



*Annual Report
2025/26*





Brush dancing at St James The Great CCE

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Cathaoirleach (Chair) Welcome

Within Comhaltas in Britain we are not building businesses and lives, we are building legacies within our branches, communities, regions and the Province.

This year Comhaltas in Britain has continued to support people of all ages and backgrounds so that they are able to access quality Irish traditional music, singing, language and dancing education amongst their peers and community, to form strong communities and friendships, and improve skills and confidence, thereby promoting well-being and reducing social isolation. My brief summary of our highlights does not do justice to the work and dedication of the branches and regions, and their committees, who are tireless in their achievements, and for this I convey my thanks and admiration.

March noted a very early start to our fleadh season in the London and Southern Region, which continued on till May with the Northern region. We witnessed the very first two-day fleadh in Scotland — a fabulous success — hosted by St James the Great branch.

Comhaltas in Britain is promoting a tutor/teacher forum to support and develop many of our wonderful teachers who volunteer their time or teach for a significantly reduced fee each week, and branches often run other activities, such as monthly sessions, Irish language days, ceilithe, and workshops from visiting tutors. This is a initiative which has been supported by our development team, and this will continue. Your legacy is proof of your dedication to volunteerism.

We awarded for the fourth time — thanks to funding from the Irish Youth Foundation — the Caroline Judge Fegan Educational Scholarship to Jennie Nolan of the Liverpool branch. This £1,000 grant is awarded to advanced volunteer tutors to help with fees, travel and accommodation costs associated with the week-long, intensive Teastas i Teagasc Ceolta Tire (TTCT). This is an annual diploma level course covers all aspects of teaching traditional Irish music, which is only held in Dublin for those of a certain standard, following successful audition and interview.

Many successes were achieved in the Northern as well as the London and Southern Regions for the SCT exams, in conjunction with the Music Teachers Board (MTB), this year. We are delighted and very proud of this achievement for members whether they are the students, guardians or tutors. Congratulations to all! We look forward to an increase in support and uptake going forward.

In early June we lost Elske Simpson, our Project Officer, to a very fortunate Newcastle City Council. We wished her well and are delighted to say that we continue to be in touch with Elske.

August saw the All-Ireland Fleadh celebration once again in Wexford. It was a very successful fleadh promoting culture, music, dancing, singing and language. And an impressive 21 medals coming to Britain, with five champions!

We would like to acknowledge and to say a huge thank you to all the funders, as well as volunteers, who have made all of these achievements, and many more, possible. We especially thank the Department of Foreign Affairs in Ireland for its continued support and guidance.

As the organisation moves forward, we will continue to evolve with our policies on equal opportunity, safeguarding, and health & safety at the forefront of our minds whilst promoting Irish heritage, music, dancing and culture through Comhaltas in Britain.

Is mise



Theresa C. Gallagher
Cathaoirleach (Chair)

Theresa C. Gallagher

Cathaoirleach (Chair)



Uachtarán (President), Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann

Dia Dhaoibh ar fad agus fáilte romhaibh go léir chuig Comhdháil na Breataine, Coatbridge 2026. Cuireann sé gliondar orm a bheith in ann taitneamh a bhaint as bhur n-imeachtaí agus cruinnithe i rith an deireadh seachtaine. Traoslaím libh ar fad as an sár iarracht agus an t-éacht a rinne sibh chun an ócáid speisialta seo a chur ar siúl.

2026 is a milestone in our Comhaltas calendar as we celebrate 75 years since our foundation. 1951 was a very different era as our parents and grandparents struggled with recession, the post war economy and a community life that was ravaged by emigration. Yet the passion for Irish culture shone through our founders as they found the time and energy to start a movement that has since grown beyond all expectations to preserve and promote our music, song, dance agus an teanga Gaeilge. With their tenacity and vision, they ensured that we now have an Irish traditional culture that is world class, has permeated continents, has developed roots in many countries, and has aided and developed communities within those countries thus providing an opportunity to showcase and enjoy our traditions in a 21st-century world.

Britain continues to be a leading light in this development. I note the new Comhaltas in Britain Volunteer Awards, honouring the volunteers who have excelled over the past year. These awards acknowledge the dedication, creativity, and energy of the people who help to make Comhaltas in Britain a vibrant and welcoming community. The categories of Ceol Nua Community, Youth, Music Tutor of the Year and the Unsung Hero inspire us to recognise and appreciate the efforts of all the people who collaborate and work to make Comhaltas in Britain the progressive organisation that it is.

Congress - Sligo - May 2025



I was honoured to visit Fleadh na Breataine in Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School, Coventry last June. The venue was ideal and provided ample space for everyone to meet, participate in, and enjoy the Fleadh. I congratulate the committee, both provincial and local who made the Fleadh such an outstanding success. The standard of the competitions was very high and rivalry was friendly and supportive. This is testament to the hard work of all the teachers, tutors and mentors involved in your branch activities.

The government of Ireland plays an important role in the success of your programmes and projects through its ESP, Emigrant Support Programme. It is very much appreciated and we thank the Irish Government, the Embassy of Ireland, Great Britain and its Consulate Generals for this very important support and assistance.

This weekend gives you an opportunity to catch up with your friends and colleagues. I wish you all a successful and enjoyable convention and I hope that you will return to your own branches inspired and energised.

Le gach dea ghuí
Attracta Ni Bhrádaigh



Attracta Ni Bhrádaigh

Uachtarán (President)

Tuarascáil an Rúnaí (Secretary) Report

As we move into 2026, we look back at what was another great year for Comhaltas in Britain, in 2025.

On a personal level it has been a great privilege joining the Provincial Committee team as secretary, following on from Patrick Ballantyne who we all miss. I am truly grateful for all the guidance and support from our chair Theresa Gallagher, the Provincial Committee members, Paddy Callaghan and Erin Watson as well as the patience bestowed on me by all branch Chairs and Secretaries as I find my feet.

Communication is paramount to the smooth running of any organisation and within our organisation it grows in strength year on year. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Erin who delivers valuable organisational information and save the important dates via her monthly newsletters. If anyone hasn't already signed up, I would highly recommend you do so.

My role as provincial secretary is to ensure that vital information on the day-to-day running of branches and regions is circulated timeously as well as sharing information from Comhaltas HQ to you. If there is anything you feel would help improve communication, please feel free to discuss this with me at convention this year.

In 2025, our musicians achieved notable success at Fleadh Cheoil nah Éireann. This highlights how the standard of music and musicians continues to grow, which can only be good for musicians, branches, regions and the Province of Britain as a whole.

Looking ahead, we anticipate another productive year, highlighted by the ongoing Caroline Fegan TTCT scholarship, SCT exams, the introduction of the tutors' forum and regional fleadhannas. I look forward to helping support London and Southern Region in their planning as they prepare to host the All-Britain Fleadh in Brentwood, Essex, which I am certain will be amazing. Last but certainly not least, to Belfast — hosts of their first ever All-Ireland Fleadh — your time to shine is drawing near. The best of luck.

Please remember my inbox is always open, so feel free to reach out if you ever need support or information.

Wendy Doherty

Runaí, Comhaltas in Britain



Wendy Doherty

Rúnaí (Secretary)

Convention 2025





Convention 2025

Treasurer Report

Following on from the precedent set last year, this is my second written Treasurer's report to accompany the main accounts that will be reviewed at our Convention in Coatbridge. We felt it was important last year to provide some context on the financial year that we'd had and the changes we had made to our banking. This year, thankfully, feels far less turbulent. As such, this will be a shorter report!

Thankfully, we have had a slightly more stable year. Last year we saw a reduction in our income as a result of poor exchange rates between the Euro and the Pound. This year was not quite so bad and so this has helped with our core costs.

We continue to be awarded our grant from our primary funder, the Emigrant Support Programme (ESP). We are both fortunate and grateful to have received multi-year funding from them over the last three years, which has provided us with some much-needed stability and a guaranteed annual source of income. Now that we have been working with this over the last few years, we have learned some valuable lessons and our next ESP bid will be drafted in such a way that it accounts for the multi-year nature of the funding, and we hope to be awarded this again for another three years.

I must also give credit to the hard work of the All-Britain Fleadh team this year. By engaging the local community in their plans, they were able to not only really improve public relations with the community in Coventry and the Midlands, but they were also able to bring in substantial amounts of sponsorship from local business, community groups, organisations and other charities. I must give a mention to several of these kind donors: Coundon Lodge, The Coventry Irish Society, Hobgoblin Music, and Basingstoke Irish Set Dancers. And a special mention to Your Irish Shop for being the principle sponsor.

As a reminder, the Province wants to support any branch or region that has a project or an idea that they would like to run. We will assist in any way we can, whether that be by helping you to find funding, supporting with grant applications, or offering financial support if we already have a pot of money that might be allocated for a project like yours! Unfortunately, we are not a bottomless money pit! But we have our Project Officers that are experts in acquiring funding.

As always, we would like to thank the Emigrant Support Programme, our primary funder, without whom we would not be able to continue the valuable work that we do in Britain. We look forward to continuing to work with them.

We also wish to thank all of our other funders too: the Irish Youth Foundation, the D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, Hadrian Trust and all the other supporters, funds, and grants that have enabled us to continue our work this year. I'd also like to thank our members, branches and regions as well for the support that you provide the province.

Finally, I would like to thank our staff members, Paddy Callaghan and Erin Watson, who work tirelessly to manage our finances and maintain our financial situation on a day-to-day basis, securing our funding, reporting, and finding new and innovative ways to raise much needed funds for both the Province of Britain and our branches and regions.

Michael Fitzgerald
Provincial Treasurer

Michael Fitzgerald

Cisteoir (Treasurer)



Tuairisc Treorai na Gaeilge

A chairde Gaeil,

Seo tuairisc gairid ar chuid de himeachtaí a tharlaigh leis an Ghaeilge i gComhaltas na Breataine i 2025. Ag Fleadh Cheoil na Breataine 2025 i Coventry bhí Seomra na Gaeilge againn , mar is ghnáth. Mo mhíle buíochas a ghabháil le gach duine a ghlac páirt ann , ach go háirithe le Margaret Gallagher as a cuidiú.

At Fleadh Cheoil na Breataine 2025 in Coventry we had a Seomra na Gaeilge stand – many thanks to those who came along and especially to Margaret Gallagher, who helped at it. Attendance though was down on previous years, so I'll be in touch with Treorai in the province to discuss some new ideas going forward.

Molaim go hard iad siúd ónár gcúige a ghlac páirt sna comórtais Gaeilge ina réigiúin , ag Fleadh Cheoil na Breataine agus ag Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann .

Massive praise and congratulations to all those how took part in Gaeilge competitions , in singing or Scéalaíocht (storytelling), at the various Fleadhanna.

Ba mhaith liom m'ard-mholadh a ghabháil le gach craobh sa chúige a chuireann imeachtaí nó ranganna Gaeilge ar fáil .

I would like to send massive praise to the work in various branches in putting on Irish language events and classes:

- Ashton-in-Makerfield branch have a weekly Irish language sessions for all their members, from youngsters to adults, and they now also host an Irish film night.
- In Cambridge, the branch has held two very successful Pop-up Gaeltacht events, which have allowed to connect to others in the Irish community there.
- Birmingham branch continues to offer monthly Irish language get-togethers, as well as fully booked evening courses at a local college.
- Both the Edinburgh and Ayr branches in Scotland have introduced regular Irish language events, and so has the Leicester branch.

Maith sibh uilig! An Ghaeilge abú!

Éimhín Ó Dunaigh
Evin Downey

Treoraí na Gaeilge
Irish Language Officer



P.R.O. Report

The past year has highlighted that we continue to be an organisation proud to share Irish traditional music, language, dance and culture.

At the heart of our organisation are the branches which demonstrate to the public our respectful, welcoming environment, especially towards youngsters. No matter what level of skill or ability, everyone is equally valued. I believe that the parents regard the music classes and fleadhs to be a worthwhile endeavour for their children. It is this ethos which makes public relations a living process in all our activities.

Our All-Britain Fleadh was successfully hosted by Midland region in June at Bishop Ullathorne School in Coventry. It was well organised and supported by other regions.

Comhaltas In Britain is continuing to promote education and the teaching of Irish music. Apart from a teachers forum we have the Caroline Judge Fegan scholarship to enable a member of Comhaltas In Britain to attend the TTCT teacher training course in Ireland.

Our permanent staff (Paddy Callaghan, Operations Manager, and Erin Watson as Outreach and Development Community Project Officer) are proactively promoting our ethos. Provincial Council Officers including Gaelige Officer Evin Downey, Ambassador Orlaith McAuliffe and Youth Officers Calum McGregor & Mairi Docherty are augmenting their work.

I have circulated a P.R.O. guidance document for all regional and branch P.R.O. It references the comhaltas.ie website and our Provincial website. It finishes with general best practice and guidance.

Everyone brings diverse life experience and insights with the common goal outlined in my first sentence. All members have a public relations role, promoting Comhaltas in various ways.

As an ongoing project I have engaged with The Museum of the Home in Hoxton, East London. The Rooms Through Time exhibition has 12 rooms, one is devoted to the Irish who came to London:

A Room Upstairs in 1956

‘Kathleen left Northern Ireland for a nursing job in the new NHS, Jack left rural Roscommon for construction work in post WW2 London. The room highlights them getting ready to go out to the Galtymore dance hall.’

I was contacted by producer David Kelly asking that Comhaltas collaborate in future events which will highlight the musical dimension of Irish immigration.

The Museum of the Home is hosting a new symposium on 1st April 2026. Professor Enda Delaney (University of Edinburgh) will deliver the keynote address.

The symposium aims to shed light on the role of the home as a vital space for Irish diaspora culture in Britain. Such settings often afforded a space for migrants and their offspring to safely express Irish ethnicity. But they also served as a crucible for some of the most significant interventions in post-war British culture, not least in the spheres of music and performance.

The symposium will address the significance of the home for Irish migrants and their children, exploring the diverse creative practices that took shape in – and emerged from – these domestic settings. It is hoped that the symposium will bring together scholars, journalists and creative practitioners to consider these themes.

John Goulding. Provincial PRO

John Goulding

P.R.O.



Youth Officers' Report

The past year has gone in a flash, and we would like to begin by thanking everyone for the continued support shown to youth officers across the province.

A major highlight of 2025 was Ceol Le Chéile: a youth orchestra made up of musicians from Comhaltas in Britain. Created for members aged 18-26, the project provides hands-on learning, supporting the talent coming through our branches, and helping musicians develop broader performance and musicianship skills. In addition, Ceol Le Chéile also gives its members the chance to reconnect and build new links with people from across the province. Feedback from the group has been extremely positive, and we hope to see Ceol Le Chéile develop into a fully established programme this coming year, bringing even more opportunities to this group of young musicians.

We are always keen to hear ideas on how we can improve the experience of young people in Comhaltas. If you have suggestions, questions, or would like to get involved, please do get in touch, our contact details are available on the website.

As fleadh season arrived, it was great to see competitors enjoying success at their regional fleadhanna and Fleadh Cheoil na Breataine 2025, held in Coventry, was a fantastic weekend of music, community, and celebration. We would also like to thank the countless volunteers who gave up their time to help, massively contributing to the success of the event.

Ceol Le Chéile 2025



Summer then brought the usual mix of summer schools, sessions, and festivals, and of course Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2025 in Wexford. It remains an important opportunity for young musicians to learn from outstanding performers, take part at a high level, and spend time with the wider Comhaltas community. We are very proud of all those who represented Britain and a massive congratulations goes to everyone who took part, especially those who returned home with medals. We would also like to give a special mention to the Ceol Le Chéile members who represented Britain in the Overseas Concert, as well as on the Gig Rig.

We've really enjoyed working alongside our Project Officers, Paddy and Erin, the Provincial Council, and Comhaltas members throughout the province, and we are so grateful for the support and guidance we continue to receive. Looking ahead, we strongly encourage all branches and regions to ensure youth officer roles are filled and supported. Youth voices matter, and it is vital that young people within Comhaltas are given real opportunities to contribute, take part in decision-making, and have their views heard.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh,

Mairi and Calum

Provincial Youth Officers

mairidocherty@comhaltas.co.uk

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Youth Officers



Calum McGregor



Mairi Docherty

Fleadh Cheoil Na Breataine 2025



Scottish Region Report



The year just ended was a great one for all associated with Comhaltas in Scotland; a year of growth, success and friendship. There is much to be proud of and optimistic as we look to the future. Some of the highlights were the establishment of the Edinburgh branch and continued growth of the Ayr branch; the Scottish region has gone from four branches two years ago, to six branches which now serve a larger area of Scotland.

Our members took part in the first Glasgow civic St Patrick's Day parade led by the St Roch's marching band. Our first two-day Scottish fleadh organised by St James the Great branch was enjoyed by all. The inaugural meeting of the IDEaS forum, which seeks to build links between the various organisations in the Irish diaspora, took place. Scottish branches enjoyed great results at the All-Britain Fleadh in Coventry and the All-Ireland Fleadh in Wexford, where each of the four longer-established branches (Irish Minstrels, Johnny Docherty, St James the Great and St Patrick's) had medal winners.

We are very grateful to Jim McKenna (chair), Cathleen Armstrong (secretary) and Noreen Hughes (treasurer) for their many years of service as they step down from the regional committee.

Here are some highlights of the year for each branch:

Ayr

The branch continues to grow, holding Monday classes and monthly sessions. Members took part in the Scottish Fleadh for the first time and celebrated their senior grupa cheoil qualifying to the All-Britain. Members performed in the Girvan Folk Festival. The branch were devastated by the sudden loss of their chair, Fabian Greenan in May. Fabian was the driving force behind the branch, and his loss continues to be felt in the branch and in the wider Scottish Region. Go raibh suaimhneas sioraí air a anam.

Edinburgh

The branch held its first get-together in September 2024, with over 30 people in attendance and is already very active. It has held regular sessions and collaborations with the Little Ireland Arts Collective and took part in the Irish Cultural Day at the cricket club. Many members competed in the Scottish Fleadh, winning ten medals. It has started to actively recruit a young membership and is holding tin whistle classes. The branch welcomed the Balinspittle CCE, Co Cork, for a session and sight-seeing tour of the city.

Irish Minstrels

The branch continues to hold weekly classes, regular sessions and fundraisers. They held their annual Winter School and the Big Band and Marching Band performed at Celtic Connections. Some of the young people took part in an exchange with Lackagh CCE, Co Galway, welcoming them to Glasgow and visiting them in Galway. Branch members organised, and the marching band led, the inaugural civic St Patrick's Day parade. This was a great day for the Irish in Glasgow. The marching band also played at the St Patrick's day parade in London and at a semi final in Croke Park.

Johnny Doherty

The branch holds weekly classes with music, dancing and Irish language. They held regular sessions throughout the year. The branch was invited to the St Patrick's Day celebrations in the Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh by the Consulate General of Ireland. They had a summer session in St John Boscós with tea and home baking. Phil Westwell won the whistling at the All Ireland.

Scottish Region



St James the Great

The branch holds weekly classes and regular sessions. Members of the branch played at the St Patrick's Day mass and in the parade. The branch organised the first two-day Scottish Fleadh in response to an increase in competitors. It was a great success! Members of St James and Irish Minstrels successfully completed their Irish language 'fainne' exams at it. The branch held a class concert in Pollokshaws Burgh Hall in June. Members of the branch walked the Camino de Santiago in October playing a few tunes along the way! They hosted a St Patrick's and a Halloween Ceili.

St Patricks

The branch holds weekly classes and regular events. The branch held their annual Christmas Jumper Day with session and visit from Santa and was attended by members of all the branches. Branch members attended the annual Irish Consulate Christmas Event and the Irish Cultural Day in Edinburgh. Members played at the Coatbridge St Patrick's Day Festival Breakfast and attended the Causeway Exchange St Patrick's Day Breakfast. John Cushley organised the Spanish Ambrosian mass with members of other branches in attendance.

Congratulations to the following medal winners at the All-Ireland:

Irish Minstrels – Beth McAlaney, Isla Mulloy, Bronagh McKnight,
Isla Smith, Harry MacDonald, Jessica McWilliams,

Calum McGregor and Micheal O' Grianna

Johnny Doherty – Phil Westwell

St James the Great – Alexandra, Dominic and Nicholas Smith
and Tilly Hughes

St Patricks – Owen O' Connor

Roisin Reid

Runaí, Réigiún na hAlban



Northern Region Report

The regional fleadh was held in May 2025 at the Immaculate Heart of Mary School in Leeds, hosted by Leeds CCE. A special mention must go to Jayne Loney from Leeds for her hard work as Fleadh Secretary.

In June, successful qualifiers, along with friends and family, attended the All-Britain Fleadh in Coventry. For both juniors and seniors, it was often their first experience of competing at a national level, and many from the region successfully qualified to go to Wexford. New experiences and new friendships were made that will go beyond competition!

During the Saturday evening presentation, our Vice Chair, Julie O'Hare (Ashton-in-Makerfield CCE), received a Gradam for her long service to Comhaltas. Congratulations, Julie!

Also from the region, Jennie Nolan (Liverpool) attended the TTCT course at Monkstown, supported by the Caroline Judge Fegan TTCT Scholarship.

The region has also supported a number of events throughout the year organised by the Irish Consulate in Manchester and looks forward to working with the new Consul General. Branches remain active throughout the region. Unfortunately, St Wilfrid's CCE in Manchester decided that they could no longer continue as a separate branch and have merged with Tara O'Carolan.

Several branches have hosted visits from Irish branches over the past year, including Leeds and Liverpool.

Liverpool also entered a number of junior and senior members into the SCT examinations, with tremendous results for everyone.

Northern Region



All branches continue to teach regularly:

Tyneside CCE holds twice-monthly classes on the second Thursday and fourth Sunday of the month.

Middlesbrough CCE continues to teach whistle and bodhrán and holds a group session at the end of each lesson.

Leeds CCE holds classes on Tuesday evenings.

In Manchester, Tara O'Carolan CCE holds classes on Wednesday evenings.

Ashton-in-Makerfield CCE holds classes on Tuesday evenings, with Liverpool teaching on Monday evenings. Liverpool has also started a guided session for senior members aimed at building confidence in playing, which has been very well received.

As a region, our members, branches, and committee are looking forward to the year ahead!

Jon Turton

Cathaoirleach / Chair – Northern Region CCE



There are seven branches in the Midland Region. Many branches in the Region have regular music classes, sessions, concerts and ceilis and involve themselves with their local community over St. Patrick's weekend. The Region was well-represented at Fleadh Cheoil na Breataine and some branches had qualifiers to Fleadh Cheoil na h'Éireann in Wexford, with success going to the Amairgin the Gael branch.

The Midland Region this year ran both the Midland Regional Fleadh with a big input from the Birmingham branch, and the All-Britain Fleadh with a big input from the Coventry branch, and obviously many other helpers from the Region. They were both very successful and very well-organised.

The Region were very sorry to hear of the deaths of Sean McDonagh (a previous chair of the Region) and Marian Turner (a sister of John Burke). Sean chaired many regional fleadhanna and was a very hard worker for Comhaltas. Marian and her family attended many fleadhanna over the years, with her children taking part in many competitions. Both Marian and Sean were familiar and welcoming faces at the All-Britain Fleadh in 2025. May they rest in peace.

- **Amairgin the Gael's** partnership with Gwent Music is going well.
- They continue their association with the Irish Consulate in Wales and have performed in front of dignitaries and community leaders from the Irish and Welsh communities.
- They were invited again to play at the Devauden festival in the heart of Monmouthshire – a wonderful showcase for the branch.
- They continue their branch exchange with the Youghal branch of Comhaltas.
- **Birmingham's** main focus for the year was to deliver music classes to their branch to both children and adults. They are delighted with the community that has evolved as a result of the music classes.
- Their Pop-Up Gaeltacht has been a great success with many Irish language classes now taking place in Birmingham.

Midland Region



- Many members of the branch helped over the weekend of the Regional Fleadh. They ensured that Irish language workshops were on offer during the day.
- **Cambridge** have a big increase in numbers of students learning music in their branch.
- They had their first ever TradFest weekend which was a huge success.
- Cambridge have links with Cambridgeshire music and the Cambridge Folk Festival, giving their members many opportunities to perform.
- Kathleen Collins received a well-deserved Gradam award at Fleadh Cheoil na Breataine 2025.
- Cambridge started their first Pop-Up Gaeltacht towards the end of the year.
- The branch were saddened by the death of Eithne Prosol - a very prominent member of the branch for many years. May she rest in peace.
- **Coventry's** main focus this year was their involvement in the organisation of Fleadh Cheoil na Breataine along with some members from other branches in the Region. Branch and committee members worked extremely hard in preparation for this event which turned out to be a huge success. Coventry were also joined for the weekend by their friends from Letterkenny who they often do exchange visits with.
- The branch were sorry to hear of the death of Breege Tighe in July 2025. She was the wife of Vincent Tighe – a former teacher and chairman of the Coventry branch. Their granddaughter, Francesca, was of great assistance in obtaining sponsorship for Fleadh Cheoil na Breataine.
- **Leamington Spa** are now using St. Patrick's Irish club for their Comhaltas classes and sessions in the heart of Leamington. The sessions have been a huge success.
- One of the Leamington qualifiers for the All-Ireland took part in Scoil Eigse and thoroughly enjoyed it.
- A very enjoyable Irish language workshop took place in November, led by Nollaig Doughan (a Leamington committee member).
- Janet Harbison is continuing to promote the harp, both in the branch and in the Midland Region. She hopes to integrate the harp more into the monthly music sessions.

- Michelle Hart (secretary) has been active in promoting the branch and in organising many opportunities for the children to perform locally.
- **Leicester** branch have increased in numbers this year and continually organise many events, including storytelling workshops, sean-nós dancing workshops and promotion of the Irish language.
- The energetic committee organise weekly music lessons for children and adults, set dancing and Irish language classes.
- The Leicester branch were saddened to hear of the deaths of John Walker, Kevin Lint and Bridget O'Donnell, all of whom were involved with the branch over the years.
- **Nottingham** celebrated their 50 years as a branch in style last September.
- The branch continue to organise many workshops, including harp, bodhran and concertina.
- They are hosting a singing workshop early in the New Year.
- Their branch were involved with 'Learn to Play' day, in the hope of increasing membership in the branch.

Midland Regional Committee

At the AGM last December, the Midland Region had a change of personnel with a new vice-chair (Marianne McAleer), treasurer (Moya Townsend) and P.R.O. (Roisin Hickey).

Carmel Burke
 Midland Regional Secretary
 January 2026



London & Southern Region Report

The Regional Fleadh was held on Sunday 23rd March 2024 at Salvatorian College, Harrow. North London branch organised it well.

Mary Walsh and Pat Connolly both of North London branch were each presented with flowers in recognition of their decades of service to Comhaltas. The flowers were presented by children who were present. Conor Walsh was the MC for this element of the fleadh and his sister Karen Trench, Chair of Kerry Comhaltas was also present.

The region was represented at the All-Britain Fleadh hosted by the Midland region at Bishop Ullathorne School In Coventry. Some members qualified for the All-Ireland Fleadh in Wexford in August.

North London hosted a Junior Fleadh on 17th November at Salvatorian College. It was well-organised, with positive feedback from parents of youngsters.

As Regional Secretary I have circulated regional newsletters which supplement the regular Provincial newsletter and branch leader's newsletter from Province.

There is the following update on the five branches in the region:

St Albans

St Albans is please to announce that after lots of social media activity we have managed to attract some more families to the branch with a total of six new members in the last few months.

We had two children play at the Friendly Fleadh in November.

We are having music lessons back in the Irish centre and plan to have some sessions on Sunday lunchtimes in the new year.

North London

The branch has had a good year and membership is stable.

Colette Keaveney, with assistance from Molly McFadden, prepared children for the Irish Music (SCT) Exams. Their branch was one of the first in Britain to take part, and the children achieved great success.

North London hosted the Regional Fleadh this year. The All-Britian Fleadh was well attended by North London and the U18 Grupai Cheoil won the All-Britian against stiff competition.

There was good attendance at the All-Ireland Fleadh by the branch and Patrick Condon came 3rd in the U12 Whistle Competition.

The Branch is grateful to the music teachers/music schools who support the branch: Colette Keaveney, Karen Ryan, Kathy Walton and Caitlin Mannion.

West London

West London CCE elected a new committee led by Conor Walsh at this year's AGM, to continue the legacy in West London CCE since 1957. A thank you to the old committee for their work in the branch especially Leona Gaine for her support and encouragement in the transition from the old to the new branch committee.

On a final note, West London CCE want to pay tribute to Marian Turner, a life-long member of West London CCE who recently passed away.

East London

Our branch continues to hold a session on the last Friday of every month at the Rose and Crown pub in Clay Hill, Enfield.

London & Southern Region



The East London branch has had a great year with various activities going on and the exciting news of the founding of Ceol na nGael (Music of the Gaels) music class. The class is being taught by Noel Angland and Caitlín Mannion, and helped out by Meabh Tierney.

We would like to acknowledge that many of the students were previously pupils of Eilish Byrne-Whelehan as part of Feith an Cheoil, which was a highly successful music school. As Feith an Cheoil unfortunately closed down last year, we felt it was crucial to keep the momentum going for the young musicians in the area who were looking for a new home.

Hastings

The branch held their AGM in October 2025 and there were no changes to the committee from the previous year.

The branch continues to be active in the local community hosting sessions fortnightly and singing circles monthly. The branch does not have enough local teachers to offer regular music classes but still hosts adhoc Irish tune workshops for multi-instrumentalists at improver, intermediate and advanced level with guest tutors, when circumstances allow. The branch is considering reviving its November annual fleadh if enough local volunteers and budget can be found.

John Goulding

Runaí, London and Southern Region



Share Your Story

Members of Comhaltas in Britain have shared personal stories about the positive impact the organisation has had on their lives through music, community and cultural connection. These experiences show how Comhaltas fosters friendship, strengthens cultural identity and creates a welcoming space for people of all ages.

Each story reflects a unique journey and inspires others to get involved. You can read these stories on the news page of our website.

Latest Website Blogs



**Hughie Gallagher
Tunebook**



Julie O'Hare's Blog



Caitlín Mannon's Blog



**50 Years of
Nottingham CCÉ**



**Ceol Le Chéile in
Wexford**



**Connecting Through
CCÉ Exchanges**



Conor Walsh's Blog



**Reflections on the TTCT
Course in Dublin**



Provincial Council 2025/26

Back Row L-R: John Goulding (P.R.O.), Michael Fitzgerald (Treasurer), Evin Downey (Treoir na Gaeilge / Irish Language Officer), Calum McGregor (Youth Officer), Mick Nixon (Auditor), Michael Nevin (Delegate to Ard Comhairle),
Front Row L-R: Mairi Docherty (Youth Officer), David Browne (Leascathaoirelach / Vice Chair / Delegate to Ard Comhairle), Theresa C. Gallagher (Cathaoirleach / Chair), Moira Callaghan (Auditor), Patrick Ballantyne (Former Rúnaí / Secretary)

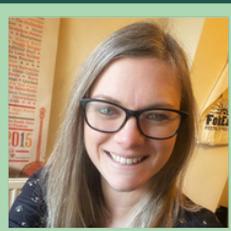
Our Staff

Paddy Callaghan
Operations Manager

Erin Watson
Outreach & Development
Community Project Officer



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Wendy Doherty was appointed Provincial Secretary (Rúnaí) for Comhaltas in Britain at an EGM held in July. Wendy has been an active Comhaltas member since 2014 and worked with outgoing Secretary Patrick Ballantyne to ensure a smooth handover.



Wendy Doherty
(Rúnaí / Secretary)

A Word of Thanks

We are indebted to the Government of Ireland, which, through its Emigrant Support Program (ESP) is our largest funder.

This continued support allows us to thrive as an organisation and work on behalf of our members across Britain.

Its trust in us — underlined by our new multi-annual funding agreement — signifies the strength of our partnership and one which we hope will continue for many years to come.



Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme



An Roinn Gnóthai Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs



Irish Abroad Unit



An Roinn Gnóthai Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs



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Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eacnamaíochta
Department of Foreign Affairs

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