

SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1960-61.

At the beginning of the 1960-61 Session, the Branch found itself faced with the problem of the appointment of a new Musical Director. Miss Whitby, who had given such outstanding service to the Branch in that position ever since its foundation, found herself unable to take it on again for another year, owing to many other commitments, one of which being the tutoring of a Corporation Evening Class in recorder playing. Unfortunately no successor to Miss Whitby could be found at the time, and it was decided to divide the Branch into three smaller groups, graded according to playing experience, but meeting every fourth Monday all together, to preserve continuity as a Branch. It was felt that there were additional advantages in this system, which would enable the more advanced players to tackle more difficult music, while the beginners would be given a chance to catch up. Mrs Smith very kindly offered to coach the second group, and Miss Murphy, Mr. Thorne and Mr. Williamson took it in turns to lead the beginners. The Branch owes a great deal to those members for helping in this way. After Christmas it was found that the beginners had made a great deal of progress, so it was decided to drop the third group, and from then until June the Branch was divided into only two groups, with meetings all together on alternate Mondays. This proved fairly satisfactory, but it was generally felt that a Musical Director was very necessary if more progress was to be made. By this time Dr. Robertson was free to take on the job, and the Committee were unanimous in asking him to do so.

During the year, there were two "pastoral visits" from headquarters, the first by Dr. Bergmann in October. This consisted of a training session in the afternoon, followed by a lecture recital with slides in the evening. At the beginning of March, Dr. Carl Dolmetsch and Mr. Saxby, who were in Edinburgh to give a concert to school children, spent the evening at the Branch meeting, giving a combined recital and training session.

The by now traditional Christmas and Summer evenings were held as usual, to which friends of members were invited. At both of these there were items in which everyone joined in, plus solo or small group items by members and friends, with the co-operation of strings, wind players and singers. At the Summer evening, a group from the newly formed Glasgow Branch gave a most professional and enjoyable performance. The very friendly and informal atmosphere of these gatherings has made them most successful, and the only problem is to find enough room for everyone.

In November some of the Branch members were invited to provide the programme for one of the meetings of the Mary Erskine Former Pupils' Guild Music Club, but apart from this, the Branch did not officially take part in any outside performance this year. A team did however enter for the Competition Festival in May, and were placed first in the Open Class for recorder ensemble. Honesty compels me to admit however, that their performance was literally unrivalled. A great success was scored at the Festival by one of our members, Mrs. Smith, who played the/

the recorder part in Handel's trio for soprano, treble recorder and continuo, "La dolce nell' obbligo", which won the Open Chamber Music class and was awarded the Horace Fellowes Trophy, the first time a recorder has featured in the winning item in this class.

A very successful innovation during the year was the weekend spent by members at Kilmory Castle, Lochgilphead, a holiday home of the National Association of Youth Clubs. This was the first weekend in May, and was attended by about 22 members and their families. The house with its large rooms and beautiful grounds proved ideal for this purpose, and it is hoped that the experiment will be repeated.

* The Branch Delegates' conference in London in January was attended by the Secretary, who gave a report on the Branch's activities during the preceeding year. There was a general discussion on how membership could be increased; various forms of advertisement had been tried by some branches, but it was generally agreed that personal contact was the best method of obtaining new members. Stress was also laid on the need for qualified teachers and it was felt that too many people were teaching the recorder in schools with no knowledge of the instrument. This was tied up with generally prevalent notion that the recorder is such a primitive instrument that it requires no study. One of the ways suggested to combat this was to encourage gramophone societies and music clubs to play first class records of recorder music. Other points of interest noted at the conference were the comparatively few branches which hold weekly meetings. One of the reasons for this is difficulty in finding accommodation, as regards which we in Edinburgh are extremely lucky.

Nine members of the Branch attended this year's course at Roehampton.