



# SUTHERLAND FLORAL ART CLUB

## 25th ANNIVERSARY

The Inaugural Meeting of Sutherland Floral Art Club was held in the Royal Marine Hotel, Brora on 6th March, 1969. Nine people attended and from them the first Chairman, Mrs. M. Dudgeon, Craikaig, was elected with Mrs. B. Partington as Secretary and Mrs. E. Traill as Treasurer. The first Minute Book cost 4/11 (about 25p), Annual Subscription was 30/- (£1.50) and visitors were to pay 4/- (20p). In October, 1969, the Countess of Sutherland agreed to become our President. From this small beginning the Club has slowly but surely developed until now we are holding our 25th Anniversary Dinner. Meetings have been held at a variety of venues between Dornoch and Helmsdale, but mainly in Golspie and Brora. Meetings of the Management Committee were initially held in various hotels but then in Committee Members' homes, as is still the case today. The Meetings of the Club have, over the years been for the benefit of

Members and guests - demonstrations, tutorials, slide shows, film shows, Question Times, etc but the Club has also been involved in providing Floral Art for a wide range of causes - Dunrobin Castle, Bonar Bridge Salmon Queen Week, Young Farmers' Dinners, Dornoch Street Fayre, the Highland Show at Ingliston, Ring of Fair Flowers in shops in East Sutherland, weddings, funerals, opening of the Dornoch Firth Bridge, a variety of churches, not least Dornoch Cathedral in 1969, 1977 and 1989, to mention a few; we had hardly drawn breath when we were invited to participate in the Sutherland Agricultural Show. This has always been a very large project, with a different theme each year, and one that has continued for twenty five years! It is now the greatest fund raiser for the Club, not least because of the generosity of the Show Committee in covering our expenses; it has not been without its hiccups, with lack of space

being a recurrent theme, and an episode of vandalism in 1985 on the night before the Show when irreparable damage was done. Needless to say, every time the Show Committee came up with the answer.

As to the Club itself it has had its high points and its low points. One low point was in 1978 when Club finances were not in good shape and there was difficulty in getting Members to serve on the Committee, another was in 1984 when doubts were raised about the Club continuing due to poor attendances at Meetings, despite having been awarded the 'Flower Arranger' Salver in 1983 for the highest additional sales of the magazine, and by then finances were sound enough. What the high points were depend on the individual Member but in addition to the hard work put into Flower Arranging a number of highly enjoyable outings took place - Inverewe Gardens in 1971, Dundonell Gardens in 1977, Aviemore in 1980, and certainly Eden Court in 1981 when 30 out of the Membership of 34 turned out to see Derek Bridges' work, and a full bus load to Eden Court again in 1989, this time to see George Smith. Eventually it was realised that Golspie was central to the Membership and attempts were made to find a fixed venue there for Club Meetings. Golspie Golf Club was regarded as ideal but could not accommodate us between April and September, our main season; eventually we settled in the Sutherland Arms Hotel for a number of years until moving to the Stag's Head Hotel fairly recently. At first we were

mostly complete beginners and tutorials were frequent in the early days. These were abandoned in 1976 due to poor support but revived again in 1978 by popular request, still continuing from time to time. Not all projects were a success - a library for Members opened in 1972 was closed in 1973 with the proceeds just 60p. A Christmas Fayre held at different times in Golspie and Rogart was held for a year or so but abandoned due to poor attendances in poor weather, although the takings were quite good. At one point the Club's hessian disappeared, although it did turn up later. This had cost 24p/yard from Hunters of Brora in 1972.

While many individuals have given freely of their time and energy to the Club over the years some must be singled out for special mention - Mrs.M.Dudgeon, first Chairman, responsible for many of the early tutorials; Mrs.M.Douglas, responsible for many of the later tutorials, twice Chairman and also Treasurer for three years; Mr.Riddle, Treasurer 1977-79, who sadly died in office but not before he had put the Club's finances on a sound basis which continues to this day; Mrs.C.Coyle who put the Sales Table on a business footing, with impressive results for our bank balance, followed on equally impressively by Mrs.K.Miller. At one time Members were asked to collect Demonstrators and provide hospitality - an allowance for £5 high tea, bed and breakfast was paid by the Club. This was not popular with anyone and now the Club provides hotel

accommodation. Attendances must be rising as it is reported that the sandwich makers now need four loaves compared with only two a few years ago, although there could be another explanation for this! As result of so many efforts the Club is thriving, with 60 Members now, the present subscription of £12 with a charge of £3 for visitors being a reflection of inflation and increased costs over the last twenty five years, not least

for the great distances many of our Demonstrators have to travel to get here. It is still excellent value at £1.70 per Meeting including tea. Also it must be remembered that over the years the Club has made many contributions to charity, indeed that is part of its function, and Members have given freely of their time to many organisations to arrange Floral Art - and so to the Anniversary Dinner, and the next 25 years!

#### OFFICE BEARERS

##### CHAIRMEN

1969-71 Mrs.M.Dudgeon  
 1971-73 Mrs.P.Macdonald  
 1973-76 Mrs.M.Douglas  
 1976-79 Mr.D.Waterhouse  
 1979-82 Mrs.B.Nicol  
 1982-85 Mrs.J.Gozzett  
 1985-88 Mrs.M.Douglas  
 1988-91 Mrs.I.Macleod  
 1991- Mrs.K.Munro

##### SECRETARIES

1969-70 Mrs.Partington  
 1970-72 Mrs.Ford  
 1972-76 Mrs.Woolcombe  
 1976-79 Mrs.B.Vicker  
 1979-82 Mrs.P.Bannerman  
 1982-85 Mrs.D.Smyth  
 1985-86 Mrs.J.Gozzett  
 1986-90 Mrs.N.Lochoe  
 1991- Mrs.P.Bluck

##### TREASURERS

1969-72 Mrs.E.Traill  
 1972-73 Mrs.M.Douglas  
 1973-75 Mrs.D.Gozzett  
 1975-77 Mrs.J.Cox  
 1977 Mrs.Macdonald  
 1977-79 Mr.Riddle  
 1979-82 Mrs.Sutherland  
 1982-85 Mrs.J.Willis  
 1985-88 Mrs.J.Johnson  
 1988-93 Mrs.H.Ewan  
 1993- Mrs.B.MacMillan