

**Nottingham Scottish Association  
The Chanter  
August 2010**

**WE'RE JUST REFINED**

They're bringing back that ancient myth  
We Reekie folk are saddled with,  
That we're stand-offish, hard to know,  
And chilly as the Pentland snow.  
The folk from Glasgow and from Leith  
In smiles of welcome show their teeth,  
For in those towns each man and woman  
Is friendly, warm of heart and human.  
We, on the other hand, go by  
With noses pointed to the sky,  
Like Castle Hill's majestic steeple:  
We're even called 'the frozen people'.  
I wonder if it's really true  
That we're so snobbish, me and you,  
I think it's all a big fiasco -  
I often speak to folk from Glasgow.

'Macnib'

## **From the President**

At the time of writing, it is still high summer and, midway through my term as president, a good time to look both back and forward. Starting with a look in the rear view mirror...

As most of you will know, the AGM saw the resignation of David Page from the position of Secretary of the Association. David has given years of service as Secretary and his hard work has been instrumental in the successful day-to-day running of the Association. He has all our thanks for this and I'm delighted that not only he will be continuing as an active member but will continue to edit the Chanter.

On the plus side, we are lucky to have Schuggie MacInnes able and willing to take over from David, so we will continue to be well-served in the future. Also, at the AGM, Margaret Barnes was elected as Vice-President, having previously been Acting Vice-President. Peggy Cooke and Gina Rose will continue as Council Members and we welcome Alan Ratcliffe and Kate Potter to the Council (in Kate's case it is more of a welcome back!). Thanks to all the Council for their support.

Last year saw a number of additions to our activities – including a series of walks, an open air theatre visit and others. They reflect a lot of careful planning and organisation by Council members – my thanks to them all for their support. We intend to build on the success of these events and you will find a programme of events planned for 2010 -11 listed with this Chanter – and on the website [www.nottinghamscottish.org.uk](http://www.nottinghamscottish.org.uk) which will be updated as we go through the year. A couple of highlights to mention are the Hallowe'en Ceilidh on 30 October (following the success of last year's event) and the annual St Andrew's Night Dinner and Dance on 27 November. I hope you will continue to support these events – and bring your friends.

Our weekly dances start again on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> September and we look forward to welcoming newcomers – and, of course, our regulars. After a successful trial last year, we will continue to provide additional support for less experienced dancers. More about the dancing later in this edition.

Thanks to David Page for his continuing work on the Chanter. He would welcome contributions!

Finally, I hope you have all enjoyed the summer and I look forward to seeing you from September onwards.

**Andrew Morrison**

## **Heroes from History: Knockshinnoch, 1950.**

*“You must drive your road to catch your coal.”* Ayrshire miners, well used to buckled and fractured seams, saw little unusual in the steepening rise as No.5 Heading was driven towards its assumed safe target of the Southern Upland Fault. Clear water began to flow from the face, no novelty in a wet pit. When a big ‘sit’ (subsidence) appeared in Wilson’s Field, a mere forty feet above the heading which was supposed to end under a hundred feet of granite, the manager ordered it to be fenced off and extra supports and precautions were put in place inbye. Nobody asked Farmer Wilson why that field was only ever used for grazing cattle. And early September 1950 was one of the wettest for many years; par for the course in Ayrshire!

A deadly jigsaw was taking shape, and there remained two missing pieces; bits of vital information missing from the pit and from the Area Office, one from each. Below that field lay a reservoir of liquid peat; Area Office knew about it from their map but were unaware that No.5 was heading for the surface. The copy of the map given to the colliery showed no trace of peat...and as the last jigsaw piece fell into place, before the horrified eyes of the manager and the men putting up the fence, the whole ‘sit’ poured downwards in an appalling vortex of soil, grass, bushes...

*“Aye, I’ll go.”* Andrew Cunningham, experienced miner, answered his manager, headed straight for the cage and raced from the pit bottom, shouting warnings, to find oversman Andy Houston. Sixty thousand tons of peat, mud and stone beat him to it. Trying to divert the flow, he battled through the rising sludge to the shaft and was drawn to safety with seconds to spare.

A blast of air from the influx felled Andy Houston, oversman. His escape cut off by the influx, his mind racing through the three-dimensional map of the workings, he phoned all the sections with orders to retreat to the West Mine; it was far from the shafts and the sludge, but there was a telephone, and blessedly, it still worked. In Wilson’s Field, desperate attempts were under way to stabilise the collapsing surface.

Ayrshire man David Park got off the overnight ‘sleeper’ in Edinburgh Waverley and bought a paper. Depute Director of Labour for the NCB Scottish Division, he had begun his career at Knockshinnoch Castle pit. Now he read that 129 men were trapped there and he headed for New Cumnock, all speed.

One hope remained. Workings from the abandoned Bank No. 6 drift mine came within 24 feet of a West Mine heading called Waterhead Dook, and a borehole between the two drained water from the West Mine. Could it be opened out with pick and shovel? Andrew Houston,

calming his trapped men, gained permission to do so. But when rescuers, bringing food and drink, broke through from the gas-filled workings of Bank No.6, they could only get through by using breathing apparatus. David Park, after a battle for approval, himself donned breathing apparatus and joined the trapped men – and, once there, refused to come out until all were saved. Between the trapped men and safety lay over two miles of derelict workings and a belt of gas, plus official reluctance to allow the use of a simple type of breathing apparatus for men untrained in its use. Gas from Bank No. 6 was already seeping into the West Mine and Park telephoned an ultimatum to the surface. There was no other way; sets of simple breathing apparatus were sent down, the escape route was lined with volunteer rescuers and on the evening of 9<sup>th</sup> September one hundred and seventeen miners, David Park the last, emerged for the mouth of Bank No.6.

Desperate attempts, including a perilous, roped-up descent into the crater in Wilson's Field, were made to reach the thirteen men still missing. Weeks later, pitmen engaged in salvage work were devastated to find messages scrawled on a conveyor belt. The last one was dated and signed September 12<sup>th</sup>, 6.10 p.m., three days after the rescue. *'Still trying. We intend to make for No. 21 Road.'* For John Dalziel and William Howatt there would be no way out. Nor for Andrew Houston's brother, nor for David Park's cousin and uncle and their mates in No.5 Heading, overwhelmed by the peat, one can only hope, with merciful speed.

Andrew Cunningham received a King's Commendation. For their courage and leadership, Andrew Houston and David Park were awarded the George Medal.

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### **Garden Dance, 1 July 2010**

A year ago we held our first Garden Dance – or, rather, we didn't. The dance was scheduled to start at 7.30, the rain was scheduled to arrive a little earlier. It did – and that was that. Would we be luckier this time? The dance was scheduled to start at 7.30, the rain was scheduled to arrive a little earlier ...as Sam Goldwyn once put it, this was 'deja vu all over again'. Fortunately this time the weather gods smiled a little more kindly and the rain held off. By 7.30, we had 24 members – complete with filled plates and chairs – in our garden ready to go. And off we went.

Several dances later, as dusk (and a few scattered raindrops) fell, we were more than ready to tuck in to a sumptuous spread and enjoy a glass or two of wine in good company. All in all a very pleasant occasion, and we'll do it again next year.

**Andrew Morrison**

In an era in which local dialects need all the support they can get it's reassuring to see that the art of communication in the Doric is far from dead! Here, extracted from 'The Leopard' magazine, is

### **` A Fine Start ti wir Holidays'**

`I neist `ear, 1951, we wid ging hame for wir holidays an' bide wi' ma grunny....it wis 'i start o' the Glesca Fair an' 'i train wis gey busy fin it stoppet at Perth. There wis six o' us lookin for seats – ma midder an' fadder, me an' ma little sister Hazel, an' Johnnie an' Annie. We were gey lucky ti get a compartment a' ti wirsels on 'i coach afore 'i guard's van. Me an' Hazel wis gey excited. 'Iss wis 'i first time we hid been on a train. Oor midder wis a bit on edge an' aa, cis she hid hid ti cope wi' visitors an' get's aaa ready for wir holidays. We hidna been gaan lang, maybe half an 'oor oot o' Perth fin I noticed a weet bit on 'i fleer.

“Hazel's piddelt hersel!” I cliped.

“Dinna worry yersel' Nell,” said Johnny ti ma midder. “I'll jist hing an' gie the weet briks a sweel oot in 'I laavie.”

Fin he cam back, we winnert foo we could get 'i briks dry.

“Ach, I'll just hud on ti them an' hing 'em oot at 'i windae,” said Johnny. Weell, they were nearly dry fin a' at eence 'i train's brakes slammed on an' Johnny gaed aa ee's length. The train cam till a gey quick stop an' a wee file efter, 'i guard burst intae wir compartment.

“Fit i' hell are ye deein' fleein a reid flag oot o' 'i windae, min?” he said.

“Flag?” said Johnny. “Fit flag? I'm jist dryin' 'i little quine's briks.” An' wi' that, he showed 'i guard Hazel's bricht reid flannel knickers.

“Damn 'i bit,” said 'i guard. “Wir driver thocht it wis my reid flag an' jamm't on 'es brakes.”

“Oh me,” said ma midder burstin intae tears, “Iss is a fine start ti wir holidays!”

### **Nottingham Cèilidh Club (NCC)**

Some of you may remember that a couple of years ago the association dabbled in the mystic arts of cèilidhs in an effort to complement our regular weekly social dances. We had limited success with this venture and the topic fell off the committee agenda with the exception of our very successful Halloween cèilidh and regular St Andrews/Burns dinners. However' the idea did not fade away completely, thanks to the

enthusiasm of some newer Association members, requests from Nottingham University International Students to hold cèilidhs and several stramashes at local barn dances. We now call ourselves The Nottingham Ceilidh Club and aim to hold informal cèilidhs every six weeks or so around the Nottingham area. To keep the costs low, (entrance is usually £3.00) the Club tries to hold these events using recorded music in cheap halls, preferably with bars – in Beeston and Hucknall so far. Cèilidh dancing is much less formal than Scottish dancing but usually more energetic, and all dances are called. No strathspeys to help get your breath back! but there are waltzes and polkas that are....well, not *quite* so manic.

So if you fancy coming to join us, our next cèilidh is on Friday, 1st October at the New Venture Social Club in Beeston Rylands. If you want to see what the craic is like and have internet access - have a look at our Facebook page - type Nottingham Ceilidh Club into the search bar, or get in touch with me; my contact details are at the back of this Chanter.

## **Shuggie**

### **ASCDS Festival 2010**

The May blossom may have been in full and glorious bloom, but the weather was more like a cold, dreich day in February as a team of happy dancers from the Nottingham Scottish Association gathered to dance in the 30<sup>th</sup> Festival of Scottish Country Dancing at Ollerton. After weeks of rehearsal and with twelve dances buzzing around in our heads we took our place in the large hall. The men were suitably scrubbed up and looked very smart in their kilts, while the ladies were decked out in white dresses with tartan sashes. It has to be said that these dresses are not the most flattering of garments, but hey, there was not one designer dress in sight so at least we all looked the same. We began with the “Reel of the 51<sup>st</sup> Division” and with the first dance under our belts we began to relax and enjoy ourselves. I am sure no one noticed the occasional slight mistake – the rule was to keep dancing! We had a nice selection of dances, my favourite being the strathspey “Autumn in Appin” (and not just because of the links with my home county). It is a lovely dance and the music seemed to fit it perfectly. I hope we continue to dance it sometimes at the Thursday night gatherings.

This year’s Festival was hosted by the Caledonian Society of Sheffield and we danced to Robert Whitehead and the Danelaw Band. Godfrey Cozens was once again the MC and gave a short history of the origins of each dance. Several groups entertained us with some complicated formations, including Schiehallion by the Nottingham RSCDS team. The afternoon drew to a close with everyone taking part in The Grassmarket Reel with more enthusiasm than skill, as most of us had just had one quick walk-through the night before.

About half the group stayed on to enjoy the evening dancing, but before we settled down to our picnic tea, we managed to nip outside between showers for a quick photo shoot with our photographers, Alan and Shuggie balancing on a rather flimsy- looking chair to do their David Bailey impressions – not at the same time I hasten to add! After a welcome rest and everyone pleasantly refuelled, the ladies changed into their more flattering evening finery and we all had a great evening of varied dancing. The evening was rounded off with a double dose of “Mairi’s Wedding,” by which time we were practically on our knees and just about staggered to the car park. Some of us may be young in spirit, but our joints don’t always agree!

All in all, we had a great time and hopefully we can get a team together again next year and help keep Scottish Country Dancing alive for a long time yet. New members take note – we will be rounding you up at the start of next year!

On behalf of the team I would like to say ‘thank you’ to Bernice for organising the rehearsals and leading the dances and also to Jeanne and Peggy for standing in when some of the group couldn’t make it.

## **Margaret Barnes**

### **Secretary’s Introduction: Hello and help!**

Some of you might be aware that David relinquished command of the secretarial chair at our last AGM. I was duly voted in to fill his sizeable shoes and have been coming to terms with the comings and goings of what is involved over the summer.

Having sorted through the assortment of paperwork, banners and other items passed over to me, it struck me that there were a fair amount of people in the Association who, although I’ve been a member now for a couple of years; I have not yet met. So I’m taking this opportunity to say hello and introduce myself. I’m from Inverness originally, having moved to Nottingham in 2005 via Dalwhinnie, Aberdeen, Burntisland and Edinburgh, managing, in the process, to tally up a good few Munros. I enjoy making beer and cider, dancing, hill walking and watching football. I’ve been travelling around Europe following the exploits of our national team for many years now and was delighted with Mr. Capello’s efforts this summer in South Africa. I also have a fondness for bananas, salad cream and black pudding although not always at the same time. I make my living as a Systems Manager for a Payroll company to make sure you don’t pay more tax or National Insurance than you should.

Most of you will know me from either Thursday night social dancing or from Wednesday RSCDS nights. For those of you whom I have not yet met, if I can be of any help in my rôle of secretary of the Nottingham

Scottish Association, please let me know. One thing I'd like some help with is finding out where all our past presidents are- if they are still with us. We all know Bernice, Bill, Dennis, etc., but what about some of our Past Presidents whom I have yet to meet? There are several names from before my time in the Association. Does anyone have any interesting stories about their time as President, or perhaps some humorous anecdotes from Council meetings before the days of mobile phones, e-mails and electric kettles? I'd love to hear about them, as would our current members. So if you have any stories you'd be willing to share, please let me know. Your stories don't have to be publishable, if you know what I mean! My contact details are in this Chanter.

Thanks!

### **Schuggie MacInnes**

Two Edinburgh ladies were in Glasgow for the sales and spent two hours looking for the cheapest tea-room before resting their weary feet. One said to the friendly wee waitress who took their order "None of your Glasgow banter, thanks, just tea, and I hope the cup is clean."

The wee lass bustled off and returned with a pot of tea a moment or so later, saying cheerily

***"Which wan o' yez wantit the clean cup?"***

### **Membership and Subscriptions**

At the end of March 2010, membership of the Association, Ordinary members, Associate, Honorary and Life members totalled 110.

Members are encouraged to participate in our weekly dancing and all other functions and events throughout the year. If members know anyone who may be interested in joining our Association please pass on their details to the secretary.

Subscriptions for 2010/2011 were due on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010, thanks to all members who have made payments, for those members who have not yet renewed and would like to do so, please complete and return enclosed renewal form.

**Jeanne Dall Hon Treasurer**

**Coming Soon!**

**14 August 2010: Barn Dance and Super Supper  
Papplewick Village Hall**

Information and tickets (£10) from Bernice Young (Tel: 0115 9637228)

**18 September and 22 October 2010  
Rambles**

Information from Bernice Young (Tel: 0115 9637228)

**30 October 2010: Hallowe'en Ceilidh  
St Andrews with Castle Gate, 7.30 – 11.00**

A seasonal mix of dance, music and games with a Hallowe'en flavour. Come and let your hair down – and bring your friends. Information and tickets (£5) from Bernice Young (Tel: 0115 9637228)

**27 November 2010: St Andrews Night Dinner  
Masonic Hall**

Details and an application form for tickets will be in the next edition of the Chanter, but please book it in your diary now!

**Come Scottish Country Dancing**

Following the success of last season's class we are offering an eight week programme to give beginners and improvers the opportunity to enjoy Scottish Country Dancing.

Our Social Dancing this season will begin on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> September at 7.30 pm in St Andrew's with Castle Gate Church Hall, Chaucer Street Nottingham. Our beginners/improvers class will commence on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September at 7.00 pm for one hour, before joining the social dancing.

Beginners /improvers: 7.00 – 8.00 pm. (no extra charge for beginner's class).

Social dancing: 7.30 – 10.00 pm.

Members £2.00: Non-members £3.00 (and you get a wee cup o' tea)

Further details from Bernice 0115 963 7228 or Jeanne 01773 765896