

PAST PRESIDENTS DINNER 2001

The 44th Annual Dinner of the Past Presidents took place in the Buchanan Suite of the Jarvis Ingram Hotel, Glasgow on Friday 23 February 2001. Eighteen of the Past Presidents, together with ten spouses, two widows of past presidents and the president-elect were present – thirty-one persons in all. The list of those attending is as follows:-

John Gunning	1957	
John Neil	1973	Margaret
Leslie Turberville	1974	Ruby
Peter Heatly	1975/1988	
Mary Black	1976/1977	
Allan Robertson	1979	Sheena
Mae (Cochrane)Heatly	1981	
Jack Snowdon	1984	
Andrew Taylor	1987	Nan
Donald McGillivray	1989	Nancy
George Philp	1991	Agnes
Jill Cochran	1992	Gordon
Winnie Ferguson	1993	George
Helen Brunton	1994	
William Black	1995	
Norman Grierson	1996	Myra
Robin Dale	1998/1999	
Ron Taylor	2000	Sheena
	1978	Isobel Smith
	1997	Jean Hoare

Sandy Brunton President Elect 2001

There was a prompt gathering of those attending at 7.30pm to participate in a quiet drink and a not-so-quiet chat before the dinner commenced at 8pm. Robin Dale, who had made the arrangements for the dinner, welcomed everyone and, in particular, Sandy Brunton who was to be installed as President the following day. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, Sandy's wife Lorna had been prevented from attending although it was hoped that she would be able to travel to the Awards Dinner the next day.

Robin intimated, with regret, that Alex Spence was missing his first Presidents Dinner since his installation in 1967. His wife Netta had had a

stroke earlier in the week and although things did not seem as bad as originally feared, naturally Alex did not feel able to come. Apologies had also been received from Jim Thomson (1980) Tom Nelson (1982), Don Hawthorn (1983) and Douglas Cape (1985).

After an excellent four-course meal, coffee was served and chairman Robin proposed the Loyal Toast. Possibly as an aid to digestion the Scribe Les Turberville was then called upon to read his account of the previous year's dinner held in Aberdeen. Fortunately no one appeared to question Peter Heatly's proposal that these Minutes be adopted.

After a short break the serious business of the evening got under way with Bill Black proposing the toast to the SASA. He prefaced his remarks by saying that it was a rare occasion in the Black household for him to be allowed to make the speeches so he had accepted Robin's invitation with alacrity. In his remarks, Bill drew on his long and varied experience with the Association, recalling his early days with Clydebank ASC and in particular an inter-club competition with Portobello when he was called upon to compete against Peter Heatly a current Scottish champion.

Early days in Water Polo involved a Jubilee League match with Warrender when, at the usual after-match festivities at a local hostelry, Bill being under age was sipping his lemonade when he was advised by a worthy opponent in all seriousness "If you don't drink, laddie, you'll never get anywhere in swimming."

In the 1950s Bill's work took him to Dundee when he joined the Belmont Club and also Ye Ancient Amphibians training in the Tay along with such as Netta and Alex Spence whose absence that evening he regretted. Returning to Clydebank, he was variously Club Secretary, Coach, District Secretary before becoming the Association's Secretary for some twenty years from the 1970s. From his long involvement with GB, LEN and FINA he learned of the high regard in which Scottish Swimming was held stemming from the post-war days of Jock Coutts whose name was a by-word in swimming circles. Two highlights of Bill's period as Association Secretary were the Edinburgh Commonwealth Games in 1986 and the Association's centenary year in 1988.

In recent years the expansion of the sport had demanded professional administration but it still received the enthusiastic support of hundreds of dedicated amateur officials in Club District and National activities. It was good to see family traditions well to the fore and this was illustrated in the appointment of Sandy Brunton who was to be installed President the

following day. Though there were precedents in husbands and wives gaining this distinction, this was the first case of a son succeeding his mother since Helen who was present had held the position in 1994. Bill invited the company to join with him in wishing Sandy happiness in his year of office and the Association much success and progress in the next twelve months.

Sandy in his reply, thanked the Past Presidents for their kind invitation to the function that evening. He was sorry that unforeseen events, namely his son's chickenpox, had prevented his wife Lorna from accompanying him although she hoped to be able to make arrangements to be at the Awards Dinner the following night.

Like the previous speaker, Bill, he recalled his own introduction into swimming some 34 years ago on joining Renfrew Aqua in a year when Alex Spence had been President of the SASA. His wife, Lorna, had swum in the North District and he produced a photograph of her receiving a trophy from Les Turberville, President of that district in the early seventies. Sandy, himself, had moved to that District and became involved in coaching and administration becoming District Secretary and later President. On his appointment the next day, he could claim to be the most northerly of Scottish Presidents and there was no doubt that residing as he did in Inverness he would be involved in a lot of travelling although he was not unused to that. He was lucky to have the support of his wife and there was no doubt he would be counting on his mother for bed and breakfast on his numerous visits to the West District.

Sandy said that the next twelve months would see the completion of the National Swimming Academy at Stirling with the administration also moving to new office accommodation there. This should be of great benefit to Scottish Swimming. It had been good, that evening, to meet so many people with whom he had grown up in the Sport over the years. The warmth of the welcome and the excellent meal augured well for the times ahead in the knowledge of support he could call upon if required.

The remainder of the evening was more to do with business than our customary informality. There were two topics for discussion. The first concerned the placement of the Past Presidents Dinner into the AGM week-end as a consequence of the Awards Dinner taking place on the Saturday evening. Following last year's discussion, the Scribe had made written representation to Council and discussions had taken place between the Administration and our District Representatives. The outcome was that the Awards Dinners are to continue on Saturday nights,

this being the most suitable to the Sponsors. It was felt important for the Past Presidents Dinner to continue and to this end the sum of £500 had been made available from Sponsorship money towards the administration and promotional costs of the Dinner. Half of this sum had been used to meet the deposit required by the Hotel. The matter was well discussed and, although certain members were not too happy, it was accepted that the Past Presidents Dinner would be held on the eve of the AGM.

The second matter for debate was in connection with the Association flag. Members would recall that the Past Presidents had donated a flag to the Association on the occasion of its centenary in 1988. Unfortunately, through lack of proper handling its condition had deteriorated and was not fit for display. The opinions of certain past presidents had been sought and a new flag had been purchased (together with a set of washing instructions) at a cost of £246. While the Association was not soliciting this, it had been suggested that perhaps the Past Presidents might wish to repeat their previous gesture. There was general approval that this should be so. A letter was read from Alex Spence in which he intimated that the balance of around £100 from the George Prescott legacy could be made available for this purpose. However those present were strongly of the view that this would conflict with the spirit of the legacy. Therefore, assuming that the absentee members would contribute, the cost per head would be £11. It was agreed that the Scribe write to them and that in the meantime the purchase price be paid to the Association and that the new flag be formally presented by John Gunning and Peter Heatly, on behalf of the Past Presidents, at the start of the Congress/AGM the next day.

The scribe then got his head down collecting the monies from those present so that Robin was able to pay the Hotel bill. By this time the hour had arrived for the proceedings to be wound up in view of the business the following day. No doubt a few hardy spirits would continue into the small hours.

It was intimated that next year's AGM, although nominally due to be hosted by the East District, would in all probability be held at Stirling to enable members to see the new Association offices and National Swimming Academy which were scheduled to be in operation by that time. Nevertheless, it was felt that tradition should be maintained and the most recent past president of the East District be accorded the honour of making the arrangements for the Past Presidents Dinner. Ron Taylor although obviously overwhelmed, accepted the responsibility. Before departing, the members thanked Robin Dale for this year's excellent arrangements.