

**SASA Past President's Association
Annual Dinner 2018 – Royal Hotel, Bridge of Allan**

Minutes of the 61st SASA Past President's Association Annual Dinner held at the Royal Hotel, Bridge of Allan on Saturday 24 February 2018 after 7.30pm

Present: Mary Black (1976, 1977) and Bill Black (1995)
Don Hawthorne (1983) and Carole
Jill Cochrane (1992) and Gordon
Norman Grierson (1996) and Myra
Robin Dale (1998, 1999) and Jennifer
Blair Prentice (2003) and Ann
Helen Murray (2004) and Stuart
Allan Fletcher (2007, 2008) and Monica
Bob Reekie (2009) and Evelyn
Doris Mair (2010) and Michael
Neil Valentine (2011) and Issy
John Deans (2012) and Tricia
Elizabeth Stewart (2016)
Margaret Somerville (2017) and Gordon

Guest of Honour

The SASA President, Alison Low (2018) was unable to attend due to having another engagement when she received the invite. She sent her apologies.

There were several apologies tabled for everyone to read. They were from:-

Jack Snowdon (1984)
Isobel Smith, widow of Peter Smith (1978)
George Philp (1991) and Agnes
Jean Hoare, widow of Derrik Hoare (1997)
Sheena Taylor, widow of Ron Taylor (2000)
Sandy Brunton (2001) and Lorna
Stewart Davidson (2002) and Joan
Tom Tracy (2005) and Sadie
Sheila Hitchen, widow of Jim Hitchen (2006)
Gina Logan (2013)
David Downie (2014) and Susie

John Deans, who stepped in to organise the dinner, welcomed everyone to the change of venue, the wonderfully refurbished and luxurious Royal Hotel, Bridge of Allan, where the function rooms are superbly laid out and tastefully decorated and the rooms just leave you speechless. He added that Alison had been very apologetic at not being able to attend as she was catching a flight south immediately after the AGM. This had been arranged between the postponement of the dinner and its resurrection. John wished Alison well for her year in office.

John then asked everyone to spend a few moments of reflection for Winnie Ferguson (1993) whose funeral took place on Tuesday only a few days before today's AGM.

John added that we had again received a generous subsidy from the Company this year and that he would work out the amounts due from the attendees later on. This year's little extra on the table were Easter eggs and John added that the recipients were very welcome to swap with each other. I took it he meant the eggs.

John then asked the Rev Don Hawthorn to say grace.

Don thanked John for the invite and said a grace from his long repertoire of humorous graces. Maybe he should consider publishing a book of them – he could call it “Amazing Graces”.

After grace those assembled proceeded to enjoy a lovely meal with plenty of options and copious amounts of liquid to help wash it all down and rounded off with tea and coffee. From the continuous buzz of conversations around the table the evening seemed to be going down very well.

After the meal John intimated that the cost would be the staggering amount of £25 per head. He followed this up by announcing that there would be a short comfort break after which the Scribe, Blair Prentice, would be invited to read the minutes of the 2017 Dinner.

Blair then read out another masterpiece of fiction, to rival those penned by Enid Blyton. The tale was masquerading as an accurate account of the 2017 Dinner held at the Stirling Court Hotel. The minutes seemed to be acceptable and were proposed by Doris Mair and seconded by Tricia Deans.

The Scribe added that the 2018 Dinner was to be organised by the Midland District and the most recent Past President from there was Eddie Wilmott who had not managed to join us this evening. Neil Valentine, being the next most recent Midland’s Past President assured the company that the Midlands District would take their turn and organise the dinner.

John then invited Doris Mair to propose the Toast to the SASA.

Doris began by thanking John for stepping in and organising the 2018 dinner at such short notice and also thanked Scottish Swimming for their generous contribution to the evening’s proceedings an action she hoped would continue for many years to come.

Doris reminded everyone that the last time she made this Toast was in 2014 when David Downie was taking on the Presidential Mantle when David reminded her that “What happens in the North stays in the North”. The same applies this year so Alison can relax.

Doris noted that one of her swimming highlights was the Commonwealth Games in 2014 and she added that the next games were only five weeks away. She asked the company to join her in wishing all the athletes and staff the very best of luck and she hoped that they would enjoy themselves as well as performing to their full potential.

Doris then reiterated Alison’s disappointment at not being able to present, Doris then proceeded to tell a few details of Alison’s involvement in swimming. Surprisingly enough, it started with her children going to Learn to Swim classes, Alison, as a parent, getting involved and eventually taking over the helm at Aberdeen Dolphins when the coach left. Alison is currently an integral part of Aberdeen ASC and has held most posts over the years. She is currently the Head Coach for the training squads and Head Teacher for the LTS scheme. Her motto is “Do as I do - Do as I say”. Alison keeps herself fully up to date with current coaching and teaching practices.

At District level Alison was the North District President in 2007 and has now reached the pinnacle of SASA President – a role to which she will bring a lot of practical swimming knowledge.

Doris asked everyone to raise a glass and toast the SASA.

John thanked Doris for stepping in (it seemed to be a theme for the night – maybe someone will step in as Scribe!) with a very appropriate toast and asked Margaret, on behalf of Alison, to reply to the Toast.

Margaret, for the second year in a row gave the reply to the Toast. She started by saying she would keep it brief – and she did.

Margaret thanked Doris for her kind words about Alison and added that having had Alison as her Vice President for the past year she was confident that Alison was a “safe pair of hands” to take over the helm of the association. Margaret added that Alison was going to have her hands full in the coming year with a new Chair coming on Board for the Company, being a member of the District Reorganisation group and a member of the Membership group which had to complete the four year review of membership for the 2019 AGM.

Margaret added that Alison was going to have to chair Council and steer them through the changes following today’s AGM– luckily she was a strong minded woman who would be able to handle the role. Margaret wished her all the best for the coming year.

John spoke a bit about how the Districts operated in the past and how they now needed to become more meaningful. He asked Margaret to speak about the Future for the Districts with particular reference to the Current District Review.

Margaret quickly intimated that the review was about the role and the method of operation of the Districts and not about any geographical review into the number, size or make up of the Districts. She added that there were two main areas of focus for the review – making the District attractive and relevant to young people and trying to attract Youth Leaders into taking a more active role in the Districts. She added that there was still a role for Life Members.

She concluded by adding that the other part of the review, trying to get more commonality in the workings of the District and in their Governance was equally important and also a challenge.

John thanked Margaret and opened the evening up to Business – Competent or Otherwise.

Don started it off by saying that it was a shame that Alison was missing her special event.

Mary Black then took to the floor reminiscing about being the first Lady President and how Bob Don described her before going on to relate a few more true stories of her escapades in the world of Synchro Swimming.

Don ended the formal proceedings with a vote of thanks to John Deans for organising the evening.

There followed a photo shoot before the Dinner finished at approximately 11.00pm.

Thank you
Scribe, Blair Prentice.

Can I just add.

According to the allocated order - North, West, East and Midland, the 2020 Dinner should be organised by the North District and Alison Low will be their newest Past President and so will have the honour of organising it.

With the change of Scottish Swimming’s AGM to September from 2020 and the Awards planned to take place on the same evening we need to discuss what format our 2020 Dinner will take and when we will hold it – the Friday night before the AGM, a different weekend, other options.