

Wellington Region Honours Its Teachers

The Wellington Region holds a special biennial "event" which previously has been a ball or dine and dance. We decided that the 1993 event should be a Dinner and Ceilidh with opportunity for dancers to mix and socialise before the dancing season got under way. The Region wished to celebrate 1993 being the 25th anniversary of the New Zealand Branch.

Our president Alan Burn came up with the brilliant idea of using the 1993 event as a forum for honouring the Wellington Region teachers for their dedicated work week after week, year after year, not only at club level but also at classes, schools, and demonstrations, and in the administration field. The Region Committee agreed that we would sponsor teachers to attend the Event but with opportunity for Clubs to sponsor their own tutor if they so wished.

The Organising Committee got under way and after months of planning THE 1993 TOPEVENT was held on 27 February 1993 at the James Cabaret in Wellington. 26 teachers were delighted to accept the invitation to attend and were warmly welcomed. Appreciation of their services was duly noted by Alan Burn. They were each presented with a carnation buttonhole provided by the Eastbourne Club. Some of our newer dancers may not have realised just how lucky we are to have the number and calibre of teachers in the Wellington Region and it was good to see them en masse being honoured in this way.

We were very fortunate to have with us the Branch President, Min Jaeger, and to witness the presentation by her to two new life members of the Branch, Mirth Smallwood and Margaret Laidlaw. Betty Redfeam and Peg Hutchison gave us the background to Mirth's and Margaret's respective dancing careers, and made us realise even more how much personal time and energy our teachers give us.

The Committee had asked those attending to wear a hat of any description and the evening started with a happy half hour with much socialising, mixing, and people asking "where did you get that hat?" This added to the fun of the evening, and there was a tremendous buzz around the place as soon as people started arriving.

Dancers showed their usual imagination and ingenuity in creating the most wonderful crowning glories and a hat parade, judged by the three Ms - Min (topped by a boater in Wellington colours), Mirth and Margaret, produced three winners. These were: a castle complete with a piper on the rampart and drawbridge (but no water!); a cottage (tea cosy) complete with garden, gravel pathway, and the most magnificent blue loo in its own little house out the back; and a silver (for 25th anniversary)

top hat, with leaves attached to silver branches, each leaf showing the name of a region - very clever!

The buffet dinner prepared by the James Cabaret staff was a tremendous treat to the eye and to the taste buds - the quantity, quality and presentation were faultless. The venue was different and made those present feel that they were at a special event, not just another Saturday night dance.

We were delighted to have Dorothy Wilson from Blenheim as our MC for the ceilidh programme, which was fast moving with lots of varied items interspersed with dancing - Scottish Country and ballroom. It was a very warm evening and being a cabaret, the floor was not as big as we are used to, but apart from the first dance, was never too crowded to dance.

Again Wellington teachers showed their willingness to share their talents and contribute to the success of the evening. Highlights were Val Scoble's dance team who depicted scenes of the Hebridean weaving industry with background singing by Edith Campbell, leading into the dance "Hebridean Weaving Lilt" - their black and white costumes highlighted by the luminous lighting; Romaine Butterfield, Noeline O'Connor and Jeanette Watson danced "The Rose of Benbecula" and "Reel of Three"; Damon Collin sang "Flower of Scotland", unaccompanied, and then, with apologies to Flanders and Swan, his own version of "Mud, Mud, Glorious Mud" entitled "Dance, Dance, Glorious Dance, there's nothing quite like it for fuelling romance" (I wonder if he has counted the number of romances fuelled by dance - an interesting exercise even if confined to the Wellington Region only.) Noeline O'Connor led us through "Le Brisquet Cellois" and Carol Smith a nine set relay of "Happy to Meet". We also had a busker, an Irish folk musician, and a ballroom dancing display.

The divine dance music came from Peter Elmes, John Smith and Merrin Simmonds.

The evening was a very happy occasion and definitely THE TOP EVENT!

Wellington Region Teachers at "The Top Event"

