

EVELYN (LYNN) MCLAREN

Dancing was a huge part of Lynn's life since she was a very small child. Born in Edinburgh, she was the youngest of ten children. She used to go without her lunch so she could save her dinner money to pay for a weekly dance class. When her parents found out how determined she was they agreed to find the money to pay for lessons.

During the 2nd World war, Lynn found herself posted to Duns in the Scottish Borders as a member of the Land Army with her friend Ella Wynn. On arrival, she was horrified to discover there was no dancing school in the area. She placed a simple advert in a little sweet shop and over 60 youngsters turned up eager to dance. This formed the Lynella Dancing School in 1944.

For decades, she taught ballet, tap and highland dancing throughout the Scottish Borders from Eyemouth, Duns over, the dancers begged her not to return to and Berwick to Coldstream, Kelso and Galashiels. When the war was Edinburgh so she and Ella stayed to continue the dance school. She carried on teaching for over 60 years. Sharing her love of dance with her young pupils was her biggest joy - regardless of their achievements.

Her dancers performed in many shows, concerts and operas throughout the Borders incorporating ballet, tap and highland. She ran many competitions and events throughout the Borders for several years - including the South of Scotland Highland Dancing Championship.

Lynn was an Honorary Member of the SOBHD and formerly part of the Technical Committee. She became an Associate of the BATD in 1957, a Member in 1959 and a Fellow in 1981. Recognising her professional manner, knowledge and beautiful feeling for dance, Miss Sadie Simpson appointed her as an International Examiner in 1986. In 2001 she was presented with the Atholl clasp.

She was always very keen to support her many pupils through their dancing exams with many becoming Associates and Members of the BATD with some also going on to become adjudicators with the SOBHD.

In 2002, Lynn was invited to Edinburgh Castle's Great Hall on the eve of International Women's Day. She was honoured as an 'unsung heroine' by the then Scottish Secretary of State Helen Liddell at a special dinner - for her lifetime's service to promoting traditional Scottish highland dancing. In November 2004, Lynn was joined by past and former pupils at a special Ceilidh to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Lynella Dance School.

After a short illness, in her 90th year, Lynn passed away peacefully on 10th December 2008. She will always be remembered as a lovely lady and an inspirational member of the BATD. A lovely lady who is remembered dearly by us all.