

# Armagh Pipers Club



# Handbook 2018-19



Winner, 2018 Good Tradition Award

## ARMAGH PIPERS CLUB EDUCATION PROGRAMME 2018-19

Armagh Pipers Club is an independent traditional music club based in Armagh City, which has developed into a centre of excellence since its formation in 1966. Its weekly music classes are attended by children and adults from Armagh and seven neighbouring counties, while its annual international event, the William Kennedy Piping Festival, attracts piping enthusiasts from all over the world. A registered charity, it operates from Áras na bPíobairí, its premises in Scotch Street, in the centre of Armagh.

Armagh Pipers Club provides a four-step Education Programme for all its students:

STEP ONE Music Classes

STEP TWO Family Sessions

STEP THREE Performances and Projects

STEP FOUR Professional & Creative Development

Attendance at all four strands will help to develop musicality and an understanding of traditional music.

The year is divided into two Semesters, separated by the Christmas break.

Semester One – Registration 3 & 10 September (classes start 17 September)

Semester Two – Registration date in early January

### FEES FOR SEMESTER ONE September to December 2018

Standard fees for one class per week: one student (adult or child) - **£100**; two students - **£175**; three students - **£225**; family group - **£275** (four or more students, parents/children). There is a small additional charge for the right to attend two classes per week.

Fees are payable at the beginning of each semester.

Fees include access to weekly classes, monthly sessions, guest concerts, Carol Service. They do not include admission to WKPF concerts, Burns Night, purchase of tin whistles, replacement of strings or reeds, instrument loans or deposits.

The Club's Education Programme for 2018-19 receives no Arts Council or other funding. For all other activities, and for core running costs, the Club is entirely dependent on donations and fundraising. The help of parents and students in these efforts is greatly appreciated. You can help out at no cost – just by doing your online shopping, with any of over 4,000 major retailers, through the links at [www.giveasyoulive.com/join/armagh-pipers-club-northern-ireland](http://www.giveasyoulive.com/join/armagh-pipers-club-northern-ireland)



## STEP ONE: CLASSES

APC holds its Monday classes (adults and children) in the Irish-Medium Unit of St Catherine's College (Coláiste Chaitríona – the lower buildings, Callan Bridge Road entrance). There is a short introductory Singing Class from **6.30 to 7pm** for children aged from 4 to 8 (fee £1, payable each week).

From **7 to 7.55pm**, there are Beginner/Junior classes for Whistle, Fiddle, Flute, Banjo, Accordion, Concertina, Harp, Pipes and Advanced Singing. We recommend that all students play whistle for at least a year before beginning another instrument.

From **8 to 9pm** there are Intermediate/Advanced classes for Whistle, Fiddle, Flute, Banjo, Accordion, Concertina, Harp and Pipes, a Junior Singing Class and a mixed-instrument Adult Session Class. Students who pay a small additional fee may attend two classes, keeping in mind that this will involve double practice time at home.

## STEP TWO: FAMILY SESSION

The Session is an essential part of the traditional music scene. Once a month all APC students come together in Áras na bPíobairí with at least one parent and play their tunes in a convivial and relaxed atmosphere. The first half (7 to 8pm) caters for Beginners and Junior musicians, with simple tunes played at an easy pace. We take a break for tea at 8; each family brings along biscuits or cakes while we supply tea, coffee and juice. From 8.30 until 9.30 the Family Session is for Intermediate/Advanced players. Parents who play music are welcome to join in!



## STEP THREE: PERFORMANCES AND PROJECTS

As well as learning music in the Classes and the Session, the Pipers Club occasionally hosts guest artists, giving learners an opportunity to hear live music played by some of the best musicians and singers in Ireland. Where possible there will also be Masterclass workshops offered by the visiting artists to APC students. Over the course of the year the Club will also offer opportunities to take part in special projects; this could include activities developed from the recently completed *Musical Footsteps* project which researched how music and song is passed down through the generations.

## STEP FOUR: PROFESSIONAL & CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

In the final part of each academic year we offer alternatives to normal instrumental and singing classes, allowing students to choose to learn new and different aspects of traditional music, some practical and technical, others research based or creative and exploratory. The following are examples of options:

## Senior Classes

- a) Performance skills workshops – these include arranging music/song for a group, learning how to set up and effectively use PA systems, learning how to sit on stage and engage with the audience
- b) Piping Classes – intensive regular pipe maintenance and reed making classes. This could lead to apprenticeships within our pipe-making workshop
- c) Workshops – to include composition
- d) Heritage project – maintaining and expanding the web-based archive developed as part of the *Musical Footsteps* project, researching their family's musical traditions and traditions of their locality
- e) Collaborations – developing new collaborative links with, for example, Duncairn Arts and Cultural Centre; National Piping Centre, Glasgow, and World Music Centre, Limerick University



## Junior Classes

- a) Learning about, and trying, new instruments
- b) LCM Exams – preparation for London College of Music exams
- c) Performance – composing and rehearsing a musical play to include songs, tunes and dances, performed for parents and teachers from local primary schools
- d) Schools Outreach – young musicians visit local schools at the invitation of the principal to promote interest in learning traditional music and songs to show what children can achieve through attendance at Armagh Pipers Club classes
- e) General Music-Making – organise regular children's sessions and source performance opportunities

## **LCM EXAMINATIONS IN IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC**



APC encourages students to take LCM graded exams. These are offered three times each year by London College of Music and provide an objective measure of musical progress. You will be advised of the closing dates for entries.

Marks achieved in higher grades are accepted by UCAS for University entrance points.

## INSTRUMENT LOAN SCHEME

Students should have their own instruments, and tin whistles can be purchased at the class. If you need advice on instrument purchase, our teachers will be able to help you. APC has a small stock of pipes, harps, flutes, fiddles and accordions which may be borrowed by students for a year. Priority will be given to students who are already in APC and who have shown ability and commitment.



There is a charge of £20 per academic year for the loan of an instrument. If you borrow pipes or harp there is a £50 deposit, refunded on return of the instrument.

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

You will receive emailed Newsletters each month and printed information regarding forthcoming activities. It is vital that parents and students read the Newsletters and are aware of what is happening in the Club. Please ensure that you include an up-to-date email address on your Registration form.

Classes will begin on **17 September** and you will find all dates for the first Semester on your Calendar. On 17 September students should come directly to the Sports Hall where they will meet their teacher and be brought to their classroom. The Sports Hall is also available between 6.30 and 9pm for students to do homework and parents to wait for their children. Parents may not sit in on classes unless they are registered as students in those classes.

Students should arrive on time for their classes and be collected promptly when lessons are finished. We are indebted to St Catherine's College for the use of the school – therefore all classrooms, toilets, Hall etc. must be left as we find them: e.g. if desks are moved, they must be returned to their original positions. We expect the highest standard of behaviour from all students – if children cause disruption in our classes, we will ask parents to remove them from the Pipers Club.

Parents must ensure that children practise at home. Practice times should be 10-15 minutes each day for beginners and increase to an hour+ for Grade 6/8 level. Students are expected to learn their tunes off by heart so that they can play them from memory. When they have memorised their first five tunes they are rewarded with a certificate.

**Junior students (below Grade 6) will need to purchase a Pipers Club tutor book (with CD) at a special price of £5. We also have tin whistles for sale at £5.**

## ARMAGH PIPERS CLUB: 52 YEARS OF MUSICAL EXCELLENCE

Armagh Pipers Club has provided education in traditional music since 1966, and has developed a national and international reputation. Its annual William Kennedy Piping Festival attracts performers and musicians from across the world, and its tutor books are used everywhere where Irish traditional music is taught. Thousands of children and adults have benefitted from its classes provided by carefully selected professional-level tutors, and many APC students have gone on to careers in performance and music education.

The Club's Educational Programme caters for the following each week:

- 1 Introduction to traditional singing and games for 4-7 year olds.
- 2 Two traditional singing classes for all ages.
- 3 Beginners Tin Whistle classes for 7+ year olds; beginners to advanced level classes for Flute, Fiddle, Uilleann Pipes, Harp, Concertina, and Banjo; adult beginners classes for whistle and fiddle.
- 4 Mixed Session class for adults who already play traditional music.

In addition, the Club organises monthly Family Sessions, Singing Sessions, Concerts, Master Classes, Reed-making and Pipe Maintenance workshops, and preparation for London College of Music exams from Grade 1 to Diploma level.

Schools outreach programmes have been organised as part of the Club's *Musical Footsteps* project, and special schools concerts during the Piping Festival, to introduce young people to traditional music and song.

Advanced students have opportunities to develop their composition and arranging skills through innovative group projects. These have included *Musical Footsteps* (documenting family musical history), *Planet Harp*, *The Armagh Song Trail* and *Music of Celebration*. APC groups perform at major events such as



*Celtic Connections*, *Piping Live* and the *Edinburgh Fiddle Festival* in Scotland, the *Baltimore Fiddle Fair*, the *William Kennedy Piping Festival*, *Slógadh*, *National Festival of Music for Youth* and *Siansa*.

Students from the Club have used their experience to play on the professional circuit in groups such as: *Lúnasa, Flook, Upstairs in a Tent, Buille, Dorsa, The Cara Dillon Band, Reel Union, Ioscaid, Nomos, North Cregg, Malinky, Afro-Celt Sound System, Connla, Cúig, The Karan Casey Band, Craobh Rua, The Armagh Rhymers, Skipper's Alley, Réalta, Corner House, Bow Brothers, Breaking Trad, Síoda, Reel to Reel, The APC Big Band* and other ensembles.

APC 'graduates' who have developed successful careers as solo performers include Jarlath Henderson, Alana Henderson, Niall, Cillian and Caoimhín Vallely, Tiarnán Ó Duinnchinn, Brian Finnegan, Leo McCann, Barry Kerr, Niall Murphy, Niall Hanna, Ríoghnach Connolly, Patricia Vallely, Éilis Lavelle, Francie Rocks, Méabh and Tiarnán Smyth, the late Mark Donnelly, and others. Many students have continued their traditional music education at university, both at undergraduate and post-graduate level and are now working in the music industry, as teachers or as performers.

Traditional song has always played a significant role in the APC education programme. Three singing classes per week catering for every age group gives every member a chance to sing alongside Singing Sessions, Master classes, the Armagh Song Trail, the WKPF Cathedral Service, the Carol Concert and the annual Burns Night. The growing popularity of singing within the Club has led to the publication of a new song book entitled *Dobbin's Flowery Vale*, which comes with two CDs, as well as a song DVD and booklet due to be launched soon.

### **FUNDING THE CLUB'S ACTIVITIES**

The Pipers Club is a volunteer-led charity and has no employees: its tutors and administrator are paid by the hour, while the Board elected by and from the membership at General Meetings receives no pay. It costs upwards of £160,000 per year to keep the Club going. In recent years about half of that total has come from grant aid, but our principal funder, the Arts Council, refused to fund the Club for 2018-19. We need to make an extra effort this year to cover a shortfall of £46,500 in funding, and we hope that our adult students and the families of younger students will play their part by supporting any fundraising activities during the year. Details of these events, which will include a major concert in Belfast in January and a Night at the Races, will be in the Club newsletters.

The Club aims to recruit a small number of businesses for a rolling three-year sponsorship programme. Donations to the charity can be fully offset against tax and a number of benefits are available to sponsors. Contact the Club for details.

## Armagh Pipers Club Calendar - Semester 1: September-December

Month	Day	Time	Event	Venue
September	Sat 1	12 – 4 pm	Pop-up Sessions	around the town
	Mon 3, 10	7 pm	Registration & Staff Training	Áras na bPíobairí
	Mon 17, 24	6.30 pm	Classes	Coláiste Chaitríona
	Fri 21	7 pm	Singing Session	Áras na bPíobairí
October	Mon 1	7 pm	Family Session	Áras na bPíobairí
	Mon 8, 15, 22	6.30 pm	Classes	Coláiste Chaitríona
	Sat 20	tbc	National Harp Day	Áras na bPíobairí
	Fri 26	7 pm	Singing Session	Áras na bPíobairí
November	Sat 3	tbc	Uilleann Piping Day	Áras na bPíobairí
	Mon 5	7 pm	Family Session	Áras na bPíobairí
	Mon 5, 12, 26	6.30pm	Classes	Coláiste Chaitríona
	Thurs 15 to Sun 18		25th William Kennedy Piping Festival	
December	Mon 3	7 pm	Family Session	Áras na bPíobairí
	Mon 10, 17	6.30pm	Classes	Coláiste Chaitríona
	Sat 15	7.00pm	Carol Concert	Áras na bPíobairí

### Armagh Pipers Club

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email: [info@armaghpipers.com](mailto:info@armaghpipers.com)

facebook: [armagh.pipersclub](https://www.facebook.com/armagh.pipersclub) and [wkpfarmagh](https://www.facebook.com/wkpfarmagh)

APC website: [www.armaghpipers.com](http://www.armaghpipers.com)

Piping Festival website: [www.armaghpipers.com/wkpf/](http://www.armaghpipers.com/wkpf/)

Brian and Eithne can be contacted by e-mail,  
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The Club has robust Safeguarding procedures: a copy of the  
policy is available to anyone on request.

Safeguarding contacts: Emer, 07840 448027

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