

SOCIETY OF RECORDER PLAYERS - EDINBURGH BRANCH  
Branch Secretary's report for the 1987-88 season

Early in the season Dr Hans Gal died at the age of 97. Since leaving his native Austria in 1938 he lived in Edinburgh and worked as a composer, performer, teacher and writer; many of his compositions are for recorders. He was Honorary President of the Edinburgh branch since its foundation and a Vice-President of the Society. Dr Walter Bergmann died early in 1988 at the age of 86. He left his native Germany for England in 1939 and made music his profession as composer, teacher, editor and continuo player. He was a Musical Director of the Society and co-founded the Recorder in Education Summer School. The Society has instituted a Walter Bergmann Memorial Fund to assist young people in the study of the recorder. In June we were sorry to hear of the death of James Allen, Musical Director of Glasgow branch. He and his wife Ethel were the mainstays of the society in Glasgow, and their pupils at Chryston High School gained many prizes in national competitions.

Our exciting new venture was the foundation of a Junior Section for players of secondary school age. Many young people who learn the recorder in primary school had little opportunity to continue at secondary school until the Junior Section was founded. We are very grateful to Sandy Howie for his initiative and for conducting the juniors every Saturday morning in school term. 23 youngsters joined the section during the year and most of them enjoyed it sufficiently to keep coming. They performed at each of our public occasions.

The main branch had 55 members, 3 fewer than the previous season (13 non-renewals, 10 new members); we remain the largest branch after London. We met on 35 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. Early in January several new ensembles were formed.

On Saturday 10 October we had a stall at the "Music and Dance Societies' Fair" in the Central Library Music Room, and two consorts performed there. Several new members joined as a result.

On Saturday 7 November for our special playing day the visiting conductor was Brian Bonsor, twelve years after his previous visit. For this most enjoyable 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 service on 6 December at which a small group of us performed. At our "Christmas evening" on 14 December we welcomed as guest performers the choir of the Methodist Central Hall. The evening also included the first public performance by our Junior Section.

On 20 February many members attended the Glasgow branch special playing day when the visiting conductor was Alan Davis of Birmingham. For our public concert on 5 March, all the conducting was undertaken by Sandy Howie. For the first time on such an occasion there were solo performances (by Ceri Ross and Sarah-Jane Selwood), accompanied by our guest harpsichordist Michael Lester-Cribb, as well as the Junior Section, consorts and ensemble pieces. Light relief was provided by members of Edinburgh Renaissance Band.

I attended the National Festival of the Society on Saturday 14 May in Birmingham, and the following day I attended the Annual Conference as branch delegate. Various rule changes were made, including the establishment of Honorary Life Membership of the Society as a recognition of meritorious service; those elected were Brian Crispin, Freda Dinn, Enid Hunt, Ken Kenworthy, Ron Skins and Marjorie Wright. The fourth Scottish Recorder Festival was held on Saturday 4 June at Alva, organized by Roxburgh branch. The principal guest conductor was Lyndon Hilling (Northampton). Other conductors included our former Chairman David Cooke, (High Wycombe), James Carey (with a new composition "At the Circus"), and James O'Malley; Sandy Howie again adjudicated the Young Ensemble competition. In 1989 the National Recorder Festival will be at Alva on 3 June. The branch season ended with the Summer Evening on 20 June with performances by various ensembles, the Junior Section and Joyce O'Riordan's evening class. On Saturday 25 June Sandy Howie was the visiting conductor at the Aberdeen branch playing day at Balbithan House.

We must again thank our conductors James Carey and Sandy Howie for leading us throughout the year and James Carey for presenting to the Library a copy of his composition for the 1986 Scottish Recorder Festival "Cocktails" (Fentone F434).