

The East Grinstead Old Time Dance Club held a Grand Charity Old Time Ball to celebrate the clubs 70th Anniversary on 3rd September 2016.

The club was formed in 1946 by Sir Archibald McIndoe and a group of local people, its prime objective was to assist in the rehabilitation of the many service men and women of the armed forces in the burns unit of the Queen Victoria Hospital. Some of the injuries were so serious that new pioneering medical treatments had to be tried & developed under the expert guidance of the chief surgeon of the hospital – Sir Archie. New techniques were developed for the treatment and rehabilitation of the serious burns casualties. Great progress was made in re-construction treatments, so the patients referred to themselves affectionately as “Guinea Pigs” and so the legendary “Guinea Pig Club” came into being.

This Charity Ball was attended by over 130 people, many of whom had travelled considerable distances to support the event. The Guests of Honour were Sir Roger Austin K.C.B. A.F.C. and the East Grinstead Town Mayor, Councillor Bob Mainstone & his Wife Christine. The dance leaders were David & Wendy Griffiths and the music was provided by the excellent David Ingley. Supporting this event was the Society’s President Fred Boast & his Wife Joyce, our Chairman Mike Cooper and his Wife Pat and our Membership Secretary Mike Savory & his Wife Kathleen together with many Society members.

After a sumptuous buffet in the interval, a grand charity raffle was held with many of the prizes donated by local shops and businesses and as a result £280 was raised for the Guinea Pig Club.

The dance programme for the evening was made up of all the Old Time Dances from the period and it was great to see our Guests of Honour joining in the dancing particularly the Town Mayor & his Wife who joined in every dance including the Lancers & Quadrilles.

Since the Ball we have received a really lovely “Thank You” card from the Mayor & his Wife thanking everybody who attended and worked so hard to make the evening such a success and in supporting this very worthy East Grinstead Charity.

Formal message from the East Grinstead Mayor reads :-

Dear Mike,

Thank you for the splendid evening of the East Grinstead Old Time Dance Club 70th anniversary.

Christine and I enjoyed joining in the many dances despite our lack of ability - everyone was kind to help us around the floor.

The town is very proud of our links to the Guinea Pig Club and the work of Sir Archibald McIndoe.

Please pass on our best wishes to all your members across the country
Cllr. Bob Mainstone (Town Mayor).