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HARP PERSPECTIVES

BUNTING'S
AIRS, GRACES AND HARPS

DAVID BYERS

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BLAIN

Welcome to *Harp Perspectives*, Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland's online journal.

One of our strategic aims is to establish thought leadership across the harp sector by building up a body of thinking about the harp and harping through a historical and contemporary lens.

Harp Perspectives is a conversation about harping and features key informants, harpers and non-harpers, sharing their authentic views and ideas. We believe that this combination of scholarly research and personal insights will highlight the harping legacy inherited from our tradition bearers and help forge a contemporary harping identity, secure in its understanding of its origin and how it wishes to evolve.

In our April edition, David Byers takes an intriguing look at the life and work of Edward Bunting, his perceived successes and failures, his turbulent financial and personal concerns and his involvement in the Irish Harp Society.

Our thanks to each of our contributors for their willingness to add their voices. Their contributions will no doubt enrich and inform our thinking.

Aibhlín McCrann and Eithne Benson

Editors

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BUNTING'S AIRS, GRACES AND HARPS

David Byers

‘Have you heard Bunting’s Irish music well played – no – for you have not heard him. To me they are sounds might make Pitt melt for the poor Irish. Not a copy is now to be got, but I hear they are very unjustly going to reprint them in Dublin. Miss Clark perhaps can do them justice, and if when she plays the *parting of friends* you should be inspired with words as tender as the tune, you might be immortal ...’

Martha McTier was writing to her brother Dr. William Drennan¹ in Dublin, on 12 December 1797. Whoever Miss Clark was, she was more likely a pianist rather than a harper.

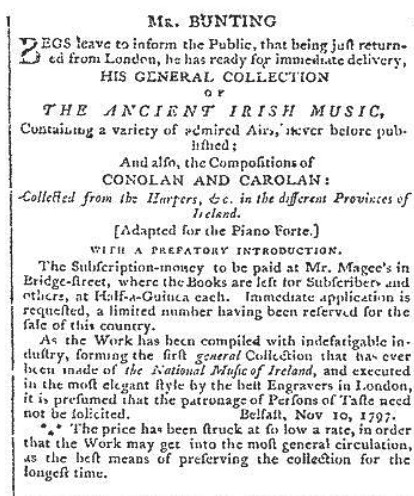


Figure 1, Bunting advertisement, *Belfast News-Letter*, November 1797.

Only one month earlier, on 10 November, Edward Bunting (1773-1843) had announced to the public² that ‘being just returned from London, he has ready for immediate delivery, his general collection of *The Ancient Irish Music ... collected from the Harpers, etc., in the different Provinces of Ireland*. (Adapted for the Piano Forte)’³

Those two quotations contain both the success and the perceived failure of the 24-year-old musician’s first published collection. Thanks to Edward Bunting’s single-handed work transcribing the airs

- 1 Jean Agnew and Maria Luddy, eds., *The Drennan-McTier Letters 1776–1817*, Women’s History Project in association with the Irish Manuscripts Commission, Dublin, 1998–1999, vol.2, p.351. William Drennan (1754-1820) doctor, poet, writer and political propagandist; he was a founding member of the United Irishmen. Martha McTier (1742-1837), sister of William Drennan and writer of well over 1,000 letters, predominantly on political matters, but also dealing with domestic and personal affairs.
- 2 *Belfast News-Letter*, Friday 10 November 1797, p.3 (also Monday 13 November 1797, p.4).
- 3 Edward Bunting, *A General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music, Containing a Variety of Admired Airs Never Before Published, and also the Compositions of Conolan and Carolan; Collected from the Harpers &c. in the Different Provinces of Ireland, and Adapted for the Piano-Forte, with a Prefatory Introduction*, vol.1, London (Preston & Son) 1797.



Figure 2, a pastel portrait of Martha McTier by Eileen Ayrton. © National Museums NI Ulster Museum Collection

at the 1792 Harpers' Assembly,⁴ he saved many from possible extinction, including *The Parting of Friends – Sgarúint na gCompánach*, so appreciated by Martha McTier. Bunting, as he stated in his newspaper announcement, had compiled the collection 'with indefatigable industry' and, as it was 'executed in the most elegant style by the best engravers in London, it is presumed that the patronage of persons of taste need not be solicited.'

Bunting also pointed out that the price of half a guinea was set at 'so low a rate' as to achieve the widest dissemination. Ten years later he wrote,⁵ 'I have computed the cost of getting out the *first* volume alone at not less than from £750 to £800 for

1000 copies. I do not expect to reap from the publication what will pay me expenses.'

Confusingly, his first two publications were both labelled 'vol.1' and those comments refer to the 1809 *Collection*. Whatever the initial outlay cost for the 1797 publication might have been, Bunting's potential financial returns were reduced, as Martha McTier had noted, by the pirating of his edition in Dublin. His achievements were further undermined by Thomas Moore and Sir John Stevenson's 'borrowings' for *Moore's Irish Melodies*. 'I have been exceedingly vexed by Stevenson's having taken my tunes', wrote Bunting⁶ – an understatement if ever there was one!

More recent negativity for all three of Bunting's *Collections* (1797, 1809 and 1840), has pointed to the airs being 'arranged' for piano, the resultant stylistic disparity and, of course, further disappointment about the lack of Irish language song texts – all understandable complaints from today's authentic performance standpoint, but unrealistic at the time. On the really positive side is the fact that so many of Bunting's

4 For a very readable and excellent account of the Belfast Harpers' Assembly, its participants and Bunting himself, see Gráinne Yeats, *The Harp of Ireland*, Belfast 1992.

5 Letter to Mary Ann McCracken, dated 12 April 1809 from London, quoted in Charlotte Milligan Fox, *Annals of the Irish Harpers*, London 1911, p.224-225.

6 Charlotte Milligan Fox, *Ibid.*, p.226. Letter dated 7 October 1809 to Mary Ann McCracken.

working papers, including Irish song texts, have survived and are now safely catalogued in Queen's University Belfast's special collections.

There are Bunting critics now, but there certainly were critics in his own time. In 1812, Dr John Gamble on one of his visits to the north of Ireland, likely in Aghyaran, Co. Tyrone, listened at length to servant girls singing in the kitchen as they worked their spinning wheels. He was entranced, provoking him to observe that Sir John Stevenson was totally unsuited to do justice to Irish music.

'Nor has Mr. Bunting, I think, succeeded much better. They have both built on an entire wrong foundation. It is wonderful, indeed, how any men who have hearts in their bosoms, should be so far misled by the ear, as not to perceive that native Irish music would lose its charm the instant that it was shackled by the symphony and accompaniment of modern art.'⁷

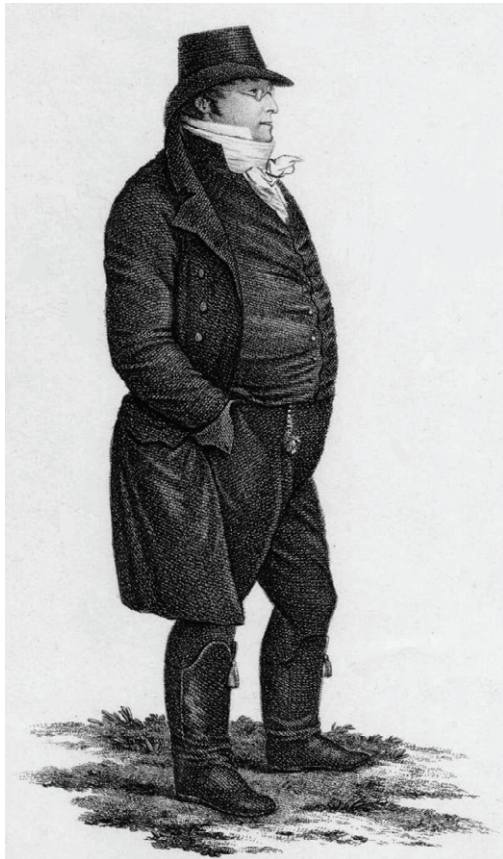


Figure 3, Edward Bunting c. 1811. Drawn and etched by William Brocas jun., published 1 September 1811 by J. Sidebotham, Lower Sackville Street, Dublin. Dedicated to the Harp Societies of Dublin and Belfast.

A perceptive writer indeed. However, with the benefit of hindsight, Bunting had no choice but to respond to contemporary conventions and to overwhelming market forces – primarily from Moore and Stevenson.

But what of Bunting's personality and his endeavours for the Irish harp itself?

The Belfast years of the Armagh-born lad, apprenticed to William Ware, the organist of Belfast's parish church, St. Anne's; his 35 years, 1784-1819, living with, and as one of, the large McCracken family (five sons and two daughters); his transcribing of the airs at the Harpers' Assembly; and his work on the three published *Collections* have been well documented.

It's difficult to believe that Bunting was so engrossed in his music that he was oblivious to the ferment around him in a family so

7 John Gamble, *A View of society and manners in the North of Ireland in the summer and autumn of 1812, etc.*, London, 1813, p.307.

passionately involved with the United Irishmen's cause. The 1792 Harpers' Assembly had taken place against a backdrop of public fervour and celebrations for the American and French Revolutions alongside the recent founding of the Society of United Irishmen. Can you imagine living amongst the family in 1798 during the ill-fated Rising and the hanging of Henry Joy McCracken who must have been like an elder brother to Bunting? In 1796, John McCracken jun., his sisters Mary Ann and Margaret, and Bunting visited Henry Joy McCracken in Kilmainham Gaol in Dublin.



Figure 4, black and white photograph of painting of Mary Ann McCracken, and her niece Maria (Henry Joy McCracken's daughter) and their dog, c.1801. (Francis Joseph Bigger)
© National Museums NI
Ulster Museum Collection

Bunting may not have been an outwardly political activist, but his sympathies are apparent from his oft-quoted performance of *The Parting of Friends* for Wolfe Tone's departure for the USA in 1795;⁸ and the 1803 trial of Thomas Russell,⁹ the former librarian of the Belfast Society for Promoting Knowledge (now the Linen Hall Library). Russell was a close friend of both Mary Ann McCracken (1770-1866) and Bunting. His trial resulted in a temporary break in friendship with Bunting's great supporter and encourager Dr James McDonnell, and a permanent break with Patrick Lynch – more of both anon.

Martha McTier, mentioning Bunting 'the famous musician' to her brother early in 1798,¹⁰ suggested 'it would be worth your while to try if you could

hear him play his Irish music – sugar plums or sweeties is his greatest temptation for he despises both money and praise and is thought a good-hearted original'.

Can that be squared with George Petrie's *Portrait* of his friend Bunting, published in the *Dublin University Magazine*,¹¹ four years after Bunting's death?

8 Wolfe Tone (1763-1798) was a key founding member of the United Irishmen; he sought French assistance for the ill-fated Rising.

9 Thomas Russell (1767-1803), also an important founding member of the United Irishmen, much admired by both Mary Ann McCracken and Martha McTier for his radical views, including his support for women's rights.

10 Agnew and Luddy, eds., *The Drennan-McTier Letters*, vol.2, p.373.

11 'P' [George Petrie], 'Our Portrait Gallery, No.XLI', *Dublin University Magazine*, vol.29, no.169, January 1847.

‘Courtied and caressed, flattered and humoured, he should have paid the usual penalty for such pampering – that his temper should have become pettish, and his habits wayward and idle – he did everything as he liked, with a reckless disregard of what might be thought of it. Wayward and pettish he remained through life, and for a long period – at least occasionally – idle, and, I fear dissipated; for hard drinking was the habit of the Belfastians in those days.’

By the end of Bunting’s life, his moods were probably determined by a heritage mix of the demon drink and his real worries about financial support for his wife and their three children after his demise. On 3 January 1845 (Bunting had died on 21 December 1843), James Orr, the McCracken’s commercial agent in Dublin, wrote to Mary Ann McCracken in Belfast:¹²

‘His death was awfully sudden. His temper was so singularly disagreeable that the very great intimacy that existed between him and me had ceased, for a length of time previous to his death, so much so that some time had elapsed before I heard he was no more.’

Over 30 years earlier, perhaps Dr John Gamble¹³ had heard some similar stories, but at least he gave Bunting the benefit of the doubt:

‘I was highly gratified with Mr. Bunting’s execution on the piano-forte. ... Mr. Bunting is a large, jolly-looking man; that he should fail to be so is hardly possible, for Belfast concerts are never mere music meetings – they are always followed by a supper and store of wine and punch. Mr. Bunting is accused of being at times capricious, and unwilling to gratify curiosity. But musicians, poets and ladies have ever been privileged to be so.’

Petrie’s mention of Bunting’s ‘long period’ of idleness must indeed have been occasional and perhaps even well-deserved. Compiling and researching the first two of his three volumes was incredibly demanding, not least because it had to be fitted in around his busy career as a working musician – a teacher, church organist, accompanist, piano salesman, concerto soloist and concert promoter (including a subscription series of Belfast concerts in 1801 and likely also in the following few years).

Bunting has been justly credited for going above and beyond his original 1792 commission, by continuing to collect airs, encouraged by the Society for Promoting Knowledge and its librarian, Thomas Russell. The years after the 1797 publication included travels in Connacht and Munster and the hiring of Patrick Lynch to collect

12 Francis Joseph Bigger, ‘Memoirs of the Irish Bards’, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, vol.13, no.2, 1907, p.54.

13 John Gamble, *A View of society and manners*, p.66.

further airs and many song texts in Irish.¹⁴ Alas, Lynch turning King's Evidence at Russell's trial in 1803 put paid to the Irish texts and the relationship with Lynch who seems thereafter to have disappeared from sight. The costs associated with the trial were the ruination of the McCracken family's finances.

Another immediate, if temporary, casualty of the trial was Bunting's friendship with Dr James McDonnell,¹⁵ the influential physician who was a prime mover in the 1792 Assembly and, along with his two brothers, had been taught in childhood by harper Arthur O'Neill in Cushendall in the Glens of Antrim. McDonnell's sin was that he contributed 50 guineas towards a public fund for Russell's arrest. At that time, in a poem attached to an undated letter to Martha McTier, William Drennan dubbed him 'The Brutus of Belfast' in his poem *Epitaph on the Living*.¹⁶

Writing home from London on 2 October 1809 to Mary Ann McCracken, Bunting is worried:¹⁷

'I am far from being well at present, and this proceeds perhaps from my great anxiety about this work [the 1809 *General Collection*].¹⁸ For, as I must have during my long absence lost my business in Belfast, I have nothing to depend on but the sale of this work, for some time at least.'

Those money worries persisted across his life. After his death, Mary Ann McCracken wrote to various people seeking for Bunting's wife 'to be placed on the list of her Majesty's pensioners for their attainment in, and promotion of the Arts and Sciences'. This was to ease her impoverished state after the death at the age of 29 of her only son Anthony, a talented engineer (there were also two daughters). The letters reveal how

14 Lynch's journal for his Connacht visit in 1802 is available online from the Queen's University Belfast Special Collections and well worth reading:
<https://digital-library.qub.ac.uk/digital/collection/p15979coll9/id/1152/rec/6>

15 James McDonnell (1763-1845), a founding member of the Society for Promoting Knowledge and a committee member for 25 years. He was a friend to many of the leading radical figures in Belfast in the 1790s and later he founded 'The Belfast Fever Hospital and Dispensary' which would eventually lead to the present-day Royal Victoria Hospital.

16 Agnew and Luddy, eds., *The Drennan-McTier Letters*, vol.3, p.170.

17 Charlotte Milligan Fox, *Annals of the Irish Harpers*, London 1911, p.225-226. Also Cathryn Bronwyn McWilliams, *The Letters and Legacy of Mary Ann McCracken (1770-1866)*, Åbo Akademi University Press, Finland, 2021, Letter 101, p.545.

18 Edward Bunting, *A General collection of the ancient music of Ireland, arranged for the piano forte; some of the most admired melodies are adapted for the voice, to poetry chiefly translated from the original Irish songs, by Thomas Campbell and other eminent poets: to which is prefixed a historical & critical dissertation on the Egyptian, British and Irish harp*, London (Clementi & co.) 1809.

much Bunting's wife had assisted him with his third volume. The following long one-sentence excerpt is from Mary Ann's letter to Robert James Tennent, the liberal MP for Belfast at that time, 27 September 1849:¹⁹

'...neither she [Mrs Bunting] nor any person now alive knows as much as myself, how completely he devoted many years of his life to the subject when his energies were all at their very best, and how frequently he went travelling through the country for many weeks at once, I think I may say months at one time, attended by a Professor of the Irish Language [Patrick Lynch], at another by a musician [the piper James Cody], besides the entire summer of 1809 which he spent in London overseeing the publication of the work, all which was attended with considerable expense, besides the loss of time, which should otherwise have been occupied in giving instructions to others, so that I do not think he derived any pecuniary advantage from his publications.'

The McCracken family was a great help to Bunting in general, but specifically in bringing the 1809 *Collection* to fruition. Mary Ann seems to have made a significant contribution to the *Historical and Critical Dissertation on the Harp* which precedes the Index and Airs, seemingly more than just a secretarial one.²⁰ When she enclosed some additional material with a letter to Bunting in London, he replied on 8 March 1809 to say that the poet Thomas Campbell (1777-1844) felt that some of the wording could be clarified and some of Mary Ann's [foot]notes might be omitted. Campbell provided Bunting with words for four songs, much to Bunting's disappointment. He had hoped for more.

Who mentioned idleness again? Bunting's letter reveals that Mary Ann had clearly chided him about wasting his time in London:²¹

'... I can assure you dear Mary that I have not the least intention of jilting my time with nonsense in London but am determined to exert any little abilities I may have in the line of my profession with all the energy and industry in my power so as to bring out my tedious work (heretofore) in the least possible time – although I am almost petrified at the expense (as I am informed) of the letter press but it must now be done at all events. ...'

Bunting was also much assisted in his 1809 *Collection* by two of Mary Ann's brothers:

19 PRONI, D1748/G/387/1, but quoted from Cathryn Bronwyn McWilliams, *The Letters and Legacy of Mary Ann McCracken*, Letter 146, pp.667, 668.

20 See also R.M. Young, 'Edward Bunting's Irish Music and the McCracken Family', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, Second Series, vol.4, no.3, April 1898, pp.175–178.

21 Linen Hall Library, Beath Collection, IR/BEA/Box 3 (9); also in Cathryn Bronwyn McWilliams, *The Letters and Legacy of Mary Ann McCracken*, Letter 95, pp.537, 538.

Francis McCracken (1762-1842) and John McCracken jun. (1772-1834). The following letter²² from Bunting to Francis (Frank) in Belfast, dated 26 April 1809, provides a glimpse of Bunting, busy in London negotiating and shipping pianos to customers in Belfast. The third paragraph deals with the production of the 1809 *Collection*.

Dear Frank,

I have received some letters lately which from the pain I suffer with a sore throat I had not spirits to answer[:] two from John [McCracken jun.] containing the sketches of Hempson & harp etc., and an order for a small piano forte best sort for Mr. Vance²³ which I have sent with some others from Broadwood[']s for different people by the Venus,²⁴ viz. one for A. McClean,²⁵ one for J. Stevenson,²⁶ one for Mr. Clark,²⁷ one for J. S. Ferguson,²⁸ one for A. Barkly²⁹ and a Grand one for Mr. Tennant [=Tennent],³⁰ (Mr. T left this business to me and I think he ought to have as good a one as Mr.[Mc]Clean at any rate, and it will be just as handy to move and without risk of damage as the smallest size, I request you may mention this to our friend Mr. T. and if he has by this time altered his mind and resolved on a smal[ler] one a line would be time enough to catch the vessel addressed to me at Broadwood[']s as I wish to please your old favorite [sic] companion if possible as well as my friend[]).

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- 22 Linen Hall Library, Beath Collection, IR/BEA/Box 3 (11) The costing of the 1,000 copies was previously published in Robert Magill Young, *Historical Notices of Old Belfast*, Belfast, 1896, p.278 (Young was the father of Mrs Beath (1888-1974)) and reprinted in Cathryn Bronwyn McWilliams, *The Letters and Legacy of Mary Ann McCracken*, p.823. My transcription of the full letter does not replicate the original line or page breaks. The division into paragraphs is also editorial. The underlining is by Bunting.
- 23 Possibly John Vance, a merchant in woollens, Waring-street, Belfast, or Thomas Vance, one of the Belfast Committee of Proprietors of the Atlas Fire & Life Insurance Company of London. Not Rev. Patrick Vance, one of the committee for the 1792 Harpers' Assembly, minister of Bunting's church (the Second Dissenting Congregation, Rosemary-street) who died on 2 January 1800.
- 24 The 'armed brig *Venus*' was advertised as 'loading at London for this port [Belfast] (*Belfast Commercial Chronicle*, Wednesday 26 April 1809, p.2). *Venus* was listed in the 1807 Smyth and Lyons *Belfast Directory* as one of eight London and Liverpool New Traders 'at present under the Direction of a Committee of the Owners'. The six listed owners' names included F. McCracken.
- 25 An Adam McClean was a member of Belfast's Police Committee and also one of the Belfast Committee of Proprietors of the Atlas Fire & Life Insurance Company of London.
- 26 Most likely James Stevenson (1786-1849), organist of Hillsborough Parish Church.
- 27 Probably William Clarke, esq., Donegall-place, Belfast, a magistrate. Likely the same William Clarke, treasurer of the Belfast Poor House and treasurer for an Exchange-Rooms Benefit Concert for the Poor House featuring J.M.C. Bianchi (violin) and Robert Haigh (cello) in August 1799. The concert included Bunting playing a Sonata on the Grand Piano Forte 'in which he will introduce an ancient Irish Air'. (*Belfast News-Letter*, Tuesday 27 August 1799, p.3). Bunting also played the viola in a string quartet by Pleyel – with J.H. Coleman as second violin.
- 28 John S. Ferguson, esq., also of Donegall-place, Belfast, a linen merchant and factor.
- 29 In 1812, Allen Barklie of Donegall-street and Springvale (Doagh) was a member of the First Dissenting Congregation, Rosemary-street, and a signatory to the petition for Catholic Emancipation to both Houses of Parliament. As indeed were both Vances, Adam McClean, brothers John jun., and Francis McCracken, Dr Robert Tennent, Henry (Harry) Joy and Dr Alexander Crawford (see below).
- 30 Likely to be Robert Tennent (1765-1837), founding member of Belfast's Irish Harp Society, medical doctor, philanthropist, sugar merchant and evangelical Presbyterian. A radical, he was interested in Irish culture and the Irish language.

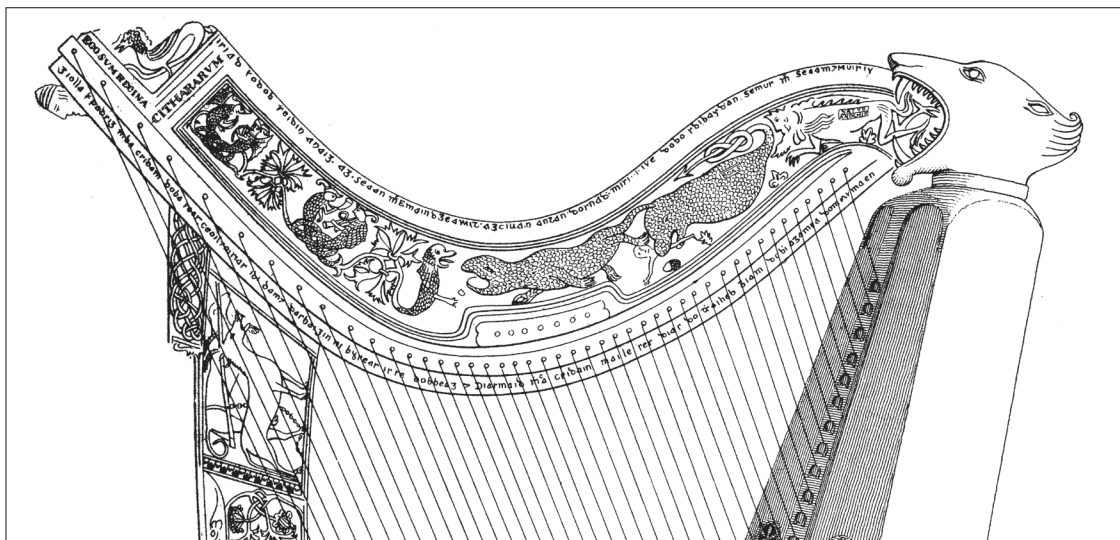


Figure 5, the dog's collar of the Dalway (now Cloyne) Harp in the engraving for Bunting's 1809 *Collection*.

I did not expect a letter from you from Liverpool altho' you promised one when you should arrive but I really think you might just let me know how you're going on a little. I have no news now of any consequence except as you may imagine that the Dr. Crawford³¹ and I are very often together and indeed he is very solicitous about me at present, poor man he don't appear to get on quickly with his business neither[,] therefore he finds satisfaction with my music in the evenings which he says composes his mind.

I am sorry John did not approve of the dog's collar;³² in the manner in which the sound board was finished of the original drawing, it would be next to impossibility for any engraver to do it and I had it altered from Gunn[']s,³³ as well as Brian's Harp,³⁴ all for the best. [Every³⁵] thing relative to my business remains as you left it, I mean as to engraving the music etc., only – for my part it is very nearly ready except that I have not got the songs from Campbell yet but all the other part is ready for engraving but I have not made up my mind how the arrangement is to be as to tunes and songs – never poor mortal regretted the loss of time which I have been about this business more than myself[.] It really has been a great, – aye, a monstrous loss, to me from first to last.

31 Perhaps Dr Alexander Crawford (1755-1823) from Lisburn, a medical doctor and chemist who was in business partnership with Cunningham Greg, manufacturing sulphuric acid at Vitriol Island, Lisburn. Crawford was a staunch supporter of the United Irishmen and had been imprisoned in Kilmainham in 1797 – as was Henry Joy McCracken. See also Brenda Collins, 'Taste, chemistry and mechanics, Early industrial Lisburn, 1760-1825', in *Industry, Trade and People in Ireland, 1650-1950*, UHF, Belfast 2005, p.114.

32 The dog's collar is that of the Dalway (now Cloyne) Harp in the engraving for Bunting's 1809 *Collection*.

33 A reference to John Gunn, *An Historical Enquiry respecting the performance of the harp in the Highlands of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1807.

34 In Charlotte Milligan Fox, *Annals of the Irish Harpers*, London 1911, p.211, is a letter from Bunting in Dublin to Mary Ann McCracken: 'I have been examining Brian Borhoim's harp, and find Vallancey's description to have been inaccurate. I purpose measuring it tomorrow ...' Brian Boru's harp – the Trinity College harp – is now reckoned to be fourteenth or fifteenth century, rather than the eleventh.

35 Badly smudged word ending in 'y'.

As I feel from what Mary, John and Mr Sloan³⁶ write, with some hints from Harry Joy,³⁷ [in³⁸] the same situation that poor Hull³⁹ was in, when he begged “for the love of God[,] Mr. Bunting dear, let me have one big pipe”. Mr. Joy seems to think from his last letter that I have miscalculated the price the work will cost – but you may tell him that I did not put down the probable expense without a good deal of calculation rather under than over the mark which I shall give you

1st.	Campbell	£50
2nd.	Harp engraving (paid for)	10
3.	Frontispiece Hempson	15
4.	Title	15
5.	Title for the outside (in same manner as Moore’s & .. Stevenson’s)	8
6.	Paper at from £3 10s. 0 to £4 0. 0 per ream for 50 reams, which will only print 96 pages per 1000 copies	200
7.	Engraving music plates with Irish, titles, &c., 90 plates at 12/6	62
8.	Working off at press at 5/- per hundred. .. .	£50
	[Pencilled total figure]	400
	Allowance to music dealers, 33 per cent. .. .	300
		700
		<u>without the letterpress.</u>

[An additional comment written on four lines, vertically, on the right-hand side of this financial statement reads:]

With other items / So that you may see I am / not so far wrong in my / statement for 1000 copies.

-
- 36 Probably J. Sloan, librarian of the Society for Promoting Knowledge, then based in the White-linen-hall, Belfast. However it’s worth noting that a William Sloane was a committee member of the Harp Society in May 1810.
- 37 Henry Joy (1766-1838), cousin of the McCracken siblings (he was the grandson of Francis Joy who founded the *Belfast News-Letter* and whose daughter Ann married ship-owner John McCracken sen.). Henry was an important barrister, Solicitor-General, Attorney-General and finally Chief Baron of the Irish Exchequer. He was a great help to Bunting during Bunting’s Dublin years, subventing his church organist’s salary.
- 38 Heavily corrected word, but ‘in’ seems the best interpretation.
- 39 Thomas Hull, dancing master, 10-12 Ann-street, and master of ceremonies for Belfast’s Subscription Assemblies (society balls in the Exchange and Assembly Rooms). He was active between 1806 and 1813 with a ball room at 2 Telfair’s-entry. In September 1816, the ball room was said in press advertisements to be ‘formerly occupied by the late Mr. Thomas Hull’. See also pages 15 and 16.

The letter ends:

Mr Broadwood⁴⁰ is very kind, the young one, in coming to see me, & Thos. Robinson⁴¹ also. I cannot as you may well judge say at what probable time I shall get home but I will push on to get the business finally settled either one way or the other as I am tired heartily of London.
Remember me to your mother and sisters and believe me dear Frank, yours sincerely

E Bunting

Bunting was well occupied across this first decade of the 19th century with one thing or another – and not just collecting airs, giving concerts or selling pianos. The records⁴² of the First Dissenting Congregation – still standing in Rosemary Street – show that at a Heads of Families meeting in 1801 there was ‘a very liberal proposal from Mr. Edward Bunting respecting the purchase of an organ’. The church minister, Dr William Bruce, described by Wolfe Tone in 1791 as ‘an intolerant high priest’, was asked to ‘return their thanks to Mr. Bunting in the warmest terms of gratitude’. But the answer was a very polite ‘no’.

That church’s first organ wasn’t installed until 1853, and the offer by Bunting raises the question of how was he going to source an instrument at that time? Perhaps this was his first potential business relationship with the organ-builder and future harp-maker Stephen White (1760-1831).

Not too much is known about White. It’s likely he was born in Gloucester,⁴³ but worked for most of his life in London. He married Margaret Shields in St Leonard’s, Shoreditch, in May 1787⁴⁴ and at least four sons have been recorded, the youngest, Thomas, born in July 1805. Thomas followed his father in the organ-building business, as did the next three generations – up to 1942!⁴⁵

40 Likely Thomas Broadwood, the youngest son of John Broadwood. Thomas joined the company in 1808 and was the instigator of the gift of a Broadway piano sent to Beethoven in late December 1817.

41 Possibly the portrait painter Thomas Robinson who lived in Belfast from 1801 to 1808, then Dublin where he died in 1810.

42 Tom Moore, *A History of the First Presbyterian Church Belfast, 1644-1983*, Belfast, 1983, p.92.

43 My thanks to Paul Tindall for sharing these genealogical details. See also *British Institute of Organ Studies Reporter*, April 2011, p.57.

44 London Metropolitan Archives: P91/LEN/A/01/Ms 7498/14.

45 See more at <https://www.byersmusic.com/resources/Stephen%20White%20organ-builder.pdf>

A series of advertisements in the *Morning Post* reveals that ‘Mr. White, Organ Builder’ was based at ‘No.24, Cumberland-street, Middlesex Hospital’ between 1802 and 1805. However, across most of the period 1806-1810, Stephen White worked in Belfast, seemingly in close association with Edward Bunting.

His first instrument in Belfast was for the Second Congregation, Rosemary-lane, with ‘consultant’, Edward Bunting. This church, founded in 1708, was built to the rear left of the First Church and was joined in 1722 by the Third Presbyterian Church to the right of the First Church. The McCracken family lived opposite the Third Church. Rosemary-lane became Rosemary-street in 1808.

‘This [the Second Church] is the first Congregation of Protestant Dissenters, in the North of Ireland, which has introduced an organ into the public worship. It will be played by Mr. EDWARD BUNTING, whose musical talents are well known and acknowledged. It has been built by Mr. WHITE, an ingenious mechanic from London, and is constructed so as to acquire considerable power from the use of pedals. – The organ is reckoned by judges one of the best in this part of the country.’⁴⁶

The organist and organ even caught the attention of Dr. Gamble:

‘Music was the favourite recreation [in Belfast], and many were no mean proficient in it. They are probably indebted for this to Mr. Bunting, a man well known in the musical world. He has an extensive school here, and is organist to one of the meeting-houses; for so little fanaticism have now the Presbyterians of Belfast, that they have admitted organs into their places of worship. At no very distant period this would have been reckoned as high a profanation as to have erected a crucifix.’⁴⁷

Every newspaper comment adds something extra. The following editorial mention confirms that Bunting was indeed responsible for White working in Belfast. The advertisement, on the same page, refers to White as a harp maker and reveals his address.

‘Mr. White, organ-builder, whose advertisement appears this day, is the person who was brought over to Ireland by Mr. Bunting, and was the maker of perhaps the finest toned instrument in this kingdom, for the use of the 2d [sic] congregation of Protestant Dissenters in Belfast. Since its erection he has added a number of Pedal pipes, which renders it in power equal to the organ of Westminster Abbey. ...’⁴⁸

46 *Belfast Commercial Chronicle*, Saturday, 6 September 1806, p.2. In this immediate part of the country there were only two church organs for comparison, both built by John Snetzler – one in St Anne’s Parish Church and the other in Hillsborough Parish Church.

47 John Gamble, *A View of society and manners*, p.66.

48 *Belfast News-Letter*, Tuesday, 30 August 1808, p.3.

**MR. WHITE,
ORGAN BUILDER, PIANOFORTE & HARP MAKER,
FROM LONDON**

BEGS leave to inform the Ladies and Gentlemen, that he intends to return to his native City in a short time. On this account, those who have Organs or Pianofortes that require Tuning, or Repairing, particularly the Hammer of the latter new-leathered, (which makes the tone equal to what it was when the Instrument was first imported), ought speedily to give their orders, addressed to him in Orr's-entry, High-street, Belfast.

Since his arrival in this Country he has repaired a number of Instruments, Organs, and Pianofortes, to the universal satisfaction of their Proprietors. Belfast, August 29 [1808].

He has on hands and nearly ready for Sale, a CHAMBER ORGAN, fit for a Drawing-room, or a small Church.

It contains four Stops, viz. Stop Diapason, Open Diapason — Principal, and Fifteenth — Price, in an elegant Mahogany Case, Seventy Guineas.

So Stephen White was said to be leaving Belfast shortly, some time after September 1808, though, as will emerge, he was working in Belfast in 1810. Had his young family remained in London during these years? Might he have travelled back and forth to visit them in London?

Orr's-entry, likely his home and workshop, ran between High-street and Rosemary-lane, parallel with modern day Bridge Street. It was destroyed in the Second World War Belfast blitz of 1941 which also destroyed the Third Church in Rosemary Street.

After completing the organ for Bunting's church, White's next large instrument, c.1807, was for Thomas Hull, dancing master and master of ceremonies for Belfast's Subscription Assemblies, the regular society balls in the Assembly Rooms.

‘During his [Stephen White’s] short residence in this country, he built for Mr. Thos. Hull an organ on an extensive scale ... This instrument has also pedal pipes, and is constructed to play with barrels as well as the fingers.’⁴⁹

Was that organ intended as a rather grand residence organ or did Hull use it to accompany dancing in his Ball-room at 2 Telfair’s-entry, off Ann Street? Whichever it was, something seems to have gone awry. The organ, ‘built by White of London’, and described as new, built entirely of mahogany, on the grandest scale and of the finest tone, was advertised for sale in 1810:⁵⁰ ‘Price, 500 Guineas, which is only one half the London charge.’ Even better, to accommodate a church, Hull would accept payments in annual instalments – ‘for a reasonable consideration’.

The organ eventually found a home in the recently built Chapel of Ease (St George’s, High-street, Belfast) between 1817 and 1824. And coincidentally, the new organist in St George’s in 1817 was none other than Edward Bunting – though marriage and a new life in Dublin beckoned just two years later.

Take a step backwards in time to that August 1808 newspaper advertisement for Stephen White, which described him as a harp maker. St Patrick’s Day that year marked the inauguration of Belfast’s first Irish Harp Society with a subscription list ‘of the Noblemen and Gentlemen associated for the purpose of reviving and encouraging the Irish harp’.

Despite the gender-specific heading, it’s good to see the two prolific letter writers, Martha McTier and Mary Ann McCracken, amongst the small handful of women who are listed. Many names already encountered in this paper were on the list, Edward Bunting of course, but including two McCracken brothers (John jun. and Francis), Henry Joy, Thomas Hull and Drs. James McDonnell and Robert Tennent. Even William Byers, a muslin manufacturer of Donegall-street signed up – sadly no relation!

The Society began with real dynamism. Its Minute Book for the first two and a half years survives in the Beath Collection in the Linen Hall Library⁵¹ and charts a trajectory from neat business-like organisation to increasing desperation as funding becomes more and more difficult. At the Society’s first meeting of subscribers in Linn’s Hotel on

49 *Belfast News-Letter*, Tuesday, 30 August 1808, p.3.

50 *Belfast Commercial Chronicle*, Monday, 11 June 1810, p.3.

51 Linen Hall Library, Beath Collection, IR/BEA/Box 5 (1).

3 May 1808 it was decided to appoint a committee to serve for six months and to meet monthly or ‘oftener’ if necessary; to allow each subscriber (and there were 191 names on the initial list) to attend every committee meeting; and to hold six-monthly general meetings. Drs. James McDonnell and Robert Tennent were tasked to write a paper to explain the progress and views of the new institution.

Not one paper, but two papers were presented in June and, in true committee fashion, the authors were requested to adopt one or combine both and arrange for it to be published in the press.⁵² Key sentences in the final version are these:

‘ ... [The society’s subscription funding is] for the instruction of a select number of pupils on the Irish Harp, and have engaged Mr. Arthur O’Neill as teacher — a man whose character and talents qualify him highly for the employment. It is proposed to select twelve or more persons, of either sex, from such candidates as offer, without distinction of sect or country; and the Society call upon all who delight in the national music, and are fond of contemplating those remains of Ireland, which bespeak the possession of science and civilization in periods of remote antiquity, to co-operate with them in this design. It is hoped that search will be made, especially among the habitations of the poor, for such persons as seem to be highly endowed with natural musical talents, and who, from their age and dispositions, may appear most likely to succeed as scholars. It is hoped likewise, that such pecuniary aid will be contributed by the generous and enlightened, as shall enable the Society to extend their views beyond the mere business of tuition; by giving premiums and support to such of the pupils as are likely to attain eminence in their profession. ...’

A sub-committee of three was ‘requested to receive an estimate from Mr. White for



Figure 6, Arthur O’Neill. Engraving by Thomas Smyth, Belfast.

making three harps and to treat Mr. McClenaghan for one, and report progress [at the] next meeting.’ We’ve already encountered Stephen White, but Mr. McClenaghan remains a mystery and seems never to be heard of again!

At face value, all was going well. The July meeting resolved ‘that the three gentlemen appointed at the last meeting to receive an estimate from Mr. White for three harps be further instructed to learn from him the lowest terms on which he would agree to furnish that number or a single harp on the plainest pattern and if he will

52 *Belfast News-Letter*, Tuesday 14 June 1808, p.2, *Belfast Commercial Chronicle*, Wednesday 15 June 1808, p.2, and *Freeman’s Journal*, Thursday 16 June 1808, p.4.

engage one for 20 guineas or three for 12 or 15 guineas each[,] to make an agreement with him accordingly’.

The minute for the meeting on 1 August is somewhat terse: ‘In consequence of some observations made by the Chairman (Mr Bunting) this evening, resolved that Doctors Tennent, McDonnell and Bryson be appointed to draw up rules and regulations for the better government of the Society.’ The meeting was adjourned to 5 September.

Clearly all was not as well as it ought to be!

Accordingly, new rules were adopted, including strict times; 8pm to 9pm was for business; only then were all Society members able to come along, ‘with liberty to inspect the books, [and] observe the proceedings of the committee’. The remainder of the evening was for conversation, with remarks ‘freely made’ about the Society’s work or observations ‘to further the views of the institution, and partly to hear the strains of our national instrument and examine the proficiency of the scholars. At 11 o’clock the musick [sic] shall withdraw and the meeting conclude’.

And fines would be imposed: ‘Every member of the Committee who shall not appear at 8 o’clock on each night of meeting shall present ten pence to be applied to the general purposes of the Society.’

At the general meeting in November a new committee was elected and ‘Edward Bunting, William Magee and John McCracken jun. appointed to examine and investigate the talents and qualifications of the boys already on the list and how to be hereafter proposed as pupils’.

Perhaps there’s a premonition of financial unease in the need to place an advertisement in the press calling on subscribers to pay their subscriptions and inviting the public to assist the institution.

Good news about Stephen White’s new harps was mentioned, not in the minutes, but in the press report of the meeting: ‘Two harps, the workmanship of an ingenious mechanic in this town, were exhibited at the meeting; and we are informed that several more are now making by the artist who has built two organs in this town, and will be ready for exhibition at the next meeting.’⁵³

53 *Belfast News-Letter*, Friday 4 November 1808, p.2.

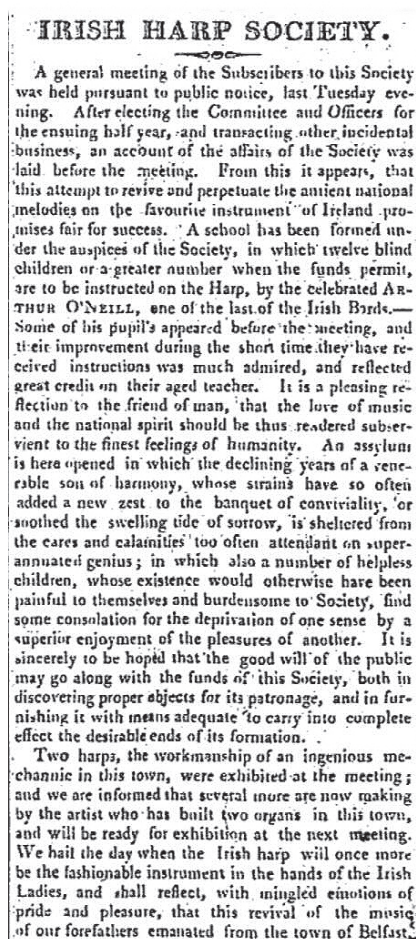


Figure 7, *Belfast News-Letter*, Friday 4 November 1808, page 2.

Whereas the Society's initial press statement in June 1808 referred to a search, especially among the poor, 'for such persons as seem to be highly endowed with natural musical talents, and ... most likely to succeed as scholars', the charitable approach is now to the fore: it's a new school in 'which twelve blind children or a greater number when the funds permit, are to be instructed on the harp, by the celebrated Arthur O'Neill'.⁵⁴

And a new harp maker emerged. In December, three committee members were appointed 'to treat with Mr. McCabe for the purchase of one harp, it to be got at a reasonable price, and the choice of the harp when purchased is also made by Mr. [Arthur] O'Neill.' Like Mr. McClenaghan, the identity of Mr. McCabe remains elusive, but at least McCabe will make a reappearance – eight months hence.

Meanwhile other business proceeded – and clearly some things moved more quickly than harp makers.

On 7 March 1809, the committee resolved that the members should dine together 'every Patrick's Day to celebrate the anniversary of the institution' and that intention should be 'published in the Belfast Papers'.

At that same meeting, Dr. James McDonnell's brother, the surgeon Dr Alexander McDonnell, seconded by Alexander Mitchell (perhaps the famous blind engineer?⁵⁵) proposed that the Society should set up a school for teaching the Irish language with James Cody as the master. Twelve members signed up immediately as scholars and the school was established in Pottinger's-entry.

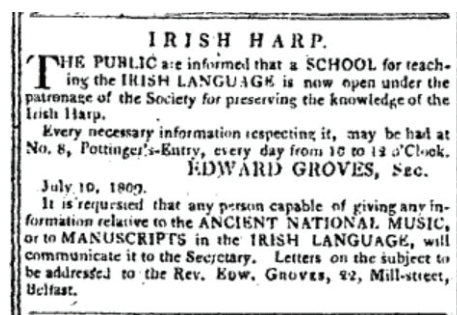


Figure 8, *Belfast News-Letter*, Tuesday, 11 July 1809, page 3 (also 14 July).

54 Ibid.

55 There were two Alexander Mitchell's on the Society's committee – one of Belfast, one of Bier's [sic] Bridge, but not easily separable as to which was which. The engineer (1780-1868) was fond of Irish music and was a friend of both Dr. James McDonnell and Bunting.

The dinner just ten days later was a great success. ‘Conviviality and good order presided’ and the published list of the 18 principal toasts (how many lesser ones were there?) provide a measure of that success! The room was ornamented with ‘a transparency representing St. Patrick in his robes and crozier, and an allegorical figure of Hibernia, with her appropriate emblems, with the following motto — “Take the Harp and raise the lovely song of Selma.”⁵⁶ In the centre of the room was suspended an ancient Irish Harp, decorated with garlands of shamrocks. The walls of the room were ornamented in a corresponding manner.’⁵⁷

Might that ancient Irish Harp have been the template for Stephen White’s new harps?

‘The venerable harper, O’Neill, entertained the lovers of harmony with several national airs’, then songs were sung before ‘Mr. Cody who has lately come from the West of Ireland, to assist in the collection of Irish melodies, performed some favourite airs on the pipes. As the glass enlivened by the toast, circulated, and the heart, alive to the sensations excited, began to expand more freely, the meeting was gratified with an exhibition of a different and interesting nature’.

‘Eight blind boys, supported, clothed, and instructed on the harp, by the Society, were admitted. This living proof of the good already resulting from their patriotic exertions, excited universal interest. They were received with repeated bursts of applause! After playing some airs, as a specimen of their progress, highly flattering to their aged teacher, they retired; and the company prepared for the usual routine of conviviality.’

Bunting was toasted as ‘the preserver of the remnant of our national music, and success to his publication’, but he must have been apoplectic by that stage – toast, No.16. Earlier, at toast No.10, had been none other than his *bête noire*, ‘Anacreon Moore’ as Thomas Moore was known.

Across this period, Edward Bunting retained his position as a committee member but, as we know, he was busy with the publication of his new *Collection* and much of his time was spent in London that summer. Presumably his absence from meetings was not subject to the 2/6 fine recently imposed by the committee for non-attendance. But was his opinion sought on the new harps?

56 Quotation from *Poems of Ossian* by James Macpherson (1736-1796).

57 *Belfast Commercial Chronicle*, Monday 20 March 1809, p.2.

Apparently not. In August ‘Mr. [Alexander] Mitchell having reported that he had consulted with Messrs Ware⁵⁸ and Guarini⁵⁹ [sic] as to the quality of the harp offered for purchase by Mr. McCabe, and they having thought it unadvisable [sic] to offer a large price for it, it was resolved – that the secretary inform Mr. McCabe that they will give five guineas for the harp and if he refuse to sell it at that price, they will give one guinea for the loan they have had of it.’

Clearly not impressed! Things were different a month later. ‘Two harps made by [Stephen] White having been sent in and examined by Messrs. [William] Williams and [Alexander] Mitchell assisted by Mr. Guarini [sic], it was resolved, from their recommendation that they be purchased at the rate of ten guineas each. Resolved that the secretary write to the secretary of the Dublin Harp Society, to inform him that harps of superior tone can be procured here.’

Eat your heart out, John Egan!⁶⁰

Further new rules and regulations, fifteen in total, were established at the November 1809 general meeting, such general meetings taking place twice a year. Two of these applied to the young harpers:

12. At every general meeting there shall be a public examination of the proficiency of the pupils and rewards bestowed according to merit.
13. If any pupil be found either thro’ incapacity or neglect, not to have improved as was to have been expected, he shall be removed and another admitted in his place.

A new mission statement was also set out. ‘This Society has been formed for the purpose of preserving the national music and national instrument of Ireland by instructing a number of blind children in playing the Irish harp and also for procuring and disseminating information relative to the language, history and antiquities of Ireland.’

Three sub-committees were to be established, each of four members: one to collect subscriptions, inspect receipts and expenditure of the money and regulate the

58 William Ware (1756-1825), organist of St Anne’s Parish Church.

59 Vincenzo Guerini arrived in Belfast from Naples to teach Italian, violin, piano and singing in 1806 and he became ‘leader of the band’ of the Anacreontic Society in 1814. He left Belfast in 1839 because of ill health.

60 John Egan (*fl.*1797-1829), Dublin harp-maker. He made instruments for Dublin’s Irish Harp Society (1809-1812) and created the Portable Irish Harp.

household economy; another to promote the knowledge of the Irish language and antiquities, and a third to superintend the musical progress of the pupils and to collect ancient music.

At a meeting on 5 December 1809, it was agreed to invite Mr. Bunting for dinner on Wednesday 20 December and a complimentary address was commissioned expressing the Society's gratitude for his exertions in rescuing the ancient airs from oblivion.

It was also agreed that one of the scholars, Edward McBride, having made such good progress should be presented with a new set of clothes. William Radcliff, a committee member, was 'appointed to furnish him, charging them to the Society'. McBride, from Omagh, Co. Tyrone, was 19 and had been with the Society just over one year, having been 'recommended by Mr. Galbraith of Armagh'.

This was the same McBride who two months later was accused by Arthur O'Neill of having 'an improper connection' with another more recent scholar – Bridget O'Reilly from Virginia, Co. Cavan. The committee investigated the allegations and agreed unanimously 'that such charges have been altogether groundless, false and unfounded'.

Meanwhile, the Society's dinner in honour of Bunting took place at O'Neill's Hotel with reportedly about 50 gentlemen who 'received him with every mark of respect; and at five o'clock they sat down to a sumptuous dinner, elegantly served up, with excellent wines, etc.'⁶¹

Toasts 9 and 10 respectively were for 'the Irish harp' and then 'the Dublin Harp Society'. At which point the chairman Gilbert McIlveen, who had been one of the founding members of the United Irishmen, rose and expressed everyone's appreciation of Bunting's endeavours over the past seventeen years and referred to the new volume, just published.

'The health of Mr. Bunting was drank [sic] with three times three.' Bunting then rose, duly flattered and made a short speech, before he 'begged leave to give as a toast, "The Harp Society of Belfast". This was drank three times three.' The listed toasts continued with eight more, before 'a number of other toasts and songs followed.' No mention, perhaps diplomatically, of Anacreon Moore!

61 *Belfast Commercial Chronicle*, Saturday, 23 December 1809, p.2.

As on St Patrick's Day, Arthur O'Neill played and led his twelve blind pupils into the room, including 'one of whom is a female, Miss O'Reilly.'

At the next general meeting, 10 May 1810, Bunting and John McCracken, jun. were both voted on to the music sub-committee. Bunting was also one of those delegated

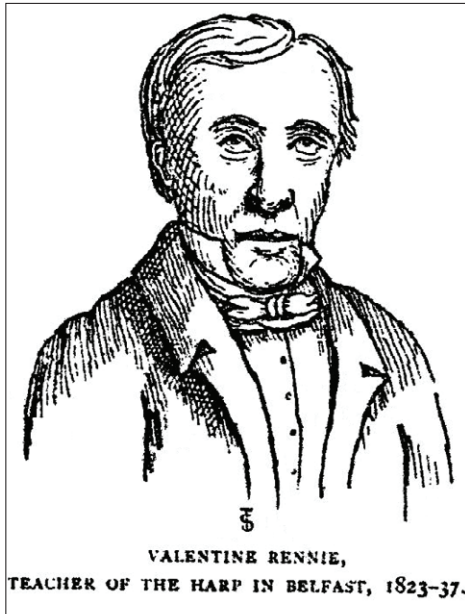


Figure 9, Valentine Rainey (later spelled Rennie). From *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, ser.2, vol.7, no.3, July 1901. Engraving by Thomas Smyth, Belfast.

to collect subscription arrears – allocated to Waring-street and Donegall Quay. The music sub-committee was 'empowered to provide for and dispatch Edward McBride and Valentine Rainey to the country for three months in such a manner as shall most contribute to the business and honour of the Institution'.

Not without problems. First was 'a deficiency in harps' – resolved by the sub-committee being authorised to have three harps made soon as possible for the use of the Society'. Assuming the Theatre could lay on a Benefit Night for the Society (which it did) then 'each of the scholars would be provided with a suit of Inishowen blue cloth'.

One month later it was decided that 'the boys' uniforms were to be locked away and only given out on public occasions'. And there was unfortunate news for two of the boys: James O'Neill and William Gorman to 'be immediately dismissed [from] the Society as incapable by nature of learning the harp'.

From this point, the minute book's notes become increasingly panicked about the difficulty of collecting subscriptions and the need to begin a series of subscription balls with Thomas Hull as master of ceremonies.

Before bidding farewell to the Society's minute book, it's worth noting a discussion in July 1810 on the propriety of allowing Edward McBride and Valentine Rainey each to have a 'harp during the time they should remain absent'. The sub-committee was authorised to use its discretion.

Just as well. This first Belfast Society ran out of funds and closed in 1813. When it was revived in 1819 with funds from a group of subscribers, mainly army officers from Ulster, based in India, the new harp master was none other than Edward McBride, succeeded in January 1822 by Valentine Rainey (sometimes Rennie).

‘He has permission, out of hours, to attend Ladies and Gentlemen for tuition on the Irish and Pedal Harp; and also, to play in genteel families in the evenings. The Irish Harp, in his hands, will be found so superior to what musical persons have been accustomed, that the committee take the liberty to recommend him to the notice of musical amateurs.’⁶²

What of those other student harpers left out in the cold when the Society’s school closed in 1813? One reappears, thanks to Dr. Gamble, writing from Lurgan in 1818:⁶³

‘... closing day brought to the gate a wandering harper, and I was no stern Harpool⁶⁴, to refuse to let him in. I kept him playing for the whole of the evening, and, though he probably was no superior performer, still it was delightful to me to listen to him. ... the instrument would shortly have been unknown, when the inhabitants of Belfast, with the liberality and public spirit which so eminently distinguish them, established a harp society, and created a fund for the instruction of blind and infirm persons, to whom, when their education is completed, a small portable harp is given. My little decrepit performer was of the number of those fortunate persons, and he was enabled, he told me, not only to support himself, but an aged father and mother.’

After Stephen White returned to London, around 1810, did the Belfast Society invest in John Egan’s new harps? Unless a Stephen White harp is found, we may never know if it really had a ‘superior tone’!

62 *Belfast Commercial Chronicle*, Monday 7 January 1822, p.3. Rainey died, after a lingering illness, at the Harp Society’s house in Cromac-street in 1837.

63 John Gamble, *Views of Society and Manners in the North of Ireland; in a series of letters written in the year 1818*, London 1819, pp.362, 364.

64 Harpool was a character in the play *The History of Sir John Oldcastle*, at one time attributed to Shakespeare.

David Byers

David Byers is a composer, musicologist, writer and music producer. After initial studies at Queen's University Belfast, he spent four years as the Manson Scholar in composition at London's Royal Academy of Music. Awarded the Irish Arts Council's Macauley Fellowship and a Belgian Government Scholarship in 1972, he studied with Henri Pousseur at the Liège Conservatoire. He spent 25 years making a wide variety of music and speech programmes for BBC Radio 3, Radio 4, and Radio Ulster, before being appointed Chief Executive of the Ulster Orchestra for the next eight years, retiring in 2010. His music covers most genres except opera and includes orchestral commissions from RTÉ and the BBC. His editions of other composers range across the baroque, classical and romantic periods to the 20th century world of Ina Boyle. Byers writes many programme notes and also liner notes for CDs. He was a member of the Irish Arts Council, An Chomhairle Ealaíon in the mid 1980s and was a Coulson Governor of the RIAM. He has served on many boards, including Wexford Festival Opera and the National Concert Hall, and also on the juries of international competitions. He continues to write and produce chamber and orchestral recordings, most recently for a CD of Kurt Weill.



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