

## HE CAME, HE SAW, HE CONQUERED

*Newly certificated Gary Morris has recently returned to his native land after spending a marvellous time in Edinburgh and at Summer School in St Andrews.*

FOR the Scottish Country Dancer, I doubt if there can be any more exciting and inspiring experience than to be able to attend a summer school at St. Andrews. Especially when one has heard so much about it for so long, and has travelled half across the world to get there. So you can imagine with what excitement I left Edinburgh one Monday morning last July.

I had arrived in Edinburgh nine months before. There I had spent a most enjoyable winter dancing with the Edinburgh Branch, and with several of the Scottish Country Dancing Clubs in the city. With mention that I was a dancer from New Zealand, I was warmly welcomed by Miss Hadden, at Headquarters, and by Tom King, of the Edinburgh Branch, who soon had me in Mrs Wadsworth's advanced class.

The first Thursday I went along with awe and trembling at the thought of being in a class with so many good dancers—there were about 80 in that class—but I needn't have worried. The ice was soon broken, the best make mistakes and I was soon having the time of my life. I was also fortunate to be asked to one of the demonstration classes, and it was a great experience to receive an hour's concentrated tuition in a small group each week on the finer points of the dances by one of Edinburgh's very capable teachers, Miss Vera Seddon.

Outside the Society classes I was also making a large and wonderful group of friends at the numerous clubs and dances in the district. The general overall standard at the dances is about the same as in New Zealand. Some of the not-so-good dancers are very rough on the floor at times, flinging their partners and themselves round and completely spoiling the dances with sheer rowdyism, a thing almost unheard of on the New Zealand dance floor. However, it was with great regret that I said goodbye to my friends that spring and set out over the border to England and a long-planned tour.

But at last I was back in Scotland again and heading for St. Andrews—a beautiful, old, grey-stone town almost unaltered by 20th century building and growth. It is a place of learning, of golf and of holiday-makers. The school has the ideal setting of the University buildings, and with Miss Hadden efficiently organising the arrivals I was soon meeting a host of new people, who in no time at all became firm friends.

Besides the many from Scotland and the hosts from England, there were more than 50 overseas visitors the first fortnight—Canada, U.S.A., South Africa, Australia, Switzerland, Holland, France, Denmark and, of course, New Zealand. There was a whole team of Swiss dancers and their demonstrations were to be most appreciated during their stay at the school.

I was staying the whole month, to sit my full teaching certificate. This was necessary as the examination was divided into two sections. The first two weeks were devoted to tuition for the preliminary examination and the second two weeks for the full certificate.

Next morning classes commenced and I and 26 others were immediately in the depths of studying for our preliminary certificate, and being capably led by Miss Jarvis. What a wonderful teacher she is, and how we laughed at her demonstration of mistakes—a "perfect" demonstration not only in footwork, but also of the glazed look of a hopeless beginner. The ordeal of the first solo teaching before class was not quite so bad as we had expected, with so much encouragement and help.

It is hard to think of St. Andrews without the amazing personality of Miss Milligan springing to the fore. To see her in action as a teacher is something never to be forgotten. To receive one of her "pep" talks is to be fired with a load of enthusiasm for Scottish Country Dancing and the Society. It is also one of the best hour's entertainment that I can remember.

She is the life of the school and there is no knowing just where she'll turn up next. The day before the second examination Miss Milligan came in and found four of us lying flat on the floor with our feet on chairs. Of course, her entrance immediately brought us flying to our feet and she was greatly amused. She then told us how someone had once said to her that to have your feet up was a good thing before examinations as it let the blood run to the brain. So she had spent quite some time before her next exam. hanging by her feet in the gym.

One of the unforgettable memories I shall always have of St. Andrews and of all my dancing in Scotland is the music. The lift given to a dance by the live musician is unbelievable. Especially

wonderful are the pianists. The Royal Society is fortunate indeed to have so many good musicians to call on—and who can play the old music as only a person with an intimate knowledge and love of the dances could do? Many times I found my feet tapping irresistibly to the music when waiting my turn in fourth place.

The days swept by quickly, and it seemed no time at all before the examinations were completed and with my bags packed I was sadly making my farewells.

A fortnight before I sailed for New Zealand the A.G.M. of the Society was held in Edinburgh. There

was a ball and an informal dance held during the weekend in the splendid Assembly Rooms. Many of my friends from St. Andrews were there and I greatly enjoyed the opportunity to see them once more and say goodbye.

And so it was with regret that I left Scotland which had so many happy memories for me, and where there was so much dancing. But when I arrived home I was fortunate enough to be in time for the last few days of Summer School at Napier and to find that our own "St. Andrews of the South." was flourishing as ever.