleadh which continues to truly bring the best of Irish traditional music to the local population. This was on the same weekend as the very popular and ever well attended North London Junior Fleadh.

The Return to Camden Town, including the wonderful Pat Connolly album launch was again a very successful and seminal event in the traditional music calendar.

All branches were successfully reconstituted. The St Albans AGM had a particularly big turnout and the West London branch should really benefit from some excellent new young blood. The North London branch once again produced a significant number of the officers for the region.

In the Christmas season all branches had their festive seisiúns, with North London's capping off their All Winners event.

The St Albans New Year seisiún was very well attended with an excellent blend of musicians.

We have started February 2019 with a huge celebration of Tom Beaumont's 70th birthday where everyone enjoyed the ambience, the excellent music and the dancing.



*Dermot Haran
Cathaoirleach, London & Southern Region*

●●● *The Midland Region*

In some ways we have had a great year here in the midlands.

Our Regional meetings have been well attended by all branches, this mainly down to the introduction of Skype at our meetings and facilitating distant branches like Cambridge and Newport (Wales) to be present. We also feel that this has contributed to the same widespread attendance at our Interbranch concerts which have been a real success, particularly in cohesing our Comhaltas branch's communities with each other.

Sadly, we have had branches struggle with maintaining numbers in classes, also struggling to get officers to keep some branches alive and we have had branches affected by serious illness. We are encouraging branches to learn from each other as we go forward and maybe we could also do that at Regional level too and pass that down.

2018 has been a very busy year with a very well-run regional Fleadh held at Princethorpe in May; several competitors qualified for the all-Britain.

The all-Britain held at Stirling in June was another successful weekend, with a number of competitors qualifying for the all-Ireland; the all-Ireland itself was an enjoyable few days.

Other highlights included:



- Leamington hosted the Echoes of Erin tour in February, which was very well attended and supported by all the branches in the Region.
- An open-air session in June in the beautiful Jephson Gardens in Leamington Spa. It was a lovely sunny afternoon and a great session with lots of visitors coming to the gardens stopping by to listen in.
- A successful dementia workshop hosted by Leicester and led by Dr Mary Tilki. It was attended by Leicester, Coventry and Birmingham.
- Leicester also hosted a baby music session, to encourage young parents to re-connect with music.
- A summer céilí held in July, hosted by the Coventry branch.

Lastly the branches in the Region have been busy with céilí, sessions, music classes and in particular fundraising activities in order to support those families who travelled to Drogheda for the All Ireland.

Marian Dwyer
Cathaoirleach, Midland Region



●●● The Northern Region

The Northern Region is a relatively large region with 7 Branches, which stretches from the North West of England over the Pennines to Yorkshire and then up to North East of England. However, many of the Branches are small and are struggling to survive and without the help and support from each other they would not be here today. Bolton CCÉ has merged with Ashton-in-Makerfield due lack of members in Bolton and this was a great loss to the region.

Members from various branches in the region attended Comhaltas Dementia and Music Training at the Irish world Heritage Centre in February. It was a very enjoyable and informative day.

Northern Regional Fleadh Cheoil was hosted by Liverpool CCÉ on Sunday 22nd April 2018 at The Holy Family School in Thornton. Entries for the fleadh were up on previous years and there was a wider range of competitions. It was a very well run fleadh and everyone enjoyed it. Congratulations to Liverpool branch on hosting a successful fleadh.

Stirling University was a beautiful setting for the Fleadh Cheoil na Breataine hosted by Irish Minstrels Branch weekend 23rd & 24th June 2018 and having the accommodation on site was fantastic. The branch was congratulated on their hard work and for hosting a successful fleadh.

Several of our junior and senior musicians qualified for the All Ireland Fleadh in Drogheda again this was an enjoyable weekend.

In June a creative collaboration between the Irish Diaspora Foundation, St Wilfrid's CCÉ and Tura Arctura was hosted. It was a



showcase of sean-nós dancing and music. It was a fabulous opportunity to access a vibrant and popular Irish cultural form and tradition with multiple resources.

Both St Wilfrid's CCÉ and Tara/O'Carolan CCÉ took part in a 12hour session at Charlton Irish Club to raise money for Irish Community Care

In October Tara/O'Carolan hosted a weekend of Music song and dance with a visit for Cahir Comhaltas.

Liverpool CCÉ visited Coatbridge in November and great weekend of music was had by all. It is hoped a returned trip by St Patrick's CCÉ will take place next year.

Leeds CCÉ held their Annual Dinner in November dancing to Leeds Céilí band and listening to the fine traditional singing of their guest from Ireland Tadgh Maher.

They also held a fundraiser in December where the junior members performed the story of 'Uncle Rat and Lady Mouse' - playing, singing, dancing and reciting - putting into action many of the useful pointers given to them by storyteller Kate Corkery.

*Julie O'Hare
Rúnaí, Northern Region*



The Scottish Region

The four Scottish branches are all very active and thriving well, with numbers increasing in some branches'

October 2017

The Scottish Region held a very successful Halloween Céilí in St. Joseph's Hall in Clarkston Glasgow on 29th October. The music was supplied by members of the St. James the Great branch, with their Chair, Stephen Deveney performing as MC for the night. Everyone involved had a great night. St. James the Great have once again recruited new tutors to their branch, and continue with Circle Time once a month, which is proving to be very popular, particularly with younger members.

November 2017

The Regional AGM was held Sunday 11th November in the Little Flower Hall in Carfin. A new committee was elected as follows:

Cathaoirleach na hAlbain	Theresa Gallagher - Murphy	<i>Irish Minstrel's CCÉ</i>
Leas-Chathaoirleach	Francis Hughes	<i>Johnny Doherty CCÉ</i>
Rúnaí	Cathleen Armstrong	<i>Irish Minstrel's CCÉ</i>
Cisteoir	Noreen Hughes	<i>St. Patrick's CCÉ</i>
Oifigeach Caidrimh Phoiblí	James Carney	<i>St. Patrick's CCÉ</i>
Oifigeach na Gaeilge	Eimhín Ó Dúnaigh	<i>St. James the Great CCÉ</i>
Oifigeach Óige	Ciara Gallagher – Murphy	<i>Irish Minstrels CCÉ</i>
Iniúcháir Amháin	Jim McKenna	<i>Johnny Doherty CCÉ</i>
Iniúcháir Dhá	Clare Jane McErlean	<i>St. James the Great CCÉ</i>

Irish Minstrel's CCÉ held a fundraising race night, which although was not as well attended as last year, still proved to be profitable for the branch. On 10th November, Johnny Doherty CCÉ and St. Patrick's CCÉ held a joint fundraiser in St. Monica's Coatbridge. Music was provided by members from both branches, and a great night was had by all. St. James the Great CCÉ continue with their Outreach Programme, visiting local primary and secondary schools, recruiting new members to their branch.

December 2017

Santa was very busy this month, making several visits to all four branches. Each branch held their own Christmas céilithe and parties, which were all very well attended. St. Patrick's had a bag packing event at a local B&M shop and raised £800.42 towards branch funds. Irish Minstrels had their annual Christmas céilí, which was quieter than usual this year.

January 2018

The Irish Minstrel's branch held their annual Winter Workshops in St. Aloysius College, with a host of top tutors on offer. These were enjoyed by all who attended, but numbers could have been higher. Members from all four branches attended the 40th Anniversary celebrations of St. Roch's Céilí Band. This was held in the Kerrydale Suite at Celtic Park, with a meal and céilí, with music provided by bands from each decade. The evening raised £3,300. which was donated to Mary's Meals.

February 2018

The Redhurst Hotel in Giffnock was the venue for the Echoes of Erin Tour Concert on 17th, which was very enjoyable, with Convention on 18th. Next came Feis Glaschú on 25th February, which was held in Woodfarm High School, Thornliebank.

March 2018

All four branches were involved in various St. Patrick's Day celebrations. Johnny Doherty and St. Patrick's hosted a joint céilí on 17th March in St. John Bosco, New Stevenston, which was a sell-out! This proved to be a great fundraiser for both branches. St. James the Great and Irish Minstrels held their own branch céilí, with members of Irish Minstrels CCÉ also

playing at the annual St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Merchant City. Musicians from St. Patrick's CCÉ performed on stage during the street festival in Coatbridge, with the Senior Céilí Band starting off the celebrations at a breakfast function held in St Patrick's Church Hall for invited guests. St. Patrick's said goodbye to its longest standing member, Joe McNulty, who has been a member of the branch for 19 years but has decided to step down.

April 2018

St. James the Great CCÉ hosted the Scottish Fleadh this year, and are to be congratulated for a very well-run and organised event. All four branches had members qualify for the All Britain Fleadh in June in Stirling University. The Irish Minstrel's branch held a céilí in St. Joseph's Church Hall, Clarkston.

May 2018

All four branches were busy organising practices, in preparation for the All Britain Fleadh in Stirling.

June 2018

The All Britain Fleadh was hosted by the Irish Minstrels, and was held in Stirling University, Stirling. This was a superb venue, with everything on site. The Fleadh was very well supported by volunteers from the branch, and was very well organised. Members from all branches enjoyed the weekend, and Frank and his team are to be congratulated. The Johnny Doherty branch lost one of their valued members, with the passing of Sean Feeney. Sean had been a member of the branch for over 30 years, keeping the Irish language alive with his classes. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

August 2018

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann was held in Drogheda this year. Unfortunately, our resident 'travel agent', Moira, didn't have much success in sourcing accommodation. Houses were expensive and a lot of our members found that they were quite a distance away. Congratulations are in order for everyone who participated and to all the medal winners from the Scottish Region:

September 2018

Irish Minstrels CCÉ held their annual Winner's Concert in the Couper Institute, with members and guests performing. As always, this was a great night. Some of the members from St. Patrick's CCÉ volunteered to provide music at a céilí in St Bartholomew's Church Hall, to raise funds for repair works in the hall, while members from St. James the Great CCÉ play at mass every Sunday in their parish. A group from St. James the Great went to Mullingar, to commemorate the anniversary of Monsignor Coakley's death. The group were made to feel very welcome and linked up with the local Comhaltas group for a weekend of music and song.

October 20018

St. James the Great CCÉ held a successful Halloween fancy dress céilí, with music provided by branch members. Congratulations to Benedict Morris and Sarah Markey from the St. Patrick's branch, who have won through to the final of the BBC Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year, 2019. On 5th October, Chonradh na Gaeilge held a lovely service in Our Lady & St. George's Church in memory of Sean Feeney. This was attended by family and friends and members of all branches. A group from Irish Minstrel's CCÉ had a weekend in Gortahork, Co. Donegal. The weekend culminated in a dinner followed by a concert and sessions, where the group performed alongside local musicians. A brilliant weekend was enjoyed by all.

*Cathleen Armstrong
Rúnaí, Réigiún na hAlban*



The Role of the Music Sub-Committee

Provide adjudicators

The Music Sub-Committee (MSC) is responsible for helping to provide adjudicators for the Regional Fleadhanna and the Provincial Fleadh each year. Adjudicators are selected from the official adjudicators list and the committee are constantly looking for new adjudicators to add to the list. The Regions throughout the Province are requested to suggest suitable names for the list and those put forward are required to 'sit-in' at a number of Fleadhanna in order to give them the confidence and experience to then adjudicate on their own. They are also required to attend and complete at least one (and more if possible) seminar for adjudicators. The list of adjudicators is updated every year.

In October/November 2018, the MSC secretary emailed all adjudicators informing them of the information that was held on them by the MSC (in accordance with GDPR guidelines).

A 'Code of Best Practice' issued from headquarters in Ireland will also be sent out to all adjudicators.

Brief adjudicators

The Music Sub-Committee are expected to brief adjudicators on the day of the Fleadh before they adjudicate, so that problems on the day are kept to a minimum. Where possible, we send briefing notes before the Fleadh in order to remind adjudicators of the latest updates. The Music Sub-Committee members from the Region running the Fleadh are responsible for briefing the adjudicators.

In 2019, the briefing of adjudicators should also highlight safeguarding. A copy of the safeguarding policy will be sent to adjudicators prior to the Fleadh that they are adjudicating. It is also imperative that the adjudicator has a clerk (18+) with them at all times. An adjudicator should never be in a room on their own adjudicating.



Deal with complaints re adjudicators

It is very important that we, as a Music Sub-Committee, are informed by the Fleadh Committee after any Fleadh if you feel disappointed in any way with an adjudicator. We will always respond to your query and if there is any justification in the complaint, we will follow it through. In turn, **it is very important that a Fleadh Committee looks after their adjudicators** in terms of transport, accommodation, meals and expenses for the day/weekend.

Assist with timetable for Fleadhanna

We also deal with aspects of the timetable for Fleadhanna. As we are responsible for selection of adjudicators, there needs to be some liaison between the committee running the Fleadh and the Music Sub-Committee members in that Region to ensure that the relevant adjudicator is being used for the correct competitions and that length of time for competitions has been allocated correctly.

Produce and update a Guidelines Booklet for running a Fleadh

The Music Sub-Committee is responsible for putting together a Fleadh Guidelines Booklet with suggestions for running a Fleadh. This Fleadh package is made available each year to Fleadh secretaries and, in particular, to those involved with running a Fleadh for the first time. We also keep this updated on an annual basis. This will be sent out in plenty of time before the Regional Fleadhanna to the Fleadh secretaries involved and any recent changes will be highlighted.

The Music Sub-Committee are also working on helpful tips for running Fleadh Cheoil na Breataine as this is a huge task for a committee to undertake and even more daunting if the committee have not been involved before. We are hoping that this will be beneficial for anyone running an All Britain. This should be completed in time for this year's All Britain Fleadh.

Coordinate dates of Regional Fleadhanna

We try to ensure that all of the Regional Fleadhanna take place on different dates so that we are not limited in selection of adjudicators. Due to overlaps in previous years, it was

decided that a Region should let the Music Sub-Committee secretary know the date of their Regional Fleadh as soon as possible. The Music Sub-Committee secretary will then inform the other Regions so that no clash occurs.

Seminars for adjudicators

Every few years, the Music Sub-Committee holds a Seminar for adjudicators. These seminars are for sit-in adjudicators (18 years and upwards), new adjudicators who have been added to the list and for more experienced adjudicators, as there are always new ideas and points to consider. We hosted a seminar on the weekend of the 11/12 November 2017 in Wiston Lodge, South Lanarkshire. Three tutors came over from Ireland and worked alongside the Music Sub-Committee in Britain to run a very successful weekend. A lot of preparation by the Music Sub-Committee went into the running of the seminar in order to make it as interactive, informative and enjoyable as possible. The seminar was enjoyed by all and the Music Sub-Committee received some very positive feedback. The next seminar will be held in November 2020 (date not decided on yet), somewhere in the London and Southern Region.

These are some of the many and varied activities that the Music Sub-committee are involved with.

Carmel Burke
Rúnaí - Music Sub-Committee



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