

UK AUTOHARPS PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2023

UKA continues to thrive. During the year we have increased our membership by a small amount and as my other report as Treasurer will show, our finances continue an upward trend. We have had six well-attended and received online workshops with Karen Mueller and our monthly Warble get-togethers organised and hosted by Jan Brodie have attracted good attendances. We have also run some live events once again, resurrecting our pre-covid annual UKA Day at Tewkesbury in March hosted by Mike Fenton which whilst not over-run with attendees was nonetheless sufficiently well-attended to make a small surplus and the Scottish Autoharp Weekend, run by the redoubtable Nadine Stah White and ably assisted by husband Iain, took place at Moniaive once again with John and Kathie Hollandsworth flying in from Virginia to teach and perform. Sadly this was the last Scottish Autoharp Weekend in its present form as Nadine is finally giving up organising this event in Moniaive and finding a new venue has been problematic, but we are assured by Rees Gallacher that efforts will be made to ensure it continues albeit in a different form.

Our Secretary, the redoubtable Neil Gillard took the bull by the horns and organised an inaugural Dorset Autoharp Weekend in the delightful village of Stourton Caundle in Dorset which by all accounts was a great success and all feedback received from those who attended has been very positive. I was unable to be there myself owing to a previous engagement but all the indications are that it will take place again in 2024 and I'll certainly be making every effort to be there this time round. I hope that more of our members will take the opportunity to experience a weekend of music and autoharping fun in midsummer in glorious Somerset and help us get back to the sense of musical and social normality we used to enjoy back before anyone had heard the word 'coronavirus'.

We also had a really great online Autoharp Day in November for all members who wished to partake. I really enjoy these events as with the facility of digital recording they are available to all of our members wherever in the world they live, and it should be remembered that UKA now has an international membership. As on previous occasions it was free to attend although the tutors received payment for their work. We had excellent workshops with Mike Fenton in the morning and Tom Schroeder in the afternoon, with Tom also providing a brilliant concert in the evening.

None of this would have happened without the work of your committee, and as your President I'd like to offer all of them my thanks for their efforts during the year, and I hope yours too. Helen Slade, Vice-President and organiser of supplies; Neil Gillard, our Secretary; Doug Harbour, Membership Secretary; Jan Brodie, Events organiser who also publishes Autoharp News; Anne Cole, our webmaster; Lyn Jones, Tutor Representative and Alison Simmonds, currently without portfolio. They all do a

sterling job on your behalf and it's both my pleasure and my privilege to work with them. I should also pay tribute to our tutors; Karen Mueller in the USA, and to Heather Farrell-Roberts, Lyn Jones and Mike Fenton here in the UK; we're blessed to have such talented people to teach and encourage us.