

PRIMARY SCHOOLS FESTIVAL 14 MARCH 2006

If you had been watching the BBC Six-o'clock News on Tuesday 14th March, and if you weren't called away for your tea, you would have heard tell of a revolutionary new method of keeping fit, enhancing health, and beating obesity. This was exemplified by the participation of around 700 Primary School Children at a festival in the Kelvin Hall, Glasgow earlier that day. So, what was this revolutionary new elixir for human enhancement? Would you believe? Scottish Country Dancing!!!

RSCDS Glasgow Branch, in conjunction with Glasgow City Council PE Team, organised this event that had the media buzzing with excitement. As the perennial 'Picture Snapper' at Branch functions, I was decidedly trounced on this occasion by an avalanche of Reporters, Camera Crews, and Professional Photographers, all bristling with enthusiasm to capture every facet of the spectacle. Our own Ruth Beattie and Christine Watson (Primary PE Manager, Glasgow City) were individually interviewed as principle organisers, both elucidating the background to the initiative and exalting the virtues of Scottish Dance as a social, team building, and healthy pursuit.

The full story however, goes back around four years. On the initiative of the Branch Chairman at that time (Les Lambert), a delegation consisting of Ruth Beattie (Then Vice Chairman), Walter Proven (Then Treasurer), and myself (Still Interfering) attended a meeting with the Director of Education. Presentations & proposals were enthusiastically received based upon the Fife schools festival (basically linking RSCDS & Regional PE Departments), and a proposition was mooted to utilise our Branch resource of qualified SCD teachers to augment the existing provision. Since then our Teacher Members have been actively involved in this project, giving generously of their time and energy throughout the Primary Schools system, ultimately achieving this spectacular result.

The festival commenced with a Grand March. Two Pipers (Jim Pettigrew and Tom McBain) led representatives of the 37 participating schools, with banners held high, into the 'Wall of sound' (you can imagine). As each new school entered the arena a resounding cheer went up from acknowledging classmates. Stewart Adam (RSCDS Chairman) and Christine Higgison (Head of Services for Primary Schools) opened proceedings, John Renton struck up the band, and Les Lambert took over as MC. If a single word could define the subsequent dancing activities, it would be 'ENTHUSIASM' - Time and again the call went out "Did you enjoy that?" – "Do you want to do it again? – The thunderous response must have resounded all over the West End.

"This is the biggest thing the Branch has been involved in for a number of years," said Vice Chairman Jim Ferguson as part of the briefing for the Teachers and Helpers the night before, and yes, we have been here before, as Arthur Craig and others will confirm. However, there are so many factions involved, hype created, and momentum generated this time around that, provided we capitalise on it, can lead to the regeneration we all desire. I believe we're on a roll, with another event in the planning this year, and most certainly another next year. Ruth, Jim, Les, all the Teachers & Helpers, the Branch itself, did you enjoy it? Do you want to do it again? ARGHHHHHH!!!!

Patrick Murray