President’s Report 2022

Dancing in the Wellington region this year has been vibrant and energetic as we bounce back from Covid . The year started well with another fabulous celebration of Hogmanay at Knox Church Hall. On learning that Summer School was once again cancelled, Elaine Laidlaw kindly took up the reins to organise this event. Thanks to all who helped make the event a success.

At the beginning of the year there was still considerable uncertainty regarding Covid; however the Region Committee faced the year with optimism and planned the usual calendar of events.

Summer Dancing again took place at the Old Government Building although poor weather and demonstrations in central Wellington meant only 2 nights of dancing were possible. These were however relaxed evenings that were well attended and splendidly led by Catherine McCutcheon and Edith Campbell. My thanks to both for very enjoyable evenings.

The devisers’ class for the year took the form of an afternoon on 19th of March where dances from *the Wellington 60th Anniversary Collection* were taught. It was wonderful to see the talent of our devisers displayed and the variety of dances that are in the book. Thanks again to Elaine Lethbridge for putting this together. The book is selling well and proving very popular.

The Region Committee again offered a full range of classes this year. To assist dancers and tutors in the appropriate selection of class the Region has developed guidance to choosing the right class and these seem to have assisted in ensuring good class fit.

The first set of Basics Classes held in May and June were extremely well attended with 25-30 attendees. The second set of Basics Classes was smaller with only 13 registered but the class had a relaxed fun vibe appreciated by all. Thanks to Catherine McCutcheon and Susanna van der Gulik for running these classes.

Half day Intermediate and Advanced classes were held in May and June. The May classes were taught by Nicole Trewavis from Palmerston North and the June classes by Gaye Collin (Intermediate) and Damon Collin (Advanced). These classes were very much enjoyed, many saying they appreciated the concentration on improving steps. Thank you to all these teachers.

The final class held this year was the Advanced Technique class in September and taught by Doug Mills. This class certainly challenged the attendees both mentally and physically. It is always fabulous to have visiting teachers to present things in a different way.

Thanks to all who helped with the classes, the musicians, class coordinators, gofers and caters.

Generally the number of dancers at events has been lower this year due to Covid. Unfortunately this combined with general difficulty recruiting new members has resulted in Kelburn SCD club closing after 63 years of dancing. It was great however to see everyone turn out for Kelburn’s last Hurrah, the club’s annual dance in June. Thanks to all at the Kelburn club who have contributed to the enjoyment of dancers in the region over many decades.

Luckily Covid did not seem to affect the numbers at the New Dancers Celebration in October and it was fabulous to see 12 sets on the floor. Johnsonville club ran this event in their usual efficient manner. It was a great relaxed evening with Rod Downey as MC putting everyone at ease and the musicians Black Tartan (Aileen Logie, Jason Morris and Hilary Ferral) putting the spring into our steps. Thanks Kristin, Rod and the Johnsonville Club for all your efforts.

This year I have been delighted to present, on behalf of the Region Committee, two Appreciation Awards. The first of these was to John Gregory, for generously giving of his time, creativity, carpentry and artistic skills to decorate venues and ballrooms over decades. The second was to Elaine Lethbridge, to recognise her support and development of Youth dancing in the Wellington Region for over 20 years, and her general willingness to shoulder the load when major events have happened in the Region.

As I finish my three years as President I would like to thank all of you who have continued to contribute your time and energy willingly to the vibrancy of the Wellington dancing community over these difficult “Covid Years” and noting that even while we were unable to dance the Archival Committee ( Philippa Pointon, Kristen Downey and Loralee Hyde) have been extremely busy collating and adding stories of our history to the Website. I really appreciate the ongoing support of all the committee members and in particular I would like to thank Damon Collin, Philippa Pointon and Margaret Cantwell for their contribution as they also step down from the committee this year.

Ann Oliver, President Wellington Region, RSCDS NZ Branch

November 2022