

**Appreciation from Murray Corps to the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, and its members, on being presented with the RSCDS Scroll by Fiona Bullivant, President of the New Zealand Branch Inc., on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2013**

It is a great honour to receive this award from the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society and I wish to convey my sincerest thanks to both the Society and the New Zealand Branch.

To receive such an award is a very humbling and overwhelming experience. Having been involved in dancing for the past 40 years, I have to say that I have enjoyed many many moments, happenings, and events. I am pleased to have been able to be part of this family and to be able to have met and made a large number of friends, both in New Zealand and throughout the world.

Not many will know how I came to be involved in dancing but it was some years ago during my first term at Intermediate School. We had options one afternoon a week and we were all asked to select three choices from the long list provided. I could only pick two that I really wanted to do and my sheet was soon handed back for me to complete – three meant three. I closed my eyes and with the swirl of the hand, and the point of a pencil, Scottish country dance became my third choice - who could be so unlucky to get their third choice I thought - I joined about 60 girls and one other male. I did not want to go, I really did not want to go, but I enjoyed it so much, I am still here today.

One of the many highlights has been the involvement in the development of Junior dancing. It is wonderful to see so many young people within the New Zealand Branch and even better to know that New Zealand has lead the way with Junior dancers, Membership, Medal Tests, and so on – worldwide – although I am sure the Society would say that they have led the way – I think to be fair the New Zealand Branch got the jump on the Society by a few months. But for any organisation to develop and grow into the future it must have young people coming through the ranks – or else it will simply fade and die.

The work that the Society does on behalf of all dancers is truly outstanding and often goes without reward, just simple criticism. It should be remembered that without the work of the Society over the past I doubt very much that we would have the worldwide family and network that we have today, and the ability to dance the same dance, the same way, anywhere in the world to music we recognise.

The Society do their work superbly and we all owe the tireless workers of the Society a great deal of gratitude, be they employed staff or the countless volunteer workers that they have – and not just in Scotland, but throughout the world. I know many will be pleased that the Society are currently looking at alternative methods of distributing its material – down loadable music, instructions, and books - ready for your iPad or Tablet. Video's are already available on Youtube and Facebook. This is a long way from the days when we had to balance a coin on the head of the Record Player to stop the needle jumping as we were dancing – I am sure many here will recall this happening, if not doing it. This is evolution, and all part of the work of the Society. Work that we all have a vested interest in supporting. What a wonderful organisation we can all contribute to and proudly be a member of, and encourage all other dancers to do the same. The Society would not have got here – 90 years later – without the support of its financial members.

I wish to pay a special tribute to Elspeth Gray, now the Membership Secretary. Elspeth has been Secretary of the Society for a number of years, taking on the role just prior to my appointment as Secretary of the New Zealand Branch, and in her role has been a great support to me and the Branch. Always available for an email chat and some well considered guidance.

My very first involvement in a Summer School was one held at Nga Tawa College in Marton - 1975 to 1976. One of the jobs I had been given was to be Door Keeper of the Dining Room. I was told that if people did not have a Name Tag, then they did not get in and I took my role very seriously. On day one I had to send someone away to get their Name Tag. Being my first Summer School I had no idea who these people were.

It was not until later that I found out that person was Madge Laing - a Society Examiner – I can assure you that Madge and I became very good friends - but she often reminded me how it all started !

Another small piece of New Zealand Branch History that not many will be aware of is that when I was appointed Secretary, I was MMC the 3rd. The third Secretary of the New Zealand Branch with the initials MMC and I have to say my predecessors had set me a very high bench mark to live up to – we had Mildred M Clancey 1957 to 1974, my close and dear friend Marjorie M Crawford 1981 to 1990 and then again in 1998, and my term 2002 to 2010.

There are a number of other people I wish to thank, but I won't start as I can guarantee that as soon as I do, I will miss someone. I am sure you all know who you are – thank you.

In closing I wish to thank my family for their support over the years. Bronwyn, Alastair and Deanne. For without their input and support I would not have had the time made available to me, or the counsel, guidance and workforce that I often needed – my sincere thanks - this award belongs to you as well.

Again, my thanks to the Society for this award. I look forward to continuing my involvement in this wonderful worldwide organisation for many years to come. I hope and trust that everyone here, throughout New Zealand, and the World, will continue to gain as much enjoyment as I have over the years, but to get something out, you also need to put something in.

Thank you.