

OIR:

THE GRAPEVINE

Newsletter No 32 - February 2018

MORE MEMORIES FROM MONICA

Tai- Chi - Two years on.

We were now firmly ensconced in the "Improvers" class and well into the "44 step open hand form", the "37" with a very difficult sandwich filling!

"If you laugh, you learn" another wise saying, also very true, There have been many joyous moments of mirth in class.

We were also working on various Chi Gong 5+8 move forms: the list was growing and we wanted more time in classes. By spring 2011, myself, Elizabeth Hambley and some of the others, joined Robert's all year class in Troon for another hour per week. Still wanting more time, at Robert's invitation, I timidly (petrified) joined his more advanced class in Prestwick. This was in Spring 2013 and was soon joined by more of my Largs friends, also invited by our kind teacher. The tendency to wish to disappear into the back wall of the Prestwick Hall re-asserted itself, but we were not allowed to regress and were gently persuaded into the middle of the class. Our fellow students were kind, supportive, and not at all terrifying. We always had someone to follow, every time we changed direction, which was extremely helpful.

At Prestwick we met Kate and Martin Wilkinson who have taken over from Robert since he retired from his OIR classes. He still teaches his all year Prestwick class, and the Troon class is in the capable hands of Alastair Fraser. Kate and Martin are also endlessly patient and kind and there is also lots of laughter in their classes.

Thank you, Monica J Rutherford for your amusing memoirs. There will be more in March as we continue into 2018.

THE GEM ON OUR DOORSTEP - Wemyss Bay Station

Our Guest Speaker, Greg Beecroft, illustrated his subject in January with many early photographs of what Simon Jenkins described as "the loveliest Station". This is the Edwardian masterpiece, together with its pier which replaced the original, built in 1865, to cut the steamer journey from Glasgow to Bute and Arran.

The original gloomy station was deemed inadequate and was replaced, in the 1920s, by this gem with its Italianate Clock Tower in the foreground. The curved structure of this newly built station, with its two Japanese towers, unimpeded by today's vehicles, was shown in all its glory in a lovely photograph. This façade, in recent years restored, together with the beautifully curved inner station, became a listed building.

The photographs, provided by several individuals, the Watt Library in Greenock, Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd and some images courtesy of the National Archives of Scotland, covered the century. They included Railway Staff during the First World War, noticeably two women were amongst them. During the wars the staff became hatted and uniformed.

The extensive work done on the inaccessible roofs, and the pier and the linkspan, were covered. Such a remarkable job in Greg's opinion. Car ferries were introduced in the 1950s. The goods yard was closed in 1960 owing to the loss of coal traffic.

Eventually the "Friends of Wemyss Bay Station" was formed and adopted the station. The floral displays, rivalling the Botanic Gardens, are back again. The Friends run a second-hand book shop in what was once the first class waiting room. The paintwork is now restored to its original colour.

The bronze statue of a young boy striding happily forth to his holiday destination is another gem on our doorstep. Well worth a visit to see the smile in the eyes of the boy, Bobby.

After questions, a well-earned round of applause was awarded to Greg.

COMMITTEE VISITS TO GROUPS

January and February are the months when the Committee visit various groups, which are not usually attended by a member of the Committee. There will be more reports to follow next month.

REPORT ON VISIT TO DANCE GROUP

The Dance Group, held on a Monday afternoon in the Clark Memorial Church Hall had a visit from a member of the committee (Bob Pattie) on the 22nd January 2018.

Everyone attending this session were obviously enjoying themselves (see photo) and during a brief interlude between dances Bob introduced himself and asked if the Group had any comments on the Group or the OIR in general. The only gripe that was received was that there were not sufficient men attending the Dance Group! An ideal opportunity therefore for you men out there to get your chums to join the OIR and get along and join the Dance Group as there is no doubt you will be assured of a warm welcome.



ENJOY MUSIC

As it was the day before Burns' day, the theme which Ian had chosen was appropriately enough "Hail Caledonia!" The first piece which Ian had recorded for us was by the Scottish Composer, Sir Alexander Mackenzie and the second piece was by Lady Nairn. These were followed by a Scottish Reel which certainly got our feet tapping.

Each piece was preceded by either some background information about the Composer or the music itself.

The Scottish theme would not have been complete without a mention of "Tam O'Shanter". Ian eloquently read a few of the verses of the scene where Tam was being chased, then played some very atmospheric music.

To round off the afternoon Ian had recorded a brass band playing a Scottish Medley.

The Group certainly enjoyed the afternoon and are very appreciative of the time and effort which Ian devotes to choosing and recording the music as well as doing some research on the composer. Thank you to Ian and the Enjoy Music participants for making me so welcome.

Jean Stuart

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

One! One! One!

Yes, our Membership has increased by 111 compared with last year on the same date, 18th January! This is largely due to the sterling efforts of our Membership Secretary Allen Fenton, plus the few who worked so hard to find premises sited in town so prominently, and of course your good selves who encourage your friends and neighbours to join us. Well done all!

Contributions to the Grapevine are always welcome. Drop them in to the office which is open weekday mornings from 10 am. to 12 noon, or ring me, Joan Robinson 01475 675665.

Visit our website: oirlarg.org.uk