



Chairman's Report... 20th Oct 2021.

Safe to say this has been a challenging time for everyone, our last AGM was 15th May 2019, 2 years & 23 weeks ago. For the record we were forced to stop our weekly meetings for 18 months.

I believe we should first take a moment to remember those who have passed since our last AGM, none of whom died due to the COVID pandemic.

July 2019 - Kate Carpenter, she was half of Skara Brae who played live music for us at many of our dances over the years.

13th February 2020 - Caroline Temple, she had hosted many summer garden dances over the years.

26th May 2020 – Ann Prior, without whom we would not have a club. As a founder and teacher she was a force of nature.

26th November 2020 – Robin Musson - A member since the Club's inception and a much valued former Chairman.

29th January 2021 – Peter Colbert - A loyal and regular member of the Club for many years.

1st July 2021 - Gill Hunt - A founding member, former Treasurer and present member of the management Committee

They will all be missed by us all and our hearts go out to their families. They, apart from Kate, had been members of this club long before I joined. Please take a few moments to remember them.

Now we must return to the club meetings.

July 2019, we had a dance hosting the French exchange with the Scots Bonnet, the dance had to go ahead without Skara Brae due to the death of Kate. Recorded music was used and it was a successful evening which was appreciated by our visitors. As the ticket price included the cost of Skara Brae we made a good profit and it felt right that the profit, £230 should be donated to the hospice that looked after Kate in her last days.

It's sad to say that that will be the last exchange that will be hosted for the foreseeable future, but we may see some of Scots Bonnet dancers from time-to-time and any of us would be welcomed if you are able to visit them.

We had 3 summer socials in 2019 well attended with many from other groups. The Callers we had asked were – Liz Beckinsale, Pat Fish and Robert and Maggie Morgan. They were successful and enjoyed by all that attended.

4th September 2019 we had a taster evening for beginners only 3 attended and didn't stay long, it was unsuccessful, possibly too early in the season, we must try things out and treat this as a learning experience.

12th September that year was our first meeting of the season, we had no new members but good attendance, enough for 3 sets. Numbers fell off a bit in following meetings.

January 2020 - Ann took a step back from calling with sight, balance and hearing problems. This was very hard for her as she had never missed a meeting since setting up the club; it was her life. At that time she needed a live-in carer and in February she was taken into a care home in Charmouth.

11th March was our last meeting in 2020 as COVID brought a stop to much of life around the world with lockdown keeping most of us at home for many months. That also made it impossible for us to visit friends and relations even when they were in poor health and we were stopped from attending funerals. For many of us that proved to be distressing.

2020 was to have been our 25th anniversary with a dance planned that was first postponed and then cancelled. We hope to move forward with a dance next year (2022) - you will realize it is still difficult to make plans.

At the beginning of lockdown we had some informal ZOOM meetings hosted by Caroline (Morgan-Smith) which went well but were given up as numbers dropped off. It's not the easiest of forums to use; It has its place but I feel it's best for small or necessary meetings rather than socializing.

We had a picnic 29th July at Salwayash to socialize as lockdown was relaxed in 2020. It was enjoyed by all that attended and we were still keeping our distance and met behind the hall on the patio space.

We had to wait until 26th May 2021 to have our next picnic at Salwayash, also successful and finally had our last picnic there on 11th August where we were able to do some, no hands, dances in the hall. Enjoyed by all. It was nice to see we still have members keen to get back to dancing - the first time many of us had danced since March 2019.

We then resumed our weekly meetings this year on 8th September. We started with good attendance, enough for three sets with members from other clubs and three beginners who we hope will come back for more, time will tell. Numbers fell off a bit but have started picking up as members come back from holidays and start to feel comfortable socializing again.

During all this time I have been supported by the committee but especially by Caroline (Morgan-Smith) and Alison (Johnstone) between the three of us we took care of all the issues that arose during lockdown which has been challenging at times. It is due to the effort put in by Caroline and Tony (Meadley) that we are now dancing. They have produced programs for our dance evenings - we are all having to relearn our dancing skills and get back to being "dance fit" and choosing the right dances to achieve that must be challenging. It is worth remembering that Ann Prior had a very remarkable knowledge of dance routines which made it significantly easier for her to produce programs.

There are, of course, many members who help when the need arises and Philip (Morgan-Smith) for maintaining our website, I thank them and all of you for your support and enthusiasm.

I came to be your chairman as a result of Ann's persuasive insistence that I should take the job, I did have a feeling that it might prove difficult with Ann at her age I had the feeling that she may have to take a step back during my tenure, little did I know what I had let myself in for. However, I am willing to stand for re-election if that is your wish but would not stand in the way of anyone else. I believe the club has a future and a good core membership: We do need to attract new members and we are short of a qualified teacher, problems that we should strive to overcome.

Malcolm