

## NOTES FROM THE MUSIC ADVISER

### Choosing a Band for your SCD event

I am occasionally asked for help in suggesting a Band for a SCD event. The discussions and decision-making going on at these times have started some thoughts on the process of selecting a band. Here are some of the things you may wish to consider:

- Suitability for your event: for a Day/Weekend/Summer School, how many classes can the group of musicians cover? If you are planning a Workshop for musicians, is there someone in the band who can teach/lead novices? For social or formal dances, can the band play up to speed, with a suitable beat? Assessing a band can be very subjective – listening to them live, if possible, will help a lot.
- What overall sound quality are you looking for: accordion-based? with drums? a strong fiddle sound? a more folk-y sound? or just a clear melody with a good beat?
- Will the selected band help to attract people to your event?
- What will it cost? Ask prospective bands for a quote. As well as the Band Fee, you may need to cover road or air travel, and provide accommodation. (Air travel can be very cheap if booked well in advance; and bands are often happy to be billeted.)
- Availability: is the band actually available on your date, and are they prepared to travel if necessary? Early booking will help secure the band of your choice, but if you are stuck, check with your preferred musicians: sometimes they may be happy to play in smaller groups, or may have a reserve line-up available. They will know who they prefer to work with.
- Who will actually be playing in the band for your event? As time passes, band membership can be fluid: do check before confirming your booking that you know which instruments and musicians will be there on the night.
- Equipment: does the band bring its own sound system, or will you have to source one locally? If that's the case, who will manage the sound on the night? If you need a microphone for the MC, or some background music, remember to ask for this.
- Would rotating around local bands help to balance your loyalties?
- What is the experience of other organisers with your selected band? Was the group flexible and easy to work with? How well did they manage their sound? Use your contacts to talk to other event organisers and dancers.

As Music Adviser I maintain a Directory of NZ Bands and Musicians, with descriptions and contact information. Soon this will be available on the Branch website, but in the meantime, feel free to email me for the document. Here are the bands currently in the Directory: Glenfiddle (Auckland), Wild Heather (Auckland/Wellington), Balmoral (Auckland/Queensland), Rose and Thistle (Auckland), Buorach Mhor (Waikato), Peter Elmes Band (Wellington), Roaring Jelly (Wellington), Fibrox (Wellington), The Strattons (Wellington) and Scotch Measure (Christchurch).

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