

Maleny Debutante Ball 1949



Back Row: ?, Mary Cash, Helen Elliot
Front: Miriam Goodwin

MALENY'S CHARMING DEBUTANTES

Presented to the State President

Maleny's new Memorial Hall, situated on the banks of the Obi Obi Creek, presented a scene of colour and animation on the evening of Friday, October 8, when twenty-five very charming young ladies made their debut. They were presented to Queensland's R.S.S.A.I.L.A. President, Mr. R. D. Huish, C.B.E., by the Matron of Honour, Mrs. M. MacDonald.

The people of Maleny and District must have felt proud as they witnessed the cream of their youth promenading prior to the presentation. Not only did the debutantes do themselves and their teacher credit by their deportment, but their escorts went through their paces without faltering at any stage during the evening.

Maleny's young men proved once more that the days of chivalry are not past. Perhaps their beautiful partners added to the determination of each that there should be no faltering and there was not.

Accompanying the State president were Messrs. R. Andrew (State vice-president), G. J. Angell (State secretary), G. C. Melsom (assistant State secretary), and J. C. McWatters (editor, "Queensland Digger"). The official party, which left Brisbane on the afternoon of the ball, arrived in time for dinner. They were met by Mr. S. Langton (president of the Maleny Sub-branch) and other officials, and after dinner were the guests of the sub-branch's executive officials. They returned next day.

No wonder the evening was such an outstanding success. How else could it be in such delightful surroundings? The Memorial Hall, an imposing building, met the eye on entry to the town from Brisbane. Originally an Air Force building in use in Maryborough, the hall was acquired, dismantled and re-erected on its present site. The committee responsible for its re-erection has taken a long-range view and the foundations are of concrete. Perhaps the most striking feature of the solidly constructed, spacious and well-designed building, is the natural lighting and ventilation. Large glass windows abound. While there it was learned that the breezes coming up the valley, through which the Obi Obi Creek wends its way, keeps the building cool on the warmest of evenings.

Many features of the ball impressed, chief of which were the decorations of the ballroom, the organisation of the Maleny Sub-branch officials, the frocking of the debutantes and other members of the fair sex among the 381 patrons who attended, and the general demeanour of the debutantes and their partners. The debutantes had been painstakingly prepared for

their presentation by Mrs. W. J. Burnett, whose instruction was so frequently favourably commented upon during the proceedings. Mrs. Burnett also made the bouquets carried by the debs.

STATE PRESIDENT INTRODUCED

Mr. Sid Langton (Maleny Sub-branch president) introduced Mr. Huish to the gathering. Mr. Langton said he hoped that the State president and the official party would carry away none but pleasant recollections of their stay in the sub-branch centre. The record of Mr. Huish, 19 years as State president of the R.S.S.A.I.L.A., spoke for itself and showed the esteem and regard in which he was held both by members of the R.S.L. and the public. The Maleny sub-branch was deeply honoured to have him present with them.

Replying to the welcome and introduction, Mr. Huish said he was pleased to be present and to learn that the people of the district were supporting the Memorial Hall and the sub-branch to such an extent. The hall had been made possible by the generosity of the people of the district. On behalf of the sub-branch, he expressed thanks to those responsible for making it available to the members of the sub-branch. Mr. Huish said it was the duty of sub-branch members to uphold the dignity of the town and district and to take part in any move to promote its betterment. He thanked the president of the Maleny Sub-branch, his colleagues, and the people of the district for the welcome given him and expressed the hope that the evening about to begin would be memorable in the history of Maleny.

THE DEBS. PROMENADE

Preceded by two small flower girls, Joy Daveson and Judy Davies, daughters of sub-branch members, the debutantes and their partners promenaded around the ballroom. Reaching the entrance to the hall, the couples halted. As each deb. was announced escorts conducted their partners to a floral arch, through which the debutantes proceeded to the steps of the stage to be met by Mrs. Burnett. The partner proceeded to the stairs on the opposite wing of the stage to reclaim his deb. after presentation to the State President.

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Mr. MacDonald (matron of Honour) introduced the young ladies, 25 in all, to Mr. Huish. The assured way in which the courtesies were carried out was eloquent of the instruction received and of considerable practice.

Prior to the presentation of the debutantes beautiful bouquets were presented Mrs. MacDonald and Mrs. Burnett. The presentations were made by Mr. Andrew.

THE SUPPER

Supper for the debutantes and the official party was served in the recreation room of the Memorial Hall, situated beneath the stage. The tables were most artistically arranged and the massing of flowers bore testimony to the artistry of those responsible. Flower colours were blended with admirable taste.

A feature of the tables was the debutantes' cake, topped by a dainty miniature debutante doll. This was made by Mrs. Burnett. Later the names of all the young ladies were placed in a glass and a draw was made for ownership of the doll. Applause was spontaneous when the winner of the doll proved to be a tall blonde. Only then did the visitors learn that the winner was both deaf and dumb. The State President presented the doll to the winner, Miss Jean Ferguson.

Proceedings commenced with the Loyal Toast, proposed by the Maleny Sub-branch president. The debs.' cake was cut by Miss Joyce DeLanty, the honour being accorded her as she was the smallest to make her debut.

THE TOAST OF THE DEBUTANTES

Mr. Langton called on Mr. Huish to propose the toast of "The Debutantes." The State President, after expressing his pleasure at being present, said he had expected to meet a few debutantes but had never hoped to see so many charming young ladies. He said the timing was perfect and there had not been one missed step during the evening, added to which was an apparent lack of nervousness which bespoke of the confidence the debutantes must have had in their tutor, Mrs. Burnett.

Speaking of the escorts to the debutantes, Mr. Huish said the young ladies had displayed wisdom in their selection and discrimination in their choice. He hoped both debutantes and their partners would remember the happy occasion. As the evening belonged to the debutantes he did not intend to encroach further upon the time at the disposal of those for whom the evening was primarily intended. Mr. Huish concluded by hoping that the evening would long be remembered by those who were making their debut.

Mr. Jack Thorne, responding on behalf of the debutantes made perhaps the most brief speech of the evening. His words were: "On behalf of the debutantes I wish to thank you for your expression of good wishes."

PRESENTATION TO TEACHER

At the instance of the chairman, Mr. Huish made a presentation of a beautiful handbag to Mrs. W. J. Burnett, tutor of the debutantes. Mr.

Huish said that good pupils were no good without a good teacher. The debutantes and flower girls alike had obviously appreciated the skilled advice of Mrs. Burnett without which the function could not have been so successful and it had been decided to reward her for her efforts in a tangible way. Making the presentation the State President said that the success of the debutantes had been a personal triumph to Mrs. Burnett's tuition.

PRESENTATION TO PIANIST

Mr. R. Andrew (R.S.L. State Vice-president) made the presentation on behalf of the debutantes to the pianist, Miss Evelyn Lawley. Mr. Andrew said Miss Lawley had done a remarkably good job and it was no wonder that both the debutantes and their partners had no trouble in keeping in step. The speaker jocularly referred to what he described, as the encroachment of the State President on his territory. He was referring to Mr. Huish's visit to a centre in his business territory.

SUB-BRANCH PRESIDENT'S THANKS

Mr. Langton, on behalf of the Maleny Sub-branch, thanked Mr. Huish and his officers for coming to Maleny. When debutantes were to be presented they had to be presented to someone worthwhile and no one could have been better fitted to perform the duty than their own State President. For Mr. Huish's co-operation, and for the attendance of those who accompanied him, the speaker and the sub-branch said "thank you."

Mr. Ernie Holyroyd supported the Maleny president. The toast of the "State Branch R.S.L. Officials" was honoured.

Responding Mr. G. J. Angell said it was a pleasure for State officers to visit country sub-branches. Unfortunately they were not able to make as many visits as they would like. Mr. Angell concluded by wishing the debutantes and their partners all success in their future lives.

Thanking the debs. and their partners for making the ball such a success, Mr. Langton said all of the many workers for the function had done a magnificent job. He did not want to individualise but he felt he could not let the occasion pass without thanking Mrs. Burnett for the capable manner in which the debutantes were trained and for artistry in making the bouquets.

Mr. W. J. Burnett replied on behalf of Mrs. Burnett. He said his wife had been well repaid by seeing the 25 debs. so beautiful that evening. His wife also wished to thank the members of the entertainment committee for their assistance.

THE DEBUTANTES

The debutantes, partners in parenthesis were:—

- Gwen Lowe (Jack Thorne).
- Valmai Alcorn (Milton Alcorn).

PERTH ● HOBART ● LAUNCESTON ● WYNYARD (BURNIE) ●

● ADELAIDE ●
● BRISBANE ●
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● MELBOURNE ●

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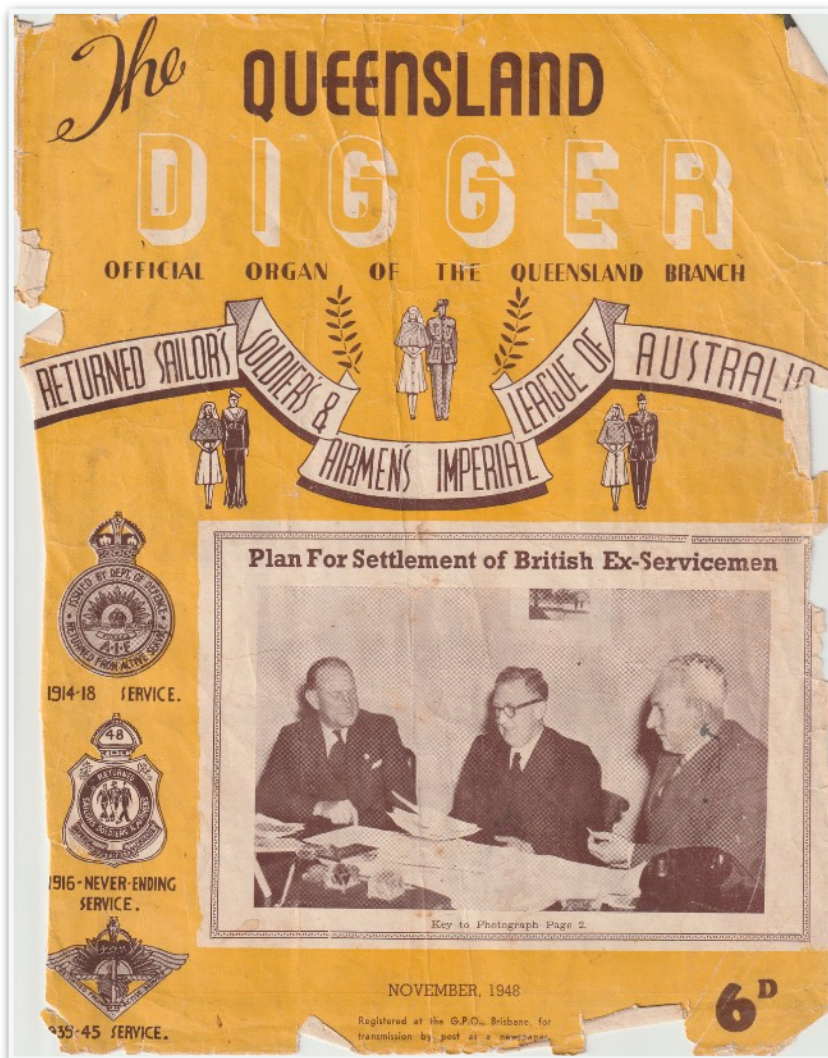
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THE QUEENSLAND DIGGER

Alma Prentis (Laurie Senescall).
Audrey Miller (Bill Neilsen) .
Jean Jessup (Norman McDonald).
Winnie Prentis (Henry Ball). ()
Mary Cash (Phill Prentis).
Helen Elliott (Lloyd Wilkins).
Sinah Richards (Watty Watkins)
Sinah Brown (Bill Neilsen).
Margaret Robinson (Norman Burgess).
Marcia Manitzky (Douglas Sommers).
Joy Marsh (Jim Cork).
Edna Impey (Douglas Watson).
Valma Egan (Jack Francis).
Stella Beanland (Jim Ryan).
Jean Ferguson (Oscar Manitzky).
Patricia Clancy (Charles Clancy).
Dawn Cork (Jack Keleher).
Miriam Goodwin (Fred Somers).
Gwen Tesch (Mervin Generick).
Shirley Metcalfe (Ian Martin).
Phyllis McNaughton (Keith McKinnon).
Jean Willocks (Vern Willocks).
Joyce DeLanty (Bill Best).

Several sub-branch officials were noticed in the gathering, among whom were John Arthur (president of Caloundra Sub-branch) and Mrs. Arthur.

The main officials of the Maleny Sub-branch are: President, Mr. S. Langton; vice-president, Mr. E. Holyrod; treasurer, Mr. Alan E. Lawley; secretary, Mr. Vic. Waddell; auditor, Mr. C. G. Berrill.



Collated by Desley Malone
Maleny Historical Memories
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Miriam (Goodwin) Limpus