

# HARP NOTES

Newsletter of the Australian Therapeutic Harpists Association

## Calendar of Events:

♦ **October 4-6, 2019**

**WA Harp Festival**

♦ **April 2020**

**IHTP Level 1 & 2, ESM in  
Melbourne, Australia**

♦ **July 1-15, 2020**

**Harp Retreat in Iona,  
Scotland**

**Level 1 & 2 IHTP to follow in  
UK.**

♦ **July 26 - 31, 2020**

**World Harp Congress,  
Cardiff, Wales.**

## Recent graduates.

Glenda Underhill - CPMP

Lyn Johnson - IHTP

*Congratulations!*



## President's Report

I write this report in the confines of my small camper out in the dusty outback of far West Qld. In tow, I have nine harps sharing my travels which are opening doors in many unexpected places. This trip has made me reflect on the journey that the wonderful world of harps can take you. Therapeutic harp is a growing field in this country and there are so many opportunities for us to promote the invaluable work that we do within Aged Care, Hospitals, Animal Refuges, Community, Schools and everywhere else in between.

In Melbourne recently, I attended the Premiere of Peter Roberts documentary "From Music into Silence", a sensitively filmed anthology of Peter's personal journey within the therapeutic harp world. To have a documentary such as this one that is being widely shown throughout Australia and soon to be in the USA, is timely as we develop our Association into the future. The respect that Peter Roberts has from audiences and the wider community for his work will provide a greater understanding and respect for the work of all therapeutic harpists in this country.

### President's Report continued...

The ATHA committee continues to meet monthly via Zoom working on a range of documents and other business items such as the Website, Membership, RPL's, Ethics, Insurance, Fundraising, Training, etc. The committee is currently designing a Certificate & Badge which will be presented to all full ATHA Members. Membership of the ATHA is growing and I thank all of you who have joined to date. The Constitution is being continually reviewed to ensure that it reflects the aims & vision of ATHA. Once again, I thank the hard working committee who give of their time, energy and commitment to the association.

On Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2019 in Perth, Kerryn Viner, ATHA Treasurer and I, will travel to Perth and present a session titled "Australian Therapeutic Harpist Association: Listen to and learn about Therapeutic Harp" followed by a Q & A session. We have also been allocated a Trade Stall and will be talking with interested harpists around the work of Therapeutic Harp. We are grateful to the Perth Harp Society Committee for providing us with this invaluable opportunity to promote the Association. It's all about getting the word out and encouraging new members to join and support our work.

While we are in Perth, we will conduct our next ATHA Annual General Meeting. Consumer Affairs require that incorporated associations hold their AGM's within five months following the end of the financial year, so this meeting will be held on Thursday evening the 3<sup>rd</sup> October in Perth via Zoom and an invitation will be circulated to all members to join this meeting prior to this date. Our Constitution states that to be a committee member you must be a Graduate of an accredited Therapeutic Harp Program and a paid up member of the Association, so we encourage any full members to consider being part of the new committee.

Tomorrow Tim & I will be joining in the festivities of Camel Racing and then head north to Mt Isa where I begin travelling with the Mt. Isa School of the Air as a "Travelling Artist in Residence", visiting six remote regions and covering over 4,000kms but most importantly, bringing harp to the Outback. Whatever your journey is with the harp, I wish you luck.

The committee are working on a number of fundraising and training ideas into the future so please remember that we encourage any ideas and suggestions that you may have and that the Association and its committee members are always here to support you.

Christine Middleton - President.

### Therapeutic Harp Internship.

In May this year, Eva Ng and Enya Hui from Hong Kong spent a week in Australia with Christine Middleton, Anna Muller and Kerryn Viner, gaining valuable therapeutic harp experience. They are both current students of the IHTP. Over the week they both had experience in aged care facilities, acute hospital settings, a childcare centre and an animal rescue facility. It was a great learning experience for all involved!



## Introducing Carol Booth - this edition's featured Therapeutic Harpist!

### An Aussie Medical Doctor and Harp Therapy

I don't recall ever actually seeing a harp before 1999.

I worked as a rural medical practitioner (GP) in an Aboriginal Medical Service.

Someone coughed on me. Before the end of the day, I was in bed and very unwell. I had been afflicted by the "Swine 'flu" epidemic that was sweeping Australia.

I recovered, but was quarantined at home and not allowed to have contact with any who hadn't had the illness. An Irish friend had a harp. Keeping our distance from each other (because I was still in quarantine) she said. "Why don't you borrow it while you are recovering?" She handed it over. I was entranced and delighted. My days of convalescence were filled with wonder and enjoyment as I made friends with the instrument. I loved that I wrapped my arms around it. I loved that I could feel its vibration. I loved that with a melody line and improvised chords, playing by ear, I could make recognisable music.

My luck continued to run high. I heard about a harp workshop. Miriam Lawson had been persuaded to give lessons in a rural town near where I live. I quickly signed up.

Miriam was a concert harpist, associated with the NSW Conservatorium of music. She wasn't just any teacher. She played harp with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

I was stunned to realise that it was possible to do serious training and exams in the harp. Without any conscious thought, my mouth opened, and I said, "I want to do it properly, I want to do the harp exams at the Conservatorium." The decision felt compelling. I started having regular harp lessons, aiming to complete all five grades for Celtic Harp within ten or twelve years.

I knew a bit about sound healing (so I thought). I'd read (well just scanned really) The Mozart Effect by Don Campbell. I had been part of a drumming group (Sisterdrum ) for years and was convinced about the therapeutic effect of drumming. I was sure it made people feel good in the short term and suspected it might have a therapeutic effect on depression. I'd been talking about researching this, but hadn't gotten around to it. I had two close friends who ran "sound healing" evenings.

In early August 2014, my other music teacher, Ruth Shepherd, said that the International Harp Therapy Program had put out the last call for enrolments. The final on-line class would begin on August 23 2014. After this, the International Harp Therapy Program would continue to exist, but it was planned that new attendance study centres would be established worldwide. This was my last chance to do the IHTP on-line! A study centre might be established in Australia, but it was unlikely to be anywhere near my hometown. Practically speaking, after the on-line course closed, attendance would be impossible for me.

"You've got to do this," said Ruth.

"How loopy are they?" I asked.

"Not very." Said Ruth.

I dithered!

At the very last hour, just before applications closed, and feeling like I was partly lunatic, I sent off the email and made the first payment to finalise my IHTP enrolment. I was still committed to doing the 5 AMEB harp exams in ten to twelve years. I didn't know where I was going to find the time to do the harp therapy course. I submitted my paperwork and was accepted to the program.

I'd had a life long experience of making intuitive decisions, and this had resulted in me, only a few weeks before, ordering a small harp. I purchased it so that I would have a portable harp, which I could play with others. I'd just felt compelled to do it. I explained it to my partner, "I don't know why I'm doing this, but it is a beautiful light harp. It's unique in the way you can wear it, and I really feel I need to go ahead and order this." Coincidentally, the name of the harp I'd ordered was a "Christina Therapy Harp" made by Triplett in the USA.

I started the study for IHTP. One of the early texts was Barbara Crowe's Music and Soul Making - Towards a New Theory of Music Therapy. I made a start and was captivated. Then I reviewed the video lecture "Music, Mythology, Medicine & How It Relates to Therapeutic Harp" by Jeanne Martin, PhD.

My feeling was one of relief and of coming home: A context!

There's been a lot of learning since then.

One result of the IHTP course for me has been to cause me to reflect on myself. I have brought into consciousness the fact that although it is not the preferred method of medical scientists, my actual primary process in decision-making is kinaesthetic. I ask my body what to do. I often "follow my gut" or ask my body "which way should I go?" I assign meaning to directions and follow the way that my body leans. There is a sense in which this is "trusting spirit" (though I do not presume to know or assert the nature of spirit).

It is my sense and belief, driven by both science and Buddhism, that we humans are all vibration and all connected. Music also is vibration.

It's been my observation that music influences outcomes and heals.

I hope to be part of the cutting edge, which takes this further into medicine and science.

It wasn't in my plan; however it seems I may be in the process of retiring from active medical practice. Harp therapy is filling parts of my life that were previously occupied by clinical medicine. I play in palliative care, rehab and general wards at two rural hospitals in the towns of Wauchope and Taree, on the mid-north coast of NSW.

Life continues to unfold.





## Therapeutic Harp Retreat, Central Coast, 10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> May 2019

On a pleasant and sunny weekend in May, a small group of us gathered on the Central Coast of NSW for a relaxing and uplifting time of harp playing and fellowship. The retreat was held at Mc Master's Beach, in a holiday house owned and generously shared by Nicky Lock. In a beautiful bush setting, and only a short walk from the beach, this was an ideal location for a quiet weekend away.



Three workshops were run by Jenni Sawell. As not all participants were IHTP students or graduates, we started with an introduction on what the modes are, discussion about the different feelings and moods which can be created by each mode, basic improvising skills and how to improvise in different modes.

Our second workshop looked at some exotic modes; some common Middle Eastern scales, how to improvise in these keys, and a discussion of situations in which these might be useful when

playing for others, especially in a therapeutic setting. Our third session included a brief overview of the principals and applications of the Chinese Five Elements. We then spent some time discussing Resonant Tone, and had some fun trying to find this for each other!

On the Saturday afternoon we took our harps down to the local historic church. A quaint little sandstone building, 175 years old, with beautiful stained glass windows, and an adjacent cemetery. Members of the congregation had been invited to come and listen to us play, but only one lady turned up. She was totally enthralled by the presence of six harps in the tiny space at the front of the church, and the beautiful tunes we played for her. When she was offered a harp to play, the look on her face said it all! She was absolutely mesmerized when she played Nicky's Reverie Harp, and we all played along in a pentatonic key with her, as we sang 'Amazing Grace'. What a highlight for her, as well as us! It was a privilege to share our joy of harp playing with this dear lady, and I'm sure she had an experience she will never forget!



Left - Right: Deirdre, Denva, Meg, Jenni, Nicky

Front: Anne

Contributed by Jenni Sawell

## Harpers Bizarre Weekend in Beaufort.

Another fantastic weekend of harps and music at Cave Hill Creek, up in the hills out of Beaufort. We celebrated our 20<sup>th</sup> year this year. Wonderful people, fantastic music, and lots of delicious food. (Yeah, No cooking!!!)

The scene from the huge windows is unbeatable, The fire in the immense bluestone fireplace warms our souls as well as our bodies. The company is like a huge family, and it's great to meet up and hear what's been happening in each others lives. Lots of humour and fun, as well as the learning.

Although this is not a weekend specifically for therapeutic harpists, many of us attended, and it was good to catch up and swap stories of our work. Andy Rigby taught us a couple of neat little tunes, imparting a bit of theoretical knowledge at the same time. We learned to sing a beautiful song from Polly, which Andy taught us to play on our harps. Greg Wilson was another tutor on harp, and the amazing Mary Doumany had us enjoying a lesson on how to make a wonderful piece of music out of a one note melody! Other tutors were Allan Evans on harp. Allan also had a workshop on Irish whistle. Jackie Luke intrigued us all with her hammered dulcimers.

The concert on Saturday night was great fun as usual, Beautiful music, and lots of laughs. I look forward to next years camp.

Article contributed by Carolan Wake.

Photo by Carla Whitely.



### News from Adelaide.

For about the past 12 months, a group of harpists ranging from beginners to advanced have formed a group for the purpose of playing as an ensemble, fellowship, sharing and having fun. Thanks to Christine Morphett for establishing the group. They meet monthly for practises and perform for festivals, concerts and entertainment for seniors in aged care homes.

Lyn continues to play for patients at Flinders Medical Centre where she plays in various wards eg the Operating Theatre Suite, Intensive Care Unit, Acute Medical Unit, other wards, and for individuals. She is a member of the Arts in Health team which includes other musicians, artists and a writer. Lyn has also recently commenced a trial of 6 hours per week at the Laurel Hospice, attached to Flinders Medical Centre. She has received positive feedback from staff, patients, visitors and volunteers and finds the work very rewarding.

### News from Tasmania.

Harp Society of Tasmania - Winter Harp Gathering - Ross, Tasmania, June 2019

A bright, sunny Sunday in June saw harpists from all over the state converge on the historic town of Ross in the Midlands district of Tasmania for the Winter Harp Gathering 2019. Famous for its historic sandstone bridge and its proximity to the 42nd parallel, Ross boasts a beautiful heritage Town Hall and Supper Room, with plenty of room for harps, harpists, food and friends. At least sixteen participants with their pedal or lever harps were set up in a circle around the room, ready for a great day of playing, friendship and fun.

Our day began with Kathleen McMahon leading us in the well-known and exciting tune, Henry Mancini's 'The Pink Panther', deftly arranged for all levels of lever and pedal harps by her daughter Emma McMahon. Challenges included lever changes or pedal slides making for an interesting and fun time. Music was mailed out well before the day which meant harpists could practice their parts before the gathering. This preparation facilitated a smooth start to the day and the parts quickly came together to form a satisfying performance piece.

After a shared lunch of delicious goodies, Kathleen explained the intricacies of string tying, and participants were invited to practice different types of knots and have a go at using different toggles. It was good to have a practical session on this important part of harp maintenance in a relaxed, setting and without the stress of actually having to change a string! Thanks to Kathleen for all your work in leading the day.

A feature of our harp gatherings is to encourage people to perform, and in this supportive setting harpists of all levels have a forum to air a piece and practice playing to other people. At the Winter Gathering we took turns to share a variety of solos, including contemporary music by Carole King, other well-known songs like Moon River and Sound of Silence, traditional tunes such as Bonny at



Morn (duet), Women of Ireland, Flow Gently Sweet Afton, to the operatic and lever-challenging Nadir's Song (Bizet). The session began with an original piece for harp and voice called Evening Calm, written and performed by Joanne Mitchelson. Everyone enjoyed being a part of this interesting and rewarding session.

The day ended with a Society favourite, the driving, two-part ensemble piece Clancy's Reel. An inspiring day was had by all and we look forward to seeing you at our Spring Gathering and AGM in the beautiful Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden, Burnie, on October 6, 2019.

Helen Morrison



# PERTH HARP FESTIVAL

Friday 4<sup>th</sup>  
Saturday 5<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> of  
October 2019

You are invited to three days of exciting workshops featuring Australian and international harpists, including one of the world's leading soloists, Alice Giles.

Join us to learn new skills, meet harpists, try different harps, watch performances and have lots of fun!



Visit The Harp Society of Western Australia's website or call 0427 217 664 for full details. Online bookings through Trybooking.



**Where:** Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts  
2 Bradford Street, Mount Lawley

**Cost:** Harp Society members \$75 one day / \$200 three days  
Non-members \$105 one day / \$230 three days

## The Festival will include:

- Ensembles, master classes & group lessons with Alice Giles
- Stalls of information, music & harps for sale
- Sing & play workshop for children
- Therapeutic harp for healing
- Storytelling with the harp
- Pedal & lever harp maintenance workshops with Liza Jensen (USA)
- Lever harp concert with Lauren Scott (UK)
- Experimental composition & improvisation



**Harp Celebration Concert** featuring Alice Giles, festival participants and local harpists 2:00pm-3:30pm Sunday  
\$30 adults, \$20 concession and free for children under 12 and festival participants.

**We welcome harpists of all ages and abilities, musicians, music lovers and the harp-curious!**





St Andrews Uniting Church in Strathbogie has hosted an ecumenical dawn Easter service for the last 3 years on Mt Wombat at Kelvin View, Victoria. There were 60 people in attendance in 2019 and it is really becoming a local event! Retired Baptist minister Bob Bruce takes the service and Di Mackrell looks after the music. This is the 2nd year that she's played the harp for the service and it works so well in that setting. Di's choir, the Strathbogie Singers, sing at the event too, and were accompanied for one of their songs with the harp as well. Because there is no power, Di uses her accordion for the hymns. And the morning finishes with a cuppa and a hot cross bun on top of the Mt!

Enquiries about ATHA can be directed to;

Christine Middleton - President. [christine.mi@bigpond.com](mailto:christine.mi@bigpond.com)

Linky Muller - Vice-President. [harplink@icloud.com](mailto:harplink@icloud.com)

Carol Booth - Secretary. [agnodice@bigpond.com](mailto:agnodice@bigpond.com)

Kerryn Viner - Treasurer. [beached@me.com](mailto:beached@me.com)

## Easy Slow Cooker Greek Lemon Chicken & Potato

(allows more time for harp playing says Carol Booth)

An elegant, easy and hearty, slow cooker lemon chicken and potato recipe full of bright flavours. For more complete meal place some asparagus on the top for the last 20 – 30 minutes.

### Recipe Notes

To present this meal on the table, I take a lemon, slice it thickly and brown the lemon slices in a very small amount of olive oil in a frying pan. Then I add the browned slices of lemon tucked in on top of the dish and sprinkle with lemon zest and parsley. I do not cook the lemon slices in with the chicken, potato and onion because the white pith of the lemon may add a bitter flavor.

If you find yourself too short of time to put this dish in the slow cooker for 5 – 7 hours, then the meal also cooks superbly in a casserole dish in the oven in about 2 hours (and has the advantage that the chicken usually comes out crisp on top).

### Ingredients

Aprox 1kg potatoes, peeled and cut into large 4 – 5cm chunks (enough to cover the bottom of your slow cooker or casserole dish).

1 medium onion, cut into chunks

5 cloves garlic, minced (if you have family members who don't like garlic this can be simply omitted and the meal still tastes great!)

1 teaspoon dried oregano

1 teaspoon dried basil

1 teaspoon dried (or fresh) rosemary crushed

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

4 maryland chicken pieces or 8 bone in thighs, trimmed of excess skin

1Tbsp olive oil

(optional if the chicken is browned on a tray in the oven)

½ to 1 cup chicken broth

2 Tablespoon of fresh lemon juice

(I sometimes use up to half a cup)

2 teaspoon lemon zest, divided

3 Tablespoon fresh parsley

### Instructions

Place potatoes and onions in an even layer in slow cooker. Pour in enough chicken broth to cover the potatoes. Sprinkle with half the garlic, half the oregano, half the basil and half the rosemary then season with salt and pepper.

EITHER: Preheat oven to 220. Dry the chicken with paper towel, season with salt and paper, place on baking paper on a tray and place in oven pre-heated till 220 till the outside of the chicken is brown (use a tray with a lip as the chicken will loose some fat). If you choose this method of browning chicken, you can prepare your potatoes and onions while the chicken is in the oven. Once chicken is brown transfer it to the slow cooker (or casserole dish) and sit it on top of the potato & onion layer. OR Heat oil in a large heavy bottomed pot over medium-high heat. Working in two batches, dab skin side of half the chicken thighs dry with paper towels, season with salt and pepper then sear in pot, skin side down, until golden brown, about 4 minutes. Transfer chicken to slow cooker over potato layer. Repeat with remaining thighs.

Slowly and evenly pour lemon juice over chicken thighs, then sprinkle in remaining half the garlic, oregano, rosemary and basil over chicken. Sprinkle 1 tsp lemon zest over chicken (reserve remaining 1 tsp in a container in refrigerator until ready to serve).

Cover and cook on low heat 5 ½ to 7 hours. Serve warm spooning some of the slow cooker juices over each serving, sprinkle with fresh parsley and remaining 1 tsp lemon zest.