

At the age of 6 along with my three sisters I spent my first year learning Highland Dancing under May Mathews and her daughter Jean. Our parents were keen for all our family to enjoy our Scottish Heritage.

The next 7 years we danced with Margo Kerr a N.Z. teacher who also taught us Ballet. During this time I was most successful in our local area. Sometimes Nance and I would venture to the Highland Games at Tamworth, Grafton or Inverell - wherever the overnight train would take us.

When our lovely teacher returned to N.Z. I travelled to Sydney to further my dancing with the amazing Dorothy Kerr, who soon became my second mum. I stayed with her every second weekend and she fostered my dancing career and passion for Highland Dancing as only she can do. I went on to win every Championship in N.S.W. and finally in 1959 the Adult Grand Australasian Champ. With her amazing foresight Mrs. Kerr then opened the door for me to take lessons with three times World Champion J.L. McKenzie in Aberdeen. My hometown of Newcastle raised the money for me to fulfil my dream to dance in Bonnie Scotland.

In 1960 at the age of 21 I sailed for 5 weeks on the S.S. ORONSAY to London then on the Flying Scotsman straight to Aberdeen. I enjoyed 4 hour lessons with J.L. every day for several weeks then with the help of my dear friend Katie Forsyth and her son Billy I was able to travel all over Scotland to compete at the Games. Finally on to Dunoon where I was given a lap of honour driving around the arena with the Australian Flag flying as I was the first overseas dancer to win the Adult World Championship.

Next I was flying off to New York as lead dancer along with Billy Forsyth in the show "CALEDONIA" Singers and Dancers of Scotland touring U.S.A. and Canada for five months. We travelled by coach through 32 States doing one night shows.

The next 50 years I have spent promoting Highland Dancing in Australia. I have trained many champions including Justine Daly who was 8 times Grand Australian Champion and won fifth place in the Adult World Championship.

I have enjoyed travelling Australia Judging, Teaching at Workshops and Examining for the N.D.A. as well as Judging overseas in Scotland, Canada and N.Z.

In 1993 I was awarded the honour of Duine Uasal by the Celtic Council of Australia for my services to the Scottish Arts.

I used to live to dance!                      Now I dance to live!

Thank you for the memories.

Flora.