

Memory of my teacher, " Denis Murphy" -- GF

Among all the grand master from 1930 until 1978 as recorded from the book, "Blackpool my Blackpool", by Kit Hallewell MBE which was published in 1979, Denis Murphy was the among the last surviving grand master of the century.

Young Denis Murphy:

Denis was born in 1930 and was living on the street called Lisburn Lane which is located just outside Liverpool in United Kingdom. In the Murphy's family, there were three siblings and Denis was the youngest. His elder sister and brother were much older. Both his sister and brother were among the top competitors in the old days. After Denis' elder brother passed away during the war, Denis' mother insisted that Denis be Dancing with his sister who was nine years older for further ballroom competition.

Early age of Dancing:

During Denis' early age, he was studied under a grand champion, Charles Thiebault. With the young Denis' talent, Mr. Thiebault experimented with Denis and trained him to dance to the new ballroom dancing styles and techniques. By introducing the hip swings and sideway dancing, Denis was quickly earn the best Foxtrot reputation throughout Britain. He had gained much attentions among all other teachers and competitors alike through out Britain. After the war years, all dancers started to adapt this new dancing styles. It formed the postures and holds for today's dancers. Alex Moore had recorded many of Denis techniques and movements into his syllabus. He eventually changed the name of his syllabus book title to "The Revised Technique Of Ballroom Dancing".

Competitions:

At sixteen years of age, Denis was the youngest in the British national team. Other team members were at their twenties including his sister Edna Murphy. Together with his sister , Edna Murphy, the couple were always ranked the top six couples in Blackpool dance competitions.

Performance high light:

Victor Sylvester was a good friend with Denis. Even Victor was much older at that time. He had specially arranged many of his music into Foxtrot so that Denis can performed with him both live and in front of television. At one time, Denis had requested to performed in front of the Queen and other royalties.

British Viennese Waltz establishment:

Viennese waltz was not part of the ballroom competition in the old time. Even today, Blackpool competition has still left this dance out. Viennese waltz was originated from Europe and was introduced to Britain in the earlier days. Many old time style dancers practise this dance on social events. It mainly consists of turning while with little or no progression. 1947, Denmark introduced the Viennese waltz dance for the first time during the world competition and Britain was challenged to compete on this dance.

Because the dizziness can cause by the old Viennese waltz trunings and also lacking progression and swings, the old time Viennese waltz method was not suitable for ballroom competitions for Britain. The young Denis got together with his teammate, Harry Smith Hampshire who also was a Britain champion, and re-invented the new Viennese waltz dancing style. It consisted less turnings, with more progressions and swings. Britain had won the competition for the dance that year. During the 60's Harry Smith Hampshire was asked to recorded this new waltz techniques. Harry was still living in Britain at the time while Denis had already immigrated to Canada. Harry's record on the Viennese waltz became today's ISTD Viennese waltz syllabus. However, today because this dance is rarely used in social events, there aren't many people truly understand how this dance should be executed.

Immigrated to Canada:

In the mid sixties, Denis together with his wife, Doreen Murphy, immigrated to Canada. Denis had continued to teach many Canadian on ballroom dancing after arrived in Canada. His sister, Edna Murphy remained in Britain and had groomed many great teachers and competitors in ballroom dancing. In Denis' early years as new immigrant, He had traveled to Quebec every two weeks to teach ballroom dancing for the Quebec dancers.

Returned to Blackpool:

Few years ago Denis had returned to Blackpool with few of his students. When he arrived through the door, the owner of the Blackpool festival immediately invited him to sit up in the VIP box along with others grand masters who he knew from before. WDC president, Donny Burn had came and self introduced to Denis because Denis' sister, Edna Murphy was his godmother. Denis had received many respects from his fellow dancers and friends in Britain. There was an interesting conversation the time when he sat with his old friend, Antony Hurley, who is also a grandmaster and a big judge. All along Denis had always complaining about that there are too much hoping and running during today's quickstep competitions. Anthony Hurley reminded him that he was the one who started in the old day. This makes me feel that he had accidentally changed the course of how Quickstep dance today.

Summary:

In ballroom dance world, he had trained many teachers and shared his knowledge among many Canadian. He had earned most respects from all dance professionals and teachers. As his students, we are greatly regretted that we lost a friend, a mentor and a great teacher. Sadly world has lost a legend and a grand master who not only knew the technique of ballroom dancing but also the history of how it happens about ballroom dancing.

With Victor Sylvester Orchestra



**ENGLAND versus DENMARK
1947 & 1948**



M^rDENIS MURPHY & MISS EDNA MURPHY