

Bangor University

MASTERS BY RESEARCH

The triple harps of Bassett Jones (1809-1869): Context and Organology

Hockenbury, Kathryn Leigh

Award date:
2022

Awarding institution:
Bangor University

[Link to publication](#)

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal ?

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Download date: 25. Apr. 2024

THE TRIPLE HARPS OF BASSETT JONES (1809 –1869):
CONTEXT AND ORGANOLOGY

Kathryn L. Hockenbury

MARes Music
Bangor University
2021

I hereby declare that this thesis is the results of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. All other sources are acknowledged by bibliographic references. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree unless, as agreed by the University, for approved dual awards.

Yr wyf drwy hyn yn datgan mai canlyniad fy ymchwil fy hun yw'r thesis hwn, ac eithrio lle nodir yn wahanol. Caiff ffynonellau eraill eu cydnabod gan droednodiadau yn rhoi cyfeiriadau eglur. Nid yw sylwedd y gwaith hwn wedi cael ei dderbyn o'r blaen ar gyfer unrhyw radd, ac nid yw'n cael ei gyflwyno ar yr un pryd mewn ymgeisiaeth am unrhyw radd oni bai ei fod, fel y cytunwyd gan y Brifysgol, am gymwysterau deuol cymeradwy.

Kathryn L. Hockenbury 25 January 2020

Abstract

Bassett Jones (1809–1869) was a vital contributor to the prevalence of the triple harp in Wales during the nineteenth century Welsh cultural revival, despite being commonly overlooked by most historians. This thesis aims to analyse Bassett Jones's role in the resurgence of the Welsh triple harp and triple harp making, as well as analyse the change in construction of the triple harp during the Welsh cultural revival. Since Bassett Jones's involvement in this movement has previously been covered only peripherally, much of the information known about Bassett Jones is due to his affiliations with more well-documented individuals such as Lady Llanover and Carnhuanawc. This thesis focuses on the impact of Bassett Jones's triple harps and the impact of Bassett Jones's advancements on the construction of the triple harp. It takes into account the importance of his affiliations, as well as the advancements pushed forward by the invention and popularisation of the double-action pedal harp. It is revealed how Bassett Jones's ingenuity created instruments to enable Welsh harpers to continue the enduring tradition of playing the triple harp. Bassett Jones dedicated his life to being a maker of quality triple harps and developing the common construction of the triple harp to be more durable. The changes that he devised resulted in more durable instruments, some of which continue to be used today.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the School of Music and Media at Bangor University with special thanks due to Stephen Rees for all of his help, guidance, and endless patience through this demanding year. I would also like to thank my parents Lynne and Paul for their love and patience, and my sister Megan for her support. The Fulbright Commission kindly waded through countless applications and saw enough potential in mine to fund me, and for that, I thank them. I would also like to extend my deepest thanks to the helpful staff at the National Museum of Wales St Fagans, the National Library of Wales, and to the harp owners who allowed me into their homes and their lives to share the history of their beloved instruments.

Contents

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: The Life of Bassett Jones.....	8
Chapter Two: Bassett Jones Affiliations.....	16
Lady Llanover and Carnhuanawc.....	16
The Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society.....	21
Lady Llanover's Contribution.....	24
Chapter Three: Harp Discussion.....	27
Prince of Wales Harp.....	29
Historical Context.....	29
Construction.....	33
Great Exhibition Harp.....	39
Historical Context.....	39
Construction.....	43
Other Surviving Bassett Jones Harps.....	49
Other Surviving Welsh Triple Harps.....	59
Chapter Four: Data Discussion.....	72
Reinforcement.....	73
Volume.....	80
Weight.....	82
Style.....	84
Chapter Five: Current Revival Movement.....	88
Conclusion.....	95
Appendix.....	99
Harp Catalogue.....	99
Harp Data.....	123
Bibliography.....	133

Introduction

In 1833, the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society was established with the goal of cultivating a standard Welsh culture. During their opening meeting, an unnamed lady suggested Welsh triple harps as a prize for their Eisteddfodau, and for this, they needed a harp maker to build quality harps under their regulations.¹ Bassett Jones (1809–1869), a wheelwright at the time, was selected to learn the trade to fulfil this need.² This work explores the life of Bassett Jones and the impact he made on the significance of triple harps in Wales during the nineteenth-century Welsh cultural revival. While his impact has been noted briefly in previous works, there is little written about his work towards elevating the triple harp as a Welsh cultural emblem. Often in literature, his work is credited to more notable figures in Welsh history like Lady Llanover (1802–1896) or Carnhuanawc (1787–1848), and more frequently, he is not named as an influential participant.

Bassett Jones not only made harps for the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society but conceived his own projects. Upon the birth of His Royal Highness Albert Edward, Prince of Wales (1841–1910), Jones devised a plan to create an extravagant Welsh triple harp, featuring symbols of the curated Welsh culture of the time.³ Having enlisted Carnhuanawc to help with iconography and presentation, Bassett Jones meticulously crafted the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) to welcome the young prince into Welsh culture and the world. Despite Lady Llanover having no involvement, she was given credit in several newspapers and, subsequently, in the historiography of her work.⁴ His surviving harps have not previously undergone exhaustive examination and historical research, despite their notability in established museums and collections around the world. This thesis explores and underscores the work that Bassett Jones did to further the nineteenth-century Welsh cultural revival movement, pushing forward the idyllic image of the Welsh culture popularly adopted at the time. Furthermore, it investigates the construction of his Welsh triple harps and the development of them over time in relation to the invention and wide popularization of the double-action pedal harp. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to address the life and

¹ An Eisteddfod is Wales's premier cultural festival that hosts a wide array of competitions in the arts based in Welsh culture.

Davies, John, Nigel Jenkins, Menna Baines and Peredur I. Lynch (eds), 'Eisteddfod', *The Welsh Academy Encyclopedia of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), pp. 247–250.

² 'Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society', *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 28 November 1840, p. 3.

³ Augusta Hall, 'The Present of a Welsh Harp to the Prince of Wales', *Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian*, 2 September 1843, p. 3.

⁴ Ibid.

history of Bassett Jones, as well as examine the construction and development of his Welsh triple harps.

Of what little literature exists that mentions Bassett Jones, there is no comprehensive work to capture his contribution to the continued use of the Welsh triple harp during the nineteenth century. Bassett Jones is often mentioned as a peripheral character in research on his more celebrated affiliations, and so a large portion of the information on his life and work are to be found through these affiliations. The main focus of this work will be on Bassett Jones and his influences. While there is ample information in relation to his associates and their contributions to the continuity of the Welsh triple harp, there are limitations to what can be practically accomplished within this thesis. This thesis cannot explore the deep intricacies of Welsh culture in the nineteenth century. It also cannot explore the work and contributions of his affiliates outside of their joint ventures, despite the quality and strength of these contributions. The scope of music and tuning in nineteenth-century Wales also cannot be addressed. While these are all subjects worthy of research individually, they are beyond the scope of this thesis. It is also important to note that, as a beginner in Welsh language learning, I had little access to any system that would allow for large pieces of work to be accurately translated from Welsh to English.

While triple harps not made by Bassett Jones are analyzed within this work, these harps serve as a comparison to the Bassett Jones harps, and were, therefore, not sought out in their entirety. This thesis does not include a complete catalogue of historical triple harps in existence, but rather an overview of as many harps reasonable for comparison. Many of these peripheral triple harps are located in the St Fagans National Museum of History, the home of the largest collection of triple harps, providing a sizeable number of triple harps from different makers, locations, and years. The St Fagans National Museum of History collection also includes small model harps that were not included in the scope of this research. Some triple harps that were located within the scope of this research were part of private collections that the owners were unwilling to share, and therefore, were unable to be included in this thesis. Others, subject to travel limitations, were included in image, iconography, and history only. The same data limitations apply to Welsh triple harps currently on display or currently inaccessible in museums.

Since only broad spectrum works have been written surrounding Bassett Jones and his harps, most literature bearing similar unsubstantiated information about his work. While Mair Roberts's book *Harpmakers of Wales* dedicates a chapter to the famous harp maker, its

popular historical writing lacks referencing and citations.⁵ Mair Roberts included key details about the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) and Bassett Jones's life, but some information lacks clarity and others lack substantiation. Roberts only dedicates one sentence to the Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851) and did not discuss any harp construction or building improvements past the visual description of the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842). Including some inconsistencies and lack of referencing, this book is an unreliable and incomplete source of knowledge on Bassett Jones and his harps.

'Lady Llanover and the Creation of a Welsh Cultural Utopia' by Celyn Gurden-Williams and *High Hats and Harps: The Life and Times of Lord and Lady Llanover* by Helen Forder, on the other hand, are substantial research-based works, however they focus primarily on the life and work of Lady Llanover.⁶ As Bassett Jones is a peripheral character in the scope of this literature, it is clear that he was not of concern within the extensive information available on Lady Llanover. Gurden-Williams focuses on Lady Llanover's endeavour to promote her idea of Welsh culture and her work to prolong and grow the use of the Welsh triple harp and the Welsh language. This makes this work an ideal source to address the work of Bassett Jones's affiliates and their accomplishments. Because of the focus of the texts, Gurden-Williams and Forder only mention Bassett Jones a limited number of times. Forder mentions Bassett Jones in relation to his work making harps for the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society and his work on the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842), and Gurden-Williams only mentions his work on the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842). However, both credit different parties for the idea of the harp. Forder claims that Queen Victoria herself commanded that Carnhuanawc have a triple harp made for the young prince,⁷ while Gurden-Williams credits the Llanover harpers for finding an opportunity to play for the Royal family, only mentioning the harp as a gift for allowing them the opportunity to perform.⁸ Neither of these claims are substantiated with reference to any primary sources, so it can be ascertained that these suggestions are the Gurden-Williams's and Forder's interpretations of the events. Because these assertions were not authenticated in any way, these perspectives were not included in the discussion of this project.

⁵ Mair Roberts, *The Harpmakers of Wales* (Llanrwst:Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 2000).

⁶ Celyn Gurden-Williams, 'Lady Llanover and the Creation of a Welsh Cultural Utopia', (unpublished doctoral thesis, Bangor University, 2013).

Helen Forder, *High Hats and Harps: the Life and Times of Lord and Lady Llanover* (n.l.: TallyBerry, 2012).

⁷ Forder, *High Hats and Harps*, p. 55.

⁸ Gurden-Williams, 'Lady Llanover and the Creation of a Welsh Cultural Utopia', pp. 165-166.

Arglwyddes Llanofar: Gwenynen Gwent by Rachel Ley is a more relevant source as it focuses on Lady Llanover's patronage of the Welsh triple harp.⁹ Ley discusses the construction of the harps in detail, as well as ventures into Bassett Jones's life. Ley compares the construction and measurements of three harps, one made by John Richards, one made by Bassett Jones, and one made by an unknown harp maker at the Llanover estate.¹⁰ Ley uses measurements for the John Richards and Bassett Jones harps from *Telyn a Thelynor: Hanes y Delyn yng Nghymru, 1700-1900* by Ann Rosser and the measurements of the third were taken by Ann Griffiths and E. Lloyd Davies. Because Bassett Jones's harps were varied in construction over his lifetime, it is difficult to accept that one could get an accurate comparison of the three makers based on measurements taken on a single harp made by each. Also, these measurements were taken by different people using different tools, which could be a concern in comparison if each does not measure in the same way. Ann Rosser's *Telyn a Thelynor: Hanes y Delyn yng Nghymru, 1700-1900*, also in Welsh, focuses its research on the harps and harpers of Wales from 1700-1900.¹¹ Because the aim of this work is to focus on the harps and harpers, there is only brief biographical information on Bassett Jones, however, Rosser goes into detail describing the construction of one of Bassett Jones's harps. This source also includes a catalogue of harps with measurements and dates, but there are some inaccuracies that have been found in this information over time. Due to these inaccuracies, this thesis includes an updated harp catalogue.

'The Morphology of the Triple Harp' by Joan Rimmer is an article written in the *Galpin Society Journal* in 1965.¹² Rimmer encompasses the entirety of the invention of the triple harp to the nineteenth-century triple harps as well as compares the Italian triple harp, a triple harp made by David Evans, and a triple harp made by Bassett Jones. This article covers just a brief section of Bassett Jones's life, as well as details measurements of only one harp. Rimmer cites Nansi Richards Jones for recognizing several significant changes in the harps through the nineteenth century including the change of grain in the soundboard, the neck style, sound hole style, and reinforcements. An addendum is added in the following *Galpin Society Journal*.¹³ This work is expanded on within this thesis.

⁹ Rachel Ley, *Arglwyddes Llanofar: Gwenynen Gwent* (Caernarfon: Gwasg Gwynedd, 2001).

¹⁰ Ley, *Arglwyddes Llanofar: Gwenynen Gwent*, p. 50.

¹¹ Ann Rosser, *Telyn a Thelynor: Hanes y Delyn yng Nghymru, 1700-1900* (Pen y Bont: Amgueddfa Genedlaethol Cymru, 1981).

¹² Joan Rimmer, 'The Morphology of the Triple Harp', *Galpin Society Journal*, 18 (1965), pp. 90-103.

¹³ Joan Rimmer, 'The Morphology of the Triple Harp II: Addendum on a Late Italian Example', *Galpin Society Journal*, 19 (1966), pp.61-64.

Jane Williams's *The Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price, Carnhuanawc*, volumes i and ii includes a large amount of primary source information from Carnhuanawc's personal records.¹⁴ While Bassett Jones is not mentioned in this work, this is an ideal source for information on Carnhuanawc, his life, and how he acquired the information to teach Bassett Jones. Williams attempts not to speculate surrounding the source material.

Since many of Bassett Jones's harps are located currently in museums, some of them have been described in museum catalogues and in survey articles such as Nany Hurrell's 'Harps in the Royal College of Music Museum of Instruments'.¹⁵ Hurrell touches briefly on a Bassett Jones harp made in 1838 (KH05: BJ1838), describing the gilding and iconography of the harp. Instead of focusing on Bassett Jones as a maker, Hurrell turns to the history of the harp owner, John Thomas (1826-1913). The same harp (KH05: BJ1838) is described in the Royal College of Music Museum of Instruments Catalogue III by Elizabeth Wells and Christopher Nobbs.¹⁶ In this museum catalogue, the harp is measured in more detail, including the string lengths, and there is more precise information, including that the harp is unusually built for the right shoulder. There is little information on Bassett Jones, outside of the note that he worked in Smith Street, Cardiff. Within the online catalogue for the St Fagan's National Museum of History, not all of the harps are listed and those that are have limited information such as the height, the inscription, and sometimes the maker of the instrument.¹⁷

Due to the lack of substantial literature on Bassett Jones himself, this thesis uses primary sources for a majority of knowledge as well as to corroborate the previous literature. A large contributor to this was the National Library of Wales's historical Welsh newspaper archive. This includes but is not limited to *The Monmouthshire Merlin*, *The Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian*, and *The Cambrian*. All of these sources were discovered in original newspapers, some written by Bassett Jones himself and others by unknown authors describing events. Other primary sources used in this thesis

¹⁴ Jane Williams, *Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price, Carnhuanawc, Vicar of Cwmdû, Breconshire; and Rural Dean* (London: Rees, Longman, 1855), i.

Jane Williams, *Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price, Carnhuanawc, Vicar of Cwmdû, Breconshire; and Rural Dean* (London: Rees, Longman, 1875), ii.

¹⁵ Nancy Hurrell, 'Harps in the Royal College of Music Museum of Instruments', *Bulletin of the Historical Harp Society*, (2007).

¹⁶ Elizabeth Wells and Christopher Nobbs, *Royal College of Music Museum of Instruments Catalogue*, III (London: Royal College of Music, 2007), iii, p. 38.

¹⁷ 'Jones, Bassett (harp-maker)' *National Museum Wales Collections Online* <<https://museum.wales/collections/online/agent/ed928a78-953e-3fd7-9130-dc7f1ca2fec6/Jones-Bassett-harp-maker/>> [accessed 28 Sept 2019].

include the literary remains of Carnhuanawc, located in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, which is quoted through *The Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price, Carnhuanawc*, and the harps, a majority located in the St Fagans National Museum of History. Other harps were located in private collections.¹⁸

This thesis is presented over five chapters, the first approaching the life and experience of Bassett Jones. It describes in a biographical context Bassett Jones's life and the ways in which he participated in and contributed to the success of the Welsh cultural revival. While little is known about Bassett Jones's personal life, he initiated several large projects in this vein that are well documented.

Chapter two analyses and evaluates the intricacies of Bassett Jones's work in relation to his affiliations. This chapter dives into joint ventures and establishes credit that was not attributed to him in previous literature, as well as addressing limitations set on him by these affiliations. This chapter also explores the accomplishments of his affiliations that created the environment for Bassett Jones's success.

Chapter three investigates the individual harps and the history surrounding them. Starting with the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842), a project in which credit was contested, it first discusses the history, then the construction of the harp. Secondly, it examines the Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851) and its history, concluding with the construction. After these two harps are discussed, the chapter continues to less notable harps, including all information that is known about their history and construction. Finally, the chapter concludes with a similar discussion of other notable harps that this thesis expounds upon.

Chapter four discusses Bassett Jones's harps from the previous chapter, comparing them and examining how his craftsmanship changed over time. This chapter argues that the Welsh triple harp construction changed over time due to its environment and the popularization of the pedal harp. This section highlights these changes and investigates them in the context of the change in use of the Welsh triple harp. It demonstrates the exceptional efforts of Bassett Jones to establish an enduring tradition of the triple harp in Wales.

Chapter five, the final chapter, discusses the current triple harp revival movement and makes parallels between the nineteenth-century Welsh cultural revival and today. This section explores the different efforts being made now and how they compare to the past. This

¹⁸ Williams, *Literary Remains*, i.

chapter discusses the work being done by harp makers on triple harps, as well as the work being done by different groups to pass on Welsh folk tradition.

Chapter One: The Life of Bassett Jones

I have seen some of the most magnificent instruments from the chief harp-makers in Europe; but with every endeavour to divest myself of partiality, I must say of the one in question, that it surpasses anything in the shape of a musical instrument I ever saw. The more you look at it the more you seem to admire it. It is unquestionably a masterpiece, an honour to the principality, and highly creditable to the manufacturer. In bringing out so splendid a specimen of national art, Mr. Jones has added a bright page to the history of Cymry's fame, and established himself at once amongst the chief harp-makers of Europe.

Mr. Ellis Roberts, harpist to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, in reference to the harp made for the Prince of Wales by Bassett Jones.¹

Bassett Jones (1809–1869) became the most notable Welsh triple harp maker in the nineteenth century, yet little is known about his modest start. Due to a lack of documentation on his life, there is an absence of context surrounding who he was and how he came into contact with harp making. It is noted by most historians that he was born in St. Nicholas, Glamorganshire in 1809, though there is no known primary source to prove this now. Son and namesake of Bassett Jones (1769–1847), he grew up in the midst of the Industrial Revolution and the changes that were brought about because of it.² In 1824 he moved to the city where, according to Mair Roberts, he was then hired at a workshop on South Street in Cardiff. His second workshop was located on Woking Street in Cardiff, near the current St. David's Hall.³

One of the earliest mentions of Bassett Jones in existing historical newspapers, dated 28 November 1840, is proceedings from the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society (Cymreigyddion y Fenni)⁴ end of year meeting, and is also the only mention of his previous career:

The chairman, in introducing to the notice of the meeting a Hirlas Horn, which is to be presented to Mr. Bassett Jones, harp-maker at Cardiff, beautifully alluded to the dearth felt in Wales, prior to the formation of this society, for good harps, and of course for a good harp-maker. When at the first meeting of this society a lady proposed giving a triple harp of the value of 20 guineas, no such instrument could be purchased in South Wales, no, nor in London. Mr. Bassett Jones, formerly a wheelwright, undertook to build the instrument, and produced one of so very superior a tone, that an impetus was given to the study of our national music; this feeling was fostered by the generosity of many ladies and gentlemen giving harps to be competed

¹ Ellis Roberts, 'Mr. Bassett Jones's Triple Harp', *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 16 May 1851, p. 2.

² 'Family Notices', *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 5 June 1847, p. 3.

³ Roberts, *The Harpmakers of Wales*, p. 60.

⁴ In the interest of consistency, the Cymreigyddion y Fenni will be referred to as the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society.

for; Mr. Jones was the builder of all of them except one, and so much talent has he evinced in this department of his business, that the chairman (no mean judge in these matters) said he would put him against the best harp-maker in England.⁵

It is not known whether these previous shops employed Bassett Jones as a wheelwright or as a harp-maker; regardless, this news report does give more detail on how Bassett Jones was chosen to be the harp maker for the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society. The previously well-known Welsh triple harp maker, John Richards of Llanrwst (1711–1789), had died fifty-one years prior and the Welsh triple harp was experiencing a decline in popularity, leaving very little room for other Welsh harp makers to rise to the position. However, the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society sought to reverse this decline and was searching for an ideal craftsman to create harps for their events. The Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society was built on the idea of preservation of the Welsh culture and managed to greatly improve the survival of the Welsh language as well as the national instrument, the Welsh triple harp. With the shortage of quality harp makers in the area and in London, the society sought out Bassett Jones to create a harp in the image and quality of the instruments of the renowned maker, John Richards of Llanrwst. Through the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society, Lady Llanover (1802–1896)⁶ connected him with The Reverend Thomas Price (Carnhuanawc, 1787–1848),⁷ who was in possession of detailed drawings including measurements of a particular John Richards harp.

Carnhuanawc was a scholar and historian of the nineteenth century with a passion for the arts and Celtic culture. Carnhuanawc spent a majority of his life studying artisans and documenting their methods in order to preserve their techniques; he often attempted these crafts himself. He had a fondness for the Welsh triple harp, and this love for Welsh arts and culture connected him to Lady Llanover and the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society.⁸

Since a lady in the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society suggested they have triple harps made as prizes for their Eisteddfodau and there was no harp maker able to make such a quality instrument, Carnhuanawc was tasked with taking his detailed notes to a craftsman to

⁵ It may be valuable to note that a Hirlas Horn is a long blue drinking horn that was historically used to sound an alarm for a battle. In this context, it is being given as an award to honour Bassett Jones's contribution to the society as a symbol of Wales.

⁶ 'Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society', *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 28 November 1840, p. 3.

⁷ Lady Lanover is known by many names, so in the interests of consistency, she will be referred to as Lady Llanover.

⁸ The Reverend Thomas Price gave himself the bardic name Carnhuanawc while signing his series of papers "Yr Iaith Geltaeg". According to his literary remains, Carnhuanawc translates to "Man of the Sunny Mound". In the interest of consistency, he will be referred to as Carnhuanawc.

⁹ In the interest of consistency, the Cymreigyddion y Fenni will be referred to as the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society.

teach him how to make quality triple harps. Bassett Jones began making Welsh triple harps modelled after the information he received, making the harps lightweight and in the traditional fashion for which John Richard was known. There is evidence of Bassett Jones also having made new instruments from John Richards harps that were no longer in playing condition.⁹

Bassett Jones himself specified that the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society only had a few guidelines for him to adhere to: one parameter was to keep the traditional look of the harps, and the other was to stay below thirty pounds in weight— a requirement necessary to keep the harps portable.¹⁰ This allowed harpers to continue traveling with their harps fastened on their backs. This migrant tradition allowed for them to continue moving from place to place to earn a living. In an exchange in the *Monmouthshire Merlin*, a writer Cynddelw made an argument that the restrictions the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society placed on Bassett Jones's creations limited the growth of the instrument and did a disservice to modern day Welsh harp growth.¹¹ However, Bassett Jones argues that these restrictions were intentionally moderate to allow him room for growth:

TO CYNDDELW. SIR,—

I beg to return you my very sincere thanks for the good opinion you have expressed of me as a harp maker, and lose no time in answering your enquiries, trusting I shall be able to give you the satisfaction you desire. In the first place, I am not, as far as I can judge, tied down by the society, to any conditions that can affect the tone of the harp, excepting weight. I am engaged not to let the instrument exceed thirty pounds in weight; and this is a necessary condition in order to carry out the object of the society; for as the harps are intended to be portable, and the harpers by whom they are used having frequently to carry them several miles in the day, in order to fulfil their professional engagements, it is considered that thirty pounds is the utmost would be expected they could manage to carry about. But by reducing the weight in some parts not essential to the tone of the instrument, I generally make them several pounds lighter. It is true you may often see triple harps much lighter than any I make, but the tone is in proportion thin and wiry; and it not unfrequently happens that the harper, intending to remedy this defect, puts on larger strings, and by screwing them up to a proper pitch, tears out the sounding board, and then abuses the harp maker as ignorant of his business. Now these are alternatives I do not wish to subject myself to, and therefore always make my harps in such a manner as that they will bear any reasonable strain, and also give a mellow and full-bodied tone, and at the same time come within the required limit of portableness. Were I left unrestricted as to weight, I should then act as my judgment might direct, but I am aware that in that

⁹ KH07: BJ1842 is discussed further in chapter three.

¹⁰ Cynddelw, 'Abergavenny Cymreigyddion: The Welsh Harp', *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 10 December 1842, p. 2.

¹¹ Ibid.

case, I must dismiss all considerations for the itinerant minstrel, and thus defeat the principal object of the society. Indeed lightness is so important a quality, that when an itinerant harper has obtained possession of a pedal harp, it is not unusual for him to take out the pedals and the machinery, in order to reduce the weight.

In the next place, as to the tuning. The triple harp is not restricted to any particular key in the original tuning. Old Parry, of Rhuabon, published a collection of Welsh airs, for the triple harp, a hundred years ago (1742), long before the pedal harp was invented, and these airs are in several different keys, both sharp and flat; but when a harper has his instrument in G, with one sharp, should he wish to alter it to C or D, he can do it by only sharpening one set of strings, i.e., in half the time it would take him to turn it from C to D, and so in proportion to the number of strings he would have to alter. But you must recollect that a country harper has not occasion for such a variety of keys as a person belonging to a regular band. The Welsh harp is chiefly used for accompanying the voice and for Welsh airs, in which an expert practitioner can, with the accidental notes, produce every modulation that the style requires, and in some instances, even much more complicated arrangements of notes than the pedal harp will admit of, in as much as the fingers can be moved with greater rapidity on the strings than the feet on the pedals.

As to the form of the harp. I am required not to deviate from the ancient style in anything not essential to the tone, so that the ornament of the comb, &c., is in the same style with that of the old harps whilst the curve of the comb, length of the strings, &c., are all left to my own discretion and I persuade myself that I have been able to preserve the ancient form, and at the same time give it a fuller and more mellow tone. With regard to further improvements, I should be most happy to be put in a situation to attempt them on a more extensive scale. I always endeavour to avail myself of my experience in every new harp that I make but you will, I am sure, admit that it will never do for a tradesman to employ his time wholly in experiments. But if the society, or any individual, would favour me with an order to that effect, I should be most happy to apply the experience I possess, as well as the untried plans which I may think practicable to forward any plan placed in my hands.

Before I conclude, I should consider myself acting unjustly towards the society, as well as ungratefully, were I not to notice most particularly one expression in your letter and I hope you will not consider me wanting in respect to yourself in so doing you tell me to be at my ease, and that I shall yet beat all those who are repugnant to the improvement of the Welsh harp and by this, as far as I understand the expression, you imply that the society which employs me is "repugnant" to such improvement. Should such be your meaning, I beg most decidedly to deny the justice of the charge. It was under the auspices of the society that I commenced, and have carried on the improvements I have been able to make and I have always found that institution most liberal in its conditions, and most anxious that I should put in practice any plan of improvement that might suggest itself to me.

I remain, sir, most respectfully yours,
BASSETT JONES.
Cardiff, Dec. 1, 1842.¹²

¹² Bassett Jones, 'Abergavenny Cymreigyddion: The Welsh Harp', *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 10 December 1842, p. 4.

After making the prize harps for the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion in 1837, Jones gained great distinction for the harps he created.¹³ He made so much of an impact that in 1838, Bassett Jones was appointed by Carnhuanawc as the official harp maker to the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society.¹⁴ For several years, he was put to the task of making the prize harps for the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society's Eisteddfodau, and by 1840, Bassett Jones was skilled enough in harp making that he was able to make all but one of the prize harps for the Abergavenny Eisteddfod.¹⁵ By the closing of the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society, Bassett Jones was nicknamed "Ieuan Delynawr" and made most of the thirty-seven harps offered as prizes for the Eisteddfodau.¹⁶ The manufacturer was heavily supported by these commissions, with Augusta Hall playing a key role in arranging sponsorship for it. It is unclear just how many harps Bassett Jones created, however some of his harps have been numbered, suggesting over one hundred.¹⁷ Many still exist in museums and private collections today.

Carnhuanawc continued to guide Bassett Jones in the creation of his harps despite Jones establishing himself as a distinguished Welsh harp maker in his own right. In Jones's endeavour to make his harp lighter, as per the request of the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society, the wood became too thin in places, leaving Carnhuanawc upset with the sound quality the instrument created. One of Jones's attempts to create a triple harp similar to John Richards's creations left Carnhuanawc dissatisfied:

It is very loud, but I do not like the tone at all. It is by no means sweet, but harsh and hollow. I think some of the wood must be too thin. It sounds the letter *oo*, as in the word *too*, with a very nasal twang, especially from the second octave down. You are of course aware that all harps sound some vowel; the North Wales harps sound the *a* with a snarling character; your best harps sound *aw* as in the word *law*.
December 9, 1843¹⁸

This was not the only time Bassett Jones was criticised for his craftsmanship. In 1837, Thomas Gruffydd described his harp as "miserable workmanship of Basset [*sic*] Jones last prize Harp [*sic*] (won by him in 1837) & now quite useless... that such bad wood &

¹³ 'Abergavenny Cymreigyddion', *Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian*, 14 October 1837, p. 3.

¹⁴ Roberts, *The Harpmakers of Wales*, p. 60.

¹⁵ 'Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society', *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 28 November 1840, p. 3.

¹⁶ Ley, *Arglwyddes Llanofar: Gwenynen Gwent*, p. 57.

¹⁷ These harps will be discussed in chapter three.

¹⁸ Williams, *Literary Remains*, ii, 411.

It is interesting to note the comparison of the sound quality to vowel sounds, which was popularised around the same time as Bassett Jones, particularly by Robert Willis's 1830 paper "On Vowel Sounds and on Reed-Organ Pipes".

workmanship was really a complete loss – as he would not now play a note on the harp”.¹⁹ As Bassett Jones began to improve on his harps, he found where he could reduce the weight of the harp without damaging the tone quality by shaving off material not necessary for the harp to resonate.²⁰ By doing this, he could moderate the weight of the harp while making the sound of the instrument rounder than the harps that came before. While it is not specified which parts of the harp Bassett Jones shaved to reduce the weight, by my examination of his harps, he was likely referring to portions of the wood that can be thinned. This task was made even more difficult as he added features to these harps which John Richards did not include: the feet, comb, metal reinforcements, and laminated wood. Some of these features made the harps heavier, but were necessary in the longevity of the harps, as many older harps were bowing at the neck due to the extreme pressure from the strings.

In 1842, Bassett Jones corresponded with Carnhuanawc on the idea of making a gift harp for His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, Prince Albert to be presented to him and Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace.²¹ Carnhuanawc had taught Bassett Jones his knowledge of harp making and had previously critiqued Bassett Jones’ harps, so he was taken as a consultant to ensure that the harp was of the utmost quality. According to *The Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price, Carnhuanawc*, written by Jane Williams, he had a significant role in the creation of the instrument, including the design, embellishment, and manufacturing.²² In July 1842, Carnhuanawc travelled with the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) and two esteemed triple harpers to Buckingham Palace for the presentation.²³ The Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842), adorned with symbols of Welsh culture, was a marvel to many.²⁴ Unlike the harps made for the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society, this harp was subject to few of those restrictions, allowing the harp to be extravagant, adorned with gold leaf and heavier. Because the weight allowance was not something Bassett Jones needed to adhere to, he was also able to implement his ideas to help reinforce the harp from damage over time.

¹⁹ MS. 13182E II, National Library of Wales Letter number 100, dated October 1839, from Augusta Hall to Mr Daniel, Chairman of the Abergavenny Association of Welshmen) as cited by Rachel Ley, *Arghwyddes Llanofar: Gwenynen Gwent* (Caernarfon: Gwasg Gwynedd, 2001), p. 59.

²⁰ Bassett Jones, ‘Abergavenny Cymreigyddion: The Welsh Harp’ *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 10 December 1842, p. 4.

²¹ In the interest of consistency, this harp will be called the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842).

²² Williams, *Literary Remains*, i.

This will be discussed further in chapter two.

²³ Mr John Wood Jones of Llanover, Harper to Sir Benjamin Hall and Mr Thomas Griffiths, harpist of Tredegar.

‘Latest Intelligence’, *Bury and Norwich Post, and East Anglian*, 2 August 1843, p. 3.

²⁴ The design and iconography of the harp will be described in further detail in chapter three.

Because Queen Victoria and Prince Albert adored the harp, Bassett Jones was appointed harp maker to the royal family in October of 1845 by Carnhuanawc at the Abergavenny Eisteddfod.²⁵ Having seen what Bassett Jones could create, it was suggested that he make another, more ornate version of the triple harp for the Great Exhibition of the Works of All Nations in London in 1851.²⁶ Queen Victoria wished for the harp to have the “artistic or ornamental part of the instrument will be emblematical of the Cymry, and the design and exquisite workmanship are intended to surpass anything of the kind hitherto manufactured at Mr. Jones’s establishment”.²⁷ After creating and showcasing the Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851), Bassett Jones went on to tour with a group of several musicians to exhibit the harp around the United Kingdom. In 1851, the Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851) was set to be raffled off, valued at two hundred Guineas. One thousand coloured lithographs of the harp were sold as tickets for the draw and one was selected as the winner.²⁸ After this, Bassett Jones continued to win more awards for his harps, as well as manufacturing more prize triple harps for the Abergavenny Eisteddfodau.

As he was creating these instruments, he was also repairing older harps made by a range of harp makers across Wales. Because the three rows of taut strings produced so much tension, he often found that the force of the strings over time would bow the neck, often cracking it apart where the grain of the wood was short. Because of this, many harps did not stand the test of time, including his own. With the freedom he was afforded through the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society, he experimented with ways of creating stronger harp necks without increasing the weight of the instruments. His experiments with supporting the neck with metal reinforcements took some of the pressure off the weakest point. However, this addition added weight, creating instruments that were often too heavy to be portable. This meant that he would need to trim off weight from other locations on the harp. Jones also added a metal comb that would go over the strings, distributing the tension of the strings along the neck of the harp, as an attempt to equalize the pressure of the strings. Another attempt at reinforcing this weak spot was to use laminated wood on the neck. This method solved the problem by creating more than one grain in all areas, avoiding one place that was weaker than the others. This technique worked well and kept the weight down;²⁹ however,

²⁵ ‘The Abergavenny Eisteddfod’, *Musical World*, 30 October 1845, pp. 518-520.

²⁶ ‘The Great Exhibition of 1851’, *Morning Chronicle*, 10 December 1850, p. 4.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ ‘The Grand Unrivalled Welsh Harp’, *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 25 June 1852, p. 8.

²⁹ The Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society requested that Bassett Jones keep his harps below 30 pounds to emulate the traditional harps made by John Richards.

many of his harps display several different techniques to reinforce this area. Bassett Jones disliked the look of the laminated wood and spent much time creating carvings and design details to hide its use. These techniques were used by triple harp makers after him to develop even better ways of supporting the neck and preventing it from bowing over time.

In the later part of his life, Bassett Jones continued to participate in Eisteddfodau. In the 1867 Caernarfon Eisteddfod, Jones won many prizes like the best specimen of a musical instrument for a model harp, a silver medal for creating the best model of a labourer's cottage, as well as a bronze medal for the best painting in oil on any subject illustrative of Welsh history.³⁰ Bassett Jones died in his home at the age of sixty on Duke Street, Cardiff in 1869 and he is buried at St. James Church.³¹ Bassett Jones left behind his widow, Mary, his daughter Ann and his son W. T. Jones.

³⁰ 'The Eisteddfod', *Aberystwyth Observer*, 14 September 1867, p. 2.

³¹ Roberts, *The Harpmakers of Wales*, p. 64.

Chapter Two: Affiliations

Lady Llanover and Carnhuanawc

The most influential affiliations that helped to elevate Bassett Jones's career were Lady Llanover and Carnhuanawc. Their connection and effect on Bassett Jones and his career can be attributed not only to their social connections, but their fervent support of Welsh culture and the image of Wales they wanted to depict. To understand the connection of these three, it is important to first explore their individual aspirations and how they mutually benefitted from their connections.

Lady Llanover was born at Ty Uchaf in Llanover Monmouthshire on 21 March 1802 to Georgina (1771–1850) and Benjamin Waddington (1749–1828). Coming from an English family, she developed a passion for the culture of the geography in which she was raised. It is debatable when Lady Llanover first developed this affection for Welsh culture: whether that was in her childhood, as she was raised, or in her adulthood. Celyn Gurden-William poses the idea that Lady Llanover simply adopted the culture in which she was raised, while Helen Forder suggests that she was “proud of her mother's Welsh ancestors, the Sparrows, linked to the Sparrows of Anglesey, many of whom served as High Sheriff for the county”.¹ Regardless, Lady Llanover's upbringing nurtured her love for the country and the culture. In her early childhood, she had Welsh language, literature, and history lessons, and would regularly communicate in Welsh with staff on the estate.²

In 1805, when Lady Llanover was three years old, she had her first interaction with the Royal family; being connected through old friends, she was introduced to the Princesses, Princess Elizabeth and Princess Augusta.³ Later in her life, Lady Llanover continued this connection, sending gifts and invitations to encourage the Prince and Princess of Wales to be closer to the country's culture. These interactions lead to a social connection with the Royal family that served the Llanover estate well. Later on, the Royal family would attend events to honour this relationship. Benjamin Hall III's father Benjamin Hall II (1778–1817) was a politician who married the daughter of Richard Crawshay, a former business partner from the influential Crawshay family. Benjamin Hall II was the property owner of the Hensol Castle and Abercarn estate, and he served as a Member of Parliament for several different locations

¹ Gurden-Williams, 'Lady Llanover and the Creation of a Welsh Cultural Utopia', p. 24.

Forder, *High Hats and Harps*, p. 11.

² Forder, *High Hats and Harps*, p. 11.

³ Ibid., p. 12.

from 1806 until his death in 1817.⁴ The combination of Lady Llanover's love for Wales and the Welsh culture and her social influence allowed her the opportunity to further realize her ideal image of Welsh culture and re-establish traditions that had waned.

The first known Eisteddfod where Lady Llanover made an appearance was the 1826 Brecon Eisteddfod. Held by the Cambrian Society of Gwent, this Eisteddfod was where she met Carnhuanawc.⁵ Carnhuanawc was born 02 October 1787 at Pencaerelin in Llanfihangel Bryn Pabuan, Brecknock. The son of a vicar Rice Price (unknown–1810), and Mary Bowen (unknown) – herself the daughter of a vicar – it is no surprise that Carnhuanawc attended the Grammar School and after became the vicar of Cwmdû in Breconshire.⁶ As an ardent supporter of Welsh culture and tradition, he developed a Welsh school in Gelli Fellen to advocate for the use of Welsh language in school. In 1823, his work helped to establish the Welsh Literary Society of Brecon, then secured finances to support the school for blind harpers at Brecon, which trained several famous harpers. Through his work, he managed to connect with many people, including Lady Llanover, interested in encouraging the Welsh language and building an image of esteemed Welsh culture.

Carnhuanawc had a fondness for the Welsh triple harp, and within an unnamed book of Welsh music he collected, he reminisced of his first memory of the harp: it was a single-row harp played by “Old Sam”, a local harper.⁷ Carnhuanawc, having been an avid historian of the nineteenth century with a passion for the arts and Celtic culture, spent much of his time studying craftsmen and documenting their techniques for future study. He often attempted these crafts himself. At one point, when he was unable to travel due to bad weather, he worked in a cottage attempting to make instruments, the first of which was a rudimentary harp.⁸ *The Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price, Carnhuanawc* depict his strong feelings on Wales and its musical traditions in poetry:

WELSH MUSIC.

In earnest ever, still to feeling true,
From age to age thy hallowed chords have borne
The spirit-power of music ever new
As nature's echoes, meeting sweet return.

The pathos of the past, emotions rife,
Which cast enchantment o'er the present hour;
Futurity's bright hope, ennobling life,

⁴ Gurden-Williams, 'Lady Llanover and the Creation of a Welsh Cultural Utopia', pp. 25-26.

⁵ Forder, *High Hats and Harps*, p. 24.

⁶ The Grammar School is now named Christ College, in Brecon, Wales.

⁷ Williams, *Literary Remains*, ii, 20.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

Speak from thy magic frame with thrilling power.

Thy country's harmonies her music knows,
Soft as the ripple of her sunny streams,
Fresh as the breeze round Cadair Arthur blows,
Ecstatic as the soaring sky-lark's dreams:

Wild as the cataract, yet gentle too
As glittering wreaths which fall in silvery spray;
From sound her scenery rises still to view
In all its glorious, serene array.
Thy country's story in thy music lives,
Thy nation's spirit animates thy frame,
Memory to thee immortal record gives,
And hope anticipates thy future fame!

The Cymry still a people shall remain,
And hold wild Wales through good and ill secure,
Their language they shall keep, their harp retain,
The bards declare, while earth and time endure! ⁹

Because Carnhuanawc and Lady Llanover's agendas aligned so well, oftentimes they were seen as a team. Celyn Gurden-Williams makes note of this in her thesis, stating that historians such as Prys Morgan, John Davies, and Hywel Teifi Edwards all refer to them as a team leading a unified agenda.¹⁰ However, also she makes the point that while these two worked together quite often, they were even wrongfully linked to each other's individual projects by their peers. According to an article written on the presentation of the harp in *The Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian*, the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) was "the gift of Lady Hall, of Llanover";¹¹ however, a corrective letter to the editor written by Lady Llanover suggests that it was not a gift from her but rather that:

The Harp in question was made by Mr. Basset [*sic*] Jones, of Cardiff, and was graciously received on his behalf as an offering from a Welsh subject, who is admitted to be the best maker of the national instrument of the Principality in Wales. The workmanship was his own, the materials procured at his own expence [*sic*], the designs for the decorations having been given at his own request by the Rev. Mr. Price, (Carnuanhawc) [*sic*] the vicar of Cwm dû [*sic*].¹²

⁹ Ibid., 413.

¹⁰ Gurden-Williams, 'Lady Llanover and the Creation of a Welsh Cultural Utopia', p. 75.

¹¹ Augusta Hall, 'The Present of a Welsh Harp to the Prince of Wales', *Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian*, 2 September 1843, p. 3.

¹² Ibid.

This is an interesting distinction, as Lady Llanover was well known in London, as her husband, Sir Benjamin Hall, was a member of Parliament; it was likely that both Carnhuanawc and Bassett Jones being associates of hers would suggest that she was involved. However, Lady Llanover advocates that this was Bassett Jones's idea, and that Jones tasked Carnhuanawc to suggest designs indicative of Welsh culture.

In *The Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price, Carnhuanawc*, it is suggested that he had more input, having taught Bassett Jones the craft of harp making and having previously critiqued the quality of Bassett Jones's harps. *The Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price, Carnhuanawc* reads:

Mr. Price, full of loyal nationality, entered with zeal and diligence upon the work. He invented and drew the design, assigned the appropriate forms and accurate proportions of each several part of the symmetrical whole, and superintended with sedulous vigilance the process of manufacture and embellishment. His mechanical skill, his artistic ingenuity, his heraldic knowledge and his fine taste were all brought to bear upon the production of this instrument.¹³

However, Bassett Jones, in response to an article in the Monmouthshire Merlin paper, had a differing opinion of the efforts taken to create this harp more in line with Lady Llanover's assessment:

Sir, - It will be remembered by some of your readers, that on the evening of the 27th of August, 1843, a Welsh Harp was presented, by the permission of Her Majesty to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, But up to the present time, the public have not been made acquainted with the particulars of the presentation, in their true light.

I should not call your attention to the subject especially after the lapse of so long a period, were it not that my attention was drawn by the perusal of a new publication, entitled "Royal Visits and Progresses to Wales," by Mr. Parry, of Chester, which contains a drawing of the Harp – also full particular of the presentation at Buckingham Palace. From the obscure manner in which my name is mentioned therein, in connection with the Harp, one would naturally conclude, that the instrument was presented by the parties who on this occasion, merely submitted it to Her Majesty.

In consequence of this, I consider it my duty to inform you and the public that the Harp was built by me solely, and the whole of the expenses were defrayed by myself. Such being the case, I think I have a claim and a right to that distinguished honour, which the recorder of this event, has forgotten to bestow upon me.

I remain yours faithfully,
Bassett Jones, Harp Maker, Cardiff.
London, April 30th, 1851.¹⁴

¹³ Williams, *Literary Remains*, ii, 300.

¹⁴ Bassett Jones, 'Mr. Basset Jones' Welsh Harp', *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 2 May 1851, p. 3.

While no source is objective, this discrepancy demonstrates the character of the collaboration established between these three Welsh culture advocates. *The Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price, Carnhuanawc* suggest that he did a majority of the planning, research, and design while Bassett Jones was just the executor of the plans. On the other hand, Bassett Jones articulates that he should receive all of the credit for the harp's creation and that Carnhuanawc and the harpers simply submitted his work to the Queen. Lady Llanover's assessment of the credit went to Bassett Jones, though she still notes that he asked Carnhuanawc for guidance. With Carnhuanawc's background in harp making, it is possible that he had helped with the construction details. Regardless of Carnhuanawc's guidance, Bassett Jones emphasized his role in this endeavour to avoid being eclipsed by the influence of Carnhuanawc and Lady Llanover.

The Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society

Eight years after Carnhuanawc and Lady Llanover met, the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society was formed.¹⁵ The Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society was built on the idea of preservation of the Welsh culture and managed to greatly improve the survival of the Welsh language as well as the national instrument, the Welsh triple harp. It also sought to promote the writing of essays and poetry, singing, Welsh music, and Welsh wool weavings through Eisteddfodau.¹⁶ Carnhuanawc, Lady Llanover, and several of her close friends were some of the first members. However, despite the main contributors being wealthy, of the first seventy-five members, it should be noted that the majority did not belong to the upper class.¹⁷ In the Monmouthshire Merlin's account of the opening meeting of the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society, an unnamed lady in the society recognized the shortage of quality Welsh harps and harp makers and suggested the prize of a Welsh triple harp for the Eisteddfodau.¹⁸ She suggested that the harp be worth twenty guineas, and at the time, it was difficult to find harps of this quality. With the decline in popularity of the Welsh triple harp as well as the death of renowned Welsh triple harp maker John Richards, there was very little room for other Welsh harp makers to rise to the position. However, the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society sought to reverse this decline and was searching for an ideal craftsman to create these quality triple harps for the Eisteddfodau. It was unclear how Bassett Jones was selected for this appointment; nevertheless, it is clear that he would not have been prepared for this craftsmanship without the guidance of Carnhuanawc, who possessed both the detailed sketches of a beautiful John Richards harp and a craftsman's knowledge of making harps.

Bassett Jones notes that the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society determined it was necessary to keep the harps at a conveniently transportable weight.¹⁹ This allowed for the continued tradition of harpers traveling with their harps fastened on their backs, moving from place to place to earn a living. While some harpers continued to travel in this way, the popularization of these heavier double-action pedal harps made it more difficult to maintain

¹⁵ The Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society was established in 1833 and disbanded in 1853 after the death of Carnhuanawc in 1848.

¹⁶ Gurden-Williams, 'Lady Llanover and the Creation of a Welsh Cultural Utopia', p. 10.

¹⁷ Williams, *Literary Remains*, ii, 231.

¹⁸ It should be notable to mention that a Hirlas Horn is a long blue drinking horn that was historically used to sound an alarm for a battle. In this context, it is being given as an award to honour Bassett Jones's contribution to the society as a symbol of Wales.

'Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society', *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 28 November 1840, p. 3.

¹⁹ Cynddelw, 'Abergavenny Cymreigyddion: The Welsh Harp', *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 10 December 1842, p. 2.

itinerant traditions. Regardless of this slow transition to a different way of use, the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society strove to uphold the humble image they had helped curate of Welsh culture. In an exchange with a writer in the *Monmouthshire Merlin*, Bassett Jones explained the society's restrictions in his own words and why he chose to create the harps as he did.²⁰

In this rebuttal, much information is revealed about the fine line Bassett Jones tried to walk between the restrictions that the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society gave him and the desire to create the clearer tone more characteristic of pedal harps. In Cynddelw's note to Bassett Jones, he questions whether the society is holding him back with restrictions. Bassett Jones made it clear that there were few restrictions on his harp making other than the design of the harp and the weight. He made note, though, that the weight restriction was somewhat difficult to meet when trying to match the tone quality of the pedal harp, which only had one row of strings allowing for them to be tighter. With more strings, there was more strain on the neck of the harp, making it unable to hold the same amount of tension in the strings. In Pierre Erard's brochure advertising for Sebastien Erard's pedal harp, Pierre discusses this issue by stating that "when the neck or curved part where the mechanism lies, is not made sufficiently strong to resist the tension of the strings, when drawn up to concert pitch, it will get distorted and alter completely its shape".²¹ Erard's solution for this was to heavily reinforce the neck, as the weight of the pedal harp was not of concern like it was for the triple harp. Because of this, Bassett Jones began to experiment on ways to fortify the neck of the harp to keep it from warping over time from the tension of the strings. Even so, these additional support systems Bassett Jones put into place created more strain on the harp. Bassett Jones balanced this out by noting he shaved down portions of the harp that are "not essential to the tone of the instrument".²² It is unclear what exactly is meant by this statement; however, measuring the weight between John Richards harps and Bassett Jones harps as well as the dimensions of the instrument, that the neck, forepillar, and soundboard were not significantly reduced in size. Regardless, the Bassett Jones harps possessed several features that the John Richards harps often lacked including feet and the neck reinforcements previously mentioned. These features create a significant weight difference between John Richards harps, which were the lightest harps still in existence from the time, and the Bassett Jones harps, which were often on the

²⁰ See quote in chapter one, p. 9.

²¹ Pierre Erard, 'The Harp in its Present Improved State Compared with the Original Pedal Harp' (London, 1821).

²² Cynddelw, 'Abergavenny Cymreigyddion: The Welsh Harp', *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 10 December 1842, p. 2.

heavier side. Bassett Jones then mentioned a scenario in which harpers of the time would change the strings of the harp to be “larger”, trying to adjust the tone of the instrument to match the tone of the pedal harp, and would tighten the strings too much, damaging the instrument. It is likely that these “larger” strings refer to strings with a wider diameter, which would create even more tension on the neck of the harp. This was a tricky predicament for Bassett Jones, as the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society had restrictions on weight, but weight was needed in order to fortify the neck from warping with tension from the strings. Bassett Jones also mentioned that, taking the travelling harpers into consideration, it was necessary to have a restriction on weight. If they did not have a weight restriction, the heavier harps would be treated similarly to the way pedal harps were treated by these musicians; their inner machinery was removed to reduce weight.

At the end of his correspondence, Bassett Jones made a clear statement to Cynddelw that the society had helped him in many ways including allowing him the opportunity to experiment and make the triple harp a better, more long-lasting instrument for the future. Because of these improvements on the harps, they started to gain great distinction among harpers. By the time Bassett Jones had made the prize harps for the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion in 1837, he had gained great distinction for the harps he created.²³ He made so much of an impact that in 1838, Bassett Jones was appointed by Carnhuanawc as the official harp maker to the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society.²⁴ For several years, he was assigned the task of making the prize harps for the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society’s Eisteddfodau, and by 1840, Bassett Jones was skilled enough in harp making that he was able to make all but one of the prize harps for the Abergavenny Eisteddfod.²⁵ Bassett Jones made harps for the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society from its establishment until its conclusion in 1853 when the society disbanded. During this time, he made a majority of the thirty-seven harps offered as prizes for the Eisteddfodau.²⁶ Lady Llanover continued to hold Eisteddfodau and promote Welsh culture outside of the society.

²³ ‘Abergavenny Cymreigyddion’, *Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian*, 14 October 1837, p. 3.

²⁴ Roberts, *The Harpmakers of Wales*, p. 60.

²⁵ ‘Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society’, *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 28 November 1840, p. 3.

²⁶ Ley, *Arglwyddes Llanover: Gwenynen Gwent*, p. 57.

Lady Llanover's Contribution

Most of Lady Llanover's life was spent advocating for the continued use of the Welsh triple harp and other Welsh cultural endeavours. This thesis would be incomplete without recognising her unique patronage that benefitted Bassett Jones and continued his legacy. Her success in helping the triple harp thrive in Wales is considered to be one of her most influential legacies, benefitting the triple harp in several different ways. For much of her life, Lady Llanover employed harpers for the estate, which she would have perform at all events “as in former days [when] the Welsh harp was an important feature in the mansion of every nobleman and gentleman in the Principality’ and ‘formed the attraction of every social gathering and was met with in most places of entertainment where travellers resorted’”.²⁷ At the Brecon Eisteddfod, Lady Llanover was introduced to John Woods Jones (1800–1844), the first harper she would become a patron of.²⁸ Coming from a gypsy lineage, he was a descendent of two harpers from the Wood family, and was a student of Richard Roberts, whose knowledge was passed down from William Williams, whose teacher was John Parry. John Parry's teacher was Robert Parry, who, according to John Wood Jones's epitaph “yr hwn a dderbyniodd ei gelfyddyd oddiwrth hen delynorion Cymru” [received his art from the old harpers of Wales].²⁹ This patronage continued to John Wood Jones's student Thomas Gruffydd (1815–1887) after John's passing. Thomas Gruffydd was known to have won numerous prizes and was named the “Special Welsh harpist to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales” in 1869.³⁰ While this patronage continued, Lady Llanover also hired other harpers for larger events and started a scholarship for students to learn from the harpers on the estate.

Another way Lady Llanover advocated for the Welsh triple harp was through the Eisteddfodau. Some through the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society and others through her own estate, each Eisteddfod had one or more triple harp competitions with lofty prizes, such as a harp made by Bassett Jones. As the pedal harp grew in popularity, fewer and fewer were interested in competing with a triple harp; however, Lady Llanover fought vehemently to ensure that no player that also played the pedal harp might compete in one of the triple harp competitions. Her reasoning for emphasizing this was expressed as follows:

²⁷NLW MSS, 1902 B, ‘The Welsh Harp (press cuttings)’, Brinley Richards, 8 March 1869.

²⁸ Gurden-Williams, ‘Lady Llanover and the Creation of a Welsh Cultural Utopia’, p. 164.

²⁹ Sir Joseph Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire*, 10 vols, (London, 1992), I, 394.

³⁰ It had been an established tradition for His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to have an appointed Welsh harpist.

My friends and fellow-countrymen, but especially you true harpers of Wales, who play upon the harp of our country, the chief object of my invitation to you, Telynorion Cymru (harpers of Wales), is to give support to the most perfect national instrument in the world, and grieved I am to say that through the discouragement that noble instrument has received for the space of fifteen or sixteen years past, it has gone down so much that in the judgement of our well-known and eminent musical countryman, Mr. Brinley Richards, here present this day, it was a necessary duty to call the attention of the Principality, through the newspapers, to the danger of losing its national instrument, and this duty he performed; and I now take this opportunity to impress upon your minds that no instrument can be the national instrument of a country unless it is sufficiently light for the player to carry it. The triple harp possesses this excellence, and there is no other national instrument to compare with it which combines the same power with such sweet harmony, and yet is so light as to enable the player to carry it for miles on foot. It is necessary to have an ass and cart, or a car (or, at least, a wheelbarrow), to bring a pedal harp from one street to another, it is so loaded with steel and brass; but the triple-stringed harp of our country can be carried on the shoulders up our mountains and down our valleys. It is also impossible to play correctly the best and finest of the old Welsh compositions upon any other harp than this, for which those grand airs were composed. [...]

The harp that I give to-day as a prize (and sorrowful am I that I cannot give seven harps instead of one) has been made in exactly and in the same manner as the harp still in my possession, made by that celebrated Welsh harp maker, John Richards. The wood in this prize harp has been drying for about 20 years; the form is the real antique shape and very elegant, yet the work is strong as in the fine old harps. The Welsh harpers in the old past time were so attached to their harps, so careful of them, that they would not trust them with others, and preferred carrying them on their own shoulders to sending them on before, or leaving them to be sent after themselves. In conclusion, I must say that I do not believe there is one person here present who has not from his heart a true and sincere desire for the restoration of the triple-stringed harp to its proper place, and to see it replaced in many hands and on many hearts in the Principality. I see around me farmers and tenants of my own, who take an interest in this competition, and proud indeed should I be to see a Welsh harp in each of their houses, which would be a source of most innocent pleasure to the 'young men and maidens, to the old people and children' when they sing together the old sweet melodies of Wales in that language to which every true Cymro wishes 'Oes y Byd' (the age of the world); but alas! Alas! The Cymru are now worse off than the Jews in Babylon. The Jews said, 'On the willow trees we hung our harps;' thus they were permitted to keep their harps although captives in a foreign land, although their hearts were in too deep sorrow to strike one string. But amongst us- amongst the Cymry- although we may have some willow trees and some harps left, alas! We have very few harpers to play upon them, as in the 'Hên amser gynt' (the old past time). May this disgrace be now removed.³¹

This was also an agenda that Carnhuanawc held closely. The two supported the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society, shaming all Eisteddfodau that allowed the pedal harp.

³¹ 'Lady Llanover And The Welsh Harp', *Musical World*, 30 October 1869, p. 749.

She also encouraged the popularization of the Welsh triple harp by supporting triple harp makers. Bassett Jones was the first harp maker from whom she commissioned triple harps, mostly through the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society. Bassett Jones's harps would be used for prizes in the Eisteddfodau or would be given as gifts to talented harpers. Additionally, after Bassett Jones passed in 1869, she hired two new harp makers to learn these skills from Carnhuanawc. These two harp makers, Abram Jeremiah (unknown–1885) and Elias Francis (1829–1911) learned to make harps under the same guidance that Bassett Jones received, studying the sketches of John Richards harps.³² According to Robert Griffith, the only harp maker in Wales who would be considered a master in the way that the old harp makers were and the last harp maker in Wales to know the skills of string making was Abram. Neither harp maker, however, rose to the same esteem as Bassett Jones.³³ There is little known about these two makers and it is unclear if their harps survived, as there are no harps within the scope of this thesis that have been attributed to them. It is possible that, being directly hired by the Llanover estate, these harps were not inscribed with the same maker's information as Bassett Jones. It is unknown if they created harps for prominent shows such as the Great Exhibition or how many triple harps they made for the estate.

Lady Llanover continued to glorify the Welsh triple harp whenever others questioned the integrity of the instrument as the Welsh national instrument and would falsify facts about its history in Wales. As it is commonly known now, the triple harp originated in Italy, however Lady Llanover believed that the harp's connection to Welsh culture was much deeper and that the Welsh triple harp has "claim to an ancestry as old as our hills".³⁴ Prys Morgan believed that it was either her refusal to accept the true history or the unawareness of it that helped to keep her so steadfast in her efforts to protect it.³⁵

The work of Bassett Jones is intricately linked to the work of his affiliations. Just as his associates do not deserve full credit for their joint ventures, this thesis would be incomplete without recognising the work and successes of these partners. They played a significant role in the success of Bassett Jones, from creating an environment conducive to success to providing the information necessary for him to learn this craft. Bassett Jones would not have achieved as much as he did with his life without the help of Lady Llanover, Carnhuanawc, and the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society.

³² Robert Griffith, *Llyfr Cerdd Dannau: ymchwiliad I hanes hen gerddoriaeth a'r dulliau hynaf o ganu* (Caernarfon: Cwmni y Cyhoeddwyd Cymreig, 1913), p. 217.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ NLW MSS, 1902 B, 'The Welsh Harp (press cuttings)', Brinley Richards, 8 March 1869.

³⁵ Prys Morgan, *The Eighteenth Century Renaissance* (Llandybie, Dyfed: C. Davis, 1981), p. 125.

Chapter Three: Harp Discussion

Bassett Jones's work for the Welsh cultural revival centred heavily on the harps that he made. Two in particular, the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) and the Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851), were so well documented and connected with events that they will be explored first; the other Bassett Jones harps will be discussed starting on page 49 and the triple harps made by other makers will be discussed starting on page 59. This chapter examines the construction and history of each harp in detail with specific characteristics being noted regarding each for comparison in Chapter Four: Data Discussion. Each harp's construction is examined including the soundbox character, reinforcements, soundboard grain direction, ornamentation, and other unique characteristics. Any history known surrounding these harps will also be noted here. Due to the wide variety of vocabulary used to describe the different parts of the triple harp, the Figure 3 labels the terminology this thesis will be using. The scroll is the highest point where the neck and forepillar meet. The forepillar is the column at the front of the harp connected to the base and neck of the harp. The forepillar is attached to the base with a bolt, or a rectangular connecting joint in the front of the harp. The strings connect to the neck at the top of the harp and the bridge rail on the soundboard. The soundboard is the wood on the front of the soundbox connected to the strings with the bridge rail. The sound holes may be located on the soundboard, or they may be located on the back of the soundbox. The back of the soundbox may be built using staves, which are strips of wood linked together to create a rounded shape, or the soundbox may have a rounded back. At the top of the soundbox is the stave cap which holds the staves together and attaches to the shoulder. A

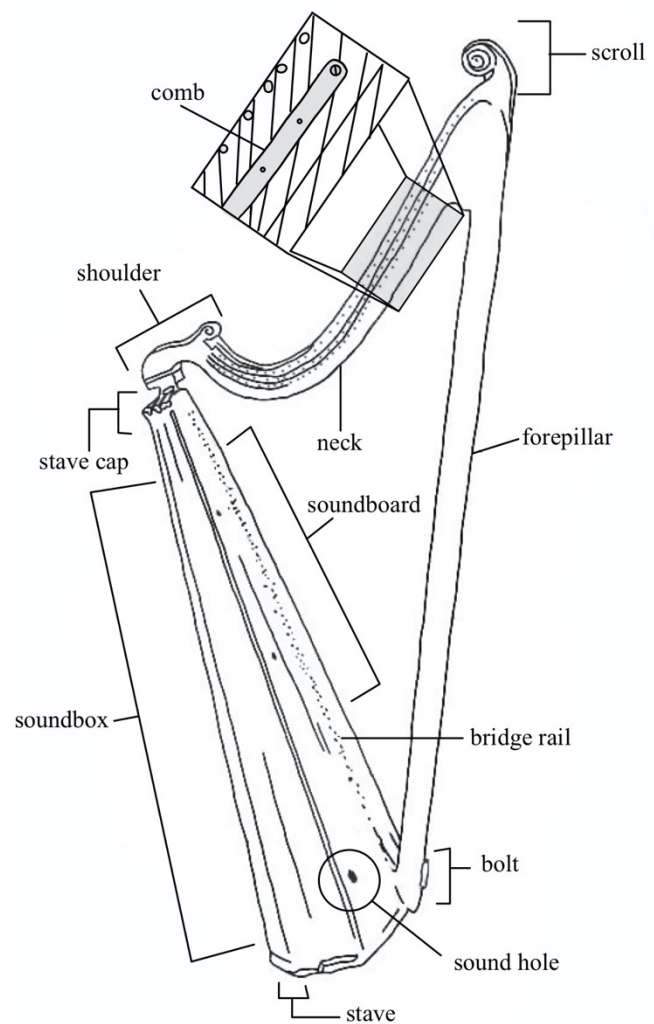


Figure 1 Rendering of a Welsh triple harp with labelled anatomy, created by the author.

comb is a metal strip that connects periodically to the harp's neck to support it and equalise the tension from the strings.

Each harp was examined and measured by the author to the closest millimeter unless otherwise stated. Most previous literature used only one Bassett Jones harp in comparison to other harp makers, however this is not representative of his full body of work and the experimentation in construction that were undertaken by him during his life. No single harp can be representative of Bassett Jones's work as a whole, therefore, each harp is vital in the understanding of his change. Because these harps are from many different locations and only some have identification codes, this thesis has attributed them new codes. These codes consist of the author's initials to indicate the study these identifiers come from, a number attributed to the harp based on the historical order of the harps studied, the initials of the maker, and the year it was made. For those with no maker's mark, they have been identified with "NMM" where the maker's initials reside. For those with an approximate year of creation, an "*" is placed next to the approximate year, and if there is no approximate year, a "*" is left in place of a date. For example, the Prince of Wales Harp is coded KH06, BJ1842: KH is the author's initials, 06 is the number of the harp within the list, BJ stands for Bassett Jones as the maker, and the harp was built in 1842.

KH06, BJ1842

The Prince of Wales Harp

1842, Bassett Jones

By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagans, Cardiff, 13.129

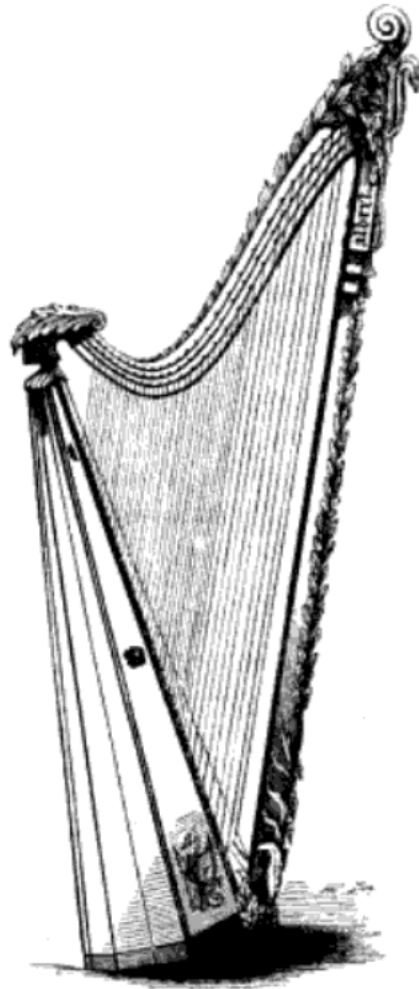


Figure 2 The Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842), “Royal Visits and Progresses to Wales, and the Border Counties” by Edward Parry.

Historical Context

Currently located in the St. Fagans National Museum of History, one of the most notable Bassett Jones harps was made in 1842 as a gift to celebrate the birth of Albert the Prince of Wales (1841–1910). While it was suggested by several articles that Lady Llanover played a role in this gift, she rejected the credit to bestow it on both Bassett Jones and Carnhuanawc. While it is unclear who exactly did what for this project, it is clear that the connections between Lady Llanover, Carnhuanawc, and Bassett Jones benefitted all parties involved.

On 3 August 1843, Carnhuanawc and two esteemed triple harpers (Mr John Wood Jones of Llanover, Harper to Sir Benjamin Hall; and Mr Thomas Griffiths, harpist of Tredegar) travelled with the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) to present it as a gift and perform for the royal family.¹

Details of the harp presentation were documented in several different newspapers, including *The Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian*:

On Thursday se'nnight, by her Majesty's command, the Rev. Sir. Price, vicar of Cwmdû, so well known for his taste, talents, and learning, as one of the most eminent antiquaries of Wales, attended at Buckingham Palace with the beautiful Welsh triple harp made expressly for his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, by Mr. Bassett Jones, of Cardiff, and which national tribute of loyalty her Majesty and his Royal Highness Prince Albert were graciously pleased to permit the Prince of Wales to accept. [...]

Mr. Price was commanded to bring with him two of the most eminent Welsh harpists, that her Majesty and Prince Albert, and their illustrious visitors, might hear the Prince of Wales's harp played upon, and have a specimen of real Welsh music. To enhance the value of this "concord of sweet sounds," and of the strains so touchingly elicited from the instrument by their unrivalled skill, native Welsh harpers performed on the instrument. Mr. Jones, the harper of Sir Benjamin Hall; and Mr. Griffith, the harper of Tredegar were selected for the occasion. In order that the scene should be characteristic, the harpers were clad in the costume of the ancient harpers of Cambria. [...] "The bardic habiliments sat well on blithe and hardy figures of the harpers and as they sat to the instrument, the Hushed cheek and eager eye where embarrassment struggled with anxiety to do honour to the gentle craft," gave zest and piquancy to the rich and passionate strains which they flung from the chords, with a brilliancy and profusion which elicited marked applause from the most fastidious of all audiences.²

On this evening, the two foremost harpers dressed in elaborate Welsh costume demonstrated the best of Welsh music and culture of the time. John Wood Jones was discovered by Lady Llanover during the 1826 Brecon Eisteddfod and enlisted him as a resident harper for the Llanover estate.³ As a member of the gypsy Wood family, a group often credited for the livelihood of the Welsh harp for many years, he was a student of several other prominent harpers. His epitaph describes the lineage of harpers he learned from, who passed down harping traditions and repertoire orally:

Disgybl telyn oedd i Richard Roberts o Gaernarfon, athraw yr hwn oedd William Williams o Benmorfa, a'i athraw ef oedd John Parry o Riwabon ... a'i athraw yntef Robert Parry o Lanllyfni yn Arfon, yr hwn a dderbyniodd ei gelfyddyd oddiwrth hen delynorion Cymru.

¹ 'Latest Intelligence', *Bury and Norwich Post, and East Anglian*, 2 August 1843, p. 3.

² 'Present of a Welsh Harp to the Prince of Wales', *Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian*, 5 August 1843, p. 3.

³ John Wood Jones (1800-44), referred to as "Mr Jones, the harper of Sir Benjamin Hall" in source material.

[He was a pupil of Richard Roberts of Caernarfon, whose teacher was William Williams of Penmorfa, and his teacher was John Parry of Ruabon ... and his teacher was Robert Parry of Llanllyfni in Arfon, who received his art from the old harpists of Wales.]⁴

Coming from this great lineage of Welsh harpers, John Wood Jones was an ideal representative to play the Welsh triple harp. There is less known about Mr Thomas Griffiths, except that he was a celebrated blind harper that won a prize for “best performer on the triple harp, of the Welsh air called ‘Y Bardd yn ei Awen’”.⁵

The Welsh minstrels first performed a duet (“Codiad yr Ehedydd”) on their own harps, after which Mr. Jones, of Llanover, had the honour of performing a solo on the Prince of Wales's harp (“March of the Men of Harlech”) which he did with much taste and effect. Mr. Griffiths followed with the ancient melody of “Pen-rhan,” [sic] which he performed in a very masterly manner. After which they played “Sir Harry Ddû” as a duet. The performances concluded by Mr. Griffiths playing a composition of his own named “Dyverwch Tywysog Cymru; or the Prince of Wales's Delight.”

Her Majesty observed that she was not a stranger to the tones of the Welsh harp, having heard it during her visit to the principality in the year 1832, when she was present at the great national festival of the Eisteddfod and her Majesty added that she remembered that visit with much pleasure. The gracious notice her Majesty and his Royal Highness Prince Albert deigned to bestow upon the Rev. Mr. Price, as placed in charge of the favourite instrument of his countrymen, and the interest they evinced in the national minstrelsy [sic] of the principality, will be indelibly impressed on the hearts of her Majesty's loyal and faithful Cambrian subjects.⁶

To perform duets, the two harpers brought their own instruments as well as the Bassett Jones harp, giving a few different examples of the triple harp for the Royal family and their guests to hear. The first song “Codiad yr Ehedydd” (or The Rising of the Lark) was a Welsh air composed by David Owens, who was commonly referred to as “Dafydd y Garreg Wen”.⁷ This song was said to be composed in the early morning as he relaxed with his harp by a large stone and heard a lark singing and was first published in 1784 by Edward Jones.⁸ The second song, “March of the Men of Harlech”, is a Welsh national song depicting the 1461

⁴ ‘Sir Joseph Bradney, *A History of Monmouthshire*, 10 vols. (London: Mitchell Hughes and Clarke 1992), I, 394.’ cited in Rachel Ley, *Lady Llanover and the Triple Harp*, trans. by Translation Unit, University of Wales, Bangor (Aberystwyth: Cyfeillion Llyfregell Genedlaethol Cymru, 2000), p. 3.

⁵ ‘The Eisteddfod’, *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette*, 1 November 1845, p. 4.

⁶ ‘Present of a Welsh Harp to the Prince of Wales’, *Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian*, 5 August 1843, p. 3.

⁷ David Owens, ‘Dafydd y Garreg Wen’ (1711/12-1741).

⁸ Robin Gwyndaf, *Welsh Folk Tales* (Cardiff: National Museum of Wales, 1989), p. 43.

attack on Harlech Castle, located in Harlech, Gwynedd.⁹ It was first published without lyrics in 1794 but has since had several different Welsh poets create a story to accompany the tune. The third song played was “Pen-rhaw”; it is an example of a song with a simple melody and four-line verses used for “cerdd dant”.¹⁰ These types of songs have a set harp melody to which a vocalist will sing poetry, following a set of rules on rhythm and cadence. This tradition is unique to Welsh culture and continues to this day.

This was followed by “Sir Harry Ddû” (or Syr Harri Ddu) a Welsh air that first appears in Richard Morris’s 1717 tune lists. “Syr Harri Ddu” is an example of penillion with a trochaic tetrameter quatrain set.¹¹ This kind of song or poem has four stressed syllables per line. The final song, “Dyverwch [*sic*] Tywysog Cymru” (or the Prince of Wales's Delight), was composed by Thomas Griffiths himself. These songs were selected deliberately as both indicative of alleged ancient Welsh music and Welsh music at the time. It is important to note that most knowledge of these tunes are stories told by Edward Jones (“Bardd Y Brenin”), with little substantiative evidence. Some

were supported by secondary sources, but more often, they were supported by no sources at all.¹²

The Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842), covered in symbols of Welsh culture, was a marvel to many. Because Queen Victoria and Prince Albert adored the harp, Bassett

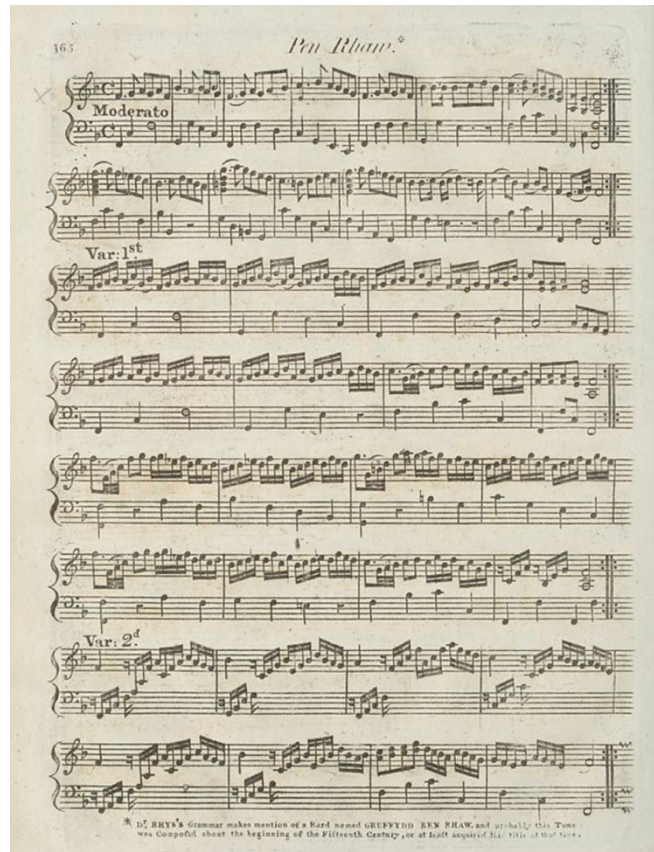


Figure 3 A Copy of 'Pen Rhaw' from Edward Jones's "Musical, and Poetic Relicks of the Welsh Bards", published in London 1811.

⁹ Lynda Rollason, “Harlech castle.”, in *The Oxford Companion to British History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) <oxfordreference.com> [accessed 11 August 2019].

¹⁰ ‘Cerdd dant’ in modern times has become a replacement for ‘canu penillion’.

¹¹ Cass Meurig, *Alawon John Thomas: a fiddler's tune book from eighteenth century Wales* (Aberystwyth: Llyfregell Genedlaethol Cymrum, 2004), p. 132.

¹² Joan Rimmer, ‘Edward Jones’s Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards, 1784: A Re-Assessment’, *Galpin Society Journal*, 39 (1986), 77-96.

Jones was appointed harp maker to the royal family. In October of 1845, it was announced by Carnhuanawc at the Abergavenny Eisteddfod.¹³

Construction

As one of the most intricate Bassett Jones harps, the construction of the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) was admired as an emblem of the Welsh culture Lady Llanover desired to cultivate. In the same newspaper article describing the visit, *The Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian* depicts the motifs of the harp:

The Rev. Mr. Price had the honour of explaining to her Majesty and his Royal Highness Prince Albert the peculiar construction of the harp of Wales, and the meaning of the Welsh mottos carved on the Prince of Wales's harp, with the workmanship and design, of which her Majesty and Prince Albert expressed their approbation. Her Majesty was also graciously pleased to desire that the harpers might be informed that she had been much gratified by their performance. The harp which her Majesty and Prince Albert have graciously received for his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales is in the ancient and picturesque form of the national instrument of the principality, stands about six feet high, and is elaborately carved in solid wood the base of the pillar is supported by the leek, the emblem of Wales, entwined with mistletoe and oak leaves. A wreath of oak leaves goes up the pillar, which terminates in the Prince of Wales's plume, supported by sprays of oak, from which depend three lables [*sic*], on which are carved in antique characters "Albert, Tywyseg Cymru" (Albert, Prince of Wales). On the side of the comb of the harp is likewise carved, in old characters, the following line from one of the Welsh bards: — "Faith [*sic*] enaid ar ei thannau" ("The language of the soul is on its strings"). On the sounding board are emblazoned the arms of Wales, four lions passant, or, and gules counterchanged, with the red dragon of Wales supporting the shield, and the coronet and plume of the Prince of Wales.¹⁴

As portrayed, there are many motifs of Wales and Welsh culture laid out throughout the harp. First mentioned, the leek is a symbol of Welsh culture through St. David, the patron saint of Wales. There are several different legends that explain the connection. The first legend, referencing a battle against the Saxons, involves soldiers wearing a leek to identify fellow countrymen. The other involves a battle in 1346 in which the Welsh fought bravely in a field of leeks. However, neither of these stories are substantiated with evidence. It is possible that the forepillar is bolted into the base of the soundbox with the same technique as harps made by John Richards and as harps previously made by Bassett Jones, however the carved leek that engulfs the base of the forepillar and conceals the joint. Hiding the bolt gives the impression that the forepillar is grounded into a separate base that attaches to the soundbox

¹³ 'The Abergavenny Eisteddfod', *Musical World* (30 October 1845), pp. 518-520.

¹⁴ "Present of a Welsh Harp to the Prince of Wales", *Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian*, 5 August 1843, p. 3.

similarly to that of the pedal harp. As the pedal harp had been recently popularized, it is possible that the reason for this change in construction is due to the need to modernize the look of the triple harp and hide its assembly, or it could be to provide a sturdier platform for the harp to stand on its own while on display. To support the latter reasoning, the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) has four feet when most triple harps made before it had none. While the traditionally made Welsh triple harps had to be transportable, this harp was built to be gazed upon and admired, so the feet would be necessary to stabilize the harp and protect it from damage. The front feet are designed as oak trees with acorns and leaves growing from them while the back feet are shaped as dragon's claws.



Figure 4 "A First Lesson on the Welsh Harp!" Published by Thomas McLean, August 24 1843. A satire piece of Queen Victoria and the Royal family watching the infant Prince of Wales play the harp.

The carved acorns and oak leaves on the base travel up the forepillar in a garland-like fashion. Oak leaves and mistletoe were other adopted Welsh symbols closely associated with the Druids. Like the acorns, the oak tree was a source of sustenance that became important to them. The mistletoe was used by the Druids as an ingredient in medicine.¹⁵ At the top of the forepillar, there is a carved Prince of Wales crown and plume that fold over to create the scroll. Prince of Wales Plume was first used in this form by Prince Arthur (1486 – 1502) at the beginning of the sixteenth century. There is no clear history behind the Prince of Wales Plume, however there is a widely told legend of the Black Prince's victory over the King of Bohemia at the battle of Cressy. This legend lends an explanation for the ostrich

¹⁵ Anne Ross, 'Ritual and the Druids', in *The Celtic World*, ed. by Miranda J. Green (London/New York: Routledge, 1995), ii, 423-444.

feathers – the ostrich feather can bend and sway in the face of wind but will not be altered, similarly to the state of kings and kingdoms in the face of adversity. The triple plume was adopted more frequently during Edward III's reign, 1327-1377.¹⁶ With the Prince of Wales Plume there is often the addition of the words "Ich Dien" which translates to "I serve".¹⁷ This quote is in reference to how the royal family are servants to the people. No longer visible on the soundboard, the red dragons holding the shield were worn off or the soundboard was replaced. Because it is no longer a part of the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842)'s decoration, it is unclear exactly what shield was depicted.

The popular dragon symbol of Wales also has several legends, but is now used as a distinct symbol of the country, and is currently included in the modern Welsh flag. Fastened on the top of the neck is a wood veneer, with the inscription "Iaith enaid ar ei thannau". This is an excerpt from a poem by David Owen.¹⁸

Senedd yr ymrysonau – y ddeudu
O ddedydd gydleisiau,
Anian i gyd yno'n gwau
Iaith enaid ar ei thannau.¹⁹

[Senate of all discord – the two sides
Of joyous unisons,
All passion there weaving
The language of the soul on her strings.]

David Owen's effect on the development of the awdl and englyn Welsh poem meters was substantial and caused him to be considered one of the leading bards.²⁰ This quote has become popularized within the community that supports the livelihood of Welsh culture and was used on several of Bassett Jones's harps. This Welsh poetry form consists of four lines with seven syllables per line. Within these four lines, the first, second, and fourth lines rhyme. David Owen's string of englynion for the Menai Suspension Bridge inspired Welsh poets for the next century.²¹

In addition to the inscription on alternating sides of the forepillar, "Tywysog Albert/Cymru", inside of the forepillar includes the date of the event, 1843. On the metal

¹⁶ Simpson, W., 'On the Origin of The Prince of Wales' Feathers', *Fraser's magazine*, May 1881, 617, pp. 637-649.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ David Owen (1784-1841) is commonly referred to as Dewi Wyn o Eifion.

¹⁹ Poem by David Owen, cited in Robert Griffiths, "Y Delyn Deir-res", *Cymru* (Caernarfon: Cwmni'r Wasg Genedlaethol Gymreig, 1899) p. 192.

²⁰ William Rowlands "Owen, David (Dewi Wyn o Eifion; 1784 - 1841)", in *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* (1959) <<https://biography.wales/article/s-OWEN-DAV-1784>> [accessed 28 April 2020].

²¹ Ibid.

reinforcement of the neck, engraved is: “Gwnaed gan Bassett Jones Caerdydd” [Made by Bassett Jones, Cardiff]. Engraved on the comb are the three-leaf clover, thistle, rose, and daffodil to depict Ireland, Scotland, England, and Wales respectively. However, some of these symbols such as the leek and dragon did not receive official status until the 1911 investiture of the Prince of Wales.²²

Unlike the harps made for the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society, this harp had little of the same restrictions, allowing the harp to be extravagantly decorated – it was adorned with gold leaf and considerably heavier. At 20.9 kg, the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) is more than 5 kg greater than other harps made in the same period. Without the weight limitations, Bassett Jones made several different changes in order to strengthen the harp and ensure its longevity. Firstly, a metal comb was added to the neck around the pegs to support the strength of the strings and to equal out the tension of each row. Once this comb was created, it became a standard for triple harp makers to use. To support the neck from warping, Bassett Jones also included laminated wood for the neck. Laminated wood removes the problematic short grain by overlapping grain in different directions. Having a spot in the neck with short grain leads to a weak spot where the neck will warp and eventually snap. Several historic harps have had this difficulty at different stages of their life. To conceal the laminated wood, Bassett Jones used a veneer over the top of the neck and details on the scroll. Instead of the standard segmented soundbox characteristic of many previous triple harps, this harp has a rounded soundbox, similar to that of a pedal harp, containing five large apertures in the centre of its back. It has been suggested that these apertures were meant to hold stops that could be removed to give the harp a larger dynamic range to compete with the pedal harp in volume.²³ Because the soundbox was not segmented, to imitate the regular scalloped triple harp stave cap, Bassett Jones created a faux cap.

²² The symbol of the leek, daffodil, and dragon became official symbols of Wales along with “Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau” as the Welsh national anthem at a time when Welsh society called for institutional and ceremonial recognition.

John S. Ellis, ‘The Prince and the Dragon: Welsh National Identity and the 1911 Investiture of the Prince of Wales’, *Welsh History Review = Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymru* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), 18(2), pp. 272-294.

²³ Emyr Davies, St Fagans National Museum of History Welsh Triple Harp Collection, Senior Conservator Furniture at St Fagans National Museum of History, (18 July 2019).

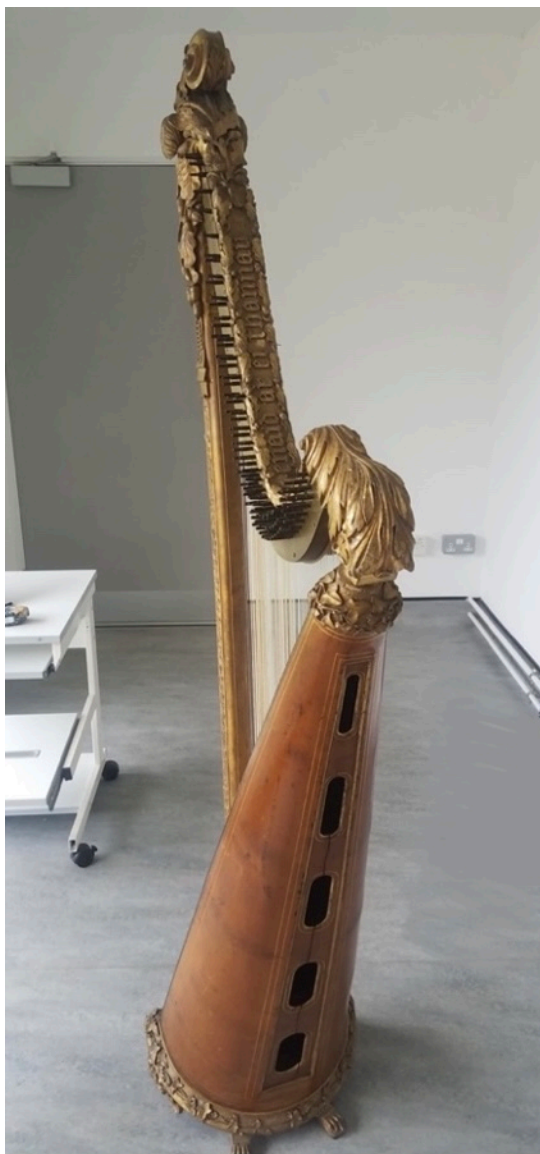


Figure 5 The Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842), photo taken by author.



Figure 6 The Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) photo taken by the St Fagan's National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff.

KH14: BJ1851

The Great Exhibition Harp

1851, Bassett Jones

By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagans, Cardiff, 58.154

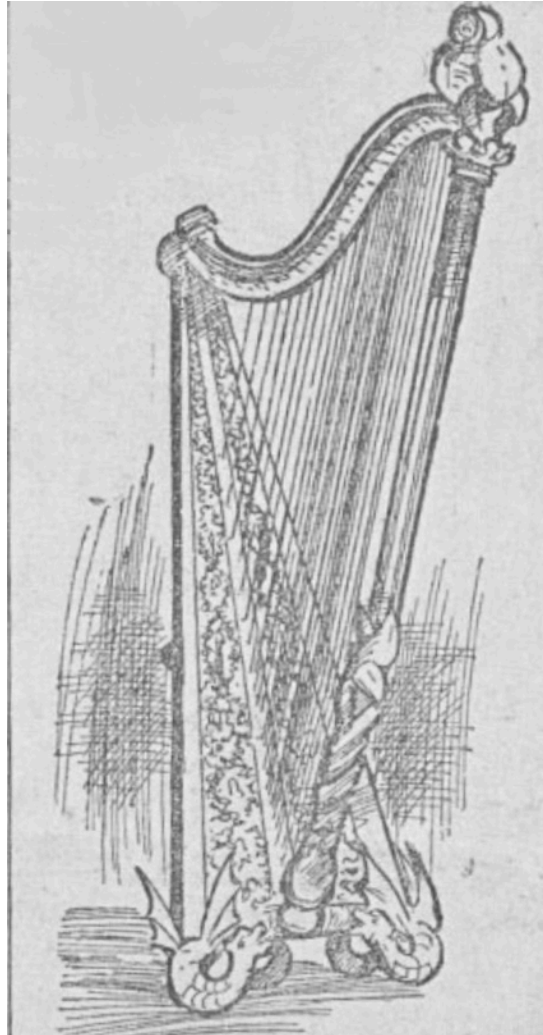


Figure 7 Rendering of the Great Exhibition Harp (KH12:BJ1851) from the Morley Music Library.

Historical Context

Currently located in the St. Fagans National Museum of History, this harp was created for the “Great Exhibition of the works of Industry of All Nations” held in London 1851.²⁴ After being presented with the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842), Queen Victoria requested for Bassett Jones to create an extravagant harp to represent the artistry and culture of Wales. At this time, as harp maker to her Majesty the Queen, Jones took it upon himself to create an even more ornate harp than the one created for the Prince of Wales. Announced in

²⁴ The Great Exhibition of the works of Industry of All Nations is also commonly referred to as the Crystal Palace Exhibition or the Great Exhibition of 1851. For consistency, this exhibition will be referred to as the Great Exhibition.

the *Monmouthshire Merlin*, Jones anticipated that “The artistic or ornamental part of the instrument will be emblematical of the Cymry, and the design and exquisite workmanship are intended to surpass anything of the kind hitherto manufactured at Mr. Jones’s establishment”.²⁵

7½ UNITED KINGDOM.	
CLASS 10. Philosophical, Musical, Horological, and Surgical Instruments.	
<p>494 TOWNS & PACKER, 30 Oxford St. Mann.—Grand transposing pianoforte. Microphonic cottage pianoforte of economic construction.</p> <p>496 ERARD, P. O. 18 Great Marlborough St. Inv. Des. and Mann.—New patent pianoforte. New patent metal frames for pianoforte. Harps. “Prince of Wales’ harp,” richly decorated.</p> <p>498 MOTT, L. H. R. 76 Strand, Inv. and Mann.—Patent metallic cottage grand pianoforte, not liable to be affected by change of climate or weather. Horizontal grand pianoforte, with metallic frames.</p> <p>499 WORKUM, R. Store Str. Inv. and Mann.—Improved piccolo pianoforte. Semi-bichord grand pianoforte, upon</p> <p>500 HOPKINSON, J. & J. 15 Soho Sq. Mann.—Horizontal grand pianoforte with new patent action. Boudoir pianoforte.</p> <p>500a TURNBULL, W. 6 Frederick St. Regent’s Park, Mann.—Set of pianoforte keys.</p> <p>502 GREAVES, E. 56 South St. Sheffield, Mann.—Æolian pitch pipe. Æolian violin mute. Chromatic solian pitch pipe. Solian tuning-forks. Pair of chromatic tuning-forks. Registered portable metronomes. Printers’ counting-machines.</p> <p>504 KERR & PATE, 141 Strand.—Brass horns with valves, French horn, trombones, trumpets, ophicleide, euphonion, cornet-à-pistons, clarionets, flutes, drums, &c.</p> <p>504a MCGILL, J. B., 3 Waterloo Pl. Edinburgh, Inv.—Tuning-fork, with chromatic scale, by which any note may be struck at pleasure.</p> <p>506 DOON, E. 113 Vauxhall Walk, Lambeth, Mann.—Violin, violoncello, double bass, and harp strings.</p> <p>508 DUNST, J. F. Cheshunt, Herts, Mann.—Box of musical bells.</p> <p>507 GIBSON, J. 37 Suffolk St. Birmingham, Inv. and Mann.—Cornopean, trombo cornets, Sax horns, keyed bugle, long valve trumpet, &c.</p> <p>508 HAWES & Co, 1 Budge Row, Prop.—Newly-invented musical instrument, called “Flutina.”</p> <p>509 HAWES & Co. 2 Budge Row, Mann.—Orders of knighthood, masonic jewels, head ornaments, bracelets, brooches, &c. in imitation of precious stones.</p> <p>509 FORSTER, SIDNEY, A. 13 Macclesfield St. Soho Sq. Mann.—A violin, viola, violoncello, &c., made after the models of the exhibitor’s grandfather, popularly known as “Old Forster.”</p> <p>510 HARRIS, J. K. Leeds, Mann.—Violoncello constructed upon improved principles.</p> <p>511 APPELL, J. 76 Queen St. Edinburgh, Inv.—Centripetal regulating pegs and pins, for tuning instruments. Spring “capo-tasto,” for the guitar, changing at once the diapason of the strings.</p> <p>512 McNEILL, J. 140 Capel St. Dublin, Inv.—Cambridge cavalry field-trumpet bugle. Balb cornopean.</p> <p>514 CHURCH, G. 12 Berkeley Pl. Bristol, Inv.—Wrist-supporter, for the piano-forte. Improved guitar. Improved finger-board for the violoncello, and other bowed instruments.</p> <p>516 EDWARDS, J. & Son, Church St. Burslem, Inv.—An instrument to give strength and flexibility to the fingers of all instrumental performers.</p> <p>517 PAGE & SOX, 23 King St. Westminster, Inv. and Mann.—Cornopean, trumpet, and valve horn, with valves of small diameter, and without angular turnings.</p> <p>518 BROADWOOD & SOX, 33 Gt. Pulteney St. Mann.—Four grand pianofortes, of different constructions.</p> <p>519 BETTS, A. 27 Royal Exchange, Mann.—Two violins.</p> <p>520 OATES, J. P. Lichfield, Imp.—Improved brass musical instruments: Cornets, pisa-cor, Sax-horn, trumpet, </p>	<p>Staffordshire horn, &c. Spring door-porter and elastic blind-rack.</p> <p>522 FAIRFAX, MISS ANNE, 29 Norfolk Cres. Hyde Park, Inv.—Gloco di Euterpe; a new musical game.</p> <p>523 JORDAN, J. 34 Manchester St. Liverpool, Inv. and Mann.—Newly-invented euphonie serpenteide, euphonie horn, tenor-valve ophicleide, and cornopean.</p> <p>525 PARSONS, L. 31 High St. Bloomsbury, Mann.—Enharmonic guitar (Inv. and prop. T. P. Thompson, M.P.), capable of being arranged in the perfect ratios for upwards of 30 keys.</p> <p>526 WHEATSTONE & Co. 30 Conduit St. Regent St. Pat. and Mann.—Concertinas, treble, baritone, concert tenor, concert bass, double, &c. Symphonion. Portable harmonium, &c.</p> <p>527 WARD, 35 Gt. Titchfield St. Inv. and Mann.—Kettle, bass, and side or signal drums. Patent flute. Newly constructed bassoon.</p> <p>527 WARD, C. 35 Great Titchfield St. Inv. Pat. and Mann.—Improved kettle-drum, bass-drum, side or signal drum; flute, and bassoon.</p> <p>528 SNELL, H. Bell’s Pond, Inv. and Mann.—Seraphine, with bichromatic or double scale of notes.</p> <p>529 STORER, J. 26 Piccadilly, Inv. Pat. and Mann.—Percussion Æolophon, with two sets of vibrators. Portable Æolophon, for flutes or violoncello parts, &c.</p> <p>530 FAULKNER, E. 11 York St. James’s Sq. Des.—Accordion stand.</p> <p>531 BRAY, J. 26 Westmoreland St. Dublin, Mann.—Double-action harp, with additional notes, music-stool, desk, and stand.</p> <p>532 JONES, B. Cardiff, Wales, Des. and Mann.—Grand triple-strung Welch harp.</p> <p>533 SIMPSON, T. Sea Lion Hotel, Hanley-in-the-Potteries, Inv.—Norma Virium, or musical accentuator, intended to supersede the metronome.</p> <p>535 SHOCAMA, A. 135 Fleet St. Inv. Pat. and Mann.—Diatonic flutes, retaining the old system of fingering while affording numerous additional fingerings, on a system strictly based upon acoustic principles.</p> <p>536 McDALL, ROSE, & Co, 38 Southampton St. Strand, Fro. and Mann.—Carte’s patent flutes, in silver and wood. Boehm’s patent flute. Improved ordinary flute.</p> <p>537 FURDY & FENOT, 74 Dean St. Soho, Mann.—Violins, violoncellos, double bass. To exhibit oil varnish equal to that on the Cremona; an art supposed to have been lost.</p> <p>538 POTTER, H. 2 Bridge St. Westminster, Mann.—Clinton’s flute, improved.</p> <p>540 KOHLER, J. 35 Henrietta St. Covent Garden, Pat. and Mann.—Patent valved wind instruments.</p> <p>541 GUDKIN, H. 58 East St. Manchester Sq. Inv.—Violin and violoncello. Self-acting pegs for tuning violins, violoncellos, and tenors.</p> <p>542 GARRETT, H. 64 King St. Whitehall, Mann.—Double-pistoned brass cornopean, with straight and curved tubes.</p> <p>543 DOON, J. Image Cottage, Holloway, Mann.—Bows for the violin, tenor, and violoncello, mounted with gold and tortoiseshell. Silver strings for the violin, violoncello and harp.</p> <p>544 CHIDLEY, R. 135 High Holborn, Des. and Mann.—Concertinas, in ivory, with gold stops.</p> <p>545 CASE, G. 34 New Bond St. Mann.—Concertina three octaves and a half compass.</p> <p>546 CARD, W. 29 St. James’s St. Des. and Mann.—Silver, gold, electro-silvered, and other flutes.</p> <p>547 CALLCOTT, J. 31 A. Admiral Ter. Vauxhall Bridge Rd. Inv. and Mann.—Newly-invented French horn and cornet-à-piston without loose crooks.</p>

Figure 8 A page from the “Official Catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the Works of All Nations, 1851”, featuring item number 532.

In the Great Exhibition, Bassett Jones’s harp was item number 532 in “Class 10: Philosophical, Musical, Horological, and Surgical Instruments”, listed “Jones, B. Cardiff,

²⁵ ‘The Exhibition’, *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 30 November 1850, p. 3.

Wales, Des. [designer] and Manu.[manufacturer] – Grand triple-strung Welch harp”.²⁶

Surrounded by other instruments on display in the tenth class, the Great Exhibition was filled with products from raw materials to sculptures organized first by nation, then by the class of product.

After the Great Exhibition, Bassett Jones advertised “The Grand Exhibition Harp Concert” in Cardiff on Monday 14 June 1852. The advertisement stated that there would be a concert featuring the Great Exhibition Harp, played by Mr. Ellis Roberts, the Harpist to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. The concert also featured Mr. T. Weaver, a professor of violin, Mr. Edward Quelch, a flautist, and several unnamed vocalists. The advertisement mentions that “The Grand Exhibition Harp Concert” will also be performed “at NEATH on the 15th, SWANSEA on the 16th, MERTHYR on the 17th, and NEWPORT on the 18th of June.”²⁷

The most detailed advertisement from the tour for “The Grand Exhibition Harp Concert” was printed in Newport on Friday 18 June 1852 by the Monmouthshire Merlin. The advertisement stated the entirety of the program for the tour, as follows:

THE GRAND EXHIBITION HARP CONCERT
MR. BASSETT JONES

Begg most respectfully to inform the nobility and gentry, his friends and the public, that a GRAND CONCERT, both Vocal and Instrumental, will take place at the TOWN HALL, on FRIDAY, (THIS DAY), the 18th June, 1852, on which occasion this magnificent and unrivalled Triple-string WELSH HARP will be performed upon, for the first time in public, by that well-known and eminent artiste, Mr. ELLIS ROBERTS, Harpist to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, whose valuable services have been secured especially for this occasion. Assisted by Mr. T. WEAVER, Professor of the Violin, pupil of Blagrove, Leader of the Royal Academy, and Mr. EDWD QUELCH, Flautist.

PROGRAMME.

Part I.

A brief description of the Exhibition Harp illustrated by a Grand Solo on the Above instrument by Mr. E. Roberts, Harpist to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales } E. Roberts

Song – “Scenes that are Brightest” – Mr. E. Robetts [<i>sic</i>]	Wallace.
Solo – Violin (On Welsh Airs) – Mr. T. Weaver	Thomas.
Solo Flute “Oh Cara Memoria” – Mr. E. Quelch	Diabelli.
Penillion Singing (by desire) – Mr. E. Roberts	

²⁶ *Official Catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851* (London: Spicer Brothers, 1851), p. 72.

²⁷ ‘Theatre, Cardiff: The Grand Exhibition Harp Concert’, *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette*, 5 June 1852, p. 2.

on his magnificent Exhibition Harp”.³² According to a later article written after the passing of Llewelyn Williams,

The harp was made by Basset [*sic*] Jones, of Cardiff, for the Exhibition of 1851. The amount of time, labour, and money expended on it unfortunately, led the maker into financial difficulties, and, as there was no purchaser at the close of the Exhibition, the harp passed into the hands of his creditors. How long it remained in their possession I do not remember, but about the years 1857-8 – it might have been a little earlier – the harp was purchased from the creditors by a number of Mr. Williams’s friends, who subscribed for the purpose, and was presented to him at a public meeting at Ebbw Vale by the late Mr. Abraham Darby, the then managing director of the Ebbw Vale Company, who headed the list of subscribers. I knew the harp well, and have heard Mr. Williams play upon it on many occasions at my house that I took the photo in 1862 or 1863. Mr. Williams has now been dead many years and I do not think any of his family survive. The present owners may be relatives, or they may have purchased the harp of the family after the death of Mr. Williams. There is no doubt, however, that this is the harp which was played at the Gorsedd at Cardiff this year. – I enclose my card, and am, &c.,

One of the Subscribers.
Newport, Dec 2.³³

While this account of events does not include the Grand Exhibition Harp Concert, it demonstrates Bassett Jones’s personal sacrifice in the creation of his triple harps. From Llewelyn Williams, it is unclear who was in possession of the harp until it was donated to the St Fagans National Museum of History.

Construction

Many viewers have marvelled at the construction and detail of the Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851) during its lifetime on display through the Great Exhibition, the Grand Exhibition Harp Concert series, and well into its time now in the St Fagans National Museum of History. Even before it first was displayed at the Great Exhibition, Ellis Roberts published a detailed description of the harp in the *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent*:

SIR,—

Permit me to send you a description of the “Triple Harp,” built by Mr. Bassett Jones, of Cardiff, for the exhibition. I having seen the harp, can safely vouch to the accuracy of the following details: —

This splendid and unequalled instrument, containing 103 strings, constructed on the antique form of the native harp of Cambria, is most elaborately carved in bold relief.

³² ‘Eisteddfod’, *Cardiff Times*, 22 April 1864, p. 4.

³³ ‘A Famous Welsh Harp: Reminiscences of Llewelyn Williams the Harper’, *Western Mail*, 8 December, 1898, p. 6.

The design of the diffusive carvings are emblematic of the country. The pedestal is carved in a wreath of oak and mistletoe, with two dragons cut in round relief, supporting the instrument. The base of the pillar forms a leek, intersected by a ribbon, on which is carved, “Undeb a Brawdgarwch.” The capital of the pillar forms the Prince of Wales' coronet and feathers entwined with oak leaves, acorns, &c. The shaft of the pillar contains the following mottoes, enriched with beautiful foliage: — “Hir oes i'n Brenhines Victoria,” on one side, “Arddangosiad cywain- waith pob cenedl,” on the other side. The part of the neck, or as it is commonly called by the harpers, comb, (crib y delyn) over the box, is ornamented with a Druidical bard's head, with oak foliage running- up the neck, entwining the beautiful motto,— “Faith [*sic*] enaid ar ei thannau.” On the comb also is introduced an equilibrium, bearing plate. This, certainly, is a very great improvement, and to which I beg to cull the attention of our Welsh harpers in general. This invention of Mr. Jones's discloses a very important secret. It not only improves the tone, but strengthens that part of the instrument most liable to give way. All Welsh harps should have the equilibrium. We should then have less of that “woody” tin kettle sound which many of the Welsh harps possess, especially “in alt.” I have seen some of the most magnificent of Erard's, the chief harp-maker in Europe, but with every endeavour to divest myself of partiality, I must say of the one in question that it surpasses anything in the shape of a musical instrument I ever saw. The more you look at it, the more you seem to admire it. It is, unquestionably, a masterpiece — an honour to the principality, and highly creditable to the manufacturer. In bringing out so splendid a specimen of national art, Mr. Jones has added a bright page to the history of Cymry's fame, and established himself at once amongst the chief harp-makers of Europe. As one of Cambria's tuneful sons, I beg to offer Mr. Jones my warmest thanks for having produced so admirable a specimen of the national instrument. He has accomplished an arduous undertaking; and I sincerely trust he will meet with that success he so richly deserves.

I remain, yours faithfully,

ELLIS ROBERTS,
Telynor Tywysog Cymru.
Welsh Harp, London,
April 21, 1851.³⁴

As described, the Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851) included a number of intricately detailed motifs to honour Wales and Welsh culture. Described in the depiction as the “pedestal”, the base of the harp is similar to the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) with the carved leek decorating the bottom of the forepillar and covers the construction of the harp where the bolt would be located. Hiding the bolt gives the impression that the forepillar is grounded into a separate base that attaches to the soundbox, characteristic of the pedal harp. As the pedal harp was recently popularized, it is possible that the reason for this change in the construction is due to the need to modernize the look of the triple harp and hide its assembly.

³⁴ Ellis Roberts, ‘The Exhibition’, *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent*, 26 April 1851, p. 5.

It is also possible that this would provide a sturdier platform for the harp to stand on its own while on display, since this harp was created to be admired while exhibited. To add to this illusion, Bassett Jones covered the base and feet of the harp with carved dragons. As mentioned before, the dragons have become one of the most notable symbols of Wales. The description explains that the dragons were cut in “round relief”, which is a type of sculpture that protrudes from a base of the same material. The dragons in relief are categorized as a high relief sculpture, as it projects more than half of the subject matter from the base material. It is important to note that the dragons were damaged at some point, and have been restored at the St. Fagan’s Museum, so they may not be exactly the same as the originals and could affect the weight of the harp.

From the base of the harp, the forepillar is simple with multiple panels, reaching to the top where the Prince of Wales feathers and coronet are located. The feathers create the shape of the traditional scroll, while the crown gives the illusion of the pillar-like head which is often referred to as a crown on pedal harps. On the shoulder of the Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851) is another high relief carving, but this time of a druid’s head. The Druids were ancient priests that populated the area and were often later connected to the mystical stories of Welsh mythology. The Druids were mentioned by Tacitus, who encountered them in Anglesey around 60 AD.³⁵ All around the harp are oak leaves and mistletoe, adorned with acorns. Acorns became a connection with Wales in association with the Druids, who believed that eating acorns would put them into a trance that would allow them to access divine knowledge.³⁶ On the soundboard, in gold paint, are symbols of Wales and the United Kingdom including acorns, ivy, druid faces, goats, the Prince of Wales feathers, clovers, thistles, roses, and leeks. Like the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842), the comb has etchings of the different floral emblems of the UK: the daffodil, the three-leaf clover, the rose, and the thistle.

On the neck, similar to the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842), is a veneer with the quote “Iaith enaid ar ei thannau”. This is a quote from Welsh poet David Owen. David Owen’s effect on the development of the Welsh poetic meters known as the *awdl* and *englyn* was substantial, and he was considered one of the leading bards of this period.³⁷ This

³⁵ John Jackson, *Tacitus: the Annals* (London: William Heinemann, 1951) v, 157.

³⁶ Anne Ross, ‘Ritual and the Druids’, in *The Celtic World*, ed. by Miranda J. Green (London/New York: Routledge, 1995), ii, p. 430.

³⁷ William Rowlands ‘Owen, David (Dewi Wyn o Eifion; 1784 - 1841), farmer and poet’ *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* (1959) <<https://biography.wales/article/s-OWEN-DAV-1784>> [accessed 28 Apr 2020].

quotation has become popularized within the community that supports the livelihood of Welsh culture and was used on several of Bassett Jones's harps.

On the sides of the forepillar are two quotes: "Hir oes i'n Brenhines Victoria," on one side, "Arddangosiad cywain- waith pob cenedl," on the other side. These two carvings translate to "Long live our Queen Victoria" and "An exhibit of the craftsmanship of every nation". Around the carved leek is a ribbon with the quote "Undeb a Brawdgarwch" which translates to "Unity and Brotherly Love". On the plaque, etched is "BASSETT JONES, Cardiff/ By Special warrants of 5th Oct 1843/ Appointed Chief Harp Maker/ To her most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria/ H.R.H. Prince Albert & H.R.H. The Prince of Wales".

Unlike the harps made for the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society, this harp had few of the same restrictions, allowing the harp to be extravagant, gold leafed and much heavier. At 23.7 kg, the Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851) is 2.8 kg more than even the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) and is more than 7 kg than other comparable harps of the time.³⁸ Without the weight limitations, Bassett Jones made several different changes to strengthen the harp and ensure its longevity. Firstly, a metal comb was added to the neck around the pegs to support the strength of the strings and to equalize the tension of each row. Mentioned in the newspaper description of the Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851) as an "equilibrium bearing plate", this comb and metal reinforcement evenly distributes the tension of the strings on the neck, allowing for it to have a more full and supported sound with tighter strings. Ellis Roberts goes on to describe the evolution of the instrument's sound from its original more traditional tone to that more comparable to the pedal harp. Roberts also mentions that the comb and metal reinforcement give support where traditional triple harps are most likely to crack and break along the neck.

At the time of the comb's invention, it was expected to become a standard for triple harp makers to use, however, many harp makers discontinued this technique in favour of more lightweight options. One of the techniques to support the neck from warping that continued to be used was Bassett Jones's use of laminated wood for the neck. Laminated wood removes the problematic short grain by overlapping grain in different directions. Having a spot in the neck with short grain leads to a weak spot where the neck will warp and eventually snap. Several historic harps have had this difficulty in different stages. To hide the laminated wood, Bassett Jones used the same "Iaith enaid ar ei thannau" veneer as the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) over the top of the neck and details on the scroll.

³⁸ The mass of these harps will be compared and discussed further in chapter four.

Instead of the standard segmented soundbox common to many triple harps before it, this harp has a rounded soundbox, similar to a pedal harp with five large apertures in the centre of its back. It is suggested that these apertures were meant to hold stops that could be removed to give the harp a larger dynamic range which would allow the triple harp to compete with the pedal harp.³⁹ Because the soundbox is not segmented, Bassett Jones created a faux cap to imitate the regular scalloped triple harp stave cap.

The Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851) stands at 190 cm tall, with a forepillar width of 7 cm. It has a total of 102 strings, with the longest measuring 149.2 cm and the shortest measuring 15.5 cm.

³⁹ Emyr Davies, St Fagans National Museum of History Welsh Triple Harp Collection, Senior Conservator Furniture at St Fagans National Museum of History, (18 July 2019).



Figure 9 The Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851), 1851, photo taken by the St Fagan's National Museum of History.

Other Surviving Bassett Jones Harps

Since the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) and Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851) were extravagant outliers of Bassett Jones's work, it is important to put them in context with other surviving harps. This is not an exhaustive list of surviving Bassett Jones triple harps, but rather a comprehensive list of the ones accessible at the time of this thesis. There are at least four more Bassett Jones harps in private owners' hands that were unattainable during the span of this thesis, as well as several museum harps in storage. These harps are organised by date or approximate date. This thesis does not explore single row harps made by Bassett Jones.

As a reminder, these harps are from many different locations and only some have identification codes; as such, this thesis has attributed new codes to them. These consist of the author's initials to indicate the study these identifiers come from, a number attributed to the harp based on the historical order of the harps studied, the initials of the maker, and the year it was made. For those with no maker's mark, they have been identified with "NMM" where the maker's initials reside. For those with an approximate year of creation, an "*" is placed next to the approximate year, and if there is no approximate year, an "*" is left in place of a date. For clarity, this thesis has labelled the language used to describe different parts of triple harp on page 27.

KH05: BJ1838**1838, Bassett Jones****Information published by the Royal College of Music, “RCM Museum of Instruments Catalogue Part III: European Stringed Instruments”, RMC 295 ⁴⁰**

Not measured or examined by author

Because this harp was inaccessible during the duration of this thesis, this information was sourced from the Royal College of Music’s museum catalogue and from photos provided. This Bassett Jones harp’s soundbox is created with nine equal staves that attach to the soundboard. There are no sound holes on the soundboard and the soundboard grain is horizontal. The forepillar is bolted into the base of the soundbox, though, the bolt itself is hidden from visibility by a carved feather. It has two simple feet in the front. This harp is not reinforced with a comb. There is a veneer on the top of the harp’s neck, which may indicate that the neck is made of laminated wood, however there is no other indication of this. The stave cap is scalloped similar to a John Richards harp. This harp is decorated with simple gilded feather detailing. There is a metal plate on the side of the neck which is not meant for reinforcement. This inscription reads: “Rif [*sic*] 4 Cymreigyddion y Fenni/ I JOHN THOMAS yn Unarddeg Oed/ Am Ragori ar y Delyn./ HYDREF 1838/ Bassett Jones/ Gwneuthurwr/ Caerdydd/ Rif [*sic*] 115” [No. 4 Abergavenny Welsh Society/ To John Thomas aged eleven/ for excellence on the harp/ October 1838/ Bassett Jones/ maker/ Cardiff/ No. 115].⁴¹ The Royal College of Music catalogue specifies that John Thomas received this harp when he was twelve, despite the inscription stating his age to be eleven.⁴²



Figure 10 KH05:BJ1838, photo taken by the Royal College of Music.

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Wells and Christopher Nobbs, *Royal College of Music Museum of Instruments Catalogue*, (London: Royal College of Music, 2007), iii, p. 38.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

KH07: BJ1842***1842, Bassett Jones******By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff, 12.44***

Not measured or examined by author

Because this harp was inaccessible during the duration of this thesis as it was on display, this information was sourced from the St Fagans National Museum of History. This harp's soundbox is created with rounded wood connecting with a soundboard instead of staves. The soundboard's grain is vertical and has six small sound holes. The faux stave cap is scalloped and joins with the shoulder leaving a slight gap to accommodate the weight of the strings. The forepillar connects to the soundbox with a visible bolt. This harp is unique



Figure 11 KH07:BJ1842, photo taken by the St Fagans National Museum of History.

because it was constructed using parts from other harps. The soundboard is known to be made by John Richards, as it is signed by the maker inside the body. However, the rounded soundbox is unlikely to be from a John Richards harp, since it is not segmented. Both the neck and forepillar are made for a taller harp and have been shaved down. On the forepillar one can see evidence of this in the bolt being relocated to a lower position and the scroll being trimmed down and reattached. On the neck, one can see holes for tuning pins that surpass what is functional for the instrument. On the front of the forepillar, the harp is painted with a gold and red floral pattern while on the back of the soundbox is decorated with intricate gold florals. The first large plaque on the side of the forepillar reads: "Cymreigyddion y Fenni/ 1842/

Anrheg Syr Charles Morgan Bar/ O Dredegar/ Enillwyd gan

John Roberts/ Telynor/ Hydref 13, 1842/ Bassett Jones/ Gwneuthurwr/ Caerdydd"

[Abergavenny Welsh Society/ 1842/ Gift of Sir Charles Morgan Bar/ From Tredygar/ Won by John Roberts/ Harpist/ October 13, 1842/ Bassett Jones/ Maker/ Cardiff]. The second plaque is illegible from its position on display.

KH08: BJ1840****No Date: 1838-45, Bassett Jones******By permission of private owner, restored by Tim Hampson***

Measurements taken by owner

This harp's soundbox is created with nine staves attaching to the soundboard. There are no sound holes on the soundboard or in the back of the soundbox, and the soundboard has horizontal grain. An iron reinforcement has been fitted to the harp under the neck. It is possible that this is a later repair, but it may also have been a reinforcement that Bassett Jones was testing. As KH08: BJ1840* and KH09: BJ1840* are adjacent maker's numbers, have different owners, and both harps have this reinforcement, it is likely that this is an original part. This harp's feet have been replaced by Tim Hampson by request of the owner to match the style of the time. Leaves carved in round relief decorate the scroll and shoulder and hide the bolt. The veneer over the neck is decorated with oak leaves and acorns carved in round relief. The plaque features the image of the Prince of Wales feathers. There are goal line details on the forepillar. It is likely this harp's neck is laminated. One maker's number away from the



Figure 12 KH08: BJ1840* pictured for sale on David Watkin's website.

next harp, this harp is meant to be played on the left shoulder and the following (KH09: BJ1840*) is meant to be played on the right. This harp was purchased by the owner from David Watkins, who acquired it from the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. It was donated to the museum by Nora Chadwick, a former lecturer at the University of Cambridge.⁴³ The inscription on the plaque reads: "Bassett Jones Caerdydd/ Gwuenthurwr Telynau Gwobrwyawl/ Cymreigddion y Fenni/ A Bhrif Eisteddfodau Cymru/ Rhif 141" [Bassett Jones Cardiff/ Maker of prized harps for/ The Abergavenny Welsh Society/ And the Chief Eisteddfodau of Wales/ No. 141].

⁴³ Watkins, David, "For Sale by David Watkins, Bassett Jones Welsh Triple Harp No. 141", *David Watkins, Harpist* (2019) <http://davidwatkins.info/Pages/other_pages/Bassett_Jones_number_141.html> [accessed 13 May 2018].

KH09: BJ1840*

No Date:1838-45, Bassett Jones

Information published by the York Castle Museum, YORCM: DA1931

Not measured or examined by author

Because this harp was inaccessible during the duration of this thesis, this information was sourced from the York Castle Museum's photos. This harp's soundboard is made by nine staves attaching to the soundboard with no sound holes (that are visible). There is a horizontal grain for the soundboard, and an iron reinforcement fitted under the neck, the same as the previous harp. This harp's two feet have unique shapes as they arch out from the triple harp. Leaves carved in round relief decorate the scroll and shoulder and hide the bolt. The veneer over the neck is decorated with oak leaves and acorns carved in round relief. It is likely this harp's neck is laminated, however there is no way to confirm this. One maker's number away from the previous harp, this harp is meant to be played on the right shoulder and the previous (KH08: BJ1840*) is meant to be played on the left. On the plaque, the inscription reads: "Rhif 142/ Bassett Jones/ Gwneuthurwr/ Caerdydd./ 'Mae Telyn yn mhob teulu= 'n offeryn Hoff euraidd i'w charu'" or [No. 142/ Bassett Jones/ maker/ Cardiff./ 'There is a harp in every family = our favoured golden instrument to love']. Pictured next to this is a stag with the words "Cymru Dros Byth" or [Wales for ever].



Figure 15 KH09: BJ1840* photographed by the York Castle Museum.

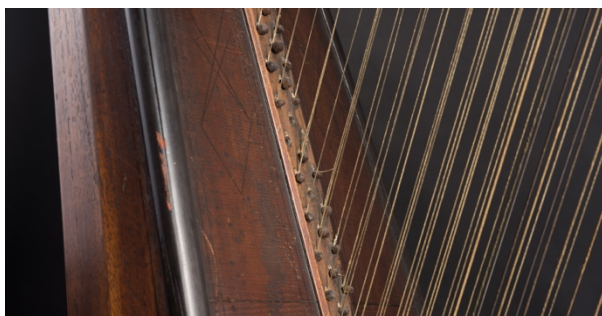


Figure 14 KH09: BJ1840* soundboard and strings, photographed by the York Castle Museum.



Figure 13 Figure 39 KH09: BJ1840* plaque, photographed by the York Castle Museum.

KH10: BJ1845
1845, Bassett Jones
By permission of private owner

This Bassett Jones harp's soundbox was created with nine equal staves that attach to the soundboard. The middle stave includes four oblong sound holes, mixing the style of the staved soundbox with the sound holes from the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842). The grain of the soundboard is horizontal. The short forepillar is bolted into the base of the soundbox; this bolt is hidden from visibility by a carved feather. It has four feet, and old images would suggest that the front were originally decorated with claws. There are two metal plates that reinforce the neck with no inscription. This harp is not reinforced with a comb. Although there is a veneer to cover the top of the neck, the neck does not give any indication of being made of laminated wood. On the soundboard, there is a detailed recreation of a popular sketch depicting Dafydd y Garreg Wen [David of the White Rock]. Above this, the soundboard is painted with leeks and a goat head, and black lining details are located in strategic places over the harp. One of these places is a black paint band at the top of the staves, hiding bolts that keep the

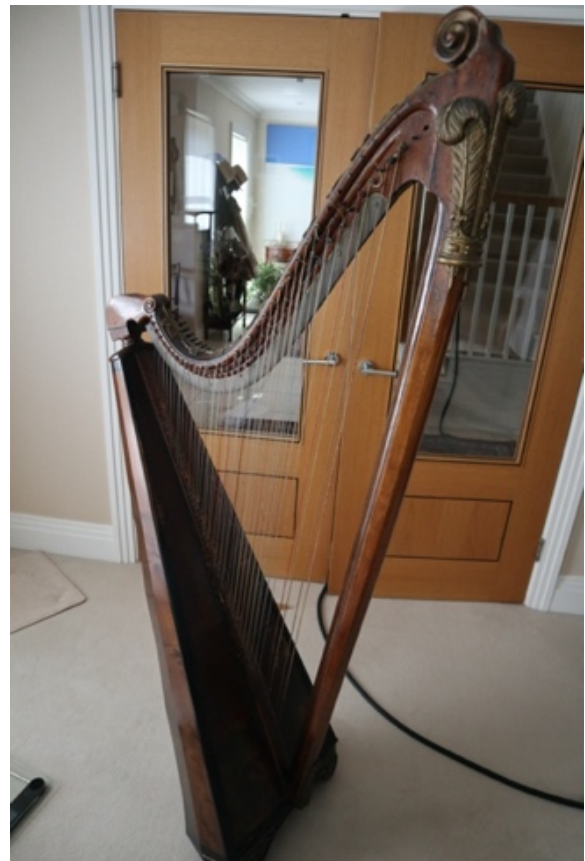


Figure 16 KH08:1845, photo taken by author.

soundbox together. This would suggest that, although there is a stave cap, it is not present for functionality but rather for the appearance of the harp. The feet, Prince of Wales feathers (located just below the scroll), and the ivy that covers the top of the neck are all gilded. Although the harp is fully strung, the accuracy of the weight may be affected by the loss of the original decorated feet and the possibility of the reinforcing plates not being original to the harp. Unlike most Bassett Jones harps, this harp is signed and stamped on the inside of the soundbox. It also included a serial number which is not present in any other Bassett Jones harp that I have studied closely. Bassett Jones's pencil writing reads, "No. 255 Bassett Jones of Cardiff 1845", and stamped on back of the bridge rail reads: "B. Jones."

KH11: BJ1840****No Date:1840-60, Bassett Jones******By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff***

This harp's soundbox is created with nine equal staves that are connected to the soundboard. The soundboard's grain is horizontal and has no sound holes. The soundboard's wood is different than that of the rest of the instrument, which may indicate that it was replaced at a later date. The stave cap is scalloped and joins with the shoulder leaving a slight gap to accommodate the weight of the strings. The forepillar connects to the soundbox with a



Figure 17 KH11: BJ1840*, photo taken by author.

visible bolt. In spite of the fact that many of Bassett Jones's instruments featured laminated wood to strengthen the neck where it is most weak, he hid this method from view in a vast majority of the harps that have survived for study. It is unclear if the metal reinforcements were original to the instrument or if they were added later on. Jones hid the use of the laminated wood along the neck with a veneer with the carving of the famous poetic quotation, "iaith enaid ar ei thannau", however, he sometimes allowed the laminated wood to be revealed in the shoulder. It is unclear whether it was hidden either as something unseemly as laminated wood was seen as cheap, or that he wanted to keep a trade secret masked. This harp has no feet and is decorated with black line detailing, mirroring earlier John Richards harps. There is no comb on this instrument, which would suggest that it was built before the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842). However, there is metal reinforcement

on the neck being used as a plaque that displays the Great Seal of the Realm which would indicate that the harp is made after Bassett Jones was declared Harp Maker to the Royal Family. This may indicate that this was the first use of laminated wood in his harps, but it may also indicate that it was made during a time or for an event in which he was less concerned about hiding his craftsmanship. Next to the seal reads: "Gwnaed gan Bassett Jones o Caerdydd" [Made by Bassett Jones of Cardiff]. This harp was fully strung with little damage; regardless, the possible repair of the soundboard may have an effect on the weight.

KH13: BJ1848***1848, Bassett Jones******By permission of private owner, restored by Tim Hampson***

This harp's soundbox is created by nine equal staves attaching to a soundboard with no sound holes, however there is a hole in one of the staves to hold a tuning fork. The scroll is separate from the forepillar and may have been replaced at a later time due to damage. The short forepillar is visibly bolted to the base of the soundbox. The scalloped stave cap is designed to look like the traditional triple harp, however its function is not to hold the staves together. Rather, there are bolts in the staves keeping them together that are hidden under a black painted triangle design. The neck does not seem to be made of laminated wood, but the metal-plated shoulder hides where this would be most visible. The metal-plated shoulder may function to hide this handiwork, or it may have been added later to protect spots on the instrument where it is likely to wear. This harp is not reinforced by a metal comb. It is decorated with black linework and the front of the forepillar is painted black. This harp has 4 feet that are rounded in the front for decoration, where the back feet are simple for stability. A plaque is secured under the strings on the neck which reads: "Won by/ Edward Jones/ at Abergavenny/ 1848", "Teyln Cefn Mably/ Gan C. Kemys Tynte,, ysw.A.S."[Esquire, M.P.], "Gwnawd Gan Bassett Jones./O. Gaerdydd" [made by Bassett Jones of Cardiff], "The gift of/ her Majesty", "di eu et mon droit"[God and my right]. Next to this is the Great Seal of the Realm.

This harp is in playing condition and is therefore fully strung. It is possible that the later addition of the metal plating as well as the damage done to the scroll may have an effect on both the height of the forepillar and the weight.



Figure 18 KH13: BJ1848, photo taken by owner.

KH15: BJ1851**1851, Bassett Jones, located in US, images sourced from public Facebook**

Not measured or examined by author

This harp, meant to be an exact copy of the Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851) in construction, is described in detail in *The Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent*:

PRESENTATION OF A HARP VALUED AT ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY GUINEAS.— For some time past, a subscription has been in course of collection, for the purpose of purchasing a harp for presentation to Miss Mary Ann Brewer, the juvenile harpist. The subscription list is now complete. The following description accompanies the harp: Grant triple-string Welsh harp, manufactured expressly by Bassett Jones, Esq., of Cardiff, by special warrants, bearing date 5th of October, 1843, appointed chief harp-maker to her most gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, his Royal Highness Prince Albert, and his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. Description. — This splendid instrument, containing 103 strings, is constructed on entirely new and improved principles. The grand and antique form of the native harp of Cambria has been strictly adhered to, and it is built of a beautiful plane tree, grown on the estate of R.F. Jenner, Esq. Wenvoe Castle, Glamorganshire. The pedestals and base of the forepillar form a leek in bold relief up the shaft of the forepillar. The capital of the forepillar forms the Prince of Wales's coronet and feathers, entwined with oak leaves, acorns, &c. The comb over the box is ornamented with oak foliage, running up the comb, entwining the beautiful motto, "Iaith enaid a rei thannau," (that is, the language of the soul is on the strings). Upon the equilibrium bearing plate of the harp is engraved, "presented by some kind friends to Mair Aun Eirios, the juvenile harpist in Liverpool, 1851, aged 14 years, expressly manufactured by Basset [*sic*] Jones, of Cardiff. It is a fac simile [*sic*] of the one in the Great Exhibition in everything except the ornamentation, and which was built by the same maker at an expense of not less than £160. The harp is really a novelty; it alone, of any harp known, produces perfect unisons, and its brilliancy of tone is most beautiful. The harp was presented to Miss Brewer at the George Hotel, by Thomas Littledale, Esq..⁴⁴



Figure 19 KH15: BJ1851, photo taken by owner.

⁴⁴ 'Presentation of a Harp Valued at One Hundred and Sixty Guineas', *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent*, 8 November 1851, p. 8.

Similar to the Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851), this triple harp is characteristic of a pedal harp in its rounded soundbox and five large apertures. This harp also includes the metal comb and the use of laminated wood hidden by the veneer carving of the poetic quotation. Over the shoulder of the harp, instead of a druid's face, this instrument has a simple leaf carving. The Prince of Wales feathers and crown adorn the top of the forepillar. In the front, the feet are made of intricately carved florals and the leek at the base of the forepillar gives the illusion of the forepillar not being bolted in but coming from the centre of a base indicative of the pedal harp. Like the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) and the Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851), the comb features etchings of the United Kingdom flowers. The soundboard exhibits paintings of two angels, and the grain of the soundboard is horizontal. As this harp has never been discussed in prior research, it is clear that this harp was uncovered during the scope of this research and has been unknown to the public in recent years.

KH16: BJ1860

1860, Bassett Jones

By permission of private owner, restored by Alun Thomas

Not measured or examined by author

This harp's soundbox is created with a rounded back attached to a soundboard having 3 oblong sound holes in the middle. The direction of the soundboard grain is horizontal, which is characteristic of the time. The tall forepillar is visibly bolted to the base of the soundbox. An oak carving veneer covers the top of the neck, suggesting that it is made of laminated wood. Although there is a large metal plate to support the neck, there is no visible inscription. The feet feature oak motifs similar to the veneer on the neck. According to the owner, this harp underwent major reconstruction by Alun Thomas in 2010, after its return from Patagonia. Since the soundboard is a different kind of wood, it is likely that this is not original. This harp is currently in playable condition and has been featured in several professional albums as well as live on the BBC Radio Cymru and Swansea Sound radio stations. It was also played in the 2019 National Eisteddfod for the launch of the Triple Harp Society.



Figure 21 KH16: BJ1860, photo taken by owner.

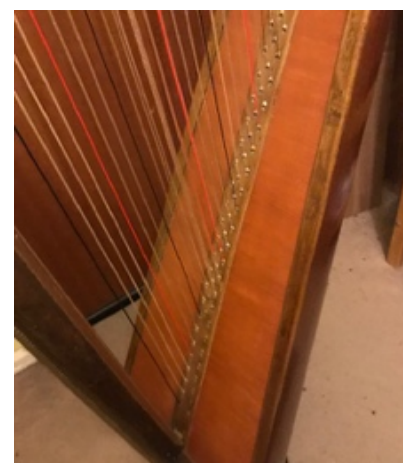


Figure 20 KH16: BJ1860, photo taken by owner.

Other Surviving Welsh Triple Harps

Organised by date or approximate date, these harps serve to represent John Richards's harp making work, as it was set as a standard for many harp makers to come, as well as depict the ways in which Welsh triple harp making changed after Bassett Jones's death. Without this information, it would be unclear how Bassett Jones's instruments changed over time and how he affected the outcome of future harp making in Wales.

As a reminder, these harp codes can be read as: the author's initials to indicate the study these identifiers come from, a number attributed to the harp based on the historical order of the harps studied, the initials of the maker, and the year it was made. For those with no maker's mark, they have been identified with "NMM" where the maker's initials reside. For those with an approximate year of creation, an "*" is placed next to the approximate year, and if there is no approximate year, an "*" is left in place of a date. For clarity, this thesis has labelled the language used to describe different parts of triple harp on page 27.

KH01: JR1760****No Date:1760-70, John Richards******By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff***

The soundbox is formed by nine equal staves with a soundboard featuring six sound holes. The sound holes are equal and spaced out evenly, following the widening of the base.



Figure 22 KH01: JR1760*, photo taken by author.

The direction of the soundboard grain is vertical which is characteristic of the time. The tall forepillar is bolted visibly to the base of the soundbox. Two feet hold the harp from behind the soundbox, leaving the front free of feet. It is possible that the feet were added later on, adding to the weight of the harp. The simple scroll atop the forepillar, while not original to the instrument, is characteristic of the style harp and is most likely what the maker had intended the scroll to look like. The stave cap holds the top of the staves together and is scalloped. Between the stave cap and shoulder is space in the connection, provided to allow for the weight of the strings. While there are metal reinforcements over strategic places on the harp, these were likely an addition after the original harp making to avoid the prevalent bowing of the neck from the weight of the

taut strings. These metal reinforcements along the neck change the weight of the instrument from its original state. The decoration of the harp is simple with the front of the forepillar painted black and simple black linework over the soundbox. There are six pointed stars painted in black around each sound hole. Not all, but many of the holes to secure strings along the bridge rail are reinforced with metal above them. This prevents significant wear over time into the bridge rail from the strings. Characteristic of John Richards harps, the base of the soundbox displays the etching of a semicircle with lines evenly spaced stretching to the edges of the base in the shape of a setting sun. These lines were evenly spaced, likely to measure out the placement for each stave. It is possible that, while this etching is meant to aid in the creation of the harp, it was also meant to serve as a signature of the harp maker, as few other makers used this technique. Despite the lack of feet in the front of the harp, there is little to no wear on the bottom of the base, suggesting that the harp may have been rested on a cushion for playing. Currently, the harp is unstrung, affecting the current weight of the harp.

KH02: JR1764***1764, John Richards******By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff, 49.67***

This harp's soundbox is created with nine staves connected to the soundboard. There are six equally sized sound holes located on the soundboard, evenly spaced and following the widening of the base. The standard sized forepillar is visibly bolted to the base of the soundbox. The stave cap is scalloped and attaches the segmented soundbox to its shoulder, leaving a gap in between to allow for the weight of the strings. The scroll is simple and characteristic of the time period. Not all, but many of the holes to secure strings along the bridge rail are reinforced with metal above them. This prevents significant wear overtime into the bridge rail from the strings. There are no other metal reinforcements on this harp, suggesting that it is in the most original state possible. The staining of the wood is a popular technique of the time in which a yellow stain would be used under the red. The yellow stain would reflect more light through the red, giving it a glowing effect.

The staining on this harp is worn down in places where there was consistent wear from the harper that reveal the yellow stain below the red. The placement of the worn-down stain shows that the harper played with the harp on their left shoulder, with their left hand playing the upper strings and the right playing the lower strings. Other than the staining, this harp is likely very near to its original state. The front of the forepillar is painted black as well as the top of its neck. This harp also displays the half-sun etching on the base, characteristic of John Richards. Richards was also known to carve a star between initials, of which this harp displays on the back of the shoulder. There are no feet on the base, yet the base of the harp is not worn. This suggests that, while playing, it may have been rested on a stand or on a cushion to protect it from wear. Upon the upward turn of the neck is a plaque which reads: "J. Richards/Llanrwst/Fecit/1764" [J. Richards/ Llanrwst/ Maker/ 1764]. It is possible that the plaque was added later, as John Richards's initials ("I.R." instead of "J.R.") are also carved into the harp twice.



Figure 23 KH02:JR1764, photo taken by the St Fagans National Museum of History.

KH03: NMM1770*

No Date: 1770-80, No Maker's Mark, Edward Jones (owner)

By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff



Figure 24 KH03: NMM1770*, photo taken by author.

This harp's soundbox is created with nine staves connected to a soundboard. On the soundboard are six equally-sized sound holes that are spaced evenly along the widening of the base. These sound holes are decorated with eight-pointed stars painted in black around them. Over the soundboard is a veneer to match fashionable Cuban mahogany furniture of the time. Because of this veneer, we do not know the direction of the soundboard's grain, however, the time in which it was made would suggest that the grain is vertical. The veneer also hides if there are metal reinforcements to prevent wear from the strings along the bridge rail. The stave cap is scalloped and joins with the shoulder leaving a slight gap to accommodate the weight of the strings. The tall forepillar is visibly bolted to the base of the soundbox. The front of the forepillar as well as the top and bottom of the neck are painted black. The harp is simply designed, following the lead of John

Richards' harps, however this harp has faced

damages, including the loss of its scroll at the top of the forepillar. Similar to the other John Richards's harps, there are no feet on this harp, and it has faced little damage on its base, indicating that it was rested on a cushion to perform. There is no etching on the base of this harp. Because of the damages of the broken scroll as well as the addition of the veneer, this harp is not strung to avoid further damage.

KH04: TI1770*

No Date: 1770-80, T*I (probable apprentice to JR)

By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff, 51.177

This harp's soundbox is created with nine staves connected to a soundboard. The soundboard has six equal sound holes equidistant following the widening of the base. These sound holes are decorated with six-pedalled daffodils, mirroring the look of the six-pointed stars shown in previous harps. The soundboard's grain is vertical. All of the holes to secure strings along the bridge rail are reinforced with metal above them, some have multiple reinforcements. This prevents significant wear overtime into the soundboard from the strings. There are also decorative flowers painted onto the soundboard and ambiguous orange paint designs on the front of its forepillar. The date this harp was made is estimated based on the colour of the stain and the popularity of mahogany furniture at a given time, however, since it is stained over the decorative paintings, it would suggest that the stain was added after its creation. Since the stain is the only indication of a more specific period, I have chosen that to date the harp. The standard sized forepillar is visibly bolted to the base of the soundbox.

This harp has no feet, however, it has damage on the back of the soundbox, hiding any wear that would have indicated if a cushion was used to perform. The scalloped stave cap joins with the shoulder leaving space to accommodate for the extreme weight of the strings. The makers initials are carved into the harp in a similar manner as John Richards, "T*I", with a star between the initials. This harp also includes the half-sun etching on the base of the harp. Because of this, it is safe to hypothesise that either the maker was an apprentice of John Richards, or that the maker had examined a John Richards harp in extreme detail with the intention of creating a replica.



Figure 25 KH04:TI1770*, photo taken by author.

KH12: TJ1848***1848, T. Jones******By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff***

This harp, made by T. Jones, is created similarly to the John Richards harps with nine equal staves attaching to a soundboard to create the soundbox, however this harp has five large oblong sound holes located in the middle stave. This mixes the traditional style of soundbox with the sound hole style of the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842). The shorter forepillar is visibly bolted to the base of the soundbox and the grain of the soundboard is horizontal. This harp also includes the scalloped stave cap holding the staves together and includes the small gap between the stave cap and shoulder to allow for the extreme tension of the strings. It has two simple feet in the front, and seems to be cut down by several inches to solve a splitting issue on the neck. This is shown by the moved bolt along the forepillar and the neck reconstruction. This harp is split in several locations and fixed with butterfly repairs. The leaf carving along the scroll is suggested to indicate that Lady Llanover commissioned the harp, however it is on several harps, including the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842), that are confirmed to not have been commissioned by Lady Llanover. Little is known of the meaning around the carving within the leaf,

shaped like the letter 'P'. The triple harp is decorated with black lining details and the front of the forepillar is painted black. Below the scroll on the forepillar is a carved acorn. On both sides of the neck there is a carving to identify the harp maker, "T. Jones Abergavenny" and "T. Jones Maker/1848". A metal plaque located below the scroll reads: "Penmaen Harp/ won by/ Edward Hughes/ Abergavenny Eisteddfod/ October 1848". Due to the extensive repairs of the instrument, both the height of the forepillar and the weight are different than during the time of creation.



Figure 26 KH12: TJ1848, photo taken by author.

KH17: TL1893

1893, T.A. LLOYD

By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff, 56.136.1

Famous for winning the gold medal at the International Eisteddfod at the World's fair in the United States of America, this harp follows the traditional look popularised by John Richards. This harp's soundbox is created of seven staves, and although it includes the joint between the neck and segmented soundbox, it is not scalloped like a traditional harp. There are no sound holes in the soundboard and the soundboard grain is horizontal. In an attempt to strengthen the neck where the grain is short to avoid splitting, a chestnut insert was placed on the side of the neck with opposing grain. The hard chestnut wood reinforces the place on the neck most likely to break, similar to Bassett Jones's use of laminated wood. A metal strip reinforces the bottom of the neck and the forepillar is bolted to the base of the soundbox. A departure from normal with this harp is its use of brass pins instead of iron, as the iron pins wear down the wood over time. The two feet on the front of the harp seem to be an afterthought as they are not carefully made. Black paint stripes detail the outside of the forepillar and neck. On the front of the forepillar is

a plaque that reads: "This harp won the Gold Medal at the International Eisteddfod held at the World's Fair/ Chicago, 1893/ Adjudicator Mr. John Thomas/ Pencerdd, Gwalia harpist to her Majesty Queen Victoria, T.A. Lloyd, maker/ West Pawlet, Vermont USA". St Fagans National Museum of History records suggest T.A. Lloyd is Tom Lloyd (1858–1917) nicknamed "Telynor Ceiriog" and teacher of Nansi Richards.

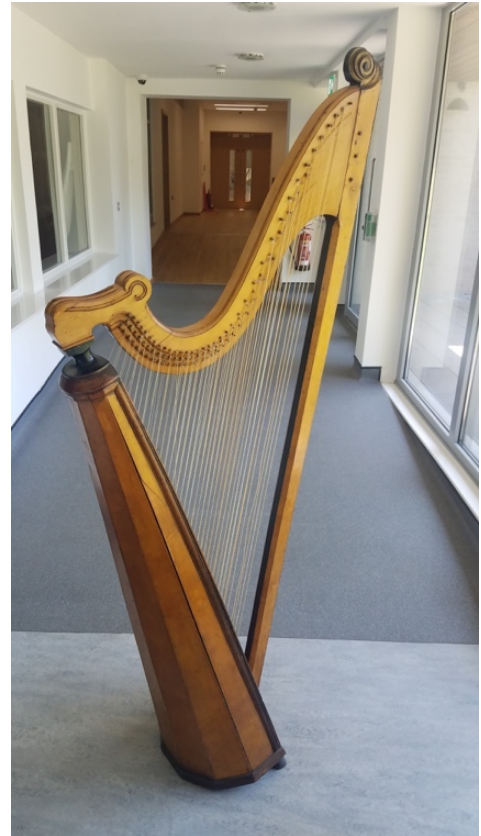


Figure 27 KH17: TL1893, photo taken by author.

KH18: RH1897***1897, Richard Hughes******By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff***

Following the Bassett Jones Prince of Wales (KH06: BJ1842) and Great Exhibition (KH14: BJ1851) harps, more triple harps were made in the image of pedal harps. This harp has a rounded back and four large apertures. Three of these are square in shape while the fourth is round. This harp takes a deviation off the normal by creating the soundbox, forepillar, and neck out of metal. The soundboard is made of wood with a horizontal grain, and there is no metal comb, as the neck is not made of wood, so it does not have the same need for support. An uncommonly large metal plate on the side of the harp serves as a plaque, indicating the harp maker and location: "Richard Hughes/ Maker/ Crewe/ 1897". This harp has five simple feet and the soundbox extends almost to the ground. The forepillar attaches to the base without a bolt, similar to that of a pedal harp. The round forepillar meets the neck and the neck extends into a downward scroll. This harp does not have the traditional scalloped joint between the soundbox and the neck, and instead has a knee shaped joint similar to that of a pedal harp. All of the metal materials are painted black to hide its material. Weighing in as the heaviest harp within the scope of this thesis, it is clear that at the time of its making, the restrictions for travelling Welsh harp players were no longer a necessary requirement.



Figure 28 KH16: PH1897, photo taken by author.

KH19: TV*

No Date, T. Vaughan

By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff, 17.107

This harp has a flute back with nine staves. The forepillar angles forwards and is



Figure 29 KH19: TV*, photo taken by author.

bolted into the base of the soundbox. The soundboard has horizontal grain, and it has the scalloped joint to attach the segmented soundbox to the neck. This harp has two scalloped feet and seems to be cut down by several inches to solve splitting issues. This is indicated by the bolt being moved upwards and the old bolt location being filled.

Because of the shortening, the neck needed to be reconstructed and it is clear that it has been split in many locations. These splits are repaired with butterfly inserts. This harp has a banister-like forepillar and is detailed with lines of black paint. Barrel-like reinforcers support the soundbox and are bolted into the soundboard as an attempt to save the instrument. Normally the soundboard would vibrate freely, but this reinforcement is bolted to the inner ribs of the harp, keeping the soundboard from properly vibrating. The inscription carved into the harp reads: "T.

Vaughan/ Maker/St Asaph".

KH20: NMM*

***No Date, No Maker's Mark, Miss A. M. Thomas (owner)
By permission of the Welsh Folk Museum, St. Fagan's,
Cardiff***

This simple harp has a segmented soundbox with nine staves. The scalloped joint attaches the segmented back to the neck. The squared forepillar is bolted to the base of the soundbox, and there are 2 simple feet in the front. This harp follows many of the standards set by John Richards and is very simple in design. The only real deviation is the soundboard grain is at a diagonal angle. The neck has split where there is short grain, and it has been reinforced by metal. This harp is possibly the triple harp pictured in the late nineteenth-century photo of the Llanover household staff, as indicated by the distinctive foot shape, and the diagonal soundboard grain.



Figure 30 KH20: NMM*, photo taken by author.



Figure 31 A late nineteenth-century photo of the Llanover household staff, possibly featuring KH20: NMM*. Photo sourced from the Lady Llanover Society Website.

KH21: TJ****No Date, T. Jones******By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff***

This harp made by T. Jones has a segmented soundbox with nine staves. There are no sound holes, and the soundboard grain is horizontal. The straight forepillar is bolted to the base of the soundbox and the bolt is decorated with black painted lines with the forepillar. There is a scalloped joint to attach the segmented soundbox to the neck and it has two club-like feet. There is a metal strip beneath the neck to support it, and there is no comb. An acorn is carved under the scroll on the front of the forepillar, and there are two paintings of the Prince of Wales feathers on the bottom of the soundboard. There are several metal plates to support splits on the neck. On the side of the scroll and the back of the shoulder, the maker's mark reads: "T. Jones/ Abergavenny". St Fagans National Museum of History records suggest T. Jones is Thomas Jones, though it is unclear which Thomas Jones.



Figure 32 KH21: TJ*, photo taken by author.

KH22: NMM****No Date, No Maker's Mark******By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff, 38.86***

This triple harp has a segmented soundbox created with ten staves. Atop the soundbox is a scalloped joint connecting it to the neck. This harp has six sound holes on the soundboard and the soundboard grain is horizontal. Instead of a scroll, the top of the forepillar has a castle style indicative of the pedal harp. The base of the soundbox reaches almost to the ground and two short feet keep it from touching the floor. Metal reinforcements, like a strip under the neck, support the weak points of the neck. The triple harp is detailed with light wood lining. There are also sun-like designs on the bottom corners of the soundboard. St Fagans National Museum of History records state that the maker of this harp is John Morgan, though there is no evidence to suggest this.

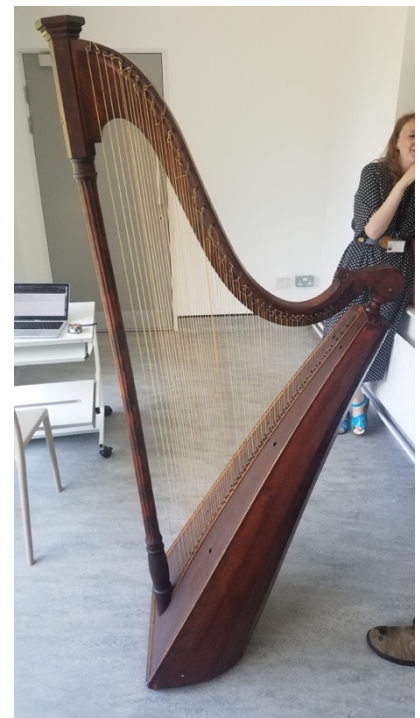


Figure 33 KH22: NMM*, photo taken by author.

KH23: NMM*

No Date, No Maker's Mark

By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff, 49.75

This triple harp has a segmented soundbox created by nine staves. These nine staves are held together and attached to the neck with the traditional scalloped joint. There are no sound holes and the soundboard has a horizontal grain. The straight forepillar is attached to the soundbox with a visible bolt, and the top of the forepillar is a scroll. It is simply designed with small details. The neck has split and there are several butterfly repairs. These butterfly repairs are common for woodworking, but less so for instrument repair. When two pieces of wood need to be joined together, notches are taken out from both sides and a butterfly shaped insert is slid into the two notches, with the wings of the insert holding them together. There is a place for a plaque to be placed, but the plaque is missing. St Fagans National Museum of History records suggest this harp is a Bassett Jones harp, though there is no evidence of this. It is possible that this harp is an early creation of Bassett Jones, however it lacks features that exist on all other Bassett Jones harps, including feet and metal reinforcements of the neck.

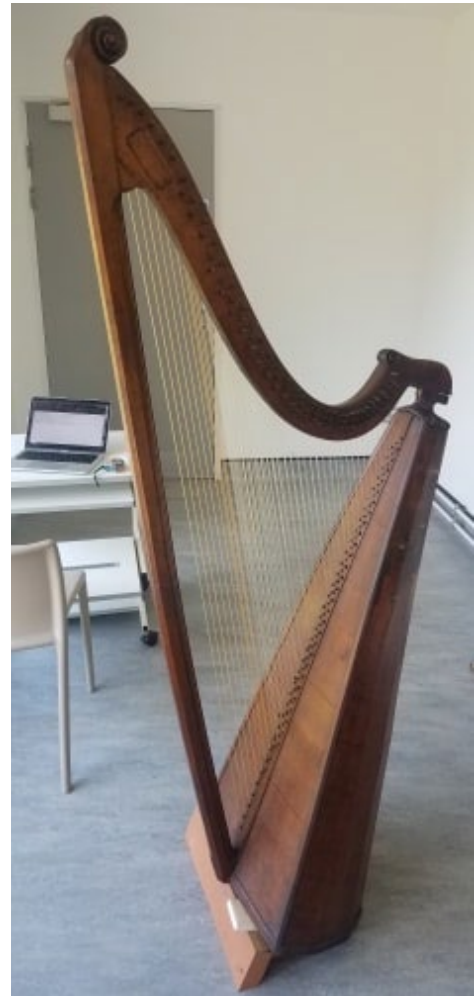


Figure 34 KH23: NMM*, photo taken by author.

KH24: NMM****No Date, No Maker's Mark******By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff***

This harp has a segmented soundbox with nine staves. These staves have been heavily reinforced by strips of metal with numbers on them suggesting that this metal had another use prior to being used for the harp. There are six sound holes on the soundboard decorated with yellow six-pointed stars. The soundboard has vertical grain and has been heavily reinforced as well. There is a scalloped joint connecting the soundbox to the neck, and the forepillar is bolted to the base of the soundbox. The numerous metal reinforcements all over the instrument are meant to hold it together, but the reinforcements have bowed the soundbox inwards. A plaque is attached to the soundboard above a metal reinforcement reading: "Presented to VI Baron Dynevor. By J. Roberts, Harpist. N. Wales About 1885."



Figure 35 KH24: NMM*, photo taken by author.

Having only examined a total of twenty-four harps, no statistically significant data can be taken from this work. Regardless, examining the majority of surviving Bassett Jones harps gives the best impression possible today of how Bassett Jones's harp making techniques changed over time. These harps will be compared in the context of their maker and the time in which they were made in chapter four.

Chapter Four: Data Discussion

Both the modern triple harp and the pedal harp were invented as a solution to the increasing chromaticism in the late-renaissance and baroque music periods. Once the modern double-action pedal harp was invented and popularized, most areas that had adopted the originally Italian triple harp embraced the pedal harp as an easier means for chromaticism in baroque music. However, Wales had integrated the instrument into its cultural landscape.

On average, the double-action pedal harp has between forty and forty-seven strings, with seven pedals. Each pedal changes the vibrating distance of the strings to change the tuning of the instrument to another key. The triple harp, having two sets of diatonic strings and a set of chromatic strings in the middle, averages anywhere from eighty to one hundred and ten strings. The harps examined in this thesis have between eighty-three and one hundred and ten strings. Having so many strings putting tension on the neck and bridge rail of triple harps, the strings needed to be light and with less tension to avoid the common warping, and sometimes splitting, of the neck and pillar. The nature of these strings creates a light and airy sound, perfect for accompanying voice and playing in smaller venues. The double-action pedal harp, on the other hand, has less strings, so the tension on them could be much greater. This greater tension allowance meant that the harp could create a greater volume of sound as well as a different, more round tone. Bassett Jones describes a common scenario for harpers in trying to make a triple harp sound more like a pedal harp:

...it not unfrequently happens that the harper, intending to remedy this defect, puts on larger strings, and by screwing them up to a proper pitch, tears out the sounding board, and then abuses the harp maker as ignorant of his business. Now these are alternatives I do not wish to subject myself to, and therefore always make my harps in such a manner as that they will bear any reasonable strain, and also give a mellow and full-bodied tone, and at the same time come within the required limit of portableness.¹

Not only would this result in the destruction of the soundboard, but, if the harper was successful in tightening the strings without destroying the soundboard, slowly the neck and forepillar of the harp will warp as the strings only pull on one side of the neck. If this warping continued, it would crack the neck where the grain of the wood is shortest. Since Bassett Jones's goal was for his harps to be made of the utmost quality, they had to be more durable than previous harps which had already begun to warp without the use of heavier strings.

¹ Bassett Jones, 'Abergavenny Cymreigyddion: The Welsh Harp', *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 10 December 1842, p. 4.

Bassett Jones strived for longevity in his instruments and incorporated several different techniques of reinforcement to reduce this flaw in the harp's construction.

Reinforcement

In 1869, a popular Welsh composer, Henry Brinley Richards (1817–1885), was attempting to build up the triple harp to its previous position in popularity. In response to this, several writers took to newspapers to voice their concern about the instrument. William Rees voices his adamant concerns about the triple harp and its quality in comparison to the pedal harp.² Rees argues that the triple harp is not meant to be played in large venues and has trouble with tuning when in wet climates. He also makes a point to mention that the triple harp is difficult for one to learn since there are no qualified teachers in populated areas like London. In response to Rees's criticism, Bassett Jones replies with:

Sir, –

I beg to make a few observations in answer to Mr. Rees's able letter on the beauty and faults of the Welsh harp. The instrument in its primeval state was certainly liable to those faults which Mr. Rees points out, but the triple harp has undergone of late years, like all other musical instruments, considerable improvement both in its construction and otherwise, but still keeping in a great degree its antique form and characteristics. The effect the atmosphere has on the strings, and the inconvenience caused to performers, have been entirely remedied by the introduction of the combe of an equilibrium bearing plate, the use of which causes an equal tension in the three rows of strings, and enables the instrument to carry a heavier weight of string of equal substance in the three rows, rendering the tone much more sonorous, and obviating that disagreeable tinkling sound connected with most Welsh harps. It was invented expressly for the Welsh harp sent to the Exhibition of 1851, and has been introduced in all harps manufactured by me in subsequent years. Mr. Ellis Roberts, the celebrated harper to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, commented thus on the merits of the plate when first introduced; This certainly is a very great improvement, and to which I beg to call the attention of our Welsh harpers in general. This invention of Mr. Jones discloses a very important secret. It not only improves the tone, but strengthens that part of the instrument most liable to give way. All Welsh harps should have the equilibrium. We should then have less of that woody possess, especially 'in alt'.

The declining use of the triple harp does not originate chiefly from the continual snapping of strings, its being unable to resist the different atmosphere exposed to, but from other causes. According to ancient rules, the weight of the harp did not exceed 25 lbs., so that it could be carried with ease from one part of the country to another. In consequence of the different portions being made so slightly, it had to be string in such a manner that all power of tone was entirely lost, and giving it that disagreeable sound found so objectionable; and even when such great care had to be taken in

² William Rees, 'The Welsh or Triple Harp', *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette*, 17 April 1869, p. 6.

stringing the instrument, its different parts gave way, the ties being not of sufficient strength to resist the immense force of the strings. Those old laws in harp construction, I am happy to say, are entirely done away with, and have been remodelled to satisfy the wants of the present day. I may mention that all harps made for the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society did not exceed 25 to 30 lbs in weight; and although they deserve thanks for their unceasing efforts in promoting the use of our national instrument, the above causes are no doubt the reason why it has gradually declined in general desuetude. I join with Mr. Rees in thanking Mr. Brinley Richards for his timely efforts in rescuing our glorious instrument from becoming a thing of the past days; and may the day be near at hand when we shall once more see the harp introduced in our National Eisteddfodau, and the old hills of Cambria once more resound with the strains that greeted the ears of our forefathers.

– I am, Sir, yours,
Bassett Jones.
Duke-Street, Cardiff, April 22.³

Bassett Jones suggests that these issues he has stated have been resolved in the last few years, stating that many instruments go through the same gradual improvement process, and he strove to do this while maintaining the integrity of the style and characteristics that make a Welsh triple harp Welsh. He then features one of his most notable changes in the Welsh triple harp to strengthen the integrity of the neck: the comb. The comb is a piece of reinforcement



Figure 1 The comb on the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06, BJ1842), photo taken by author.

metal that runs parallel to the neck of the harp, attaching at equal intervals to level the tension of the strings across the entirety of the neck. While this reinforcement is featured on some of his more notable harps like the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) and the Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851), the comb did not last the test of time, and newer harp makers opted for other means of reinforcement. Bassett Jones himself did not use a comb in his 1860 harp (KH16: BJ1860), despite this newspaper quote coming from nine years after this harp's creation. In the chart below one can see which harps have a comb and which harps do not. While the inclusion of a comb does not help date KH19: TV*, KH20: NMM*, KH21: TJ*, KH22: NMM*, KH23: NMM*, or KH24: NMM*, it does help narrow down the approximate date for KH08: BJ1840*, KH09: BJ1840*, and KH11: BJ1840*. KH11: BJ1840* is a Bassett Jones harp that included a comb and KH08: BJ1840* and KH09: BJ1840* are Bassett Jones harps that do not include a comb. Bassett Jones states that the comb was made “expressly for

³ Bassett Jones, ‘The Welsh Harp’, *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette*, 1 May 1869, p. 6.

the Welsh harp sent to the Exhibition of 1851”, however it was included in the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) nine years prior.⁴ Another miscommunication made by Bassett Jones in this statement is that he included a comb on all harps made after the Exhibition Harp (KH12, BJ1851), as there is no comb on KH14, BJ1860. It is possible that this harp was commissioned expressly with the desire to not include a comb, or it is possible that the comb, or evidence of a comb previously, was replaced or covered in its significant repair. The below table shows the harps examined in this thesis in date order. As a reminder, the end of the identification code gives the maker’s initials and date made. If the date is estimated, a date is given with an “*” on the end, if the date is unknown, an “*” is in its place.

ID	Comb (yes/no)
KH01: JR1760*	no
KH02: JR1764	no
KH03: NMM1770*	no
KH04: TI1770*	no
KH05: BJ1838	no
KH06: BJ1842	yes
KH07: BJ1842	no
KH08: BJ1840*	no
KH09: BJ1840*	no
KH10: BJ1845	no
KH11: BJ1840*	yes
KH12: TJ1848	no
KH13: BJ1848	yes
KH14: BJ1851	yes
KH15: BJ1851	yes
KH16: BJ1860	no
KH17: TL1893	no
KH18: RH1897	no
KH19: TV*	no
KH20: NMM*	no
KH21: TJ*	no
KH22: NMM*	no
KH23: NMM*	no
KH24: NMM*	no

Figure 2 A table comparing triple harps over time with the inclusion of a comb.

⁴ Bassett Jones, ‘The Welsh Harp’, *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette*, 1 May 1869, p. 6.

Many harps that do not include a comb do include an equilibrium bearing plate that reinforces the neck.⁵ These metal reinforcements along the neck work similarly to the comb, equalising the tension from the strings across the neck, reducing the pressure on weaker areas. While John Richards and other early harpers did not include metal reinforcements to the neck, this was a popular addition in later harps and in repairs of harps that previously did not have any sort of reinforcement on the neck. This reinforcement technique provided a clean way to reduce the warping, and the plates were made in different styles, some also being used as a plaque. Many of the Bassett Jones harps that include a metal reinforcement along the neck are simple sheets of metal cut and attached along the neck below the strings or beneath the neck. This includes the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842), KH08: BJ1840*, KH09: BJ1840*, KH10: BJ1845, KH11: BJ1840*, KH13: BJ1848, the Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851), KH15: BJ1851, KH16: BJ1860, KH18: RH1897, KH21: TJ*, KH22: NMM*, and KH24: NMM*. KH07: BJ1842 is unique in how it only has small, reinforced spots in specific locations. This is likely due to the fact that the harp is a combination of several different harps that were taken apart and put back together. KH21: TJ* and KH22: NMM* are unique in how the metal reinforcement is located below the neck instead of on one of the sides. Some of these metal plates were left blank while others served a dual purpose of providing equalised pressure along the neck and providing a place for an inscription to be located. KH24: NMM* is a unique instrument in the sense that most of the harp has been repaired with metal plating. The vertical grain soundboard split, so strips of metal are screwed into the soundboard at unequal intervals to keep it together. The soundbox has metal reinforcements to hold the staves together, however, they have warped the shape of the soundbox. These strips of metal are branded with letters and numbers, suggesting that this has not been the first use of this metal, but rather that it was used previously as measuring tools and as barrel rings. Since this reinforcement technique is widely used for repair of old harps, this is not a useful feature in dating a harp. The table below organises the harps in date order, using an “*” to identify estimated or unknown dates, to see the difference in the metal reinforcement use over time.

⁵ Due to Bassett Jones referring to the comb as an equilibrium bearing plate in the above quote, this will be referred to as general metal reinforcements.

ID	Metal Neck Reinforcements (yes/no)
KH01: JR1760*	no
KH02: JR1764	no
KH03: NMM1770*	no
KH04: TI1770*	no
KH05: BJ1838	yes
KH06: BJ1842	no
KH07: BJ1842	yes
KH08: BJ1840*	yes
KH09: BJ1840*	yes
KH10: BJ1845	yes
KH11: BJ1840*	yes
KH12: TJ1848	no
KH13: BJ1848	yes
KH14: BJ1851	yes
KH15: BJ1851	yes
KH16: BJ1860	yes
KH17: TL1893	no
KH18: RH1897	yes
KH19: TV*	no
KH20: NMM*	no
KH21: TJ*	yes
KH22: NMM*	yes
KH23: NMM*	no
KH24: NMM*	yes

Figure 3 A table comparing triple harps over time with the inclusion of metal reinforcements.



Figure 4 KH11: BJ1840* with visibly laminated wood on its shoulder.
Photo taken by author.

Another way in which Bassett Jones reinforced the neck was to use laminated wood. Since the harps were likely to crack where the grain of the wood is shortest in the neck, he cut the wood into thin sheets and rotated the grain of the wood in many angles to maximize the long grains in the neck. While this was a technique that worked well and he incorporated it for the remainder of his career, he often hid this craftsmanship under a veneer. This covering of the construction along the top of the neck is possibly due to the societal stigma that laminated wood is not as expensive, or it may have been to hide the construction secrets from other harp makers. This was not a technique that he

advertised, and it is often difficult to identify because of this. This technique was clearly visible in one harp, KH11: BJ1840* in which Bassett Jones left the lamination of the shoulder observable. The table below compares the harps inclusion of laminated wood as a technique for resolving this problem. In the table, the “(likely)” values identify the harps that had the veneer but did not show any evidence of the lamination. KH07: BJ1842 is unique because it does not feature laminated wood in its neck despite being built after Bassett Jones had implemented this because it was made from parts of other harps. KH17: TL1893 is unique because, despite not using laminated wood, the maker replaced a section of the neck on only one side where the grain of the neck was short with chestnut wood. Similar to Bassett Jones’s laminated wood, T.A. Lloyd angles the new section of stronger wood’s grain against the other grain, creating a longer grain next to the section of short grain. KH18: RH1897 cannot include laminated wood in the neck because it is not made of wood but rather a strong metal.

ID	Laminated Wood (yes/no)
KH01: JR1760*	no
KH02: JR1764	no
KH03: NMM1770*	no
KH04: TI1770*	no
KH05: BJ1838	(likely)
KH06: BJ1842	yes
KH07: BJ1842	no
KH08: BJ1840*	(likely)
KH09: BJ1840*	(likely)
KH10: BJ1845	(likely)
KH11: BJ1840*	yes
KH12: TJ1848	no
KH13: BJ1848	(likely)
KH14: BJ1851	yes
KH15: BJ1851	yes
KH16: BJ1860	(likely)
KH17: TL1893	(similar)
KH18: RH1897	(not wood)
KH19: TV*	no
KH20: NMM*	no
KH21: TJ*	no
KH22: NMM*	no
KH23: NMM*	no
KH24: NMM*	no

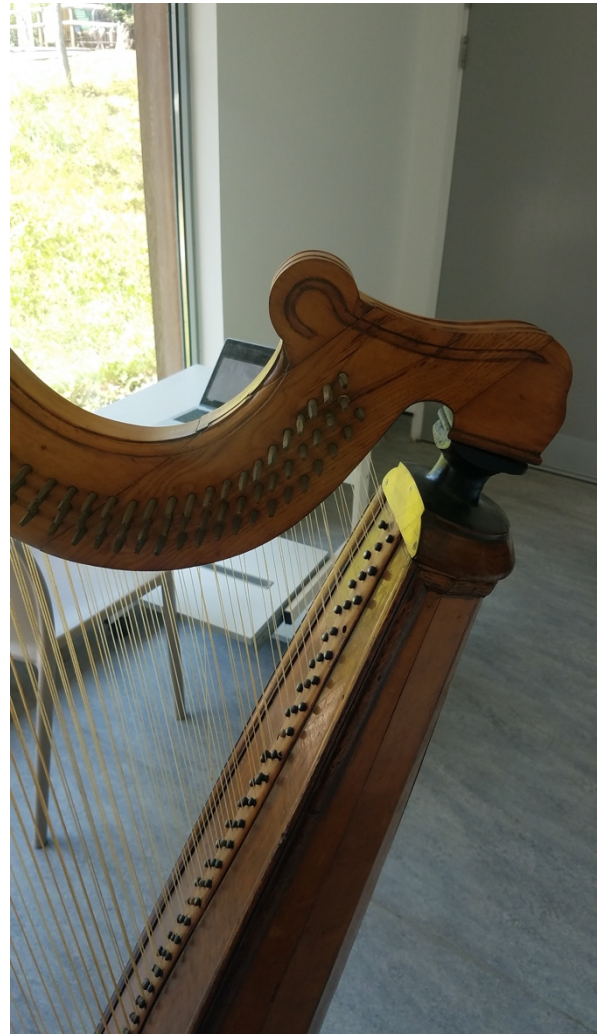


Figure 6 KH17: TL1893 featuring a wooden insert starting at the top of the shoulder and ending at the lowest point of the neck. Photo taken by author.

Figure 5 A table comparing triple harps over time with the inclusion of laminated wood.

In order to reduce the chance of the bridge rail pulling from the soundboard as described, Bassett Jones changed the direction of the soundboard grain. Before, when the soundboard often had vertical grain, the soundboard only needed to fracture at two grain lines to pull the bridge rail out of the instrument. This became especially apparent with the increase in popularity of the double-action pedal harp, as harpers began to tighten and adjust their strings. To reduce the likelihood of this occurring, Bassett Jones began to make the soundboard with horizontal grain. This way, the strings pulled the bridge rail perpendicular to the grain. This means that the soundboard would have to break along many more than just two grain points. This was such a popular adjustment that it set the precedent for coming years, and many triple harps that are made today still include a horizontal soundboard grain. It is clear in the table in figure 41 that once the change had been made, most harp makers adopted it. KH03: NMM1770* is unique in that the grain of the soundboard is unknown due to a veneer finish added onto the harp. This veneer was added to match the furniture style of the time as it was likely being displayed in a home with similarly stained furniture. KH07: BJ1842 is again an outlier because, although this harp was made in 1842, the harps that the parts of this harp belong to were made far before. KH20: NMM* is an outlier in that this harp maker chose to make the grain diagonally placed instead of horizontal. While this is different, it essentially performs the same task of having the strings pull against more grain. While this feature is not useful in dating instruments that have been made after 1838, it clearly identifies KH24: NMM* as being an instrument made prior to 1838.

ID	Soundboard Grain Direction
KH01: JR1760*	vertical
KH02: JR1764	vertical
KH03: NMM1770*	(unknown)
KH04: TI1770*	vertical
KH05: BJ1838	horizontal
KH06: BJ1842	horizontal
KH07: BJ1842	vertical
KH08: BJ1840*	horizontal
KH09: BJ1840*	horizontal
KH10: BJ1845	horizontal
KH11: BJ1840*	horizontal
KH12: TJ1848	horizontal
KH13: BJ1848	horizontal
KH14: BJ1851	horizontal
KH15: BJ1851	horizontal
KH16: BJ1860	horizontal
KH17: TL1893	horizontal
KH18: RH1897	horizontal
KH19: TV*	horizontal
KH20: NMM*	diagonal
KH21: TJ*	horizontal
KH22: NMM*	horizontal
KH23: NMM*	horizontal
KH24: NMM*	vertical

Figure 7 A table comparing triple harps over time with the soundboard grain direction.

While these changes make the triple harp stronger to prepare for even more tension on the strings, these changes also make the triple harps more durable overall. A majority of the instruments studied in this research are no longer playable for fear that the strings will put too much tension on the neck and damage the instrument; however, two of the instruments examined are still in playing condition and the owners continue to perform on them.

Volume

While Bassett Jones mentioned that the triple harp could not match the volume of sound a pedal harp could make because of the lack of tension on the strings, what he did not mention what was also adjusted to aid in improving the volume of the triple harp. The main reason for having sound holes on an instrument like the triple harp is to amplify the volume of sound. Sound holes radiate sound at different frequencies based on the size and shape of the hole. When a string is plucked on a harp, it created vibration that is then transferred to the soundboard. As the soundboard vibrates, it changes the amount of space in the soundbox. To aide in this, the sound holes allow for air to enter and exit the soundbox, allowing for easier vibration of the soundboard.⁶ The early triple harps like the ones made by John Richards had six small holes on the soundboard increasing in size proportionately to the size of the soundbox with the two on the top being the smallest and the two on the bottom being the largest. Harps like this include KH01: JR1760*, KH02: JR1764, KH03: NMM1770*, KH04: TI1770*, KH22: NMM*, and KH24: NMM*. On most pedal harps, the sound holes are located in the back and are large and oblong. These large oblong sound holes allow the pedal harp to ring out and project more volume, especially in the lower notes. Because of this, Bassett Jones began to move the sound holes of his triple harps to the back of the instrument. Since there was little standard for how many oblong sound holes are in the back or the soundbox or how large or small they are, Bassett Jones's triple harps with sound holes in the back are sometimes very different. Many of the harps that include oblong sound holes in the back also include the rounded soundbox instead of the staves. These harps include the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842), KH12: TJ1848, The Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851), KH15: BJ1851, KH16: BJ1860, KH18: RH1897, and KH22: NMM*. However, KH10: BJ1845 has a back made of nine staves. In the middle stave, there are four oblong openings to create these sound holes. As these sound holes were the only means of access to the inside of the soundbox, this change may also be made in order to accommodate for and

⁶ Chris Waltham, 'The Acoustics of Harp Soundboxes', *The American Harp Journal*, (Winter 2010), pp. 26-29.

ease in repairs and stringing. It should also be noted that larger sound holes will help in the reduction of the weight of the instrument, which was essential for Bassett Jones. Another way Bassett Jones chose to amplify the

sound of the triple harp is to leave the base of the harp open to act as a large sound hole. With such a large part of the instrument removed, this would significantly reduce the weight of the instrument. This is present in harps KH11: BJ1840*, KH13: BJ1848, KH17: TL1893, KH19: TV*, KH18: MNN*, KH21: TJ*, and KH23: NMM*. Figure 8 shows that harps made after the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) were all either with oblong sound holes in the back of the instrument, or the base of the instrument was open for projection. KH07: BJ1842 is once again an outlier because this triple harp is made from pieces of other triple harps. This is useful information when dating a harp because it can be determined if the harp was made before or after Bassett Jones moved away from the traditional six sound hole concept. This dating information reinforces the idea the KH24: NMM* was created before the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842).

ID	Sound Hole Type
KH01: JR1760*	6 holes in soundboard
KH02: JR1764	6 holes in soundboard
KH03: NMM1770*	6 holes in soundboard
KH04: TI1770*	6 holes in soundboard
KH05: BJ1838	(unknown)
KH06: BJ1842	5 oblong holes in back
KH07: BJ1842	6 holes in soundboard
KH08: BJ1840*	none
KH09: BJ1840*	none
KH10: BJ1845	4 oblong holes in back
KH11: BJ1840*	none
KH12: TJ1848	5 oblong holes in back
KH13: BJ1848	none
KH14: BJ1851	5 oblong holes in back
KH15: BJ1851	5 oblong holes in back
KH16: BJ1860	3 oblong holes in back
KH17: TL1893	none
KH18: RH1897	4 oblong holes in back
KH19: TV*	none
KH20: NMM*	none
KH21: TJ*	none
KH22: NMM*	6 holes in soundboard
KH23: NMM*	none
KH24: NMM*	6 holes in soundboard

Figure 8 A table comparing triple harps over time with the type of sound holes included.

Weight

As Bassett Jones noted, the weight of the instruments was of vital importance to his work in his early career working with the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society. Originally, they set restrictions for his making, allowing him only thirty pounds. Bassett Jones believed at the time that:

...this is a necessary condition in order to carry out the object of the society; for as the harps are intended to be portable, and the harpers by whom they are used having frequently to carry them several miles in the day, in order to fulfil their professional engagements, it is considered that thirty pounds is the utmost would be expected they could manage to carry about. But by reducing the weight in some parts not essential to the tone of the instrument, I generally make them several pounds lighter. It is true you may often see triple harps much lighter than any I make, but the tone is in proportion thin and wiry...⁷

However, by the end of his life, he believed that the weight restriction was no longer necessary as the culture of harp playing had changed and that these rules were part of the reason for the slow decline in popularity of the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society.⁸ The Welsh triple harper culture in the eighteenth century was to travel from place to place looking for work to earn a living. Because of this, the earlier Welsh triple harps were lightweight with no feet.

With the growing popularity of the double-action pedal harp, many harpists around Europe chose to transition their playing from the triple harp to a more modern solution for increasing chromaticism in music. The pedal harps were heavy and not meant to be transported frequently, so it made it more impractical for Welsh harpers to travel. When a Welsh triple harp player needed to travel with a pedal harp, it was not uncommon for them to remove the inner mechanism just to transport it.⁹ If the harper was unwilling or unable to remove the workings of the harps, they would adjust to the growing culture of leaving their harp at home to play the harp that was owned by the venue. Because these harps started to become more stationary instruments, the triple harp players adjusted as well. Without the need to travel, the harp makers began to prioritise the sound strength and durability of the instrument over the weight. This allowed for more opportunity to reinforce weak points of the harp as well as add other features, both decorative and functional. The table below gives the

⁷ Bassett Jones, 'Abergavenny Cymreigyddion: The Welsh Harp', *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 10 December 1842, p. 4.

⁸ Bassett Jones, 'The Welsh Harp', *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette*, 1 May 1869, p. 6.

⁹ Cynddelw, 'Abergavenny Cymreigyddion: The Welsh Harp', *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 10 December 1842, p. 2.

mass measured of each harp. As this was the most challenging piece of information to measure, some harps are labelled as “(unknown)” to indicate that it was not able to be measured during the time of this thesis. Within this table are several significant outliers: The Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842), the Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851), and the harp made mostly of metal instead of wood, KH18: RH1897. Both the Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851) and the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) are adorned with extravagant decorations and feature all of Bassett Jones’s reinforcement techniques. Because of this and because these harps were meant to be on display rather than travel with, their mass is considerably greater than the other harps.

ID	Mass (kg)
KH01: JR1760*	9.1
KH02: JR1764	8.1
KH03: NMM1770*	10.9
KH04: TI1770*	10
KH05: BJ1838	(unknown)
KH06: BJ1842	20.9
KH07: BJ1842	(unknown)
KH08: BJ1840*	16
KH09: BJ1840*	(unknown)
KH10: BJ1845	13.6
KH11: BJ1840*	12
KH12: TJ1848	14.9
KH13: BJ1848	14.4
KH14: BJ1851	23.7
KH15: BJ1851	(unknown)
KH16: BJ1860	19
KH17: TL1893	14.4
KH18: RH1897	24.3
KH19: TV*	12.1
KH20: NMM*	14.8
KH21: TJ*	15.3
KH22: NMM*	14.3
KH23: NMM*	12
KH24: NMM*	12.9

Figure 9 A table comparing triple harps over time with the mass of the harps.

Despite the weight restrictions put on Bassett Jones by the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society, the mass of the harps steadily increased over time. Removing the unknown harps as well as the harps without a date estimate, it is clear that the harps get heavier as time goes on. Because of this, weight may be a good indicator of around what time the harp was made.

However, with large outliers, this is not the most reliable indication of a harp's creation date. One may, however, be able to identify a harp maker like John Richards because his harps did not exceed ten kilograms, while Bassett Jones created harps with a wide variety of masses. Below, the graph depicts the general increase in mass over time.

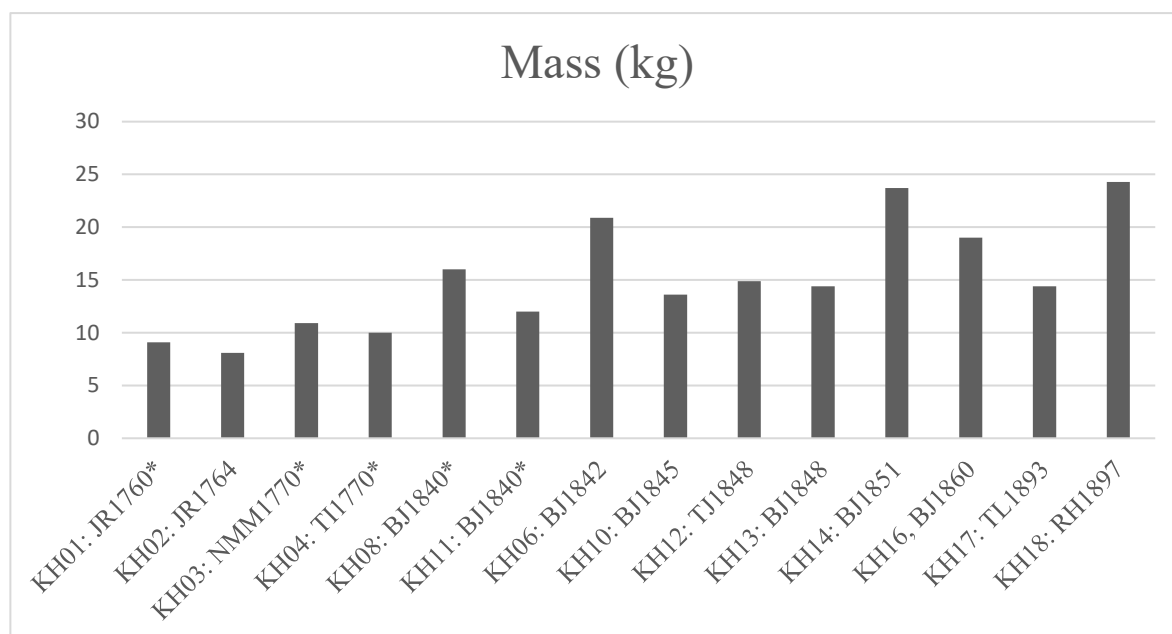


Figure 10 A graph depicting the difference in mass of the triple harps over time.

KH17: TL1893, in comparison to more contemporary instruments, is quite a lighter weight. However, this harp was made under the idea of making a more traditional Welsh triple harp and is still over five kilograms more than the harps they were attempting to imitate. With the majority of new harps being made heavier than before, it was less feasible to travel carrying the harp, and instead the triple harp made it less feasible for harpers to continue itinerant traditions.

Style

Because these harps were not moved as frequently due to their weight, the harps needed feet to stand on display. Some of the triple harps feature intricately designed feet with Welsh motifs while others have more simple designs. Previous to Bassett Jones, John Richards often made harps without feet. These harps had a signature etched design on the bottom of the base: a half circle with lines extending from the centre like a rising sun to measure out where the staves should be placed. This design is unique to John Richards harps and to KH04: TI1770 which has several other indicators to suggest that the maker of this harp was an apprentice to John Richards. KH01: JR1760* is a unique harp in that John Richards

made it, but it has feet. These feet were likely a later addition to accommodate for a harper that was still performing on it. After this, every harp made by Bassett Jones has feet. Some harps have unique feet like the Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851), which featured intricate carvings of dragons that encompass the feet. The unique arched design of the KH20: NMM* allows for it to be possible to identify it in a historical picture, like that of the Llanover household staff from the nineteenth century. In the table below, it is clear that once the feet were added to the triple harp, they were only rarely made without them. Another harp with unique feet was the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) which displays gilded motifs of oak trees.

ID	Feet (y/n)
KH01: JR1760*	yes
KH02: JR1764	no
KH03: NMM1770*	no
KH04: TI1770*	no
KH05: BJ1838	yes
KH06: BJ1842	yes
KH07: BJ1842	(unknown)
KH08: BJ1840*	yes
KH09: BJ1840*	yes
KH10: BJ1845	yes
KH11: BJ1840*	no
KH12: TJ1848	yes
KH13: BJ1848	yes
KH14: BJ1851	yes
KH15: BJ1851	yes
KH16: BJ1860	yes
KH17: TL1893	yes
KH18: RH1897	yes
KH19: TV*	yes
KH20: NMM*	yes
KH21: TJ*	yes
KH22: NMM*	yes
KH23: NMM*	no
KH24: NMM*	yes

Figure 11 A table comparing triple harps over time with the inclusion of feet.

The feet of the Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851) and the laminated wood were not the only two construction details that were hidden from view by decoration. At the base of the forepillar is a carving of a leek. This leek encompasses the entirety of the bolted connection between the forepillar and the base of the harp. It may be that Bassett Jones desired to hide all construction of these more intricate harps, regardless, it also creates an illusion that the triple harp mimics the base of a double-action pedal harp.



Figure 12 Double-action pedal harp made by Sebastian Erard in 1810.



Figure 13 The Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) made by Bassett Jones in 1842.

As you can see in figure 12 and figure 13, the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) gives the illusion that the base of the harp extends farther than it does to hide the bolt that holds the triple harp together. Creating this faux extended base gives the triple harp the look of a double-action pedal harp by masking the construction details. This pedal harp base illusion appears in the Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851), KH18: RH1897, and KH22: NMM*. All of these harps also contain other features of the double-action pedal harps' style. The Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851) and the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) both feature the Prince of Wales crown and feathers over the scroll. These details mimic the shape of the crown of a pedal harp. Both of these harps also have a rounded soundbox with oblong

sound holes in the back and they also both are entirely gilded similar to a double-action pedal harp. KH22: NMM* also features the crown instead of a scroll, however, this harp is not gilded in the same way.

The modern double-action pedal harp affected not only the way that the triple harp was used in Wales, but the way they were built and the way they were meant to sound. Since the pedal harp was so popular and widely used outside of Wales, it was necessary for the triple harp to change and adapt to meet the needs of the harper. Otherwise, the triple harp would have been left behind as it was everywhere but Wales. Bassett Jones recognised this early, working within the means that the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society established, he was always working to change and adapt the triple harp to create a sound that was popular for the time, create a harp that was considered beautiful for the time, and establish a place for the triple harp in the future of Wales.

Chapter Five: Current Revival Movement

As there has been little research done recently on Bassett Jones and the Welsh triple harp, it is vital that this thesis cover not only the nineteenth-century Welsh cultural revival, but the current revival movement and the similarities between the two. With harp makers and harpers alike attempting to sustain the Welsh triple harp at the heart of the Welsh culture, many now are attempting similar feats to those in the past. It is remarkable to witness the similarities between the current resurgence of the Welsh triple harp and that of the nineteenth century Welsh cultural revival. With the tradition and playing of the triple harp being passed down to each new generation, there have been growth and decline periods in popularity. Despite this, since the introduction of the triple harp in Wales, there is the sentiment that there has been an “undying tradition of the Welsh triple harp in Wales... a totally unbroken line”.¹

This sentiment can be attributed to the formidable Nansi Richards Jones (1888–1979). Nansi Richards was taught the harp in the aural tradition through Tom Lloyd (1858–1917) nicknamed “Telynor Ceiriog” or The Harpist of Ceiriog. By 1910, Nansi had won the National Eisteddfod competition for the triple harp for three uninterrupted years.² Gaining popularity in established families, Nansi had the opportunity to play for the royal family during the enthronement of Edward VIII (1894–1972) and was shortly thereafter named the “Royal Harpist”.³ As the foremost triple harper at a time when there were few, Nansi Richards strived to ensure the continued line of the triple harp in Wales. She helped to



Figure 1 Nansi Richards with student Gwyndaf Roberts, as published on the Cymdeithas y Delyn Deires website.

establish Côr Telyn Eryri (the Snowdonia Harp Choir) in 1930, taught students in the aural tradition she was raised in, and even gifted KH10: BJ1845 to its current owner. Her students,

¹ Steffan Thomas, Triple Harper, (11 March 2021).

² Davies, John, Nigel Jenkins, Menna Baines and Peredur I. Lynch (eds), 'Richards (Jones), Nansi (Telynores Maldwyn; 1888–1979)', p. 760.

³ Ibid.

Dafydd Roberts and Gwyndaf Roberts, two members of the 1976 Welsh folk band Ar Log, are some of the last remaining harpers taught in the aural tradition.

During Nansi Richards's time, not only were triple harpers rare, but triple harp makers were scarce. Until the early twentieth century, few changes were made to the construction of the triple harp as very few makers existed. John Weston Thomas (1921–1992) was a carpenter who established his love for making harps while making a miniature model of a music room with functioning instruments.⁴ The first full sized single strung harp he made was completed in 1967, with a segmented soundbox similar to that of John Richard's harps.⁵ In the same way that Bassett Jones learned to make harps, John Weston Thomas's first triple harp was created "based on the plans of John Richard[sic] of Llanrwst".⁶ After establishing his career, Thomas took on three apprentices, Allan Shiers, Bryan Blackmore, and his son Alun Thomas. While John Weston Thomas continued to make other harps, one of his most notable creations was the perpendicular triple harp. As the triple harp still faced the same challenges in construction and longevity that Bassett Jones had attempted to resolve,



Figure 36 John Weston Thomas with his first perpendicular triple harp (published in *So Long to Learn* by Ann Rosser).

John Thomas experimented until he had found a sustainable solution to the bowing of the neck and the heavy tension of the strings. The perpendicular triple harp, the design of which was created and popularized by John Weston Thomas, includes a laminated neck with a brass channel installed under the neck, which transfers the bridge pins between the rows of strings.⁷ By moving the tension of the strings to opposite sides of the neck, this prevents the bowing of the neck and forepillar that had plagued the triple harps of the past. While this

⁴ Ann Rosser, *So Long to Learn* (Fishguard: Pembrokeshire Press, n.d.) p. 15.

⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

⁶ Ibid., p. 24.

⁷ Thomas, Allun, "My Harps: A Short Introduction", *Allun Thomas: Maker of Fine Celtic and Triple Harps*, (n.d.) <http://www.thomasharps.co.uk/body_types.html> [accessed 10 March 2021].

strengthens the neck and increases the longevity of these triple harps, it also allows for more tension and heavier strings to be placed on the instrument giving it a rounder sound, comparable to the tone and volume of a pedal harp. These perpendicular triple harps are substantially heavier than previous triple harps made in Wales.⁸ Bryan Blackmore continued his harp making until moving to Australia; Allan Shiers, though no longer making triple harps, founded Telynau Teifi, a not-for-profit community enterprise to make harps; and Alun Thomas continues his father's legacy today, making an array of lap harps, celtic harps, and perpendicular triple harps in the same workshop his father had founded in 1965.

For some time, the perpendicular triple harps were the only triple harps being made in any numbers in Wales. At the time, Tim Hampson was establishing his career, making harps for Clive Morley Harps in Lechlade. When Tim Hampson left Clive Morley Harps and started his own business making bespoke harps and repairing historical harps in 1998, this changed the triple harp landscape and opened doors for harpers looking to play historically informed performances. Specializing in historical craftsmanship, he trained on the London College of Furniture Musical Instrument Technology course. The first two triple harps he chose to recreate, one from the eighteenth century and one from the nineteenth century located in the St Fagans Museum, were heavy because of his choice in wood and the reinforcements he included.⁹ Returning to this version of the triple harp, Tim Hampson faces the same contradictory challenges that Bassett Jones faced during his time making triple harps: harpers put too heavy strings on their harp, creating too much tension on the neck; the neck and forepillar of the harps bow under extreme tension; and harpers desire lightweight instruments for easier mobility. Without the use of John Thomas's perpendicular stringing, the ample tension created with the three rows of strings on one side will cause the harp's neck and forepillar to twist and bow. However, if the harp maker attempts to fortify the neck and forepillar to prevent this damage, it inadvertently makes the harp heavier. Triple harp strings that are available now have a heavier gauge than those used historically, so even with the lightest tension strings available, some triple harps may still warp over time. This contributes to added stress to Hampson's harp necks. Bassett Jones faced this problem as well due to harpers replacing their triple harp strings with heavier modern strings, attempting to mimic the sound of the pedal harp.¹⁰ From this, the bowing of the harps became more prominent and

⁸ Tim Hampson, Harp Maker, (21 March 2021).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Bassett Jones, 'Abergavenny Cymreigyddion: The Welsh Harp', *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 10 December 1842, p. 4.

led to more damage in the instruments. Hampson recommends for historical harps to use extra light gauge strings and to drop the tuning below $a' = 440$ Hz, the modern standard for tuning, to a more historically appropriate pitch like the standard Baroque music tuning, $a' = 415$ Hz which is about a half step lower.¹¹ While this tuning benefits the longevity of the harps, it makes it challenging for these harps to be played in a group, as they will not be tuned to the same pitch. While John Weston Thomas solved the problem with string tension, it changed the sound of the harp and made them heavier. Similar to the desires of the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society, many players hope to find a compromise between weight and longevity of the instrument, and similar to the desires of Bassett Jones, harp makers hope to find techniques that will strengthen the neck and pillar of the triple harp without increasing the weight. Many harpers and hobbyists are now asking for the older style harps or historical harp recreations. Hampson has experienced this directly, describing how the perpendicular triple harps made by John Weston Thomas and his apprentices “sound more like a modern harp... a lot of the people that have perpendicular harps are finding them too heavy, and I don’t know if it’s just the weight, but they’re coming to me and asking for lighter harps, and even the perpendicular ones that I’ve made are lighter”.¹² At the time of writing (March 2021), he has made twenty-two triple harps, including three perpendicular triple harps.¹³

Tim Hampson’s arrival in the harp-making business has opened up the opportunity for triple harpers to acquire comparable working models of these more traditional triple harps, or to have historical harps repaired, possibly to playing condition. Steffan Thomas, a current triple harp player, believes that “of those playing today, the majority are perpendicular harps... it’s down to access, for a long time the perpendicular was the triple harp you could buy... there is certainly a resurgence of interest in the historical harp”.¹⁴ Especially for those that desire to connect to the history of the triple harp in Wales, “there’s a move now to rediscover, in a way, because of the work Tim Hampson is doing, and so these recreations and these restorations are telling us something new. I’ve used the harp to accompany for dance, and... as you turn back to these older instruments, it then makes you reconsider the dance patterns and the complexity”.¹⁵ Because of the lighter stringing, lower

¹¹ Huw Roberts, Co-founder of Cymdeithas y Delyn Deires, (11 March 2021).

¹² Ibid.

¹³ These twenty-two triple harps consist of harps of various designs including eighteenth-century triple harps and nineteenth-century triple harps.

¹⁴ Steffan Thomas, Triple Harper, (11 March 2021).

¹⁵ Ibid.

tension, and difference in tone, the older harps and triple harp recreations need to be played in a more mindful way, especially in the lower registers where the harper's hands need to be located closer to the soundboard for a clear sound. Having access to historical instruments, or instruments that play similarly to that of historical instruments, allows the harper to play traditional tunes with more understanding of historical playing.

With the growing appreciation for traditional Welsh triple harps, Tim Hampson has been making more and more triple harps in this fashion. As his harps are bespoke, he makes harps following specifications from the harper, so Hampson is tasked with finding new ways of reinforcing the neck and forepillar to prevent damage without increasing the weight.¹⁶ Just as Bassett Jones used metal reinforcements, equilibrium bearing plates, and combs, Tim has implemented each of these techniques. While these metal reinforcements do well to support the neck and pillar, if the metal plate is too thick, it can add too much weight to the harp. Despite being unaware of Bassett Jones's practice of including laminated wood in his construction, Tim has also chosen to laminate the necks of his harps, allowing for different grain directions throughout the neck, under the assumption that this was unfaithful to the original instrument but extended the harp's life.¹⁷



Figure 37 Tim Hampson playing the triple harp in his kitchen playing his Emma Elizabeth nineteenth-century triple harp.

Another challenge that both Bassett Jones and Tim Hampson share is the small market of people that want a triple harp and can afford the time, craftsmanship, and supplies that it takes to commission one. Since these harps are not premade on an assembly line, they can take several months for a single harp maker like Tim Hampson or Bassett Jones to make. Access has always been a major barrier to growing the number of triple harps and triple harpers in Wales. In Bassett Jones's time, the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society sought to remedy this by commissioning and gifting triple harps as prizes. Today, harps have been commissioned from Tim Hampson by Rhiaian Bebb, the co-founder of Cymdeithas y Delyn Deires, the Welsh Triple Harp Society that launched in 2019, expressly to be used as rental harps through the society. In the same way that the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society

¹⁶ Tim Hampson, Harp Maker, (21 March 2021).

¹⁷ Ibid.

created guidelines for Bassett Jones to follow in his commissions, Hampson was also given directives in the construction of harps created for Cymdeithas y Delyn Deires.

Rhiain Bebb, inspired, in part, by Lady Llanover, commissioned Tim with the goal of designing a student triple harp which is now named the “Nansi”, after Nansi Richards. Bebb stated that:

As the ethos of the Society is to preserve, promote and attract more players (and the prices of large harps being so high) a 'Nansi student type' basic harp seemed to be the answer - a harp which is not too small or too tall. (The first one was 48" high, but I later decided to change it slightly so that they are now 54" high.)¹⁸

The desire is for harps that are small and light, as a reduced-size harp would benefit students who show an interest in learning and would allow the society to more easily transport the harps to and from students. Visually, the only request made is for the Nansi triple harps to have a scroll, as this is distinct to the triple harp. The harps need to be made in an affordable manner, as to not be overly concerned about the delicacy in which they will be handled, especially in the case of students who may only house one for a few months. Straying from the tradition of the Welsh triple harp being played on the left shoulder, the Nansi triple harps are made expressly for the right shoulder in order to attract those students who already play another kind of harp on the right shoulder. By targeting this audience of students already committed to playing the harp, they increase the chance of a student continuing to play the triple harp. While Cymdeithas y Delyn Deires hopes to reduce the access barrier for students interested in taking up the triple harp, there are limitations to their availability. Currently, as of March 2021, only members of Cymdeithas y Delyn Deires can hire one of the two Nansi triple harps available for three to six months while they determine if they would like to invest in a triple harp of their own. Tim Hampson is currently working to have two more Nansi triple harps available for the society in the coming months. Despite only launching recently at the Llanrwst Eisteddfod in 2019, Cymdeithas y Delyn Deires has already held several performances and events and has plans to continue. For the growing membership, Cymdeithas y Delyn Deires members believe that "there is a responsibility... to keep commissioning these harps, renting them out, and making them available".¹⁹

Like Cymdeithas y Delyn Deires, there are other groups in Wales working to promote folk instrumental traditions, like Clera, which started out under the name COTC (Cymdeithas Offerynnau Traddodiadol Cymru).²⁰ This group started with the mission of hosting

¹⁸ Rhiain Bebb, Co-founder of Cymdeithas y Delyn Deires, (14 March 2021).

¹⁹ Steffan Thomas, Triple Harper, (11 March 2021).

²⁰ “The First Ten Years”, *Clera* (n.d.) < <http://www.clera.org/saesneg/1st10yrs.php> > [accessed 23 March 2021].

workshops and classes to promote the instrumental traditions of Wales. Clera has undertaken several projects including “Telynor Cymru 2016”, a Wales Arts Council supported project teaching groups across the country Welsh Gypsy harp tunes and features a triple harp in its logo. Today, Clera still hosts workshops, tune clubs, and sessions to promote Welsh instrumental folk traditions. Another group that has promoted the Welsh triple harp is trac, Wales’s folk development organization that was founded in 1997. Trac’s mission is “to strategically develop the folk music and dance scene of Wales into a vibrant, living tradition shared and enjoyed by audiences, amateur and professional musicians across borders and age-groups, and to celebrate and promote the very best representation of our folk music culture at home and across the world”.²¹ One project by trac is AVANC- Ensemble Gwerin Ieuencid Cymru. AVANC is the Youth Folk Ensemble of Wales which features two young triple harp players: Cerys Hafana and Meinir Olwen.

As these groups continue their performances, workshops, and projects with the goal of promoting Welsh musical traditions, it is clear that there has been an increase in interest and playing of the triple harp in recent years. Steffan Thomas mentioned, "When I started there were a handful of people actively playing, whereas now, it's quite pleasing to say I don't know everybody who plays the triple harp, that certainly wasn't the case 20 years ago, I knew everybody".²² Tim Hampson also recognises this increase in interest, as he has been commissioned to make more triple harps. In the same way that there was a resurgence of the triple harp during the time of Bassett Jones due to the enthusiastic advocates that pushed for more representation, these groups have helped to facilitate another resurgence based in passion and preservation of tradition. While the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society disbanded in 1853, the legacy of the main contributors and most enthusiastic participants lived far beyond the twenty years in which the society was active. Lady Llanover continued to hold Eisteddfodau and promote Welsh culture outside of the society and Bassett Jones had created a majority of the thirty-seven harps offered as prizes for the Eisteddfodau which were able to be used by triple harpers for over a century.²³ While these groups have and can create great impact, it is the endeavours of the passionate few that creates this great change.

²¹ “About Us”, *trac* (n.d.) <<https://trac.wales/about-us/>> [accessed 23 March 2021].

²² Steffan Thomas, Triple Harper, (11 March 2021).

²³ Ley, *Arghwyddes Llanofer: Gwenynen Gwent*, p. 57.

Conclusion

During his lifetime, Bassett Jones created a legacy through his triple harps. His experience with the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society allowed him to build the majority of the thirty-seven prized harps for the Eisteddfodau, and his independent work likely amassed him over one hundred more.¹ His harps have travelled the world and have been played for thousands of audiences including Queen Victoria. Although he faced points of criticism, he went on to earn the titles of official harp maker to the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society in 1838 and harp maker to the royal family in 1845.² Up until his death in 1869, Bassett Jones continued to advocate for the Welsh triple harp as a viable instrument for harpers.³

Chapter one discusses the life of Bassett Jones and his contributions to the Welsh cultural revival. With the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society's need for a harp maker, Bassett Jones abandoned his work as a wheelwright and began to learn the trade. With the guidance of Carnhuanawc and the detailed measurements of a John Richards harp, he quickly became a skilled craftsman. Working under the guidelines of the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society, Bassett Jones learned what was necessary and not necessary in the construction of the triple harp and developed his craft to meet the needs of the harp players.⁴ Though his work was often attributed to others, Bassett Jones sought to heighten the esteem of the triple harp in his own work. Through the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842), he reconnected the Royal Family and the Prince of Wales to the Welsh culture, and through the Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851) he reached the larger audiences of the Great Exhibition and the Grand Exhibition Harp Concert series.

Chapter two analyses the intricacies of Bassett Jones's work in relation to his affiliations. This chapter explores their joint ventures and established credit that was not attributed to him in previous literature. Although many attributed the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) and the subsequent performance to Lady Llanover and Carnhuanawc, Bassett Jones deserves sole credit for the idea and creation of the harp. Carnhuanawc's role was in the conceptualization of the harp ornamentation and the presentation. This chapter concludes with a brief overview of Lady Llanover's contribution to the Welsh cultural revival

¹ Ley, *Arglwyddes Llanofer: Gwenynen*, p. 57.

² Mair Roberts, *The Harpmakers of Wales* (Llanrwst:Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 2000), p. 60.

³ Bassett Jones, 'The Welsh Harp', *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette*, 1 May 1869, p. 6.

⁴ Bassett Jones, 'Abergavenny Cymreigyddion: The Welsh Harp', *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 10 December 1842, p. 4.

in relation to the triple harp to establish the environment and efforts that surround Bassett Jones and his work.

Chapter three investigates the individual harps and the history surrounding them. It began with the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) and Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851) as these two had the most information and history involved. Since they were such great outliers in the scheme of Bassett Jones's work, separating these two harps from the rest allows the thesis to establish their individual intricacies. The chapter continues with other notable Bassett Jones harps with detailed descriptions of the construction and ornamentation, as well as supplying further information on their history. Finally, the chapter concludes with a similar discussion of other historic triple harps from different dates and different makers in order to establish a baseline of comparison for the Bassett Jones harps.

Chapter four compares the information gathered on the harps included in chapter three and establishes several points of change enacted by Bassett Jones. These four points of change are examined in the context of the popularization of the pedal harp and the environment of the time. The first of these is changes in reinforcement techniques. These changes are essential in the work that Bassett Jones did, as his harps needed to be strengthened to withstand the increased tension from the strings. Triple harps were warping due to the tension of the many strings over time, and, with the additional tension caused by harpers changing the strings, this resulted in even more damage to the instruments. The second was a change in volume. To compensate for the difference in volume between the triple harp and the pedal harp, Bassett Jones devised a way to increase the volume of the triple harp by adopting the pedal harp sound holes. The third significant change was in mass. As mentioned in chapter one and two, the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society established regulations, specifically in mass, for Bassett Jones to adhere to in his making. It is clear from the data that over time this mattered less and he and other harp makers were able to build harps prioritizing longevity and durability over ensuring the harp had a low mass. The fourth and final change examined in this chapter is the change in style of the harps. With the extravagant look of the gilded double-action pedal harp becoming fashionable, Bassett Jones and other harp makers wanted to keep abreast of the latest trends. Because of this, many of the harps began to resemble pedal harps, either in construction or in ornamentation.

The invention and following popularization of the double-action pedal harp affected the way Bassett Jones and other makers created the triple harp. These additions to the triple harp changed the basic anatomy of the harps by adding feet and changing the sound holes from small holes on the soundboard to large apertures in the back of the soundbox. These

modernizations adapted the Welsh triple harp to the needs of the contemporary Welsh harpers. Despite the persistent argument against the continued use of the Welsh triple harp, Bassett Jones helped to sustain its use for many years until his passing in 1869.

In chapter five, the final chapter, the current triple harp revival movement is discussed, making connections between the nineteenth-century Welsh cultural revival and today. It starts with discussing Nansi Richards as one of the last triple harp players taught in the aural traditions, and how she passed down her knowledge and passion to the next generation of triple harpers. Then it explores the John Weston Thomas perpendicular triple harp and the challenges that harp makers face making the same and different kinds of triple harps. It also covered the efforts to preserve the legacy of the triple harp and how they compare to the past.

While this thesis aims to explore Bassett Jones's harps in the nineteenth century and place them in context of the Welsh cultural revival, it also explores Bassett Jones's harps in today's Welsh cultural revival. Bassett Jones harps are still being played and repaired today, so this thesis provides essential information for craftsmen like Tim Hampson to repair as well as build new harps in the same style. By giving insight into the struggles that Bassett Jones faced with the balance of string tension and weight of the instruments, harp makers will now know what has been attempted historically to combat this and can choose to be historically accurate in their recreation. With many triple harpers pushing to preserve the triple harp's legacy in Wales, it is likely that more commissioners will be asking for historical harps to be repaired to playing condition and for historical harp recreations to be made. This will lead to harp makers facing the same problems encountered by Bassett Jones, repairing the bowed neck of the triple harp or even replacing it. With this thesis, the harp maker will have the resources to make historically accurate suggestions for repair and maintenance. As there is a growth in student harpers learning to play the triple harp, more triple harps will be commissioned and made in Wales. With more triple harps being made and played, the triple harp will be performed upon for more audiences, displaying the Welsh national instrument in its historical state.

Since the triple harp has had little research surrounding it in the last twenty years, there is a large amount of research to be completed in this area. To build upon this thesis, one could attempt to create a more complete catalogue of Bassett Jones's triple harps including those excluded due to travel constraints, as well as collect more thorough information on harps that were included but unable to be examined within the scope of this research. It may be beneficial for one to trace triple harps through ownership from the time we know Bassett

Jones had made them and determine the fate of those instruments, especially the ownership of the Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) and the Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851). It would also be worthwhile to connect photos of harpers and their harps to the instruments in museums, as many of the instruments in this survey were unable to be officially dated.

On a broader scale, harp makers other than Bassett Jones in the nineteenth century have yet to be researched. This research could prove to be a difficult task as compared to Bassett Jones, whose triple harps were well documented through newspaper articles and by the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society. This will likely not be the same for many others. Once that research has been completed, it would be noteworthy to attempt a comparison between triple harp makers in the nineteenth century and pedal harp makers in the nineteenth century.

Although he was not often given credit, Bassett Jones was an integral partner in the nineteenth-century Welsh cultural revival. His harps were prized for their beautiful look and sound, despite all those who argued against the continued use of the triple harp. Without a maker willing to adapt to the cultural needs of the time, the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion Society, Lady Llanover, and Carnhuanawc would not have been as successful in their endeavors. This documentation of Bassett Jones's works serves to preserve his legacy of contribution to the nineteenth-century Welsh cultural revival and provides proper attribution for these efforts.

Appendix

Harp Catalogue

This harp catalogue serves the purpose of referral and future comparison.

KH01: JR1760*

No Date: 1760-70, John Richards

By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff

Forepillar:

Width, 5cm

Height, 191cm

Longest string, 169.5cm

Shortest string, 12cm

96 strings

Weight, 9.1 kg

9 staves

6 sound holes in the soundboard

Vertical soundboard grain

The bolt is visible

2 feet

There are metal reinforcements over strategic places on the harp, these were likely an addition after the original harp making to avoid the prevalent bowing of the neck from the weight of the taut strings. These metal reinforcements along the neck change the weight of the instrument from its original state. The decoration of the harp is simple with the front of the forepillar painted black and simple black linework over the soundbox. There are six pointed stars painted in black around each sound hole. Not all, but many of the holes to secure strings along the bridge rail are reinforced with metal above them.

Characteristic of John Richards harps, the base of the soundbox displays the etching of a semicircle with lines evenly spaced stretching to the edges of the base in the shape of a setting sun. These lines were evenly spaced, likely to measure out the placement for each stave. It is possible that, while this etching is meant to aid in the creation of the harp, it was also meant to serve as a signature of the harp maker, as few other makers used this technique. Despite the lack of feet in the front of the harp, there is little to no wear on the bottom of the base, suggesting that the harp may have been rested on a cushion for playing.



Figure 1 KH01: JR1760*, photo taken by author.

KH02: JR1764**1764, John Richards*****By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff, 49.67***

Forepillar:

Width, 5cm

Height, 182cm

Longest string, 163cm

Shortest string, 13cm

97 strings

Weight, 8.1 kg

9 staves

6 sound holes in the soundboard

The bolt is visible

No feet

Not all, but many of the holes to secure strings along the bridge rail are reinforced with metal above them. This prevents significant wear overtime into the bridge rail from the strings. There are no other metal reinforcements on this harp, suggesting that it is in the most original state possible. The staining of the wood is a popular technique of the time, in which a yellow stain would be used under the red, as it would reflect more light through the red, giving it a glowing effect. The staining on this harp is worn down in places where there was consistent wear from the harper to reveal the yellow stain below the red. The placement of the worn-down stain shows that the harper played with the harp on their left shoulder, with their left hand playing the upper strings and the right playing the lower strings. This harp also displays the half-sun etching on the base, characteristic of John Richards. Richards was also known to carve a star between initials, of which this harp displays on the back of the shoulder. There are no feet on the base, yet the base of the harp is not worn. This suggests that, while playing, it may have been rested on a stand or on a cushion to protect it from wear.

Inscription:

"J. Richards/Llanrwst/Fecit/1764" [J. Richards/ Llanrwst/ Maker/ 1764].

It is possible that the plaque was added later, as John Richards's initials ("I.R." instead of "J.R.") are also carved into the harp twice.



Figure 2 KH02:JR1764, photo taken by the St Fagans National Museum of History.

KH03: NMM1770****No Date: 1770-80, No Maker's Mark, Edward Jones (owner)******By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff***

Forepillar:

Width, 5cm

Height, 182cm

Longest string, 160.5cm

Shortest string, 13.5cm

98 strings

Weight, 10 kg (missing parts, metalwork and strings as well as damage on the back of soundbox)

9 staves

6 sound holes in the soundboard

The bolt is visible

No feet

The sound holes are decorated with eight-pointed stars painted in black around them. Over the soundboard is a veneer to match fashionable Cuban mahogany furniture of the time. Because of this veneer, we do not know the direction of the soundboard's grain, however, the time in which it was made would suggest that the grain is vertical. The veneer also hides if there are metal reinforcements to prevent wear from the strings along the bridge rail. The front of the forepillar as well as the top and bottom of the neck are painted black. This harp has faced damages, including the loss of its scroll at the top of the forepillar. Similar to the other John Richards harps, there are no feet on this harp, and it has faced little damage on its base, indicating that it was rested on a cushion to perform.



Figure 3 KH03: NMM1770*,
photo taken by author.



Figure 4 KH03: NMM1770*, photo taken by
author.

KH04: TI1770***No Date: 1770-80, T*I (probable apprentice to JR)****By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff, 51.177**

Forepillar:

Width, 5cm

Height, 182cm

Longest string, 160.5cm

Shortest string, 13.5cm

98 strings

Weight, 10 kg (missing parts, metalwork and strings as well as damage on the back of soundbox)

9 staves

6 sound holes on the soundboard

Vertical soundboard grain

The bolt is visible

No feet

All of the holes to secure strings along the bridge rail are reinforced with metal above them, some have multiple reinforcements. The sound holes are decorated with six-pedalled daffodils, mirroring the look of the six-pointed stars shown in previous harps. There are also decorative flowers painted onto the soundboard and ambiguous orange paint designs on the front of its forepillar. The date this harp was made is estimated based on the colour of the stain and the popularity of mahogany furniture at a given time, however, since it is stained over the decorative paintings, it would suggest that the stain was added after its creation. Since the stain is the only indication of a more specific period, I have chosen that to date the harp. The makers initials are carved into the harp in a similar manner as John Richards, "T*I", with a star between the initials. This harp also includes the half-sun etching on the base of the harp. Because of this, it is safe to hypothesise that either the maker was an apprentice of John Richards, or that the maker had examined a John Richards harp in extreme detail with the intention of creating a replica.

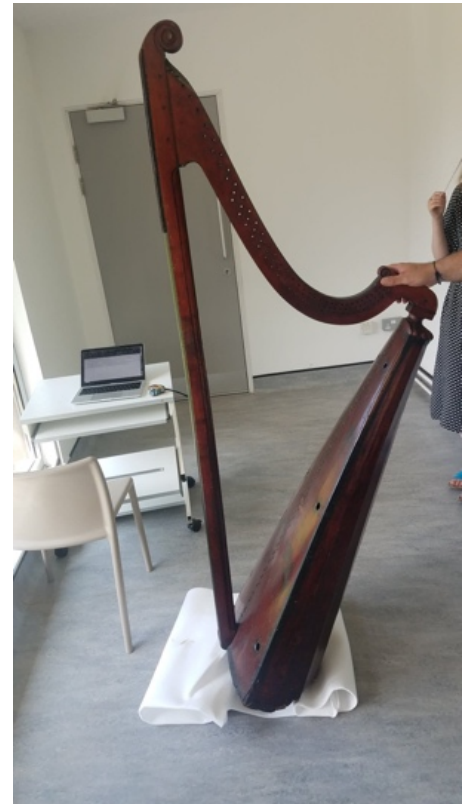


Figure 5 KH04:TI1770*, photo taken by author.



Figure 6 KH04:TI1770*, photo taken by author.

KH05: BJ1838**1838, Bassett Jones****Information published by the Royal College of Music, “RCM Museum of Instruments Catalogue Part III: European Stringed Instruments”, RMC 295**

Measurements taken by Royal College of Music, rounded to the nearest millimetre

Overall height: 2035mm (203.5 cm)

Forepillar height: 1895 mm (189.5 cm)

Length of soundboard: 1150 mm (115 cm)

Width across neck: 1055 mm (105.5 cm)

Width of soundboard: at top 120 mm (12 cm), at bottom 485 mm (48.5 cm)

Depth of soundbox: at top 80 mm (8 cm), at bottom 335 mm (33.5 cm)

Longest string: 1535 mm (153 cm)

Shortest string: 154 mm (15.4 cm)

99 Strings

9 staves

No sound holes (possibly on back of soundbox)

Horizontal soundboard grain

2 feet

Because this harp was inaccessible during the duration of this thesis, this information was sourced from the Royal College of Music’s museum catalogue and from photos provided. The forepillar is bolted into the base of the soundbox, though, the bolt itself is hidden from visibility by a carved feather. There is a veneer on the top of the harp’s neck, which may indicate that the neck is made of laminated wood, however there is no other indication of this.

Inscription:

“Rif [*sic*] 4 Cymreigyddion y Fenni/ I JOHN THOMAS yn Unarddeg Oed/ Am Ragori ar y Delyn./ HYDREF 1838/ Bassett Jones/ Gwneuthurwr/ Caerdydd/ Rif [*sic*] 115”
[No. 4 Abergavenny Welsh Society/ To John Thomas aged eleven/ for excellence on the harp/ October 1838/ Bassett Jones/ maker/ Cardiff/ No. 115].

The Royal College of Music catalogue specifies that John Thomas received this harp when he was twelve.



Figure 7 KH05:BJ1838, photo taken by the Royal College of Music.

KH06: BJ1842***The Prince of Wales Harp, 1842, Bassett Jones***

By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff

Forepillar:

Width, 6cm

Height, 192cm

Longest string, 147.5cm

Shortest string, 13cm

96 strings

Weight, 20.9 kg

Rounded soundbox

5 large apertures on back of soundbox

Laminated wood

Includes a comb

4 feet

The Prince of Wales harp was made as a gift of honour for the new Prince of Wales, Albert by Bassett Jones. It is possible that the forepillar is bolted into the base of the soundbox like the harps before it, however a carved leek on the base of forepillar hides where it would be. Round relief acorns and leaves on the base form this faux-base and travel up the forepillar in a garland-like fashion. At the top of the forepillar, there is a carved Prince of Wales feathers and crown that fold over the scroll. On the comb there are etchings of the three-leaf clover, thistle, rose, and daffodil.

Inscription:

“1843 Tywysog Albert/Cymru”
[Albert, Prince of Wales]

“Gwnead gan Bassett Jones Caerdydd”
[Made by Bassett Jones Cardiff]

“Iaith enaid a rei thannau”
[the language of the soul is on the strings]



Figure 8 The Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842) photo taken by the St Fagan's National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff.

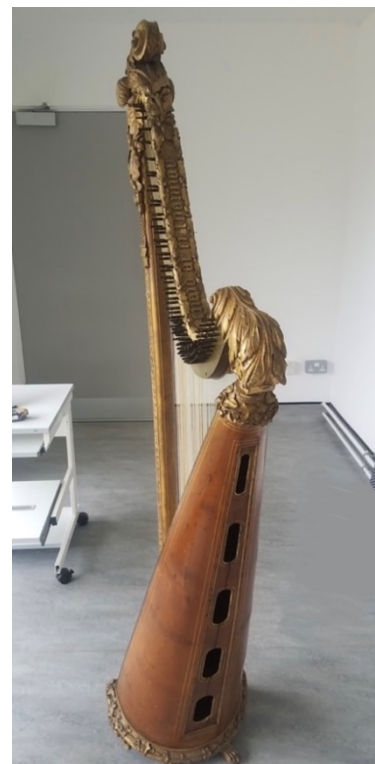


Figure 9 The Prince of Wales Harp (KH06: BJ1842), photo taken by author.

KH07: BJ1842***1842, Bassett Jones******By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff, 12.44***

Measurements taken by the St Fagans National Museum of History

Height: 1840 mm (184 cm)

Width: 540 mm (54 cm)

Depth: 770 mm (77 cm)

Rounded soundbox

6 sound holes in soundboard

Vertical soundboard grain

The bolt is visible

This harp was constructed using parts from other harps. The soundboard is known to be made by John Richards, as it is signed by the maker inside the body. However, the rounded soundbox is unlikely to be from a John Richards harp, since it is not segmented. Both the neck and forepillar are made for a taller harp and have been shaved down. On the forepillar one can see evidence of this in the bolt being relocated to a lower position and the scroll being trimmed down and reattached. On the neck, one can see holes for tuning pins that surpass what is functional for the instrument. On the front of the forepillar, the harp is painted with a gold and red floral pattern while on the back of the soundbox is decorated with intricate gold florals.

Inscription:

“Cymreigyddion y Fenni/ 1842/ Anrheg Syr Charles Morgan Bar/ O Dredygwr/ Enillwyd gan John Roberts/ Telynor/ Hydref 13, 1842/ Bassett Jones/ Gwneuthurwr/ Caerdydd”
[Abergavenny Welsh Society/ 1842/ Gift of Sir Charles Morgan Bar/ From Tredygwr/ Won by John Roberts/ Harpist/ October 13, 1842/ Bassett Jones/ Maker/ Cardiff].



Figure 10 KH07:BJ1842, photo taken by the St Fagans National Museum of History.

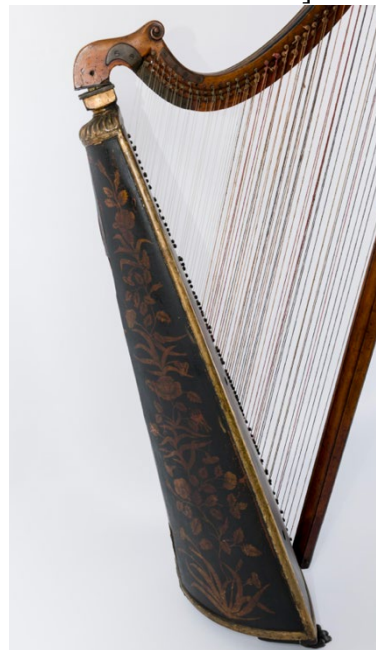


Figure 11 KH07:BJ1842, photo taken by the St Fagans National Museum of History.

KH08: BJ1840***No Date:1838-45, Bassett Jones****By permission of private owner, restored by
Tim Hampson**

Measurements taken by owner

Forepillar:

Width, 5cm

Height, 174cm

Longest string, 144cm

Shortest string, 11cm

93 strings

Weight, 16kg

9 staves

No sound holes

Horizontal soundboard grain

Iron reinforcement under neck

Feet have been replaced by Tim Hampson

Leaves carved in round relief decorate the scroll and shoulder and hide the bolt. The veneer over the neck is decorated with oak leaves and acorns carved in round relief. The plaque features the image of the Prince of Wales feathers. There are goal line details on the forepillar.

It is likely this harp's neck is laminated. One maker's number away from the next harp, this harp is meant to be played on the left shoulder and the following (KH09: BJ1840*) is meant to be played on the right.

This harp was purchased by the owner from David Watkins, who acquired it from the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. It was donated to the museum by Nora Chadwick, a former lecturer at the University of Cambridge.¹

Inscription:

“Bassett Jones Caerdydd/ Gwuenthurwr

Telynu Gwobrwyawl/ Cymreigddion y Fenni/ A Bhrif Eisteddfodau Cymru/ Rhif 141”

[Bassett Jones Cardiff/ Maker of prized harps for/ The Abergavenny Welsh Society/ And the Chief Eisteddfodau of Wales/ No. 141]



Figure 12 KH08: BJ1840* plaque, photo taken by owner.



Figure 13 KH08: BJ1840* pictured for sale on David Watkin's website.

¹ Watkins, David, “For Sale by David Watkins, Bassett Jones Welsh Triple Harp No. 141”, *David Watkins, Harpist* (2019) <http://davidwatkins.info/Pages/other_pages/Bassett_Jones_number_141.html> [accessed 13 May 2018].

KH09: BJ1840****No Date:1838-45, Bassett Jones******Information published by the York Castle Museum, YORCM: DA1931***

Not measured or examined by author

9 staves

No sound holes

Horizontal soundboard grain

Iron reinforcement under neck

Feet have unique rounded shape

Leaves carved in round relief decorate the scroll and shoulder and hide the bolt. The veneer over the neck is decorated with oak leaves and acorns carved in round relief. Pictured on the plaque is a stag.

It is likely this harp's neck is laminated.

One maker's number away from the previous harp, this harp is meant to be played on the right shoulder and the previous (KH08: BJ1840*) is meant to be played on the left.

Inscription:

“Rhif 142/ Bassett Jones/ Gwneuthurwr/ Caerdydd./ ‘Mae Telyn yn mhob teulu= ‘n offeryn Hoff euraidd i’w charu”

[No. 142/ Bassett Jones/ maker/ Cardiff./ ‘There is a harp in every family = our favoured golden instrument to love’]

“Cymru Dros Byth”

[Wales for ever]



Figure 14 KH09: BJ1840* photographed by the York Castle Museum.

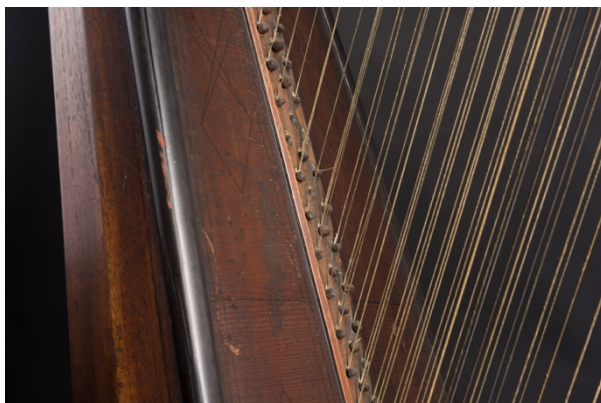


Figure 15 KH09: BJ1840* soundboard and strings, photographed by the York Castle Museum.



Figure 16 Figure 39 KH09: BJ1840* plaque, photographed by the York Castle Museum.

KH10: BJ1845***1845, Bassett Jones******By permission of private owner***

Forepillar:

Width, 5.5cm

Height, 166cm

Longest string, 138cm

Shortest string, 12cm

110 strings

Weight, 13.6 kg

9 staves

4 large apertures, on the back of the
soundbox

Horizontal soundboard grain

4 feet

The bolt is hidden from visibility by a carved feather. There are two metal plates that reinforce the neck with no inscription. This harp is not reinforced with a comb. Although there is a veneer to cover the top of the neck, the neck does not give any indication of being made of laminated wood. On the soundboard, there is a detailed recreation of a popular sketch depicting Dafydd y Garreg Wen [David of the White Rock]. Above this, the soundboard is painted with leeks and a goat head, and black lining details are located in strategic places over the harp. One of these places is a black paint band at the top of the staves, hiding bolts to keep the soundbox together.

Inscription:

"No. 255 Bassett Jones of Cardiff
1845", and stamped on back of the
bridge rail reads: "B. Jones."

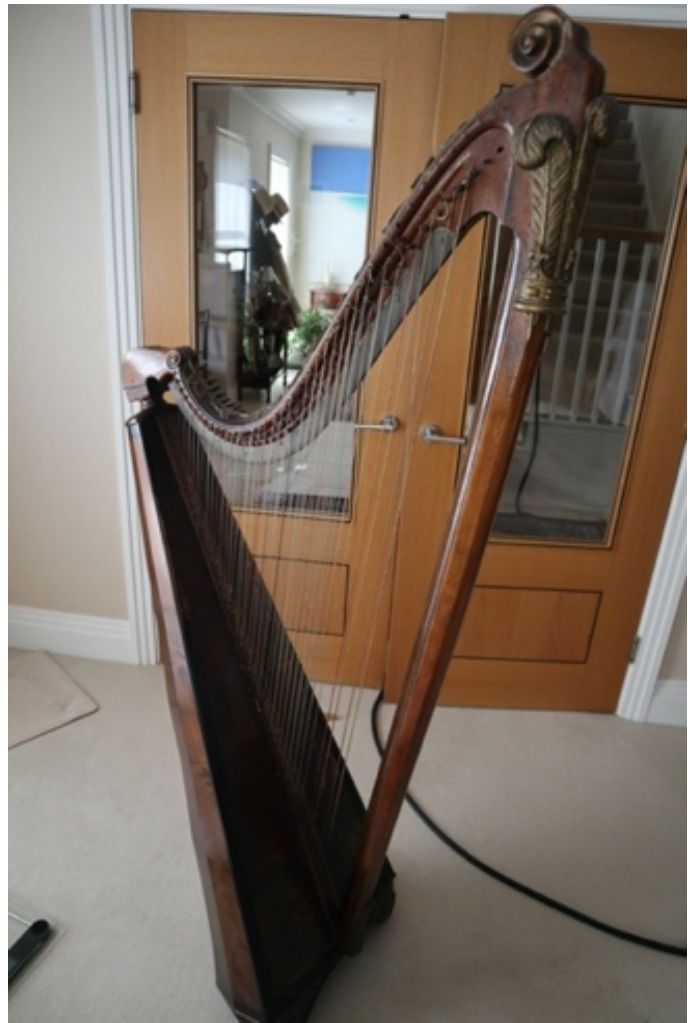


Figure 17 KH08:1845, photo taken by author.



Figure 18 KH08:1845, photo taken by author.

KH11: BJ1840****No Date: 1840-60, Bassett Jones******By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff***

Forepillar:

Width, 5.5cm

Height, 185cm

Longest string, 156cm

Shortest string, 15.5cm

96 strings

Weight, 12 kg

9 staves

No sound holes

Horizontal soundboard grain

The bolt is visible

This harp is decorated with black line detailing, mirroring earlier John Richards harps. It is unclear if laminated wood was used in the neck of this triple harp.



Figure 19 KH11: BJ1840*, photo taken by author.

Inscription:

"Gwnaed gan Bassett Jones o Caerdydd"
 [Made by Bassett Jones of Cardiff]

"Iaith enaid a rei thannau"
 [the language of the soul is on the strings]



Figure 20 KH11: BJ1840*, photo taken by author.

KH12: TJ1848

1848, T. Jones

By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff

Forepillar:

Width, 5.5cm

Height, 170cm

Longest string, 134cm

Shortest string, 9cm

98 strings

Weight, 14.9 kg

9 staves

Five large apertures, in the back of the soundbox

The bolt is visible

Horizontal soundboard grain

2 feet

The triple harp is decorated with black lining details and the front of the forepillar is painted black. Below the scroll on the forepillar is a carved acorn.

Inscription:

“T. Jones Abergavenny”

“T. Jones Maker/1848”.

“Penmaen Harp/ won by/ Edward Hughes/
Abergavenny Eisteddfod/ October 1848”



Figure 21 KH12: TJ1848, photo taken by author.



Figure 23 KH12: TJ1848, photo taken by author.

KH13: BJ1848**1848, Bassett Jones*****By permission of private owner, restored by Tim Hampson***

Forepillar:

Width, 5cm

Height, 166cm

Longest string, 141cm

Shortest string, 11cm

97 strings

Weight, 14.4 kg

9 staves

No sound holes

The bolt is visible

4 feet

The scroll is separate from the forepillar and may have been replaced at a later time due to damage. The scalloped stave cap is designed to look like the traditional triple harp, however its function is not to hold the staves together. The neck does not seem to be made of laminated wood, but the metal-plated shoulder hides where this would be most visible. The metal-plated shoulder may function to hide this handiwork, or it may have been added later to protect spots on the instrument where it is likely to wear. It is decorated with black linework and the front of the forepillar is painted black.

Inscription:

"Won by/ Edward Jones/ at
Abergavenny/ 1848"

"Teyln Cefn Mably/ Gan C. Kemys
Tynte,, ysw.A.S." [Esquire, M.P.]

"Gwnawd Gan Bassett Jones./O.
Gaerdydd" [made by Bassett Jones of
Cardiff]

"The gift of/ her Majesty"

"di eu et mon droit" [God and my right]



Figure 24 KH13: BJ1848, photo taken by owner.



Figure 25 KH13: BJ1848, photo taken by author.

KH14: BJ1851***The Great Exhibition Harp, 1851, Bassett Jones******By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff***

Forepillar:

Width, 7cm

Height, 190cm

Longest string, 149.2cm

Shortest string, 15.5cm

102 strings

Weight, 23.7 kg

Rounded soundbox

5 large apertures in the back of soundbox

Includes metal comb

Made for the Great Exhibition of 1851, this harp is an extravagant piece of work. The laminated wood is hidden by the veneer carving of the poetic quotation. A druid's face is carved over the shoulder of the harp and the Prince of Wales feathers and crown adorn the top of the forepillar. In the front, the feet are made of intricately carved dragons and the leek at the base of the forepillar gives the illusion of the forepillar not being bolted in but coming from the centre of a base indicative of the pedal harp. All over the harp are carvings of acorns, and the soundboard is covered in gold paintings of symbols of Wales and the United Kingdom including acorns, ivy, druid faces, goats, the Prince of Wales feathers, clovers, thistles, roses, and leeks. Like the Prince of Wales harp, the comb has etchings of the United Kingdom flowers.

Inscription:

“BASSETT JONES, Cardiff/ By Special warrants of 5th Oct 1843/ Appointed Chief Harp Maker/ To her most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria/ H.R.H. Prince Albert & H.R.H. The Prince of Wales”
 “Hir oes i'n Brenhines Victoria” [Long live our Queen Victoria]
 “Arddangosiad cywain- waith pob cenedl” [An exhibit of the craftsmanship of every nation]
 “Undeb a Brawdgarwch” [Unity and Brotherly Love]
 “Iaith enaid a rei thannau” [the language of the soul is on the strings]



Figure 26 KH14: BJ1851, The Great Exhibition Harp. Photo taken by author.



Figure 27 KH14: BJ1851, The Great Exhibition Harp feet. Photo taken by author.

KH15: BJ1851***1851, Bassett Jones, located in US, images sourced from public Facebook***

Not measured or examined by author

103 strings

Rounded back

5 large apertures in back of soundbox

Includes a metal comb

4 feet

Horizontal soundboard grain

This harp is meant to be an exact copy of the Great Exhibition Harp (KH14: BJ1851) in construction. It is likely that laminated wood is hidden by the veneer carving of the poetic quotation. The shoulder is decorated with a simple leaf carving. The Prince of Wales feathers and crown adorn the top of the forepillar. In the front, the feet are made of intricately carved florals and the leek at the base of the forepillar gives the illusion of the forepillar not being bolted in but coming from the centre of a base indicative of the pedal harp. The comb features etchings of the United Kingdom flowers. The soundboard exhibits paintings of two angels.

Inscriptions:

“Iaith enaid a rei thannau” [the language of the soul is on the strings]

“presented by some kind friends to Mair Aun Eirios, the juvenile harpist in Liverpool, 1851, aged 14 years, expressly manufactured by Basset [*sic*] Jones, of Cardiff.”



Figure 28 KH15: BJ1851, photo taken by owner.

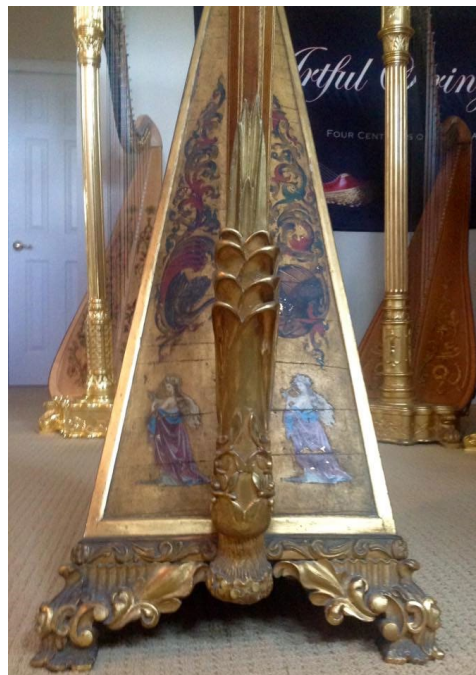


Figure 29 KH15: BJ1851, photo taken by owner.

KH16: BJ1860***1860, Bassett Jones******By permission of private owner, restored by Alun Thomas***

Measurements taken by owner

Forepillar:

Width, 5cm

Height, 203cm

Longest string, 61cm

Shortest string, 10cm

83 strings

Weight, 19kg

Rounded back

3 large apertures in back of soundbox

Horizontal soundboard grain

The bolt is visible

An oak carving veneer covers the top of the neck, suggesting that it is made of laminated wood. The feet feature oak motifs similar to the veneer on the neck. This harp underwent major reconstruction by Alun Thomas in 2010, after its return from Patagonia.



Figure 30 KH16: BJ1860, photo taken by owner.



Figure 31 KH16: BJ1860, photo taken by owner.



Figure 32 KH16: BJ1860, photo taken by owner.

KH17: TL1893**1893, T.A. LLOYD*****By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff, 56.136.1***

Forepillar:

Width, 5cm

Height, 186cm

Longest string, 161cm

Shortest string, 12cm

95 strings

Weight, 14.4 kg

7 staves

No sound holes

Horizontal soundboard grain

Metal reinforcement under neck

The bolt is visible

2 feet

This harp is famous for winning the gold medal at the International Eisteddfod at the World's fair in the United States of America. In an attempt to strengthen the neck where the grain is short to avoid splitting, a chestnut insert was placed on the side of the neck with opposing grain. Black paint stripes detail the outside of the forepillar and neck. St Fagans National Museum of History records suggest T.A. Lloyd is Tom Lloyd (1858–1917) nicknamed “Telynor Ceiriog” and teacher of Nansi Richards.

Inscription:

“This harp won the Gold Medal at the International Eisteddfod held at the World's Fair/ Chicago, 1893/ Adjudicator Mr. John Thomas/ Pencerdd, Gwalia harpist to her Majesty Queen Victoria, T.A. Lloyd, maker/ West Pawlet, Vermont USA”



Figure 34 KH17: TL1893, photo taken by author.



Figure 33 KH17: TL1893, photo taken by author.



Figure 35 KH17: TL1893, photo taken by author.

KH18: RH1897**1897, Richard Hughes*****By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff***

Forepillar:

Width, 5.5cm

Height, 170cm

Longest string, 166cm

Shortest string, 11cm

97 strings

Weight, 24.3 kg

Rounded back

4 large apertures in back: 3 are square in shape, 1 is rounded

The soundbox, forepillar, and neck are made of metal

Horizontal soundboard grain

5 feet

The forepillar attaches to the base without a bolt, similar to that of a pedal harp. The round forepillar meets the neck and the neck extends into a downward scroll. This harp does not have the traditional scalloped joint between the soundbox and the neck, and instead has a knee shaped joint similar to that of a pedal harp. All of the metal materials are painted black to hide its material.

Inscription:

“Richard Hughes/ Maker/ Crewe/ 1897”



Figure 36 KH16: PH1897, photo taken by author.



Figure 37 KH16: PH1897 plaque, photo taken by author.

KH19: TV****No Date, T. Vaughan******By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff, 17.107***

Forepillar:

Width, 5cm

Height, 166cm

Longest string, 136.5cm

Shortest string, 13cm

87 strings

Weight, 12.1 kg

9 nine staves

No sound holes

Horizontal soundboard grain

This harp has two scalloped feet and seems to be cut down by several inches to solve splitting issue. This is indicated by the bolt being moved upwards and the old bolt location being filled. Because of the shortening, the neck needed to be reconstructed and it is clear that it has been split in many locations. These splits are repaired with butterfly inserts. This harp has a banister-like forepillar and is detailed with lines of black paint. Barrel-like reinforcers support the soundbox and are bolted into the soundboard as an attempt to save the instrument. Normally the soundboard would vibrate freely, but this reinforcement is bolted to the inner ribs of the harp, keeping the soundboard from properly vibrating.

Inscription:

“T. Vaughan/ Maker/St Asaph”.



Figure 38 KH19: TV*, photo taken by author.

KH20: NMM***No Date, No Maker's Mark, Miss A. M. Thomas (owner)****By permission of the Welsh Folk Museum, St. Fagan's, Cardiff**

Forepillar:

Width, 5cm

Height, 191cm

Longest string, 166.5cm

Shortest string, 11.5cm

90 strings

Weight, 14.8 kg

9 staves

Diagonal soundboard grain

2 simple feet

The bolt is visible

The neck has split where there is short grain, and it has been reinforced by metal. This harp is possibly the triple harp pictured in the late nineteenth-century photo of the Llanover household staff, as indicated by the distinctive foot shape, and the diagonal soundboard grain.



Figure 39 KH20: NMM*, photo taken by author.



Figure 40 A late nineteenth-century photo of the Llanover household staff, possibly featuring KH20: NMM*. Photo sourced from the Lady Llanover Society Website.

KH21: TJ****No Date, T. Jones******By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff***

Forepillar:

Width, 5.5cm

Height, 182cm

Longest string, 144cm

Shortest string, 13cm

96 strings

Weight, 15.3 kg

9 staves

No sound holes

Horizontal soundboard grain

The bolt is visible

It has two club-like feet and there is a metal strip beneath the neck to support it. An acorn is carved under the scroll on the front of the forepillar, and there are two paintings of the Prince of Wales feathers on the bottom of the soundboard. There are several metal plates to support splits on the neck.

The maker's mark reads: "T. Jones/ Abergavenny".



Figure 42 KH21: TJ*, photo taken by author.

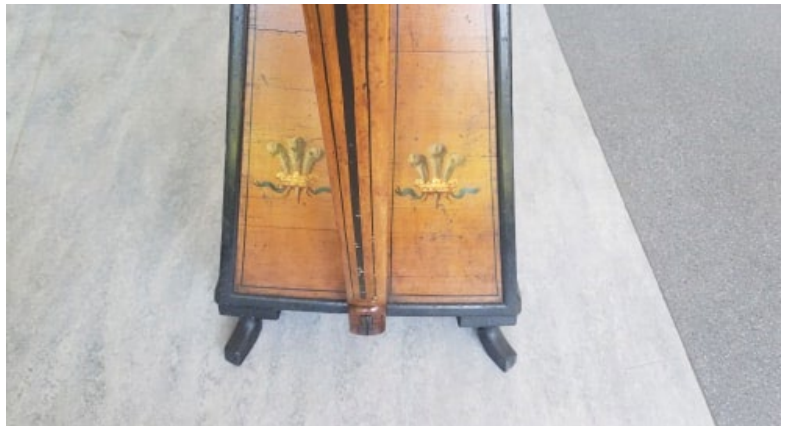


Figure 41 KH21: TJ*, photo taken by author.

KH22: NMM*

No Date, No Maker's Mark

By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff, 38.86

Forepillar:

Width, 4.5cm

Height, 182cm

Longest string, 160cm

Shortest string, 10cm

90 strings

Weight, 14.3 kg

10 staves

6 sound holes on the soundboard

Horizontal soundboard grain

Instead of a scroll, the top of the forepillar has a castle style indicative of the pedal harp. The base of the soundbox reaches almost to the ground and two short feet keep it from touching the floor. Metal reinforcements, like a strip under the neck, support the weak points of the neck. The triple harp is detailed with light wood lining. There are also sun-like designs on the bottom corners of the soundboard. St Fagans National Museum of History records state that the maker of this harp is John Morgan, though there is no evidence to suggest this.



Figure 43 KH22: NMM, photo taken by author.*

KH23: NMM****No Date, No Maker's Mark******By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff, 49.75***

Forepillar:

Width, 5cm

Height, 181cm

Longest string, 156.5cm

Shortest string, 13.5cm

96 strings

Weight, 12 kg

9 nine staves

No sound holes

Horizontal soundboard grain

The bolt is visible

The neck has split and there are several butterfly repairs. There is a place for a plaque to be placed, but the plaque is missing.

St Fagans National Museum of History records suggest this harp is a Bassett Jones harp, though there is no evidence of this. It is possible that this harp is an early creation of Bassett Jones's, however it lacks features that exist on all other Bassett Jones harps, including feet and metal reinforcements of the neck.

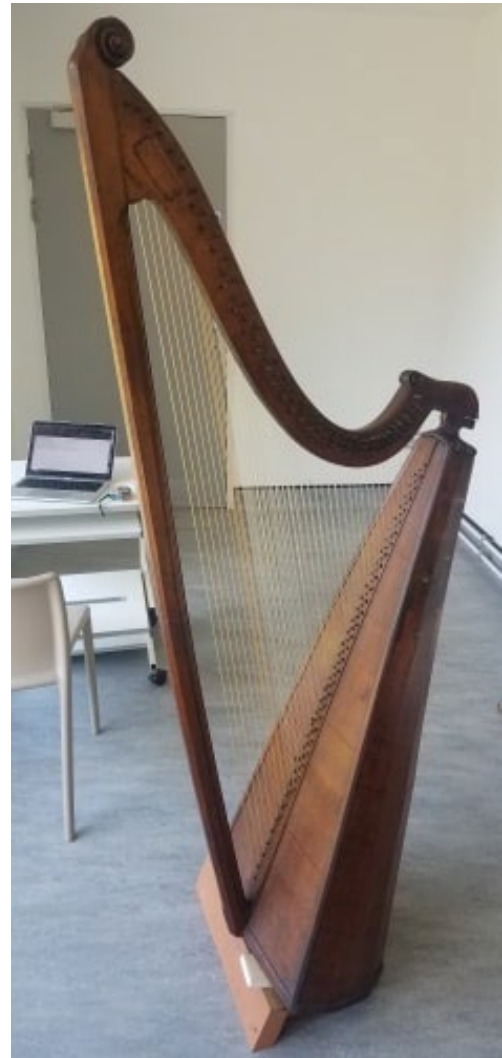


Figure 44 KH23: NMM, photo taken by author.*

KH24: NMM****No Date, No Maker's Mark******By permission of the St Fagans National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff***

Forepillar:

Width, 5cm

Height, 185cm

Longest string, 162cm

Shortest string, 15cm

96 strings

Weight, 12.9 kg

9 staves

6 sound holes on the soundboard

Vertical soundboard grain

The bolt is visible

The staves have been heavily reinforced by strips of metal with numbers on them suggesting that this metal had another use prior to being used for the harp. The sound holes are decorated with yellow six-pointed stars. The soundboard has been heavily reinforced as well. The numerous metal reinforcements all over the instrument are meant to hold it together, but the reinforcements have bowed the soundbox inwards.

Inscription:

"Presented to VI Baron Dynevor. By J. Roberts, Harpist. N. Wales About 1885."



Figure 45 KH24: NMM*, photo taken by author.

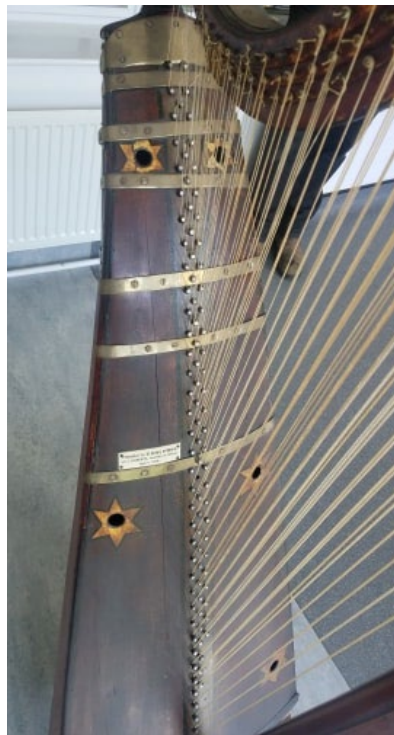


Figure 46 KH24: NMM*, photo taken by author.

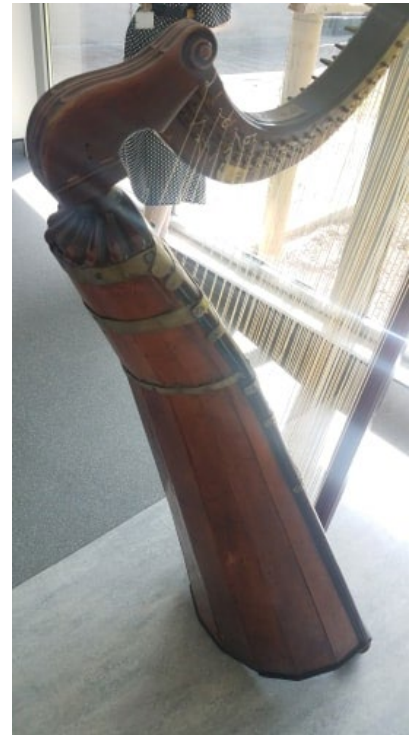


Figure 47 KH24: NMM*, photo taken by author.

Harp Data

ID	KH01: JR1760*	KH02: JR1764	KH03: NMM1770*	KH04: TI1770*	KH05: BJ1838	KH06: BJ1842
Maker	John Richards	John Richards	no makers mark	T*I	Bassett Jones	Bassett Jones
Year Made	1760*	1764	1770*	1770*	1838	1842
Mass (kg)	9.1	8.1	10.9	10	(unknown)	20.9
Feet (y/n)	yes	no	no	no	yes	yes
soundboard grain direction	vertical	vertical	(unknown)	vertical	horizontal	horizontal
metal neck reinforcement (y/n)	no	no	no	no	yes	no
soundbox construction	9 staves	9 staves	9 staves	9 staves	9 staves	rounded back
comb (y/n)	no	no	no	no	no	yes
laminated wood neck (y/n)	no	no	no	no	(likely)	yes
Sound hole type	6 in soundboard	6 in soundboard	6 in soundboard	6 in soundboard	(unknown)	5 oblong in back
Forepillar Width (cm)	5	5	5.5	5	(unknown)	6
Forepillar Height (cm)	191	182	188	182	189.5	192
Longest String Length (cm)	169.5	163	171	160.5	153	147.5
Shortest String Length (cm)	12	13	13.5	13.5	15.4	13
Number of Strings	96	97	101	98	99	96

ID	KH07: BJ1842	KH08: BJ1840*	KH09: BJ1840*	KH10: BJ1845	KH11: BJ1840*	KH12: TJ1848
Maker	Bassett Jones	Bassett Jones	Bassett Jones	Bassett Jones	Bassett Jones	T. Jones
Year Made	1842	(unknown)	(unknown)	1845	1840*	1848
Mass (kg)	(unknown)	16 kg	(unknown)	13.6	12	14.9
Feet (y/n)	(unknown)	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
soundboard grain direction	vertical	horizontal	horizontal	horizontal	horizontal	horizontal
metal neck reinforcement (y/n)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
soundbox construction	rounded back	9 staves	9 staves	9 staves	9 staves	9 staves
comb (y/n)	no	no	no	no	no	yes
laminated wood neck (y/n)	no	(likely)	(likely)	(likely)	yes	no
Sound hole type	6 in soundboard	none	none	4 oblong in back	none	5 oblong in back
Forepillar Width (cm)	(unknown)	5	(unknown)	5.5	5.5	5.5
Forepillar Height (cm)	184	174	(unknown)	166	185	170
Longest String Length (cm)	(unknown)	144	(unknown)	138	156	134
Shortest String Length (cm)	(unknown)	11	(unknown)	12	15.5	9
Number of Strings	(unknown)	93	(unknown)	110	96	98

ID	KH13: BJ1848	KH14: BJ1851	KH15: BJ1851	KH16: BJ1860	KH17: TL1893	KH18: RH1897
Maker	Bassett Jones	Bassett Jones	Bassett Jones	Bassett Jones	T. A. Lloyd	Richard Hughes
Year Made	1848	1851	1851	1860	1893	1897
Mass (kg)	14.4	23.7	(unknown)	19	14.4	24.3
Feet (y/n)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
soundboard grain direction	horizontal	horizontal	horizontal	horizontal	horizontal	horizontal
metal neck reinforcement (y/n)	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
soundbox construction	9 staves	rounded back	rounded back	rounded back	7 staves	rounded back
comb (y/n)	no	yes	yes	no	no	no
laminated wood neck (y/n)	(likely)	yes	yes	(likely)	similar	(not wood)
Sound hole type	none	5 oblong in back	5 oblong in back	3 oblong in back	none	4 large in back
Forepillar Width (cm)	5	7	(unknown)	5	5	5.5
Forepillar Height (cm)	166	190	(unknown)	203	186	170
Longest String Length (cm)	141	149.2	(unknown)	61	161	166
Shortest String Length (cm)	11	15.5	(unknown)	10	12	11
Number of Strings	97	102	(unknown)	83	95	97

ID	KH19: TV*	KH20: NMM*	KH21: TJ*	KH22: NMM*2	KH23: NMM*	KH24: NMM*
Maker	T. Vaughan	no makers mark	T. Jones	no makers mark	no makers mark	no makers mark
Year Made	(unknown)	(unknown)	(unknown)	(unknown)	(unknown)	(unknown)
Mass (kg)	12.1	14.8	15.3	14.3	12	12.9
Feet (y/n)	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
soundboard grain direction	horizontal	diagonal	horizontal	horizontal	horizontal	vertical
metal neck reinforcement (y/n)	no	no	yes	yes	no	yes
soundbox construction	9 staves	9 staves	9 staves	10 staves	9 staves	9 staves
comb (y/n)	no	no	no	no	no	no
laminated wood neck (y/n)	no	no	no	no	no	no
Sound hole type	none	none	none	6 in soundboard	none	6 in soundboard
Forepillar Width (cm)	5	5	5.5	4.5	5	5
Forepillar Height (cm)	166	191	182	182	181	185
Longest String Length (cm)	136.5	166.5	144	160	156.5	162
Shortest String Length (cm)	13	11.5	13	10	13.5	15
Number of Strings	87	90	96	90	96	96



PRIFYSGOL
BANGOR
UNIVERSITY

**Ysgol Cerddoriaeth a'r Cyfryngau
Prifysgol Bangor**

*School of Media and Music
Bangor University*

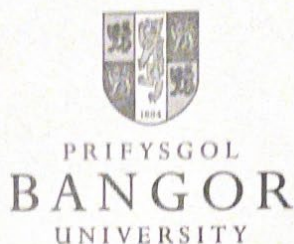
Myfyriwr/Student: Kathryn Leigh Hockenbury 17/07/2019

Mae'r astudiaeth hon wedi cael ei chadarnhau o ran agweddau moesegol, yn dilyn ymgynghoriad gyda'r arolygwr (os perthnasol) a gyda'r swyddog Moeseg yr Ysgol. Mae rhyddid i'r fyfyrwr a enwir uchod barhau gyda chasgu'r data a gweithio ar yr astudiaeth.

This study has been approved with regards to ethical concerns, following consultation with the supervisor and the School Ethics officer. The student named above is now free to continue with collecting the data and working on the study.

Dr Dyfrig Jones

Swyddog Moeseg yr Ysgol
School Ethics officer



Bangor University's 'Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic
Quality and Standards of Research Programmes' (Code 03)
<https://www.bangor.ac.uk/ar/main/regulations/home.htm>

COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND BUSINESS

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's nameKathryn Hockenbury.....

The researcher named above has briefed me to my satisfaction on the research for which I have volunteered. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. I also understand that my rights to anonymity and confidentiality will be respected.

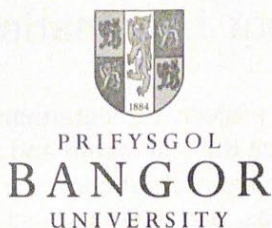
Signature of participant

H. Roberts

Date

27 / 8 / 19

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



Bangor University's 'Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic
Quality and Standards of Research Programmes' (Code 03)
<https://www.bangor.ac.uk/ar/main/regulations/home.htm>

COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND BUSINESS

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's nameKathryn Hockenbury.....

The researcher named above has briefed me to my satisfaction on the research for which I have volunteered. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. I also understand that my rights to anonymity and confidentiality will be respected.

Signature of participant

Date

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



Bangor University's 'Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic
Quality and Standards of Research Programmes' (Code 03)
<https://www.bangor.ac.uk/ar/main/regulations/home.htm>

COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND BUSINESS

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's nameKathryn Hockenbury.....

The researcher named above has briefed me to my satisfaction on the research for which I have volunteered. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. I also understand that my rights to anonymity and confidentiality will be respected.

Signature of participant 

I Steffan Thomas consent to the use of my name in this dissertation

Date 26th March 2021

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



PRIFYSGOL
BANGOR
UNIVERSITY

Bangor University's 'Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and
Standards of Research Programmes' (Code 03)
<https://www.bangor.ac.uk/ar/main/regulations/home.htm>

COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND BUSINESS

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's nameKathryn Hockenbury.....

The researcher named above has briefed me to my satisfaction on the research for which I have volunteered. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. I also understand that my rights to anonymity and confidentiality will be respected.

Signature of participant*T. Hampson*.....

Date*26th March 2021*.....

I consent to the use of my name in this dissertation
This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



Bangor University's 'Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic
Quality and Standards of Research Programmes' (Code 03)
<https://www.bangor.ac.uk/ar/main/regulations/home.htm>

COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND BUSINESS

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's nameKathryn Hockenbury.....

The researcher named above has briefed me to my satisfaction on the research for which I have volunteered. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. I also understand that my rights to anonymity and confidentiality will be respected.

Signature of participant

Rhiain Bebb.

Date

March 26, 2021

I consent to the use of my name in this dissertation.

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.

Bibliography

Newspapers

Aberystwyth Observer

Bury and Norwich Post, and East Anglian

Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette

Cardiff Times

Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent

Glamorgan Monmouth and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian

Monmouthshire Merlin

Musical World

Western Mail

Personal Contacts

Bebb, Rhian, Co-founder of Cymdeithas y Delyn Deires, (14 March 2021).

Davies, Emyr, St Fagans National Museum of History Welsh Triple Harp Collection, Senior Conservator Furniture at St Fagans National Museum of History, (18 July 2019).

Hampson, Tim, Harp Maker, (21 March 2021).

Roberts, Huw, Co-founder of Cymdeithas y Delyn Deires, (11 March 2021).

Thomas, Steffan, Triple Harper, (11 March 2021).

Other Primary Sources

David Owen, Poem, cited in Robert Griffiths, “Y Delyn Deir-res”, *Cymru* (Caernarfon: Cwmni'r Wasg Genedlaethol Gymreig, 1899).

Jane Williams, *Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price, Carnhuanawc, Vicar of Cwmdû, Breconshire; and Rural Dean* (London: Rees, Longman, 1855), i.

Jane Williams, *Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price, Carnhuanawc, Vicar of Cwmdû, Breconshire; and Rural Dean* (London: Rees, Longman, 1875), ii.

MS. 13182E II, National Library of Wales Letter number 100, dated October 1839, from Augusta Hall to Mr Daniel, Chairman of the Abergavenny Association of Welshmen) as cited by, *Arglwyddes Llanofer: Gwenynen Gwent* (Caernarfon: Gwasg Gwynedd, 2001).

NLW MSS, 1902 B, ‘The Welsh Harp (press cuttings)’, Brinley Richards, 8 March 1869.

Official Catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851 (London: Spicer Brothers, 1851).

Pierre Erard, 'The Harp in its Present Improved State Compared with the Original Pedal Harp', (London, 1821).

Books

Bradney, Sir Joseph, *A History of Monmouthshire*, 10 vols, (London: Mitchell Hughes and Clarke, 1992), I.

Forder, Helen, *High Hats and Harps: the Life and Times of Lord and Lady Llanover* (n.l.: TallyBerry, 2012).

Griffith, Robert, *Llyfr Cerdd Dannau: ymchwiliad I hanes hen gerddoriaeth a'r dulliau hynaf o ganu* (Caernarfon: Cwmni y Cyhoeddwyr Cymreig, 1913).

Gwyndaf, Robin, *Welsh Folk Tales* (Cardiff: National Museum of Wales, 1989).

Jackson, John, *Tacitus: the Annals* (London: William Heinemann, 1951) v.

Ley, Rachel, *Arglwyddes Llanofer: Gwenynen Gwent* (Caernarfon: Gwasg Gwynedd, 2001).

Meurig, Cass, *Alawon John Thomas: a fiddler's tune book from eighteenth century Wales* (Aberystwyth: Llyfregell Genedlaethol Cymrum, 2004).

Morgan, Prys, *The Eighteenth Century Renaissance* (Llandybie, Dyfed: C. Davis, 1981).

Roberts, Mair, *The Harpmakers of Wales* (Llanrwst: Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 2000).

Rosser, Ann, *So Long to Learn* (Fishguard: Pembrokeshire Press, n.d.) p. 15.

Rosser, Ann, *Telyn a Thelynor: Hanes y Delyn yng Nghymru, 1700-1900* (Pen y Bont: Amgueddfa Genedlaethol Cymru, 1981).

Wells, Elizabeth and Christopher Nobbs, *Royal College of Music Museum of Instruments Catalogue* (London: Royal College of Music, 2007), iii.

Articles, Chapters, and Dissertations

Ellis, John S., 'The Prince and the Dragon: Welsh National Identity and the 1911 Investiture of the Prince of Wales', *Welsh History Review = Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymru* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), 18(2).

Davies, John, Nigel Jenkins, Menna Baines and Peredur I. Lynch (eds), 'Eisteddfod', *The Welsh Academy Encyclopedia of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008).

Davies, John, Nigel Jenkins, Menna Baines and Peredur I. Lynch (eds), 'Richards (Jones), Nansi (Telynores Maldwyn; 1888–1979)'.

- Gurden-Williams, Celyn, 'Lady Llanover and the Creation of a Welsh Cultural Utopia', (unpublished doctoral thesis, Bangor University, 2013).
- Hurrell, Nancy, 'Harps in the Royal College of Music Museum of Instruments', *Bulletin of the Historical Harp Society*, (2007).
- Ley, Rachel, *Lady Llanover and the Triple Harp*, trans. by Translation Unit, University of Wales, Bangor (Aberystwyth: Cyfeillion Llyfregell Genedlaethol Cymru, 2000).
- Rimmer, Joan, 'The Morphology of the Triple Harp II: Addendum on a Late Italian Example', *Galpin Society Journal*, 19 (1966).
- Rimmer, Joan, 'The Morphology of the Triple Harp', *Galpin Society Journal*, 18 (1965).
- Rimmer, Joan, 'Edward Jones's Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards, 1784: A Re-Assessment', *Galpin Society Journal*, 39 (1986).
- Ross, Ann, 'Ritual and the Druids', in *The Celtic World*, ed. by Miranda J. Green (London/New York: Routledge, 1995), ii.
- Simpson, W., 'On the Origin of The Prince of Wales' Feathers', *Fraser's magazine*, May 1881, 617, pp. 637-649.
- Waltham, Chris, 'The Acoustics of Harp Soundboxes', *The American Harp Journal*, (Winter 2010), pp. 26-29.

Websites

- "About Us", *trac* (n.d.) <<https://trac.wales/about-us/>> [accessed 23 March 2021].
- "The First Ten Years", *Clera* (n.d.) <<http://www.clera.org/saesneg/1st10yrs.php>> [accessed 23 March 2021].
- 'Jones, Bassett (harp-maker)' *National Museum Wales Collections Online* <<https://museum.wales/collections/online/agent/ed928a78-953e-3fd7-9130-dc7f1ca2fec6/Jones-Bassett-harp-maker/>> [accessed 28 Sept 2019].
- Rollason, Lynda, "Harlech castle.", in *The Oxford Companion to British History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) <oxfordreference.com> [accessed 11 August 2019].
- Rowlands, William, 'Owen, David (Dewi Wyn o Eifion; 1784 - 1841), farmer and poet' *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* (1959) <<https://biography.wales/article/s-OWEN-DAV-1784>> [accessed 28 Apr 2020].
- Thomas, Allun, "My Harps: A Short Introduction", *Allun Thomas: Maker of Fine Celtic and Triple Harps*, (n.d.) <http://www.thomasharps.co.uk/body_types.html> [accessed 10 March 2021].

Watkins, David, “For Sale by David Watkins, Basset Jones Welsh Triple Harp No. 141”, *David Watkins, Harpist* (2019) <http://davidwatkins.info/Pages/other_pages/Basset_Jones_number_141.html> [accessed 13 May 2019].