

MEMO FROM THE BACK ROOM

"AT this rate we'll have to cancel the school!" The closing date for applications had come and gone and things did not look very bright. Barely half the residential accommodation was booked. It seemed such a pity to break the tradition, especially when summer school was to be held in the capital after so many years, to say nothing of all the arranging which had already been done. We had made a number of trips up the coast to find a picnic site and suitable hall, had several times driven round the proposed route for the treasure hunt to make notes on items of interest, had contacted the appropriate authorities to fix up the evenings at Percy's Reserve and the Botanic Gardens—in other words mapped out the programme with a fair amount of detail, all this of course being over and above the domestic-type arrangements of accommodation for classes and housing with endless *et ceteras*!

With all this information and a lot of educated guesswork, Bruce worked out the permutations to produce the costings, so that the charges could be fixed and the application forms be drawn up. Catriona (3½ years) joined the work force by joyously putting the forms into envelopes—and naturally insisted on being properly dressed for the occasion—white dress, tartan sash and brooch. Incidentally, if you received a form with one page printed upside-down, you must have been unfinancial! We didn't want to waste the forms which had been accidentally printed in that manner . . . Scottish thrift it's called!

The completed forms came dribbling in—we were glad our postie is a Scot; when he heard about the summer school he didn't mind the frequent trips to the door to deliver registered mail—suppose money orders or cheques would make life easier when over 200 envelopes have to be delivered! (By the way 94 arrived after the closing date.) The fact that the forms which arrived were often not "completed" was a kind of ill-wind—it rather prompted us to invest in an attractive desk for our living room, so that Bruce could write to the incomplete-form-fillers thus leaving the table free for nappy-folding, typewriter, etc.

In these days of sales gimmicks we wished there had been a crystal ball thrown in with the desk! With it Bruce could perhaps have discovered if the form-fillers with blanks in their form had (1) not read the question, or (2) been diverted during the filling-in and had later quickly popped it into an envelope without checking, or (3) felt that the question did not apply but omitted to say this was the reason for the blank space! Sixty-three letters were written to blank-ish form-fillers out of 248 forms received!

Time came for the programme notes to be prepared. Edith, duly armed with a Preliminary Typing Certificate, counted hundreds of alphabetical letters to try to make the layout interesting (the arithmetical calculations went astray on a few pages!) and the Committee tried to put themselves into the visiting dancers' shoes (dancing and other) to make out a list of helpful suggestions. The stencils were run off and the machine-like workers moved in. Collate pages, make them even, add covers, staple . . . collate pages, make them even, add covers, staple . . . At another table a group of folders and staplers got to grips with the name labels and the tartan ribbon—Dress Stewart for residents, Buchanan for commuters (Wellington's colours are yellow and black) and a greenish tartan (Douglas?) for officials—procured by Bruce during several lunch-time forages round the city to ferret out enough pieces. Funny how things disappear just when you want them!

Just as we were grabbing a day or two to think about things such as Christmas presents, the Weir House warden's wife rang up—"A pile of frozen vegetables has been deposited at the kitchen door—did you know?" We wondered how many of the other "faithfully promised" arrangements would fall through! Later the caretaker told us that some one got at the groceries that had been delivered a day earlier than promised.

And so Boxing Day dawned and we moved into Weir House—bassinette, toys and a seemingly endless list of personal and school equipment. The door of the children's room was slightly narrower than the rest—so we had to dismantle the cot and manipulate it through! Settling in was quite a mammoth operation for the Campbells to say nothing of the school!

Sunday saw the influx of the workers to get the place ready. The few bodies who had had to arrive early because of transport complications were dragooned into the work force. One of these arrivals said he had driven 25 miles round Wellington trying to find Princes Street—we were worried in case our idea of geographically naming different parts of the school building was too "way out"—however, everyone turned up safely.

Speaking of complications—a big job, much more involved than trying to work out the figure diagrams of an intricate dance, is the matching of people and rooms, even though there were not too many individual requests to be considered. In the Midlothian block there were a number of double rooms, also only one ablution block per floor (with open showers—it's a men's hostel—and one bath on the top

floor). So we mentally mapped out the arrangements including some privacy for the shower-takers.

Then a call from Weir House informed us that cubicles were being put in to all the showers—hurrah! That would save a lot of messing about with fixing up curtains. We went ahead and allocated the rooms. Ten days later another call—sorry the top floor cubicles would not be put in by Christmas and, by the way, the bath can't be used—it leaks! So another evening was used up rearranging the allocations to put the boys on the top floor—it wasn't possible to do a straight switch—fewer rooms on the first than on the second floor. You can imagine our horror, therefore, on inspecting the premises on the 26th, when we discovered a large "out of use" notice on the first floor ablution block door and the place littered with timber and carpentry gadgets! With the aid of several stalwarts, the "junk" was stacked in the shower area so that the other facilities could be used—and, of course, a few people were obliged to use up their surplus energy (?) trotting up and down stairs for a shower. O the trials and tribulations of organising!

In blissfully ignorant hope we had thought that once the school was under way life might become at least slightly less hectic! Yo ho ho! It never let up for a moment! During class hours the organiser might reasonably hope to catch up on some paper

work, but it is amazing how many people seemed to be "on the loose" at that time. From the minute one showed one's face in the morning till last thing at night someone always seemed to want a "quick word" to ask some question or another.

It was a strangely cloistered existence. Edith drove into town four days or so after moving into Weir House and really got quite a surprise to find she was still in Wellington—she felt like a country cousin. Perhaps the street names in Weir House gave the feeling of being 12,000 miles from New Zealand.

The days flew past as they always do and lots of plans got lost in the rush. It had been intended to put notes beside each place name to indicate from which dance the name was derived and any details known about it—and, of course, to explain the "daisy" on the doors leading to the toilets. As far as Edith could discover, this term is used in the Glasgow area and south of it, to describe the chamber pot (sounds much nicer than the usual abbreviation). We trust some people found time to read the sheet giving all the information which was put up a few days before the school closed.

On that final sad Saturday it was evening and several packed-car-trips later that the Clan Campbell arrived home with all their "stuff," and several weeks later before they felt they had returned to

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normalcy. But, naturally, little reminders of summer school keep popping up such as when we fall over the box of abandoned cardigans and other clothing, or Catriona describes something or someone and we eventually realise she is talking about what she did and saw, including the Queen with her crown. It was very pleasant on the last day when the warden stopped by for a brief chat and said that we would be welcome back. We shall remember him as a tall, dark, bearded figure clad in a dashing silk dressing jacket, coming to our door on Hogmanay to make gentle enquiry how long the celebrations might continue as he had guests in his flat! No doubt everyone has happy little memories tucked away in the corner of their minds.

For so long we were keeping our eyes and ears open for summer school ideas, the practice is hard to break and we still find ourselves saying "now that would be good for summer school" . . . we shall have to store them up for next time. What a frantic, frustrating, fascinating, fruitful and exhilarating experience it was to organise a Scottish country dancing summer school!

CLANIS CAMPBELLIS.

The Crown Print regret that at the time of the magazine going to press, your Editor is in hospital. We all wish him a speedy recovery.

DANCER FAILS TO RETURN

DURING my visit to St Andrews last year, I met dancers from various parts of the world, including some from France, Belgium, Holland and Germany, who were in the same classes as me. It was a great pleasure also to meet Miss Jean Milligan, who proved to be most knowledgeable on S.C.D. in New Zealand.

One particular dancer accompanied me on all occasions at St Andrews, Perth, Edinburgh and Glasgow, and supported me in conversations relating to our dancing here. Some people were most surprised to learn that our summer schools catered for 200 dancers. They imagined we were just a small overseas Branch. I was glad to have my dancer to back me up.

I introduced this dancer—the "New Zealand Scottish Country Dancer"—to many people and the last one of these pocketed it, tendering cash in lieu. So you see, my dancer was our annual magazine. It thrilled many people at St Andrews. Does it continue to thrill you as each fresh edition appears better than the last?

LEN SMITH.



MISS MARY RONNIE, South Island Vice President, Branch Bookshop Keeper, organiser of the summer school at Dunedin, tutor of Andersons E Club, has recently set out on a journey round the world which will take six months to complete. She is combining business with the pleasure of holidaymaking, so her trip should be full of interest. Born in Glasgow, she came to New Zealand as a girl, had her higher schooling in Dunedin and is a graduate of the University of Otago. Dunedin City Librarian, she will be visiting many libraries, including one in Finland, and she is to read a paper at an international conference of librarians in Liverpool. There will be time for only a few weeks in Scotland before she flies to the United States and Canada. She also plans for overnight stops in Honolulu and Fiji in her flights across the Pacific. The wheels for Dunedin summer schools have long since been set in motion, and Mary will be back at the controls immediately on her return. The Bookshop will continue to function in her absence. She will be receiving her copy of "Dancer" in Scotland, so on behalf of her many dancing friends in New Zealand: "Hope you are having a good time, Mary, but haste ye back, lass."