

RSCDS Glasgow Branch Seniors' Group

Seniors' Summer Meeting Thursday 9 July 2015

On one of those rare days of warm sunshine, the Seniors' Group met for their summer meeting on Thursday 9 July. Inside the now familiar venue of the Crookston Hotel, we enjoyed our lunch, eagerly anticipating the main event. For a second year running we were able to highlight Douglas Academy's School of Music (Milngavie) and invite a final year pupil to showcase her talent before taking a B.Mus at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) after the summer.

Ms. Alice Guse came highly recommended, and as a gifted clarsach player, having played violin for several years previously, did not disappoint. On meeting, Alice and her mother Grace were absolutely charming and Alice's uplifting performances were punctuated with good humour and information about her chosen instrument, the celtic clarsach (or lever harp). The versatility of the harp was surprising; wrong assumptions being made that only classical and/or traditional celtic music would be appropriate. Alice's eclectic programme spanned all manner of tempos, from Morag's Merry Wedding music to dances, e.g. the '*Gaelic Waltz*' (Alan Stivell) and a set of jigs (Lisnagun and Morrison). We were told about '*The Angels' Share*', a beautiful air about whisky, before listening to the Spanish sounding and very dramatic '*Nataliana*'. Quickly the mood changed again to American '*New Blues*' (Deborah Henson-Conant) which earned the nickname 'the groovy chick' reminiscent of the swinging 60's! The final set consisted of '*Highland Cathedral*' and the '*Tongadale Reel*'. After her inspirational performance, Alice was more than happy to answer questions about the clarsach, and we were even allowed to touch this very imposing instrument which is quite beautiful to look at.



The Group is indebted to Mr. Peter Knapman (New Kilpatrick Ceilidh Band), accompanied by his wife Sheila, who provided a microphone system on this occasion to enhance Alice's performance when speaking to the audience and replying to questions. This was a very enjoyable and carefree meeting, and something a little different. We wish Alice well when she enters the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland this coming autumn, the first ever student to be accepted on the B.Mus course playing lever harp!



Daphne Davidson
Seniors' Group Organiser