

# Wighton Harpist Lunchtime Series

## Early clàrsach music played by Simon Chadwick

Wighton Heritage Centre, Dundee Central Library, Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2007

A selection of old Scottish tunes played on my battered old replica of the medieval “Queen Mary” harp with silver and gold wire strings.

The old Gaelic harp repertory from Ireland was collected by Edward Bunting directly from the harpers in the late 18th century, and his notebook jottings contain many clues about harmony, setting and arrangement. By contrast, the repertory preserved in Scotland was printed in settings for other instruments. This means that to play it on the harp a lot of reconstruction and guesswork is required. The tradition died out in Ireland soon after 1800 but was already extinct in Scotland 100 years earlier.

Today’s recital takes music from two important books from the collection, James Oswald’s “Caledonian Pocket Companion” for the German-flute or violin of c. 1740 (Wighton 31983) and Daniel Dow’s “Collection of Ancient Scots Music” for violin, harpsichord or German-flute of 1776 (Wighton 53675).

*Port Preist*  
*Port Jean Lindsay*

Two tunes from the Straloch lute manuscript, preserved in Edinburgh and compiled c. 1629 (NLS ms adv.5.2.18). The Scottish lute books are a valuable source of old Gaelic harp music - they are significantly older than most of the Wighton Collection. A version of Port Preist appears in Dow titled “The Fiddlers Content by Rory Dall” so the tune may be a composition of Ruaidhri Dall Ó Catháin (c. 1570 - c. 1650).

*Caoineadh Rioghail*

From Oswald’s “Caledonian Pocket Companion” where it is titled “The Royall Lament”. This tune was composed by Iain Garbh Cholla (The 7th MacLean chief, c.1600-1680) on the execution of Charles I in 1649.

*Rory Dalls Port*

From the “Caledonian Pocket Companion”; the variations may have been composed by Oswald. The tune was used by Burns for “Ae Fond Kiss”.

*Cumb Peathar Ruari*

Composed by Ruaidhri Dall Ó Catháin as a lament for his sister, and preserved in Dow’s book.

*Lude’s Supper*

By Ruaidhri Dall Ó Catháin. This tune appears in both Oswald’s “Caledonian Pocket Companion” and Dow’s “Collection of ancient Scots music”. Lude is the Perthshire house where the medieval “Queen Mary” harp was preserved.

*Cumb Joarla Wigton*

I played this grand Lament for the Earl of Wigton here in October. Since then I have invented some new and exciting ways to play the variations. It was composed in 1619 and is preserved in Dow’s book

For more info call 01334 474263 or visit [www.friendsofwighton.com](http://www.friendsofwighton.com) or [www.simonchadwick.net/wighton](http://www.simonchadwick.net/wighton)  
The next Wighton Harpist event is a demonstration-recital, Wednesday 21st Feb, 1:15 - 1.45 pm at the Wighton Heritage Centre, Dundee Central Library, Wellgate, Dundee, DD1 1DB

# Wighton Harpist

AN  
HISTORICAL ENQUIRY  
RESPECTING  
THE PERFORMANCE

ON THE  
HARP

IN  
THE HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND;

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES, UNTIL IT WAS DISCONTINUED, ABOUT  
THE YEAR 1784.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

AN ACCOUNT OF A VERY ANCIENT CALEDONIAN HARP,

AND OF

THE HARP OF QUEEN MARY.

ILLUSTRATED BY THREE ELEGANT ENGRAVINGS.

DRAWN UP

BY DESIRE OF THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND,  
AND PUBLISHED UNDER ITS PATRONAGE,

BY  
JOHN GUNN, F. A. S. E.

AUTHOR OF A TREATISE ON THE ORIGIN AND IMPROVEMENT OF STRINGED INSTRUMENTS;  
AN ESSAY ON THOUGH CLASS, ADAPTED TO THE VIOLONCELLO, &c.

EDINBURGH:

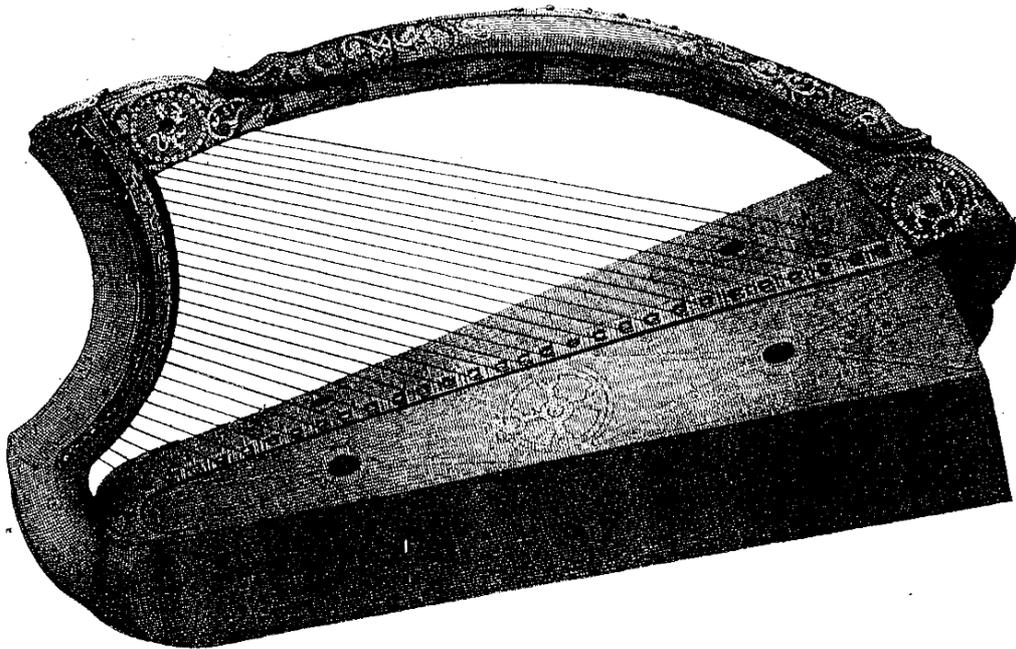
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1807.



*Drawn and Engraved by David Sumner, 1807.*

QUEEN MARY'S HARP.

Published by A. Constable & Co. Edinburgh, April, 1807.

Lunchtime Series 2006