



Gold Badge Citation: Nicolas Broadbridge

Nic was born in 1941 and music and dance have been a theme throughout his adult life. From an early age he joined his mother in English Country Dancing in Surrey. Whilst not immediately taking to the dancing, he loved the music. For Nic, the music comes first, always underpinning the dance. He started to play the accordion for dancing when he was 15, he already played the piano. His first paid engagement playing for dance was as musician to the Cobham Evening Institute class (which had been started in 1923 by Susannah Sharp, Cecil's younger daughter). One evening when the caller failed to show up, he took the class and discovered the delights of teaching and playing.

Nic originally trained as a horticulturist at Cambridge University Botanic Garden and Pershore Institute of Horticulture in Worcestershire. As a student Nic joined the Cambridge Morris Men and the Round and then London Pride who combined Morris and English Country Dancing.

In the 1960s, he joined the Whirligigs Display team led by Marjorie Fennessy. Through this connection, he met and worked with Pat Shaw at Cecil Sharp House.

In 1969, Nic and Nell married and moved to Scotland, initially to Crarae on Loch Fyne and then to their present home near Lanark. For many years Nic has been a pioneer in championing English Country Dance in Scotland, running groups in Edinburgh and Glasgow starting in 1982 with 'The Glasgow Assembly' and then later 'The Edinburgh Assembly'. These English Country Dance classes are held on alternate weeks and participants travel far to attend them. They also do outreach at local festivals and Nic is associated with Blind Dance, teaching for Confidence (Blind Dance's Social successor).

He and Nell have arranged an annual Ball for over 30 years. Each Ball has a topical theme which informs his choice of dances e.g. a Purcell



Ball in 1995 to mark the 300th anniversary of Purcell's death featuring dances to Purcell's tunes. These Balls have attracted individuals and groups not only from England but from Belgium, Germany, Sweden and Norway as well as from as far afield as Japan, Australia, USA and Russia. In 2017 Nic ran a Pat Shaw Ball which helped celebrate the 100th anniversary of Pat's birth. Nic also runs an annual spring workshop weekend of dance in Edinburgh, inviting other well-known international teachers of dance to lead these courses.

Nic teaches and plays his accordion for the regular Assembly meetings but for the yearly Balls he enlists his son, Aidan (who plays the fiddle) and Brian Prentice (who is the piano accompanist for the Scottish National Ballet). Together they play at Balls and other events around England and Wales as 'The Assembly Players'. When Nic is the M.C. for these evenings, Aidan and Brian play as 'A&B'.

'The Assembly Players' play on recordings made by Nic, both of the music from the Balls and other themed sets of dances. He has directed and led the band on numerous recordings of ECD and Scottish Ceilidh dance, always approaching dances as a musician first. If the tune is not good, the dance is abandoned. He is a composer of tunes and dances and a researcher into Historical Dance, being a bridge between ECD and Early Dance. (He wrote the introduction to the country dance volume in the Nonsuch Historical Dance series.) His publications include 'The Assembly Dances' (original dances and tunes), 'Purcell's Dancing Master' (the first collection of dances to Henry Purcell's music) and 'The Fallibroome Collection' for the EFDSS (a completely new edition in one volume). Nic has also edited the music for a number of books of dances, which have been prepared for publication by Antony Heywood, including 'Holland as seen in the English Country Dance', 'New Wine in Old Bottles', 'English or Double Dutch' and the recent Pat Shaw's 'Another Look at Playford'.

As well as being a favourite on the English dance and festival circuits, Nic has an international reputation both in Europe and the USA. He leads events run by the NVS throughout Holland, Germany and Belgium and regularly appears at festivals and special events such as the Fall



Ball in San Francisco and on both coasts of America where he is in great demand both as a M.C. and as band leader.

Nic has contributed enormously to the continuance of English Country Dancing throughout England, Scotland and Wales (where he has run weekends of Pat Shaw dances) as well as internationally. By his regular classes and workshops in Scotland and other appearances throughout England, Europe and the USA and his regular appearances at Festivals as an English Country Dance teacher, caller and musician, Nic Broadbridge is surely worthy of the Gold Badge of the English Folk Dance and Song Society for his services to English Dance and Music both in the UK and Internationally.

I have known Nic since 1965 so have watched the development of most of these activities. We were introduced by Marjorie Fennessy as we were both members of the Whirligigs Dance Group.

Brenda Godrich



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