

LOVAT HOTEL - PERTH

25 February 1995

The 38th annual re-union of Past-Presidents was held in the Lovat Hotel, Perth on the evening of Saturday 25th February 1995.

This followed the 97th Annual General Meeting of the Association held in Dewar's Rinks, Perth earlier that day.

Those attending were as follows

John Gunning (1957)

George Prescott (1964)

Alex Spence (1967) and Necca

John Neil (1973) and Margaret

Leslie Turberville (1974) and Ruby

Peter Hearty (1975 and 1988)

Mary Black (1976 and 1977)

Alan Robertson (1979) and Sheena

Jim Thomson (1980) and Chris

Mae Hearty (1981)

Don Hawthorn (1983) and Carol

Jack Snowden (1984) and Alberta

Douglas Cape (1985) and Amy

Norman Beattie (1986)

Andrew Taylor (1987) and Nan

Don McGillivray (1989) and Nancy

George Philp (1991) and Agnes

Jill Cochran (1992) and Gordon

Winnie Ferguson (1993) and George

~~John~~ Helen Braaten (1994)

Isobel Smith and Margaret McWhir were most welcome guests as widows of two past presidents of the Association.

Winnie Ferguson who in conjunction with Alex Speare had made arrangements for the weekend, presided at the dinner. New attendance records were set 35 in all being present and 20 out of 21 Past Presidents attending. The only one missing was Tom Nelson (1982).

It was a matter of regret that the newly elected President for 1995 - Bid Black - had been prevented by a ^{rowing} back injury from attending both the Annual General Meeting and the Past-Presidents Function. Notwithstanding, it was great to have Mary his wife present at both functions - she had even managed to rip

home and see him in between. No doubt in true wifely fashion - attending to his creature comforts!!!

After pre-prandial drinks, the company sat down at the festive board which was arranged in a rectangle so that all could see - and be seen!!

Winnie Ferguson welcomed everyone and expressed thanks to Alex Spence for his assistance to her - also mentioning that Alex had now completed 50 years as a ~~member of the S.A.A.~~ official and almost 60 years as a member of the Association.

George Prescott was then called upon and obliged with the Selkirk Grace of Robbii Burns.

There followed an excellent meal - good food and wine - well served. After coffee and the Loyal Toast, the Senior Past-President John Gunning rose to propose the toast to the Scottish Amateur Swimming Association, Scotland, although numerically a small nation had in swimming - as in other walks of life - accomplished great things. He instanced Sir Peter Hearty who had been a worthy and effective ambassador for our sport throughout the world. In the resurgence of sport after World War 2, Scotland had not been found wanting. Nowadays, though the Amateur concept of

taking part in sport for pleasure or the physical benefits it brought were under threat from professionalism and the intemperance of performance enhancing drugs, he was confident that the Association would continue to strive to live up to the best ideals for the young club swimmer as well as for the international competitor. He invited the company to drink to the future of the Association and those charged with the responsibility for its development.

Winnie Ferguson then expressed sadness that Bill Black the new President could not be with us to reply to the toast. She paid tribute to Bill in a short "This is YOUR LIFE" speech in which she traced his ~~invaluable~~ progress through school and service life in the R.A.F. to his arrival in Dundee where he began his long involvement with the S.A.S.A. His candidature as a Club, District and Water Polo official - as Secretary of the Association for some 20 odd years - had been immense and he fully deserved the honour of being made President. She was sure that the whole company would join her in wishing him an enjoyable and successful year of office.

Mary Black thanked the company for their good wishes. She reported seeing Bill after the AGM and prior to the dinner. While regretting that he had missed out on this big day in his life, he was content that all had gone well at the meeting. Mary then delivered the reply which Bill was to have given to the toast. He recalled his enjoyment of attending previous Past Presidents Dinners as a Spouse and unofficial photographer. He wondered how he had got so far in swimming particularly since in his early days - a Senior Council Member had admonished him "You will never get anywhere in swimming if you don't drink". He recalled sayings of certain former presidents and mentioned some of his own attempts at constitutional reform including the time that he was defeated by 200 votes to 1 - NOT EVEN his spouse would second his proposal. However the Association was now set in a new direction and had a new structure. While expansion and progress were most laudable aims ~~the~~ he hoped that the slogan "Safety, FUN and FITNESS" would not be forgotten. One of the attractions of the Past Presidents Dinner was that it keeps the element of fun to the fore. Having

enjoyed being included in past occasions, he looked forward to playing his part in the future.

To complete the formal part of the evening it was agreed to send cards to those prevented by illness from attending - viz.

Ruby Prescott

Isobel Beattie

Bill Black

At a certain stage in the proceedings (not recorded) the Scribe (Les Turberville) read his account of the 1944 Dinner - held in Edinburgh. This was subject to the usual ribaldry but as no one saw fit to improve on the written words they were adopted as the only record for posterity.

Members of the company were informed that ~~a dance~~ there was dancing in the Hotel should they wish to attend. However age; the effects of a long day; or an excess of food and drink seemed to deter the lads and lassies from showing their nimbleness on the dance floor and anecdotal recollections were traded across the tables.

untill 11 p.m.

Before the evening closed it was pointed out that the 1996 A.G.M. (or Congress) would be held in the North District. The mantle of organising the Past Presidents Function therefore fell on Jill Cochran who - as was to be expected - accepted gracefully.

Winnie Ferguson was thanked for the efficient manner in which she had presided: notwithstanding that this duty coupled with the responsibility for calculating and collecting the financial dues in respect of the evening's entertainment had led to no little degree of confusion at the top table.

Nevertheless the evening had been one of companionship and fun (as mentioned by Bill Black) which the Past Presidents and their spouses have come to expect on these happy re-unions.