

Mirth Smallwood



(Mirth receiving Life Membership of the NZ Branch)

Mirth Smallwood arrived from the United Kingdom in the 1950's and as a Physical Training Teacher, taught at Auckland Diocesan For Girls later changing direction and becoming a Librarian. Mirth also worked for the Education Correspondence School dealing with Apprenticeship Courses. She also spent three years in Rarotonga helping to set up the Cook Island Library Service.

Mirth attended her first Summer School in 1957 and since then she has taught at numerous Summer Schools, weekend and day schools.

Her influence has been particularly strong in Wellington where she founded Wadestown Club and was the founding Teacher of Kelburn Club. She has also taught at Lower Hutt, Wellington, Island Bay and more recently, in her retirement, continued dancing for a short while at Waikanae.

Mirth has conducted Preliminary Test and Teachers Certificate courses with excellent results and in 1970 was the first teacher of a preparation course to hold such a class in the Wellington area, away from the

Summer School environment. Under Mirth's guidance the class achieved a 100% pass rate.

Mirth was a master of correctness and while teaching a class to do the formation Allemande, was heard to say "Men, hold your hands like this – don't cover the ladies good points".

Mirth was a great friend of the Clancy family and often baby-sat the Clancy girls to allow Mildred and Win to attend their Club or other functions.

In 1974 Susan Turner arranged a tour of New Zealand by Miss Milligan. On learning that Miss Milligan was to travel around the South Island alone Mirth took leave from her employment to ensure Miss Milligan did not travel alone.

She served for at least nine years on the Technical Committee and was Convener for two years.

Mirth always set a very high standard and expected potential teachers to reach that standard. She had the ability to take a dancer's steps to pieces and then rebuild them without destroying the dancer's self-confidence. Teachers have been very grateful for her many helpful hints and her encouragement of younger teachers have been very much appreciated.

In recognition of her services to Scottish Country Dancing in New Zealand, Mirth was elected as a Life Member of the New Zealand Branch in January 1993.

Mirth had a great sense of fun and often had her classes in hysterics. One such instance was, when she told the class that while dancing Four Hands Across the hands had to be held at the Ladies Convenience. The result was that at the Mock Court she was charged and had to wear a roll of toilet paper that she did during the Final Night Dance.

Mirth was well remembered by her many dancing partners and friends for her kind hearted ways. Mirth's early involvement in the New Zealand Branch and her requirement to be precise and accurate, along with her high standards have paved the way to ensure that our form of Dance is performed to the very highest and best standards possible, while at the same time being able to enjoy ourselves and have fun.

Congratulations

to

Catherine Edwards

On passing her Preliminary Test
at the September Examinations held in
Palmerston North