

Branch Secretary's report for the 1984-85 season

There were 62 members, 11 more than the previous season. The Branch met on 34 Monday evenings from October to June in Augustine Congregational Church hall for combined playing. One-to-a-part ensembles practiced separately during alternate meetings. As in the previous two seasons, a group played easier music in the Library during the first half of many meetings under the guidance of Joyce O'Riordan. Early in the season the branch purchased a Kung Great Bass recorder in C. Its deeper tones enriched the combined playing and increased the range of music available.

On Saturday 10 November there was an "open playing day" in Augustine Church hall which attracted a good attendance by members and others and included a short recital by the Edinburgh Recorder Consort.

The "Christmas evening" on 17 December before an audience of relatives and friends included as guest performers Linda Howie (soprano) and John Tothill (clarinet). The annual public concert in St. Cecilia's Hall on Saturday 9 March included as guest performers Heather Coates (soprano), Julia Wood (cello) and Leon Coates (harpsichord).

Following the cancellation of the 1985 National Recorder Festival due to be held in Glasgow the branch committee proposed a Scottish Recorder Festival. After other Scottish branches had given their support I undertook the secretarial work and the event was held on Saturday 23 March at Alva, the base of the Hillfoots branch which made the local arrangements. Combined and group playing was conducted by all the Scottish branch Musical Directors and also Theo Wyatt from London. Jim Carey composed "Trains" for the occasion. The young ensemble competition was adjudicated by James O'Malley and the junior prize was won by Wardie Primary School trio. It has been agreed that it will be repeated in future years with the 1986 festival at Alva being organized by the Aberdeen branch.

On Saturday 11 May we held a special playing day in the afternoon and evening with Lyndon Hilling (Northampton) as visiting conductor. We were equalled in number by visitors from the other five Scottish branches and country members who expressed their appreciation for an enjoyable occasion which included a buffet meal.

Unfortunately the Society held its National Playing Day and Annual Conference at Brentwood in Essex on same weekend, so we were unable to send a representative. Theo Wyatt retired as Chairman after thirteen years' service, which began with the first National Recorder Festival in Birmingham and ended with the first Scottish Recorder Festival in Alva. He is well-known as a conductor and tutor at summer schools and weekend courses. His work for the Society includes good quality duplicating which produces the Oriel Library of music at very low prices. He is succeeded by Philip Thorby of the North London branch who is Head of the Department of Renaissance and Baroque Music at Trinity College of Music, London and directs his own professional early music group Musica Antiqua of London.

The branch season ended on Monday 17 June with the "summer evening" which included string trios performed by Eric Gillett and friends and the première of David Cooke's "Suite for Recorders". A presentation was made to David on his departure for the South after five years as a member and two as Chairman. He is a fine player whose ensembles won two first prizes at the 1981 National Recorder Festival. He founded and directed the Edinburgh Recorder Consort which performs regularly to a professional standard on its own and also at our branch concerts. He will be greatly missed.

On Saturday 22 June Jim Carey was the guest conductor at the Aberdeen branch playing day at Balbithan House. He was accompanied by three other branch members.

We again owe thanks to our conductors especially Eric Gillett our Musical Director who organized and conducted our meetings and provided a continued supply of arrangements. Jim Carey conducted regularly and this season composed "Trains" and presented to the library copies of his "Music for a Celebration", commissioned for the 25th anniversary concert in 1983. Joyce O'Riordan conducted the "library group". David Cooke conducted his arrangement of Vaughan Williams' "Folk Song Suite" and his own composition "Suite for Recorders". James O'Malley conducted a group at the "open playing day". The branch will wish to thank them all for their leadership and inspiration.