

The Scottish Country Dance Society Bulletin

No. 18.

June 1941

Editorial

WHILE the progress of the war is the predominating thought in our minds, members will be glad to know that the work of the Society still goes on, although in a more restricted way. Our membership is scattered and with so many of our halls being taken over for military and other purposes it has not been so possible for the Branches to carry out any very cut and dried programme. Still in spite of certain drawbacks our Scottish Dances are being danced with as much enthusiasm as ever. They have proved a great attraction and of great interest to many of our visitors from Overseas—men and women who have come over to help in the war effort. These enthusiasts are not only from the Dominions but include Poles, Free French, Czechs and many others. The Poles as well as showing a great interest in our dances have been teaching their own national dances to Scottish classes. The Anglo-Polish Ballet had keenly appreciative audiences when it visited our cities. The Cracow Wedding with its varied and lovely colours, its gaiety and zest of movement was perhaps the most popular feature of all.

There have also been international parties up and down the land with national dancing as the common background. There is no doubt that the music, spirit and nature of our Scottish dances have done a great deal to break down barriers of different language and customs and have helped to promote a spirit of good fellowship. In dancing our visitors and ourselves have found a common interest.

The pioneers of the Society and those who have carried on the work since 1923 should feel glad that through their efforts so many happy programmes have been provided for so many engaged in war work. Had it not been for the Society the choice of dances would have indeed been very limited.

SCOTTISH DANCING AND THE NEW YOUTH MOVEMENT.

Mixed clubs for girls and boys aged from 14-18 are springing up all over the country. The object of these clubs is to stimulate interest and encourage the practice of spiritual, educational and recreational activities. War time is always difficult for this particular stage of youth. There is sometimes less discipline at home,

and not the usual conditions of home life. Also after long hours of routine work in a factory, the practice of which may be mastered in an hour, there is often an overwhelming desire to commit some exciting acts of violence in leisure time. These clubs should serve a very useful purpose. On the recreational side dancing of all kinds is very popular and members will be glad to know that Scottish Country Dancing is playing an important part in the programme. Many of our teachers are giving their services to work of this kind, and both boys and girls are showing a keen interest. At many of the courses arranged for Leaders under this Government scheme instruction in the simpler dances is being given.

SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING IN A.R.P. POSTS.

This continues to be a very popular form of recreation for workers in A.R.P. posts in many districts. Many of our own teachers who are working in the posts take the classes and others visit posts in their own district. Workers in the centres have said that they like Scottish Country Dancing partly because it is an activity that the men and women can practise together and partly because it requires no great equipment or drastic change of clothing.

In Glasgow because of the increasing demand for teachers there has been a new development. The authorities have sent representatives from the Posts in the various districts to a class that has been held for the purpose of taking the Teacher's Certificates I and II. These members have shown great keenness and are already handing on their own knowledge to others in the Posts.

From the above members will realise that Certificate classes are still being run and Examinations conducted, but a full report of these will be given in the October Leaflet. Scottish Country Dancing also continues to be included in the programme of the Musical Festivals in Scotland.

These various items of news show that the war has in no way killed the practice of Scottish Dancing, but unfortunately these activities with our Forces, Youth Groups, and A.R.P. personnel have not meant an increase of income to the Society and yet the work at Headquarters goes on although on a smaller scale. It is realised that payments of subscriptions become yearly more difficult, but members are urged to give their financial support to the Society so that its work may continue. A good response to this appeal would be greatly appreciated.

MRS LAW.

Members of the Society will learn with very deep regret of the death a short time ago of Mrs Law, Secretary of the London Branch. Mrs Law gave her services unsparingly not only to the work of the London Branch but also to the general work of the

Society. When information was wanted in the research work of some of the dances it was often Mrs Law who got it for us. These visits to the British Museum must have taken a great deal of time and patience but both were given gladly and ungrudgingly. Many Society members will have very warm memories of Mrs Law's hospitality and welcome to the activities of the London Branch. She was often a keen member of our Summer School at St Andrews. The Society and the London Branch in particular have suffered a great loss in the death of Mrs Law.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Many interesting letters have come in but as space is limited only extracts from a few of them can be printed. The following is an extract of a letter from Mrs Colin Rutherford, President of the Reel Club of Victoria, British Columbia:—

"I was very pleased to receive your Editorial dated October 1940 and very interested in all your news. It may interest you to know that I have kept up my Reel Club weekly dances all winter and by charging a small fee and giving all teaching services free we have been able to send £5 twice to the Glasgow Red Cross and will soon have enough to remit another £5."

Mrs Harris Hunter, Secretary of the Perth Branch, writes of her husband, Lt.-Col. T. Harris Hunter, 51st Div. R.A.S.C., who is now in Oflag VII C/H, Germany.

"My husband, who is a prisoner of war in Germany, started a Country Dance class there some time ago. Having forgotten some of the dances he asked me to send out a book. I have sent out '24 Favourites,' but don't know yet whether he has received it or not. They all seem to be very keen on Country Dancing and he has invented a new dance which he is calling the 51st Division. I am so glad they have found another interest."

Interesting correspondence is going on with a small group of people in New York who have been practising Scottish Country Dances for over a year. A few years ago their leader, Mr C. Dewar Simons, attended the Music School at St Andrews and while there became interested in Scottish Country Dancing and came to our Summer School the following year. His enthusiasm for Scottish Country Dancing has resulted in a steady growth of membership among his friends, some of whom are Scottish, and now the suggestion has been put forward that they would like to form a Scottish Country Dance Society of America.

We welcome the opportunity of a further link with our friends in America in these times. The formation of such a Society would indeed be a great step forward for Scottish Country Dancing.

SUMMER SCHOOL.

This year there was only a provisional booking made of University Hall, St Andrews, for our Annual Summer School. In May, however, the Committee decided that it would be wiser not to go ahead with any further arrangements. The decision was made with much regret, but when peace comes it is hoped that our members will re-unite at St Andrews where we have had so many happy times.

NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF OFFICE-BEARERS.

Executive Council.

Chairman—Mrs HAMILTON MEIKLE, Brankstone, Bogside, Alloa.
Vice-Chairman—LORD JAMES STEWART MURRAY, Easter Moncrieffe, Bridge of Earn, Perthshire.
Mrs STEWART, of Fasnacloich, Camserney Cottage, Aberfeldy, Perth.
Miss A. ANDERSON, 16 Warriston Crescent, Edinburgh.
Mrs BRUCE, 5 Rubislaw Place, Aberdeen.
Miss M. M. Dow, Training College, Dundee.
Mr J. DRUMMOND, Lynwood, 83 Craigcrook Avenue, Edinburgh.
Miss JEAN MILLIGAN, 22 Roxburgh Street, Glasgow, W.2.
Hon. E. FORBES-SEMPILL, Fintry House, Aberdeenshire.

REPRESENTATIVES OF BRANCHES.

Secretary—Mrs M. K. BROWN, Thornhill, Cairnmuir Rd., Edin., 12.
Treasurer—Mr R. T. TERRAS, British Linen Bank, Galston, Ayr.

TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP TO SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY.

Annual Subscription	- - - -	5/-
Life Membership Subscription	- - - -	£3, 3/- or

£2, 10/- to those who have paid their annual subscription for four years. Those who have paid their annual subscription for ten years may become Life Members on payment of £1, 10/-.

GRAMOPHONE RECORDS.

Members are reminded that Gramophone Records (price 3/8, plus cost of packing and postage—9d. extra for one or two records, 10d. extra for three records, 1/- extra for 4, 5 or 6 records, 1/3 extra for 6 to 14 records, 1/4 extra for 14 to 20 records) should be ordered either from Miss J. Milligan, 22 Roxburgh Street, Glasgow, W.2., or from the Treasurer, Mr Terras, British Linen Bank, Galston, Ayrshire.