

Cecelia Folkard

By MARG HAYLOCK
Staff Reporter

PICTON - Throughout the Christmas season, 87-year old Cecelia Folkard will share the gift of music with fellow residents at the H.J. McFarland Home for the Aged.

This remarkable senior citizen, who obtained three degrees in music from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, has played in several Picton churches and is recognized as an outstanding organist.

"I've played in the Anglican Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist and the Roman Catholic Churches, here," she said, recalling her career.

"I was always interested in music. We had such wonderful chances and such good teachers," said the Edinburgh-born organist.

"My aunt was a teacher in London and played in a big school there and my father was musical, too."

Miss Folkard played the organ at the old Church of St. Mary Magdalene during the final week of services there, in 1912, and when John Diefenbaker visited Picton, in 1975, for the dedication of stain-glass windows at the church, which is now a county museum, she played for the occasion.

"Nobody was any nicer than John Diefenbaker. His wife was a wonderful musician," said Miss Folkard, an ardent Tory.

"I was ahead of my time for a young woman," she said, reflecting on her career as a social services worker and an organist.

Miss Folkard first came to Prince Edward County as a young girl to visit relatives.

"My mother had cousins here and they had beautiful homes and all kinds of pets that children would just love," she said, speaking of her first ties with the county.

She left Scotland to live in Prince Edward as a girl of 16 and began to play in local churches, soon after her arrival.

"I played an awful lot for young people," she said.

"I taught a lot and after new things were introduced I would help to bring these innovations in music into the churches."

One of Miss Folkard's first jobs in Picton was as a telephone operator with Bell Canada. She was later employed as an old age pensions investigator and commuted from Picton to Toronto, for many years, spending each weekend at her Hill Street home and her work week in the city.

She also worked for three years, in the Brockville area, and while employed as old age pensions investigator for Renfrew District, she became a heroine and won the Dow Award.

While driving on a Frontenac County road, Miss Folkard saw a coupe hit a washout and strike a tree. The car, driven by an Ohio man who had two passengers, burst into flames.

Miss Folkard, who was carrying a fire extinguisher in her vehicle, stopped and put out the blaze but the men were trapped in their car, as the door had jammed. She

took a tire iron from her trunk and pried open the door, releasing the trio.

For her bravery, she received the Dow Award, in 1950, and a \$100 Canada Savings Bond.

"Things happen and you have to get out and help. I did what I could and I gave the men first aid," said Miss Folkard, this week, describing the rescue of the three motorists.

She said she obtained a driver's permit as a girl of 15 and was always interested in cars.

"I did a lot of work on them," she said.

In addition to her interest in mechanics, Miss Folkard enjoyed boating, tennis and politics.

"I really enjoy elections. I used to get out and work like a dog," said the Conservative party supporter who helped when James Taylor MPP Prince Edward-Lennox ran for the first time in this riding.

Miss Folkard is an avid reader and said her enjoyment of books began in her childhood days. Her parents

had a large library and she learned to read before she started school.

"I like historical books about early settlers and books about politics," she said.

"I've always been interested in learning. In Prince Edward County, the people were friendly and nice and I liked to do all of the things they were doing," Miss Folkard said.

A resident of Hill Street, here, for many years, Miss Folkard customarily spent the winter months in Florida,

where she owned a trailer.

Several years ago, she fell and broke her hip just a few months before her winter vacation. She was a patient in Kingston General Hospital for several weeks and, as soon as her hip had mended, travelled south for her winter holiday.

Miss Folkard was the victim of a second accident while on vacation. A car struck her, breaking both of her legs and she received head injuries and internal injuries. Doctors predicted she would not move about freely, again. She proved them wrong and was walking spryly, within a few months. She remained in her Hill Street home, until two years ago.

"I play here when people want me to play," said Miss Folkard, discussing her activities at the McFarland home.

"It's nothing much like I used to do," said the organist who has played in Scottish cathedrals and in large churches in Ontario.

To the residents of the McFarland Home, her music is a special gift to be enjoyed, especially during the holiday season.

page 2

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