

MARJORY ROWAN

Marjory Rowan lives and for many years taught in Edinburgh. The daughter of SOBHD Founder Member Cissie Tucker, she was closely involved with the SOBHD from its early days. In fact before she ever became a delegate to SOBHD she says as a teenager she often acted as babysitter for children of SOBHD Committee members during their discussions. Her first position with the SOBHD was as delegate for the Victoria (Australia) Scottish Highland Dancing Association.

She was appointed Secretary/Treasurer of the SOBHD (following Elspeth Strathern) and served the Board in that capacity and eventually as Director of Administration for over 50 years. She was a hard taskmaster who acted strictly to the rules and regulations of the Board. While her manner could be brusque she always acted fairly and to the letter of the rules and constitution. For many years she virtually ran the SOBHD single-handed from one of the bedrooms of her home in Bruntsfield, Edinburgh. Only after the introduction of the Registration Schemes did she agree to take on a part time assistant.

Through her position as Board secretary, Marjory dealt with Brigadier Alasdair MacLean (former Chairman and President of the SOBHD and also the Director and Producer of the Edinburgh Military Tattoo). To say he was a character is an understatement. For instance, we are told he phoned one evening to invite Marjory and her husband to cocktails the following Sunday and on hearing of a problem over baby sitters said just bring the children. Big Mistake! When Marjory arrived complete with baby and carry cot plus two children, Mrs MacLean (who had been taught dancing by Cissie Tucker and who had three children of her own), was unperturbed but the Brigadier was not amused. The instruction was 'put THAT in another room on a bed'. His lounge was a treasure trove of goodies with drums and tables all around the room. While her sons played and banged on all the drums her daughter went round lifting and examining all the other trophies. The visit did not last long.

A week before the Brigadier's death Marjory received a phone call from Mrs MacLean asking her to take a taxi round to the house. When she arrived Mrs MacLean was at the door with her coat on and said simply 'he's in that room and the best of luck'. There was no good morning greeting from the Brigadier in the bed just the instruction 'sort' meaning the multitude of papers spread all over the bed. It took quite a few hours to 'sort it' into piles for the Army, the Tattoo, the SOBHD etc. When finished she was instructed to go to the stair and see if Mrs MacLean had returned. She had not so Marjory was instructed to go into the lounge and bring back a bottle of whisky and two

glasses. Marjory didn't drink whisky and asked if he was allowed it. "I don't give a bugger, just go and get it" was the reply. She had a drink with him and when his wife returned he gave Marjory a hug and she left. He died five days later.

Marjory herself was a major Championship and competition winner and over the years along with her mother in the Tucker-Rowan School then on her own taught many Champions including World Champions. (She is pictured here with the British Championship Trophy.)

In the early 1950's Marjory worked in a legal office and one day was told by the boss Mr Nightingale, to put on her "Shawl and Bonnet" and come with me in the car. She had no idea where she was going and her boss didn't speak in the car. They arrived at the house and the door was opened by former SOBHD President Dr MacLaren. He greeted Mr Nightingale and then spotted Marjory. Mr Nightingale was surprised that his client should know Marjory. On that day, Marjory was there to witness signatures on the papers before being dispatched to the car. On the return journey Mr Nightingale asked about Highland Dancing. Dr MacLaren had told him that Marjory shouldn't have to work on a Saturday as she was very good at this Highland Dancing and needed Saturdays to compete. A few days later, he sent for Marjory and she was told to report to him every Monday about any competitions she had attended and if she needed the next Saturday off. Her boss became really interested in Highland Dancing, never having heard of it before that visit to Dr MacLaren. Marjory rarely worked Saturdays after that day.

Until she retired from the Worldwide Judging panel, and as her SOBHD duties allowed, Marjory was in demand as a judge and examiner and travelled extensively throughout the United Kingdom, North America and Europe. Marjory also started and until recently was the only organiser of the Commonwealth Championship, one of the oldest of the SOBHD recognised Championships held in Scotland.