

Branch Secretary's report for the 1986-87 season

During this season we celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the Society and the thirtieth anniversary of the branch, but sadly two of the most influential branch members died. Eric Gillett, our Musical Director since 1965, had to stop conducting at the end of 1986 because of illness, and he died on 24 April 1987. His dedicated work for the Society included conducting most of the branch meetings during 22 years and arranging well over 100 works for performance by recorders.

May Whitby, the founder and first Musical Director, remained an active member of the branch until this year and was present at the February meeting when we commemorated the thirtieth anniversary but she was prevented by illness from attending the anniversary concert and the Jubilee Festival and Reception; she died on 25 July 1987. Through her teaching as well as her SRP activities she was a major promoter of recorder playing.

Obituary notices have been written (by Sandy Howie and James O'Malley respectively) and will appear in the September 1987 issue of "Recorder" magazine.

Some branch members will have known Dr Sam Taylor of Scarborough, a familiar conductor at SRP festivals, editor of the SRP news in "Recorder" magazine and examiner for the CSRP (the Society's qualification for teachers and conductors). Tragically Sam and his wife were killed in a road accident on 5 July 1987.

More happily, we celebrated two birthdays. James Carey invited us to his sixtieth birthday party in February when we performed his music, as also did the Sine Nomine Singers and other musicians. Joyce O'Riordan celebrated her eightieth birthday: in recognition of her outstanding and still continuing work in recorder education and for the Society, she was elected to Honorary Membership of the Branch during the Summer Evening on 15 June.

We congratulate James Carey on the publication of two works and thank him for presenting copies to the branch library: "Trains" (Fentone F362) composed for the 1985 Scottish Recorder Festival and an arrangement for recorders of Pachelbel's "Canon and Gigue" (Fentone F295).

There were 58 members, 4 fewer than the previous season (14 resignations, 10 new members). The Branch met on 37 Monday evenings from September to June in Augustine Congregational Church hall for combined playing. As usual one-to-a-part ensembles practiced separately during alternate meetings, and the formation of new one-to-a-part ensembles was encouraged.

On Saturday 25 October we held a special playing day in the afternoon and evening with Paula Campbell (London branch) as visiting conductor. For this occasion we were joined by members of the other five Scottish branches and country members.

Our hosts, Augustine Church, invited us and their other "tenant organizations" to a special service on 16 November and also a party on 19 November when we performed some ensemble pieces.

The "Christmas evening" on 15 December included songs sung by Sheila and Ian McNab, Dorothy and Eric Gillett.

At our meeting on 2 February we recalled the inauguration of the branch by Edgar Hunt on 5 February 1957 by reading the Foundation Minute and by playing the Scottish Dance by William Brade which Edgar Hunt had arranged and dedicated to the branch. The same piece featured in our Thirtieth Anniversary Concert in St. Cecilia's Hall on Saturday 28 February when we were joined by the Sine Nomine singers and by Susan Craxton (harpsichord).

On Monday 2 March we held an "open playing evening" when we were joined by a number of visitors.

Several members attended the Golden Jubilee Festival of the Society on Saturday 4 April at Goldsmith's College, London. James Carey represented us at the Jubilee Reception at the Art Workers' Guild the previous evening. The following day I attended the Annual Conference as branch delegate. At this Conference the Chairman, Philip Thorby, retired and was succeeded by Graham Danbury of Mid-Herts branch, the former Treasurer. The former rule forbidding payments to members (other than out-of-pocket expenses) was replaced by a new rule allowing the payment of professional fee: the intention is to allow professional musicians who are members to charge their usual fees.

On Saturday 16 May some members attended the Glasgow branch playing day conducted by Brian Bonsor.

The third Scottish Recorder Festival was held on Saturday 30 May at Alva, organized by Glasgow branch. The principal guest conductor was Paul Clark (Birmingham); our former Chairman David Cooke, who is now Musical Director of High Wycombe branch, again made the journey north to conduct his own compositions. James Carey and Sandy Howie conducted sessions and James O'Malley again adjudicated the young ensemble competition. Roxburgh branch have undertaken the organization of the fourth Scottish Festival at Alva in 1988.

At the "summer evening" on 15 June we were joined by Joyce O'Riordan's "Saturday Club" for children and also her adult evening class.

We again thank our conductors James Carey and Sandy Howie for their inspiration and hard work.