

Atholl Clasp
Christine E Aitken
Independent member of the SOBHD and adjudicator

I have been involved in dance since the age of 3. Firstly I studied Highland with Miss Nancy Dickson, and studied Tap, Ballet and Modern Dance with my Theatre branch teacher, Miss Effie Drummond. Both these teachers taught in my home town of Paisley. In later years I took lessons in Highland from Mrs Jessie Stewart Haggarty MBE.

I competed regularly at many Highland competitions and Stage Festivals. In 1957 I won the 10 years Scottish Championship at the Cowal Highland Games and was successful in many other competitions. 56 years of teaching dancing is almost a lifetime, but it doesn't seem that long as I am doing something I love and am passionate about.

Much of my time is devoted to my involvement in Highland dancing. As a delegate to the SOBHD, I represented the BATD both at SOBHD General meetings and at Technical and Judges committee meetings. At present I am an Independent Member on the Technical Committee and serve as Convenor on the Judges Committee.

From 2015 until 2018 I was President of the BATD, an office I held with pride. I am and have been for many years an examiner of the BATD and served on their Highland and Stage and Ballet Committees. Until recently I taught several dance styles, but now I teach Highland dancing only. However my love for all genres of dance will never leave me.

What an honour and a privilege to be the 2018 recipient of the Atholl Clasp. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would be worthy of this wonderful award. To be alongside many wonderful worthy recipients whom I have always looked up to for their expertise and dedication to the world of Highland Dancing is living the dream.

Thank you to the Atholl Dancing Association for this award which I will cherish for ever.