

Chairman's Preface

BELINDA QUIREY

Belinda Quirey was one of the prime movers in the formation of the Early Dance Circle in 1984; she devised its title, and insisted that it have a chairman, not person, woman or even plain chair. So it was with a sense of gratitude that in the summer of 1996 the EDC began to plan a celebration of her 85th birthday. Belinda was a formidable woman with a caustic tongue, and so it was with some trepidation that she was approached to ask if she would enjoy a presentation of papers and a tea-party to celebrate her great age and our debt to her. She was by then becoming very frail, but was touched by the proposal: 'How very kind', although her famous snort was still to be heard at the thought of a tea-party!

Our plans had hardly begun with a call for papers when Belinda suffered a massive stroke and died. We decided that, as she had welcomed the idea, we would continue with our plans and make the event a memorial to her instead.

Some of those approached had to decline because of professional commitments in the realm of Early Dance (the volume of this work as a reason for absence would have pleased her) and two pieces were sent to be read in absentia. The conference was held on April 5th 1997, a few days before what would have been her 85th birthday. It was a fascinating occasion, full of reminiscence of an amazing life. Belinda was famous (or rather notorious) for her interruptions of disagreement – or even occasionally agreement – and so those who presented these papers had the rather unnerving experience of having to imagine the interruptions which would doubtless have punctuated their words.

Belinda Quirey could be a very difficult character, but it was often her stubbornness and forthrightness that gave Early Dance the opportunity to attain the reputation and standing that it has today. I was proud to consider her a friend and mentor – and I miss her.

Sian Jones