

The New Season

Belated good wishes to you all for 2003 and many happy hours dancing.

Our dancing this year has been particularly good and one night we had twenty-one dancers. Aad was very pleased with this number, as from his records, it was a record! It is good to have Hazel and Liam home from their trip to Australia and New Zealand and included in this issue is an account of their experiences doing Scottish Country Dancing "Down Under". As Hazel and Liam returned to us, Tom and Deirdre left for their holiday in the antipodes. They are now home and we hope they enjoyed their trip. Maybe they will have a few stories for us about their time "Down Under" which they will share with us in another issue.

New Members.

Marion Gully. Marion heard of our Dancing Club from Anne Wilkie and joined us late in 2002. We extend a very warm welcome to her and hope that she will enjoy dancing with us.

New Arrivals.

Congratulations to June and Eric on the birth of their first grandchild - a little girl. Congratulations also to Hazel and Liam on the birth of their first grandchild - a little boy. We are all thrilled with the news of the arrival of two healthy babies and send our best wishes to them all.

Dancing Displays.

In January we danced, once again, for the Past Members of the Girls' Brigade in Greystones. It was a very good night, much enjoyed by all. As usual, they gave us a lovely supper.

Also in January we danced again for the patients in the Royal Hospital, Donnybrook. Mr. Eric Rankin from the Royal Hospital "Friends" office made us very welcome and



Dancing for the patients and staff of the Royal Hospital, Donnybrook

looked after us extremely well. We hope the patients enjoyed the dancing and the music.

We look forward to dancing at Castleknock I.C.A. on Wednesday 19th March next.

The Trip to Cork

Although it sounds like the title of a dance tune this was the annual pilgrimage to Lee-side to honour the memory of Robert Burns.

As always the warm welcome and friendly ambience was much enjoyed by the Dubliners, as Blair's photographs show.

We are looking forward to meeting our southern friends and partners in April.



Aad and the President of the Past Members of the Girls' Brigade in Greystones, Patty Rudd



Other performers at Greystones

Dancing on the ceiling

The Summer School in Christchurch, New Zealand
28th December to 5th January

We had a fantastic time at this Summer School. It ran over 8 days but no activities were scheduled for New Years Day! The organisation was totally efficient and yet friendly and there was never a dull moment. There were people from all over the world but mostly from New Zealand and Australia - over 200 all together. One of my strongest memories is of the incredible Scottish accents of some of the people that had been in Australia and New Zealand for 50 years! We stayed in apartments which belong to the University of Christchurch, 5 rooms to each apartment, and the excellent food was served in the dining room.

The dancing classes were held in school and college halls nearby, all walkable to in about 15 minutes. There were 4 "live musicians" including Muriel Johnstone on the piano and Chris Duncan on the fiddle. They rotated round the classes - the rest of the time it was CDs. Classes were held from 9.30am to 10.45 and 11.15 to 12.30 each day except New Year's Day - Afternoons were spent doing the tourist thing with visits to a winery, the Antarctic centre, a beautiful garden to see roses in full bloom in December. In the evenings there were dances from 8pm to 10pm when we did about 12 dances each night. These were talked through but not walked through. We reckon we did 96 dances during the week, about a third were familiar, another third we had heard the names and the rest were completely new.

The Hogmanay Ball had 22 dances and lasted from 8pm till 1 am with a novel ceremony to bring in the New Year. Remarkably, we sang "A Guid New Year to Ane an' A'" and not "Auld Lang Syne". Back at the residence, we continued till 5am with good music, singing and dancing in bare feet on the carpet.

There were 9 different classes ranging from those for the under 13s to the Post Preliminary Teachers Class. Liam joined the Social class - "For dancers with at least 4 years of experience but who did not wish to do much technique but do enjoy interesting classes." There were 21 in this class coming from Canada, USA, Australia, England, Scotland, Japan and of course New Zealand. John Martin cheerfully welded us into a coherent and enhanced group of dancers.

I joined the Advanced Technique Class - "Dancers will be expected to be very familiar with the require-



Blair's photographs of the Cork Burns Night

ments of the Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced classes (from allemande and pousette to knot, rondel and tow-nee) and have a high standard of performance and a reasonable level of fitness. There were 55 in this class coming from Australia, Scotland, France, Japan, England and of course New Zealand. There was also a class called Advanced/Teachers/Seniors - "this class is for dancers with knowledge and experience but for whom a high level of technical performance may now be difficult".

Most of my class mates were teachers and were very familiar with what we were expected to do. I was on a very steep learning curve and both the brain and the legs were stretched to capacity! One of our challenges was to dance a repeat of Montgomerie's Rant with no music at all.

A Quotable quote from Bill Sobel, our teacher "The men have to curve around to accommodate the ladies".

Another teacher's quote, "Now I'll dance with James as he is a real man and it shows".

All in all, an exciting part of our antipodean experience.

Hazel and Liam

Forthcoming Events

21st March. Ballylesson, N. Ireland. 25th Anniversary Dance. Band. Ian Muir Sound. Org. Ballylesson S.C.D.C.

22nd March. Belfast. Dance. Band. Ian Muir Sound. Org. R.S.C.D.S. Belfast Branch.

5th April. Annual Dance. Taney Parish Centre. 7.30 p.m. to 11.30 p.m. Music by John and Judy Barnes.

3rd May. Coleraine. Day School and Dance. Teacher. Andrew McConnell - Pianist: Dorothy Hamilton. Band. David Oswald and his band. Org. R.C.D. S. Portrush Branch.

9th May. Belfast May Ball. Band: John Renton and his Band. Org. R.S.C.D.S. Belfast Branch..

10th May. Dance for Fun Ceilidh. St. Bridgid's Parish Hall. Stillorgan. 7.45 p.m. - 11.30 p.m. Music by John and Judy Barnes. Org. The Scottish Benevolent Society of St. Andrew.

10th May. Carrickfergus Dance. Band. John Renton and his Band. Org. R.S.C.D.S. Belfast Branch.

30th May. Comber Annual Dance. Band. Ian Muir Sound. Org. Comber S.C.D.C.

14th June. Comber N. Ireland Annual Dance. Org by Comber Scottish Country Dance Club.

6th July. Dancing in Dun Laoghaire. H. S. S. Pier. 3.00p.m.

A.G.M. To be advised.

There will be no dancing in Holy Week. Thursday 17th April, 2003. Happy Easter to you all.

