

Royal Scottish Country Dance Society Branch Award

John Smith

Citation



John Smith was born in New Zealand of Shetland parents, who encouraged him to learn the violin. He eventually passed all exams available to a New Zealand violinist and therefore had the opportunity to commit to further study and a musical career overseas, but chose to remain in New Zealand. John's musical background encompassed many musical genres including solo concert performances, cabaret, restaurant and ceilidh. He has also maintained a strong involvement with Shetland fiddle music.

John started playing for Scottish Country Dancing with the Peter Elmes Band in 1980, filling in when the regular fiddler was unavailable and then took over as the regular fiddler, a role he has filled for nearly thirty years. John has assisted Peter with transcription of music for use by the band. He has always had a strong stage presence at dances, engaging with the dancers and providing lively impromptu solo virtuoso items between dances.

John has travelled with the Peter Elmes band to many New Zealand Summer Schools and weekend schools as well as four Australian Winter Schools and performs on the band's Thistle Hall CD. As well as playing with the band, John has frequently played for dance classes. In the process of all of these activities, John and his music have become well known and much appreciated by Scottish Country Dancers throughout New Zealand and elsewhere.

Very few musicians can claim to have made such a long and strong contribution to Scottish Country Dance music in New Zealand.