

Good Neighbours (Guid Nychburris) Festival

from *Diane Bradshaw*, Upper Hutt Club President

This year the Wellington Region Event was hosted by the Upper Hutt Club at Knox Church Hall in Lower Hutt. We decided to invite local teachers to teach dances they had devised themselves. We felt that having most of the dances taught would make the event attractive to new dancers, who might not otherwise attend an annual dance, whilst still providing a challenge for experienced dancers.

I found the idea of the *Good Neighbours Festival* when I was searching the Internet for significant events/dates in Scottish history that we could use for the theme. The idea of a *Good Neighbours Festival* fitted so well with local teachers teaching locally devised dances to all the neighbouring clubs/dancers.

In Dumfries, the *Good Neighbours Festival* is a celebration of becoming a Royal Burgh in 1186 and the festival has been held since 1932. There, just like here, Good Neighbours Day was 19th June 2010. In Dumfries, they began with the 'Riding of the Marches' by 250-300 horses at 7.30am, so we began with the Grand March at 7.30pm.

This was lead by piper Ross Edwards, Region President Bernice Kelly and Upper Hutt Club President Diane Bradshaw and the six teachers who were to teach their own dances - Iain Boyd, Romaine Butterfield, Rod Downey, Catherine Edwards, Ian Simmonds and Jeanette Watson.

The Upper Hutt Club teacher Chris Kelly compiled the programme and was the MC for the evening. The music was supplied by our own excellent local musicians Peter Elmes (accordion), John Smith (fiddle), Aileen Logie (accordion) and Terry Bradshaw (snare drum).

In order to give all 12 clubs in the region an opportunity to contribute to the event, we invited them to create a poster of A2 or A3 size. This was to introduce their club to the rest of the region, as many dancers attend one or two clubs regularly and only occasionally visit other clubs. The posters were displayed around the walls for the evening, where they were a colourful addition to the other hall decorations of yellow and black streamers and balloons (Wellington Colours).

The *Good Neighbours Festival* in Dumfries has a Queen of the South so we selected our own Queen by drawing a name out of a sparkling top hat. Our Festival Queen for the evening was Dorothy Warring from the Island Bay Club. She was suitably regaled with royal blue sash and tiara by Bernice Kelly and Diane Bradshaw before being presented to the assembled dancers. Dancers entered into the spirit of the evening by bowing or curtsying as she passed.

The new dances proved very popular and the evening was a great success, with many favourable comments being received.

The sash and tiara have been put away now but who knows whether we'll do it again in the future? It was wonderful to be part of the Good Neighbours Celebrations even though we're on the other side of the world. After all, the Scottish Country Dancing community worldwide are all our neighbours.





Wellington Region Day School

from Lynn Reeve

In April, I had the pleasure of attending the Wellington Region Day School for Beginner Dances.

Twenty-seven eager learners assembled and were soon moving around the room - smiling, relaxing and learning to dance, thanks to the warm and enthusiastic manner of our tutor, Kathryn Deroles.

Kathryn had contacted each of us prior to the day, giving us the opportunity to inform her of individual expectations and concerns. The programme was structured to cover as many of those requests as time would allow.

From the Young to the Young-at-heart, we shared the joy of dance and improved our skills through listening, learning and laughing.

The following week, Kathryn provided us with more information and music. Thank you Kathryn for the time you gave us to ensure a truly positive and informative 'Hot Chocolate Sauce' day was enjoyed by all.

I would like encourage all beginner dances to take the opportunity to attend these days - it was great fun!

On 18 September, the Wellington Region New Dancers Celebration is being held at Onslow College. We look forward to seeing you there.



Good Neighbours Festival 19 June 2010

Photos: Lorelee Hyde