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GLASGOW BRANCH

May 2008 Newsletter

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

It is with sadness that we record the death of yet another much loved member of the Branch – the very talented pianist Muriel More. Her funeral took place on Thursday 20th March. It was a privilege to have danced to Muriel's music and I will remember her inspirational playing at classes and Festivals with her eyes fixed on the dancers and not on the notes or music sheet. The tribute to Muriel is printed inside.

Speaking of Festivals it is a pleasure to note the success of the Demonstration Group at Glasgow and Edinburgh Festivals and especially the return home of the Glasgow Quaich. Well done!

Another successful Children's Primary PE Festival of SCD has just taken place in which over 700 children took to the floor at Kelvin Hall with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. Many thank to all the Stewards, helpers and Branch Teachers, not forgetting Ruth's Sub-Committee, MC Les Lambert and John Renton's Band. It all resulted in a fabulous day of dance.

As the AGM approaches, I am delighted to say that Nan Lawson is to become our new Hon President, and of course, her first job will be to get rid of me and install our new Chairman. I do hope you will support the Committee by your presence. There will be the usual opportunity for questions, comments, etc. at the Forum. The Committee, I think, will have a few items for your consideration.

My thanks to members and Committee who have served over the last two years and my best wishes to all for the future.

Jim Ferguson

OBITUARY

MURIEL MORE

So many of us have been saddened to learn of Muriel's death on 13th March. Her health had been deteriorating for some time, and those of us who knew her well were aware that she was failing, if not in spirit, in physical strength. But it was as the result of an especially cruel fall that she was admitted to hospital, after which her weakening frame succumbed to the illness that she had denied for so long.

Muriel was born in the west end of Glasgow in 1919, and she subsequently moved to Bishopbriggs, where she spent the rest of her life. Prior to her marriage she worked as a nurse, when her very caring personality comforted many in wartime years. She had always been a gifted pianist and after the war she studied at the RSAMD, then known as the Athenaeum. From there she graduated LRAM and subsequently taught music at a local school.

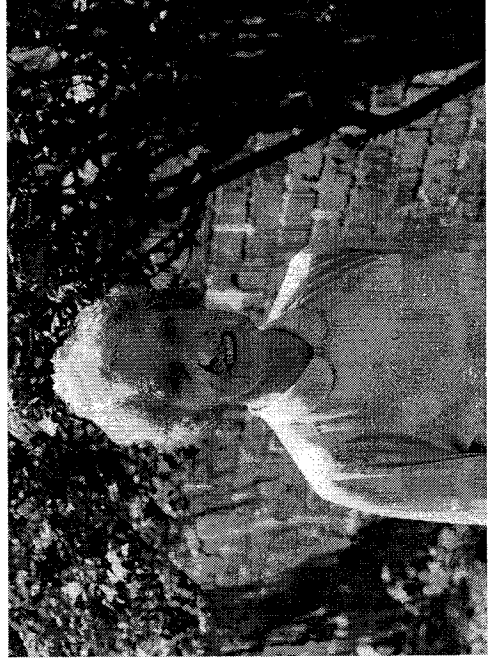
Muriel married in 1949 and was married to David for 56 years. Muriel and David brought up their son and daughter, also David and Muriel in Bishopbriggs, and in the course of time Muriel began to play for Scottish country dance classes where many of us first met her. She played in the 1960s for Society classes taught by Duncan Macleod, Janet Cross and Margaret Prentice. She also played most faithfully for many years for her good friend, Glasgow Branch teacher Duncan Maclean. Both were a powerful influence in Scottish country dancing in the city and Muriel's talents were soon to be recognised further afield and abroad.

It was however as a devoted pianist and friend of the demonstration group that I remember her best. Muriel loved playing in a firm and distinctive style. She had a wonderful partnership with whatever piano she played, and there were many that could barely be credited with the name! But Muriel never resorted to despair. She made the most of whatever situation we were in, even on one occasion making music on an instrument which was almost unplayable. She did so with the help of our Convenor pushing up the keys when they were unable to do so themselves! In these situations the full extent of her lively, determined personality and her extreme musicality came to light. If the piano was not playing well, she herself seemed to manage to convey an enthusiasm and energy to the dancers she was playing for. Accompanist apart, Muriel cared deeply about the well-being of the team and its purpose of producing the highest standard of performance. Her vigorous style lifted us all in spirits and allowed us to execute the dances with the finest style and grace. She, too, knew all the dances. She was no automaton, but was able to give appropriate cues if it seemed there was some doubt. Muriel played with us in many different places - modest village halls, old people's homes and in grand prestigious hotels and concert halls. She regularly played with the team in our elegant City Chambers, where we frequently performed.

But quite apart from Glasgow, Muriel's music was in demand in many towns and cities in Britain and abroad. She was a popular choice for weekend schools the length and breadth of the country, as well as in the Netherlands, Germany and Austria. For many years she was a popular pianist at Summer School where she was a friend to many students from all over the world. She took great pride in providing exactly the music that was required, and she supported the teaching staff by readily adapting to the pace and requirements of the class. Muriel was awarded the Society Scroll in 2001, only granted for exceptional service and outstanding service to the Society, and we in Glasgow were truly delighted that she was honoured in this way.

There have been many occasions on which Muriel's playing will be remembered as outstanding and unforgettable, but perhaps, for some of us at any rate, one of the most memorable was the memorial service for Dr. Milligan, held at Jordanhill College of Education in 1978. The occasion was inevitably one of solemnity, an expression of appreciation of Dr. Milligan's lifetime's work for the Society. Muriel's sensitive playing was a perfect expression of the mood of all those present, touching hearts, and minds in a moving and uplifting way. As she played the sun shone brightly through the high windows, bringing with it light and hope. While we are sad today for the passing of a lady who, from the depths of her heart, gave all she could to the Society and to Glasgow Branch in particular, we shall remember for her vibrancy, her lively, energetic style, and her cheerful, encouraging and engaging smile for all who came in contact with her.

Ruth Beattie



Editorial

The past few weeks have been ones of mixed emotions for me with regard to the Country Dancing scene.

Like many other members of the Branch, I attended the funeral service for Muriel More at Cadder Church. When I first took up dancing, which was with the Bishopbriggs Club, Muriel was the pianist there and gave me a wonderful introduction to the music of the dance. So I found it very moving to hear the tape of her playing dance music at her funeral. It brought back lots of happy memories – her music definitely told you where to go in many a dance!

A couple of weeks ago I was at the Kelvin Hall for the Primary Schools Festival. What a great day was had by all. The steps may not have been perfect, but the enthusiasm of the children said it all. If you have access to the branch website, it is well worth following the link to The Herald site showing pictures taken on the day.

I don't know if you have noticed, but after the letter in the last newsletter about two couple dances being danced in three couple sets, the suggestion has been adopted at Branch events. Feedback has been good so far. So writing to the newsletter with suggestions can be worthwhile – addresses can be found on the letters page.

Finally, can I remind you about the Branch AGM taking place on 22nd May?

See you all there!

Pat McBride

LETTER PAGES

Schools' Day of Dancing..... A personal view.

Sir,

Several months ago I accepted the invitation to assist with the stewarding of the children at their Day of Dance in the Kelvin Hall and immediately began to have misgivings because one seems to continually hear of horror stories about how children have become increasingly unruly, disrespectful, uninterested in anything which is not computer based, and generally out of control.

My fears slowly began to evaporate as soon as the children started to arrive and settled into their allocated seats with little more than the expected excitement at being a part of such a large group in such a large venue, (often the first time in the Kelvin Hall).

The time approached for the dancing to begin, and, once again, my worst fears were rapidly dispersed as the class teachers and helpers brought their groups down to their positions on the dance floor and, with the help from the stewards, all were quickly ready to begin.

From the moment the dancing began, it was very clear to me that the vast majority of the children were bursting with enthusiasm for the dancing, although the sets were often mobile (just as in many a dance class where the lines on the floor are known to move considerable distances) and, although some children had mastered the steps well, often the dance steps were few and far between.

Does this matter?
I would suggest not.

Without the enthusiasm and enjoyment of the occasion the children would never be able to look back at their experience and perhaps think about trying Scottish Country Dancing in the future.

The organisation required to teach the teachers and the children and then to bring them all together is no mean feat, and I have to congratulate all concerned in the Education Department and RSCDS. When looking at the program and the hundreds of children, I could not believe that it would be possible to complete the programme and to do it on time.

How wrong can one be!

Congratulations to the excellent job done by the Master of Ceremonies who took control and finished the lot almost to the minute!

However, there were one or two items which allowed the attention of many of the children to wander. The initial speeches were perhaps too many and/or too long and the language used was, at times, possibly more suited to just a minority of the audience. The Demonstration Team danced with their usual excellent performance and for this I would like to personally congratulate them. At the start of their routine most of the audience were captivated, but began to loose attention about half way through. With the attention span of today's audience, two shorter performances would probably have had more impact, as did the shorter demonstration of The Reel of the 51st Division.

All things considered, an excellent day, and a very worthwhile experience for nearly one thousand children.

Sandy Morrison

LETTER PAGES

Square set dances

Sir
Over the years I have witnessed the scramble to make up square sets, often with a couple seen dashing from one set to another, only to find that they were not needed yet again.

Why not line up as for "normal" dances and count off as for "normal" dances?

Any spare couples will all be near each other at the ends of the lines and hence able to form the remaining set (sets) with no rushing around like headless chickens.

Sandy Morrison

Contact the Editor

If you would like to write to us on either of the above, or any other topic of interest, please send letters either by e-mail to

glasrscdseditor@hotmail.co.uk

or by the more traditional method to

Pat McBride, 25 Wester Cleddens Rd., Bishopbriggs, Glasgow G64 2NQ.

The next newsletter will be published in August.

Closing date for any input is Friday, 1st August.

Spring Classes 2008

The Spring Classes this year are being held in Cleveden School, Cleveden Road, Glasgow starting at 7.15 pm.

The dances are expected to be from UK sources other than Scottish ones.

The dates that have been arranged for the classes, and the teachers for those dates, are

22 nd April	John Johnston
29 th April	Jimmy McMillan
6 th May	Eric Finley
13 th May	Andrew McConnell

THE ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY GLASGOW BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD AT 7.30pm ON 22 MAY 2008 IN WOODSIDE HALLS, GASGOW

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Chairman's Remarks
3. Minutes of AGM held on 24 May 2007
4. Matters Arising
5. Branch Report
6. Accountant's Report
7. Financial Report
8. Report to the Trustees
9. Appointment of Accountants
10. Election of Office Bearers and Committee for 2008-9
11. Election of Honorary President
12. Election of delegates to RSCDS AGM
13. Any Other Business

Office Bearers

Hon. Vice-President	Dr A MacFadyen
Chairman	Mr J Ferguson
Vice-Chairman	Mrs M Weir
Secretary	Mr D M Drummond
Treasurer	Mrs S Tuffill (Not seeking re-election)
Social Events Convenor	Mrs F Frame
Publicity	Miss P McBride
Membership Secretary	Mrs M Daniel
Youth Convenor	Mrs P Gillies
Dem. Group Convenor	Mr S Wilkins

Committee

Mrs R Beattie
Mrs F Fairlie (Not eligible for re-election)
Mrs K Morrison (Not eligible for re-election)
Mr S Morrison
Miss H Battson
Mr I Hutchison