Egan "Irish Harp Society"
wire-strung Irish harps
Information about stringing and tuning
collated by Simon Chadwick
November 2017

RBA harp — Described 1904

no	in	cm	note	wire	description	poss mm Parker p.18 1829	modern
1	2.625	6.7	b‴	steel	B 1st octave	0.48	0.58
2			a‴	steel	B 1st octave		
3			g‴	steel	B 1st octave		
4			f‴	steel	B 1st octave		
5			e‴	steel	B 1st octave		
6			d‴	steel	B 1st octave		
7			c‴	steel	B 1st octave		
8			b″	steel	B 1st octave		
9			a″	steel	B 1st octave		
10			g″	steel	B 1st octave		
11			f″	steel	B 1st octave		
12			e″	steel	B 1st octave		
13			d″	steel	B 1st octave		
14			c″	steel	B 1st octave		
15			b′	steel	B 1st octave		
16			a′	steel	B 1st octave		
17			g′	steel	B 1st octave		
18				steel	B 1st octave		
19				steel	B 1st octave		
20	16	40.6		steel	B 1st octave		
21	17.375	44.1		steel	E 2nd octave	0.6	0.7
22	19.125	48.6		Brass	D 3rd octave	0.88	1.04
23				Brass	D 3rd octave		
24				Brass	D 3rd octave		
25				Brass	D 3rd octave		
26	28.5	72.4		Brass	D 3rd octave		
27	31.25	79.4		Brass	C 3rd octave	0.9	1.08
28				Brass	C 3rd octave		
29				Brass	C 3rd octave		
30				Brass	C 3rd octave		
31	42.25	107.3		Brass	C 3rd octave		
32	44.375	112.7		Brass	B 3rd octave	0.92	1.12
33				Brass	B 3rd octave		
34				Brass	B 3rd octave		
35				Brass	B 3rd octave		
36				Brass	B 3rd octave		
37	53.75	136.5		Brass	B 3rd octave		

32 is written 23 in RBA

R.B. Armstrong, *The Irish and the Highland Harps*, David Douglas, Edinburgh, 1904, p.106

Mike Parker, *Child of Pure Harmony*, Lulu 2005, p.18

Patrick Byrne's harp
Measured by Ann and Charlie Heymann, 2011
Cleveland, Ohio, at the home of Baby Dee
String lengths

no	in	cm	wire	Byrne's account of his stringing	
1	2.375	6.0			
2	2.625	6.7			
3	2.75	7.0			
4	3.125	7.9	6		
5	3.75	9.5	6		
6	4	10.2	6		
7	4.375	11.1	6	7-8 of the next	
8	4.875	12.4	6	making 34 in all	
9	5.25	13.3	6		
10	6	15.2	6		
11	6.75	17.1	5 or 6	----------------------	----------------
12	7.25	18.4	5		
13	8	20.3	5		
14	8.5	21.6	5	6 5 of the next	
15	9.5	24.1	5		
16	10.5	26.7	5		
17	11.25	28.6	4 or 5	----------------------	----------------
18	12.5	31.8	4		
19	13.75	34.9	4	6 7 of the next	1/4lb of next
20	15	38.1	4		which will
21	16.375	41.6	4		string the tennor
22	17.75	45.1	4		
23	19.375	49.2	4		
24	21.5	54.6	3		
25	23.875	60.6	3		
26	26.5	67.3	3		
27	29.75	75.6	3	6 of the next	1/2 lb each of
28	33	83.8	3		the first 3
29	35.875	91.1	3		numbers
30	38.5	97.8	2	3 wires of	
31	41	104.1	2	the next size	
32	43	109.2	2		
33	45	114.3	1	Largest wire to be	
34	47	119.4	1	got in Flower the	
35	49	124.5	1	wire drawers	
36	51	129.5	1	Church St.,	
37	53	134.6	1	Dublin, 5 wires	
				of this	

Treble disposition
could be
7 5 8
6 6 8 Byrne's account of his stringing from
7 6 7 H.G. Farmer, 'Some Notes on the Irish Harp'
but not 6 6 7 in *Music & Letters* vol XXIV, April 1943.

Ixion's harp
Measured 1872
Or tune one note lower

no	in	cm		wire	description	poss mm Birmingham wire gauge
1	3	7.6	g‴	25		0.51
2			f‴	25		
3			e‴	25		
4			d‴	25	all the rest 25	
5			c‴	25	wire brass or steel	
6			b″	25		
7			a″	25		
8	7	17.8	g″	25		
9			f″	24		0.56
10			e″	24		
11			d″	24		
12			c″	24	the next seven	
13			b′	24	of 24 wire	
14			a′	24		
15	10.5	26.7	g′	24		
16			f′	22		0.71
17			e′	22		
18			d′	22	the next seven	
19			c′	22	of 22 wire	
20			b	22		
21			a	22		
22	20	50.8	g	22		
23	*20*	*50.8*	*f or g*	20		0.89
24			*e or f*	20		
25			*d or e*	20		
26			*c or d*	20	the next six	
27			*B or c*	20	of 20 wire	
28			*A or B*	20		
29	36	91.4	G or A	18		1.25
30	*36*	*91.4*	*F or G*	18		
31			*E*	18	the eight lowest	
32			*D*	18	strings consist	
33			*C*	18	of No. 18 wire	
34			*BB*	18		
35			*AA*	18		
36	54	137.2	GG	18		

In some of Egan's improved harps,
however, two additional strings
below low G were added,
making 38 in all

English Mechanic and World of Science, Vol. XV,
London, 1872, p. 510-11. Thanks to Karen Loomis

Patrick Murney — Described 1882

no	wire	Description	poss mm Birmingham wire gauge
1	25		0.51
2	25		
3	25	No. 25 in the	
4	25	7 following	
5	25	which are the	
6	25	shortest	
7	25		
8	24		0.56
9	24		
10	24	No. 24 in the	
11	24	7 following	
12	24		
13	24		
14	24		
15	22		0.71
16	22		
17	22	No. 22 in the	
18	22	7 following	
19	22		
20	22		
21	22		
22	20		0.89
23	20		
24	20	No. 20 in the	
25	20	7 following	
26	20		
27	20		
28	20		
29	18		1.25
30	18		
31	18	No. 18 in the	
32	18	8 strings nearest	
33	18	the pillar	
34	18		
35	18		
36	18		

James O'Laverty, The Irish Harp
in *Denvir's Monthly*, 1903, p.17

Birmingham Wire Gauge aka Stubs
The origin from which SWG was
developed in the late 19th c
from sizes.org