

The Chanter
Nottingham Scottish Association Newsletter
December 2008

The Innumerable Christ

'Other stars may have their Bethlehems, and their Calvaries, too.'
(Professor J Y Simpson)

Wha kens on whatna Bethlehems
Earth twinkles like a star the nicht
And whatna shepherds lift their heids
In its unearthly licht?

`Yont a' the stars oor een can see
An' farther than their lichts can fly
I' mony an unco'warl' the nicht
The fateful bairnies cry.

I' mony an unco' world the nicht
The lift gaes black as pitch at noon,
An' sideways on their chests the heids
O' endless Christs roll doon.

An' when the earth's as cauld's the mune
An' a' its folk are lang syne deid,
On countless stars the Babe maun cry
An' the Crucified maun bleed.

HUGH McDIARMID

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

It was with shock and sadness that we learnt of the sudden death of our friend Graham Young; his quiet manner at our dancing classes and functions will be sorely missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with Bernice and the family at this time. There is a tribute later in this Chanter.

This is also our first chance publicly to give our sincere condolences to Margaret and Rae Morrison on the passing of their brother-in-law in Australia. This Chanter should reach you at the start of the Christmas Season; Isobel and I would like to wish you all peace and contentment now and in the coming year.

*May the best you've ever seen
Be the worst you'll ever see.
May the moose ne'er leave yer giral
Wi' a teardrap in its e'e.*

Let's look forward positively to next year, for our next function is Burns' Night on 31st January; please don't leave it to the last minute to book. It's the 250th Anniversary of the birth of Rabbie and we are making this a special event. We have songs and live music at no extra cost to you. The immediate Past President of the Burns Federation, John Haining, is coming down from Paisley to give the "Immortal Memory" and our Patrons Sir Andrew and Lady Buchanan will be our guests. This event will be widely publicised at the beginning of the New Year so please book your places promptly.

I look forward to seeing you all there.

Bob Logan

Back Hame

Let me tell you a little about my 'hame toon' and its history ancient and modern. Fife was originally one of the Pictish kingdoms and is still known as The Kingdom of Fife within Scotland. This is unique in Scotland in that it is neither Fifeshire nor The County of Fife. It is believed it was the marshlands that gave **Markinch** its name.

The word "inch" in ancient Celtic means 'island' or "haughland". The first part of the word, however, has led to more speculation. The word 'mark' means horse in old British language, or more specifically a warrior's steed. The clue to the meaning of the term 'island of the warrior's horses' may be understood if we assume, as several writers do, that Dalginch to the east of Markinch was the site of an ancient Pictish and later Scottish stronghold, one of seven administrative centres in northern Scotland. A local king or chieftain would have required a safe place to keep his warhorses, safe from wolves and marauders. A piece of high, dry grazing ground surrounded by an impenetrable marsh would be ideal for a warrior's steeds and the breeding mares needed to maintain the herd.

James Law of Brunton secured a burgh charter from King Charles II in 1673 when Markinch became a Burgh of Barony. He took over from the dynasty of Moutries, Lords of Markinch who had been prominent since the 14th century. The Laws at that time owned the land around Dalginch; it later came to be known as the Lands of Brunton and Dalginch.

A small area in the town is still known as Bow Butts, this reminds us of the fact that after the defeat at Flodden in 1513 (when the Lord of Markinch was killed) the Scottish King once again insisted that each town have an area set aside for archery practice. The oldest bow in existence was found hidden in the rafters of a house close to Flodden field. It is made from a single piece of Yew, about six feet long with a range of 180 to 200 yards. Markinch is well supplied with yew trees and most old houses have one in their gardens. Practice by royal decree would have taken place from the church, and marks where arrows were sharpened can still be seen on the north and east walls of the church where the archers took aim.

Little has been written about the Catholic pre-reformation history of Markinch, although we know the names of several Vicars from Vatican records. Up until the 18th century, the job of Minister in Markinch was a dangerous one requiring difficult decisions on questions of loyalty. Andrew Lamont had to make the difficult choice between loyalty to King or Covenant. He chose to support the King but that turned out to be the losing side and he was dismissed by the church authorities in 1639. General Leslie of Balgonie's struggle on behalf of the Covenanting cause contributed eventually to the execution of Charles 1 The minister who took over the parish, Fredrick Carmichael, was a strong Covenanter who accompanied Leslie into battle, along with many townfolk.

By the 1660s a monarch was back on the throne in the shape of Charles 11 and once again the minister of Markinch was out of favour. Markinch Parish Church stands on what is believed to have been a religious site since prehistoric times, evidenced by a large block of incised limestone with a hole through the middle found during renovations in the last century. The first written reference to the church comes from a document relating to the Bishop of St Andrews in mid-11th century, before the Norman Conquest. The site was dedicated to Christianity by St Drostan, a missionary working among the Picts in the 6th century. The church has one of the finest Norman towers in Scotland.

Probably our most famous son was in fact a daughter, for Mary Beaton (or Bethune) was one of the Queen's four Marys. In more modern times John Haig established a whisky-blending plant in 1877. After a disastrous spillage of pure whisky into the nearby river Leven it is reputed that the Parish Minister began the Sunday service with the hymn 'We Shall Meet by the River'. Even sadder! In 1941 the S.S. *Politician* sank off the Isle of Eriskay carrying 2,000 cases of Haig's export whisky bound for North America. This sad event led to the book and the film 'Whisky Galore'. John Dixon's paper mill produced the very first 'carbon less copy paper' and next door Tullis Russell pioneered 'twin wire' writing paper; this gave two smooth surfaces allowing high quality printing on both sides of a sheet. John , Haig and the paper mills were major employers for many years but 'only Tullis Russell has survived.

Markinch Highland Games, held in early June, dates back to the mid-19th century, but further back than everything I have mentioned is a 'stone circle' from Neolithic times, about 3000 BC. Despite its great age there had been people living and holding ceremonies on the spot for well over a thousand years before it was built.

I trust you will have found this insight to my 'Hame Toon' of interest and with our membership from 'a' the airts and pairts' we can look forward to reading about your 'Hame Toon'.

Bill Dall

If ye dinnae like the weather, haud oan ten minutes...

One day an auld wife in Lanarkshire was told that they were moving the Glasgow boundary line and her cottage would be in the county no longer. "Och, well", she said, " I always found the Lanarkshire weather was too relaxing, anyway "

Geography, like the Scottish climate, is all in the mind...

The Egyptian Experience.

Amazing, wonderful, incredible, fabulous, fantastic, mind-blowing! There are just not enough adjectives to describe the holiday Chris and I have just spent in Egypt, although when I say holiday, it was certainly not a relaxing time. Every day was filled to the brim and when we returned to Nottingham, we felt we could do with another break just to recover. The whole concept of Ancient Egypt just "blows you away."

The skill and knowledge of these people five thousand years ago is unbelievable. We spent the first three days of our holiday in Cairo, starting with a tour of this frenetic city of nineteen million people. There is a great deal of poverty and some of it was quite harrowing to see, but the people were very friendly, although sometimes the street hawkers were a bit more than persistent. However, we found that generally speaking, a firm "La Shokran " (No Thank you) was enough to make them move on to the next susceptible-looking tourist.

We visited the Mosque of Mohammed Aly (not Ali), the founder of modern Egypt and in the afternoon we went to the Egyptian Museum. It is impossible to describe this wonderful place in a short article, but suffice it to say, Chris said I looked awestruck most of the time. The Tutankhamun room was absolutely packed, but well worth putting up with the crush to see these fantastic treasures. We were very fortunate in having a marvellous guide throughout the holiday, who spoke perfect English, was incredibly knowledgeable and had a lovely sense of humour.

Next on the agenda was a visit to Sakkara, Memphis, the ancient capital of Egypt and of course, the Pyramids of Giza. They are so close to the city as to be almost a suburb and the first impression was slightly disappointing. However, when you stand back and view them with the desert in the background, you can really appreciate and wonder at these amazing structures. The Sphinx was the next stop. It is so huge and with the Pyramids in the background, the whole scene is brought into perspective. The Step Pyramid at Mit-Rahina is the oldest, over five thousand years, and just to look at and touch something of this age is very humbling.

From Cairo we flew to Aswan for three days, visiting the High Dam, which has made such a difference to irrigation in Egypt. Everywhere the influence of the Nile is so strong – it really is the lifeblood of Egypt. During our stay in Aswan we flew to Abu Simbel, site of the temples of Rameses II and his wife Nefertari. The temple of Nefertari is very unusual, in that temples were dedicated either to the Pharaoh or the gods and the fact that Rameses II dedicated the temple to her, showed his great love and regard for his wife. Apart from the fact that Abu Simbel was awe-inspiring, perhaps the most incredible thing about it was that it was moved from its original site in a huge international operation just before the dam was flooded. Not one single piece was damaged and it now looks as if it has stood in its present site forever. It would have been criminal to have lost such a fantastic place. Like everywhere else connected with Rameses II, the temple and the statues are immense – this guy had quite an ego!

We had a lovely sail in a felucca before joining the ship for our Nile Cruise for the next three days. We visited the temple of Kom Ombo which is dedicated to not one, but two gods – the falcon god Horus, son of Isis and Osiris and the Crocodile god, Sobek, to avoid jealousy between the deities. The people weren't taking any chances!

Next stop was the temple at Edfu, the best preserved in Egypt. Its excellent state of preservation allows the visitor to understand some of the mysteries of Ancient Egypt. While aboard the ship we also enjoyed an Egyptian evening and everyone joined in the spirit of things by dressing up in traditional dress. Most of the men didn't quite conjure up images of Sheikhs in their tea-towel headdresses and neither did any of us ladies quite have the figure of the enchanting belly-dancer who entertained us, but the evening was great fun.

After disembarking from the cruise ship and transferring to our hotel in Luxor, we set off for a visit to the temples of Karnak and Luxor. Karnak is dedicated to the god Amon-Ra and is one of the largest places of worship in the world. The avenue of the Sphinxes which is still being excavated is quite a sight and eventually it is hoped to link the two temples with these statues.

During our holiday we also visited the Temples of Philae, Imhotep, the Cheops Boat Museum and of course some of the tombs in the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens. The carvings and paintings in the tombs are wonderfully preserved and having

such a great guide in Sherief, enabled us to understand some of the stories they told. It is thanks to Rameses IV that many of the mummies have survived. He had them re-embalmed after tomb robbers desecrated their places of rest and stole the treasures. Having seen the fabulous treasures of Tutankhamun, who was a relatively unimportant king, makes you wonder just what treasures were lost.

On the final morning in Luxor, we were up at 3.45 a.m. and set off in a launch to the site for a hot air balloon flight and watch the sun coming up over the Nile. Drifting over the fields allowed us to see just how poor some of the people who cut the sugar cane and other crops are and makes you realise how fortunate we are.

There are so many sights in this amazing country and after so many early morning starts and long days, we did manage to spend a relaxing afternoon by the hotel pool in Luxor before flying back to Cairo for our return home, now fully understanding the expression "templed out."

Margaret Barnes.

`First Steps' – continued..

16.10.62 *All this activity took a bit of fuelling, it seems*

After Scottish, which was good fun as usual, fifteen of us went back to Tricia's room, where she dispensed tea whilst Jackie and I ran in and out from the kitchen with kettles of hot water, like the oldfashioned maternity scenes in the films! Tricia had baked a gorgeous big fruit cake and I donated a chocolate Swiss roll and the biscuits you sent – thanks, Mum! Most of the men consumed two or three cups of tea and up to four or five pieces of cake, so we presumed they were contented with what they were given!

Well, must stop and do some work – busy week ahead:

- Tuesday – Scottish practice – or international folk dancing
- Wednesday – Country Dancing, mostly English
- Thursday – new Israeli folk dance group
- Friday – Ballroom dancing or Scottish Country Dance at Bracknell
- Saturday – Jazz Band Ball
- Sunday – usual Scottish meeting

Also in my diary:

- Hallowe'en party at Maidenhead Scottish
- Reading Pipe Band Social
- Scottish Concert at Maidenhead

If I don't get slimmer on all this exercise, I really shall despair!

Iris Dale

Greetings from India

You may remember last October (07) we had a couple of visitors from Mumbai, India. Vipil and Abhay had come over to work with Shuggie for a few weeks. Their first night in Nottingham and indeed the UK was spent at -5'C but things soon warmed up especially with a trip to flares and two Thursday nights of dancing. They both send their regards to everyone.

Shuggie's Cèilidh Nights

Thanks to everyone who supported our first cèilidh held in Beeston back in September. It was great to see so many people there along with some new faces. Unfortunately we were unable to have a repeat performance in November; however, we are looking to resurrect them towards the end of February next year- watch this space.

We made quite an impression on the band- Fred's Folk. Andrew and Sue Morrison joined Pip and myself at their annual barn dance on 22nd November in aid of the Bluebird Trust. Three kilts from the four of us generated lots of interest for the association on the night.

Nottingham Scottish also made a donation. They are a small registered charity, which over the last thirty years has raised funds to aid many local disabled groups and people of all ages. On the night the band numbered double figures, spanned three generations of the same family and travelled a combined total of 1200 miles to attend.

There will definitely be an SCD/Cèilidh in Holland on 27th March 09: speak to me if you'd like to come along.

Shuggie MacInnes

Imagine this on a Thursday night...

“Now, gentlemen,” said the Colonel, “as you know, there is Highland dancing when ladies are present, and there is Highland dancing. We will have Highland dancing. In Malta in '21 I saw Strip the Willow performed in 89 seconds, and an Eightsome Reel in two minutes 22 seconds. These are our targets. All right, pipey.”

We lined up and went at it. You probably know both the dances referred to but until you have seen Highland subalterns and captains giving them the treatment you just don't appreciate them. Strip the Willow at speed is lethal; there is much swinging round, and when fifteen stone of heughing humanity is whirled at you at close range you have to be wide awake to sidestep, scoop him in, and hurl him back again. I have gone up the line many times, and it is like being bounced from wall to wall of a long corridor with heavy weights attached to your arms. You just have to relax and concentrate on keeping upright.

Occasionally there would be an accident, as when the padre, his Hebridean paganism surging up through his Calvinistic crust, swung into the M.O., and the latter, his constitution undermined by drink and peering through microscopes, mistimed him and received him heavily amidships. The padre simply cried “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!” and

danced on, but the M.O. had to be carried to the rear and his place taken by the second-in-command, (who was six feet four and a danger to traffic)

Dand MacNeill

From the Department of Rural Community Affairs, Lower Bohemia Region

Dear Yonder Peasant,

An audit of this Department's accounts shows you were allocated an excess number of pine logs on the Feast of Stephen last year. This was due to a fault in our new Wenceslas computer system which was installed to improve the efficiency of pine log distribution. The shining of very bright moonlight on the night in question damaged the software, leading to this error, which we regret. Please arrange to return the pine logs to this Department by the coming Feast of Stephen.

Yours sincerely,

H. Page, (Assistant to Senior Welfare Officer, Lower Bohemia Region).

Dear Mr. Page,

Your letter has only just reached me because it was sent to the wrong address. My dwelling is right against the forest fence, by Saint Agnes' Fountain, not, as you put on the envelope, by Saint Andrew's Fountain which is a good eight leagues hence. The other thing is, I have burnt most of these logs, it being very cold. The snow is laying round about and it's deep and crisp and even. Not to mention the frost being cruel. In these conditions, it will be hard for me to make the journey to your department. Wouldn't it be possible for you to come hither, Mr. Page?

Yrs etc

Y Peasant

Dear Mr. Peasant,

We are sorry we got your address wrong. Discs containing the details of many peasants sadly went astray some months ago. Ministers have apologised and announced that lessons will be learned. Please let the authorities know if you think your data may have fallen into the wrong hands. We have no machinery for collecting excess pine logs. Please ensure they are returned in the next ten days.

Yrs

H. Page

Dear Mr Page,

Please find enclosed a small amount of ash from the pine logs I was sent last year. I will post further instalments soon but, knowing the postal service, it will be months before you receive them.

Yrs,

Y Peasant.

Dear Peasant,

I am informed by our Looking Out Team that you have been in the habit of gathering winter fuel. It means that you never actually qualified for free pine logs but were eligible for a voucher for three bundles of kindling wood. To improve efficiency, these vouchers will no longer be distributed on the Feast of Stephen, but in mid-August.

Yrs

H. Page

Dear Page,

What are you going to do about Saint Agnes' Fountain, which has been out of action since the last Feast of Stephen when the pipes burst? Three lots of your people have been round to look at it, but nothing has been done.

Yrs

Y.P.

Dear Peasant,

It has come to light that, owing to a glitch with the Wenceslas computer system, you were also given flesh and wine you were not authorised to receive last year. Please return these with the pine logs.

H. Page

Look, Mr. So-Called Assistant to the So-Called Senior Welfare Officer, I ate the flesh and I drank the wine. That's what you're supposed to do. I might be able to return a rabbit bone with the one pine log I've been saving up, but I don't know how. Have you noticed how the nights grow darker and the wind blows stronger?

Y Peasant

Dear Mr. Peasant,

I enclose a copy of our booklet 'How to Tread where the Snow lies Dinted' which should help you with your journey. Please note that this Office will be closed for the Feast of Stephen holiday, reopening on January 9th. You may leave your pine logs, with or without rabbit bone, at the back door of the Wenceslas Castle Leisure and Heritage Centre. On behalf of the Department, I wish you a Merry Christmas.

(Extract from the 'Telegraph', courtesy of Iris & Peter Dale.)

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'Over-indulgence can do funny things to a man and for a moment I recalled a friend, Charlie M, who was asked to leave a Mull hotel after chasing a black cat with a poker. This in itself did not seem to be too heinous a crime because some men dislike cats, but it was Charlie's 'additional information' that settled the matter; he explained that the black cat was under his bed, that it was wearing a red waistcoat, playing a melodeon and running up the chimney every time he chased it'

(from 'Scotland's Magazine' of the 1950s)

The Annual Church Service

The Feast of Saint Andrew the Apostle was celebrated on a Sunday this year, coinciding with the first Sunday in Advent. Association members were glad to join the congregation of Saint Andrew's Church and take part in the service.

We were reminded that our Patron Saint was the first to respond to the call 'without delay'. His adoption as Patron Saint of Scotland remains hidden in legend but his example has been followed by many Scots. The congregation was challenged to recognise, from photographs, these benefactors: and it gave us cause for thought that we remember those who directly touched our lives more readily than those who sought to help others in far-away places.

Dennis Willey

We have lost a dear friend...

It is with great sadness that I type this tribute to our dear friend Graham Young who passed away suddenly on Sunday, 7th December in Nottingham City Hospital; he will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him.

Chancellor Graham Young was born in 1939 in Uddingston, Lanarkshire, first son to Chance and Maggie Young. At school age the family, like so many other mining families, left Scotland and settled first in Hucknall then in Bestwood Village. Graham's first day at school was, to say the least, memorable, when his mum sent him dressed in his kilt! Graham said often it was not one of his mum's better ideas.

In 1950, now eleven, Graham was elected as 'Best Pupil' at the village school. Six years later he followed in his father's footsteps, taking up a career at a local pit as an electrician. In 1964 'The Lad' started courting a lass from the 'posh end' of the village, yes, our Bernice. They had a weekend trip to Blackpool but Graham brought the hotel receipts back to show the parents he had rented two rooms! A year or so later they married and it was back to Blackpool for the honeymoon. Graham, being a canny Scot, saved a bit of money by halving the hotel bill.

Their son Andrew saw the light of day in 1966 and in 1969 daughter Alison completed the family. A year later, as 't pit closed, Graham started his career with The Nottingham Fire Service. During his 22 year service he had his share of burns and blisters, rising to the rank of Station Officer, but a health problem ended his time with The Brigade on St Andrew's Day 1989.

Starting about a year later Graham served on the Bench as a Magistrate, first at Ilkeston and then in Nottingham. In 1990 Graham **and Bernice 'took to the floor' and their Scottish Country Dancing** days were well and truly launched. In 1993 the pair of them 'scrubbed up fine' and went off to a Garden Party at 'Buck House', no less. Their love of dancing took them the length and breadth of the country with Saturday dances and festivals with The Scottish.

By 2002 Graham was finding the dancing a bit hard, so he offered his services to help with

our Thursday class and the rest, as they say, is history. For the next six years we relied on his canny approach and his weekly programmes, carefully put together to give a nice blend of new dances and old favourites; his system could tell him when he last did this dance or that dance. Earlier this year he decided it was time to hang up the microphone and take a well earned rest, and we have missed the nice way that he called us to order on a Thursday night, 'Right, half past seven, we have enough for two sets, let's get started.' Many of you will remember him calling our formal dances at St Andrew's and Burns Nights.

Graham has left us with a lasting memory in the form of the jig he devised, called 'The Nottingham Scottish', and how proud he was when we danced it for him only last week at our St Andrew's Dinner Dance I say on behalf of all our members 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'

I know you will join with me in sending our deepest sympathy to Bernice, Andrew, Alison and of course to dear mum-in-law Jean.

Bill Dall

Scots as she is spoke

Question: what is, or was, a 'gibberie wallie'?

Was it

- [a] a local radio presenter?
 - [b] an Aberdonian well where gingerbread was sold?
 - [c] a highly-valued ornament on a Glasgow mantelpiece? Or
 - [d] a set of insecure false teeth?
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Book now for Burns Country

It is now time to confirm your booking for David's Burns Country and Tattoo Tour with a deposit of £45 per person. The tour is also being advertised in Derby, Chesterfield and Sheffield so make sure of your seat as soon as possible! A [booking form](#) accompanies this issue in case the dog or the baby got to the last one!