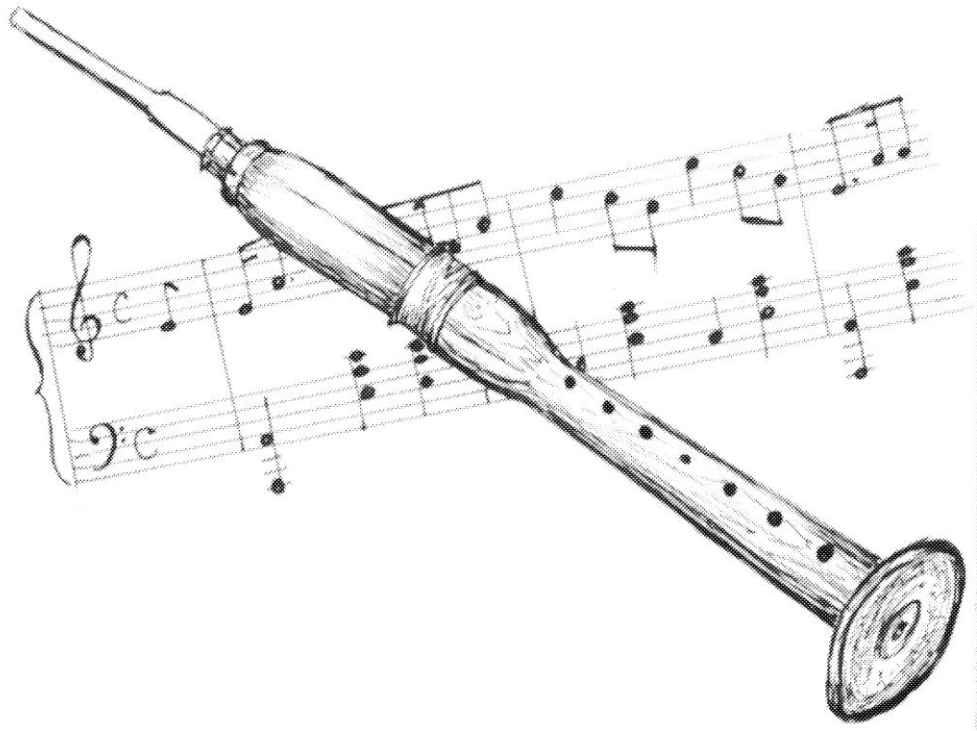


The Chanter



Nottingham Scottish Association
Newsletter
August 2011

www.nottinghamscottish.org.uk

Danny Reynolds

Another year, another ring,
around our silver birch will bring.
Another cascade of leaves to ground,
for sweeping and bagging and bending down.
Another chance for frost or snow,
to clear the bugs, and so, help grow.
Another phase, another face.
A twilight in our favourite place.
A joy for years, inwardly denied,
my room of choice, our room outside.

As Autumn spreads it's cloak of gold,
anticipate the new for old.

Fear not the chill,
that winter may bring,
for we cannot see every Spring.
So on the here and now, we focus.

Enjoy today,
live, love and pray,
for the bonus of sharing another Crocus.

From the President

I hope you have all had a great summer and welcome back to the new season of dancing and other events.

If you have had a holiday, I hope it was a good one and if you have one still to come, enjoy it. Chris and I had two weeks in Menorca in June and I think we came home more tired than when we left. In spite of cold, windy weather for the first three days and rain, thunder and lightning on the fourth day, we packed a lot in and explored a fair bit of the island, learning about Menorca's history from the Bronze Age settlements, influences of occupation by various other races, including the British, and more recent events of this and the last century. We walked for miles on the path which goes right round the island, known as the Cami de Cavalls, stopping off in pretty little coves, which were for most part deserted. We ate and drank plenty and I think we are still struggling to lose these extra pounds. Why does it take far longer to lose them than it does to gain them?

The Nottingham Scottish has enjoyed a varied programme of events since our Thursday night socials finished in May. Jeanne and Bill organised a Treasure Hunt, which unfortunately took place when I was away, but I understand it was a great success. We had a Garden Dance at Andrew and Sue's and thankfully the weather was kind to us. We had a good turnout and did a good selection of dances followed by a hearty bring and share supper. Once again we had a visit to the Open Air Theatre at Newstead Abbey this time to see Twelfth Night and were impressed by the fantastic memories and versatility of the players. Needless to say, food and wine were once again part of the evening's enjoyment and the brief shower of rain after the interval didn't trouble us too much. The following

evening we gathered together again for our annual Barn Dance at Papplewick and everyone agreed that the fish and chip supper was a great hit. In spite of the warm weather the dancing was energetic, if not very professional, but hey, we were there to enjoy ourselves.

The walking group has continued with it's very popular monthly rambles and the numbers have been very encouraging. The August walk had to take the crown for the most interesting and the biggest turnout yet. No details were given in advance, but Bernice managed to make it sound intriguing and the numbers kept growing. It turned out to be a ghost walk at Annesley Hall and - more about this later in the newsletter.

I would like to welcome Christine Vincent as the new editor of The Chanter and also to say thank you to David Page for his work as editor over the past few years - not an easy job. Christine joined the Nottingham Scottish through the walking group and along with her husband Dave has keenly supported our other functions throughout the year.

Some of you may know that our Treasurer Diane Robertson is ill and unable to undertake her duties at the moment. We are pleased to say that Jeanne has agreed to cover for Diane on a temporary basis, so all communication regarding renewals, etc should be sent to Jeanne until further notice. We wish Diane all the best in her fight to return to good health and our thoughts are with her and Keith at this difficult time. I would ask you all to take note of the "Coming Events" section and I hope we will have something for everyone.

Margaret

NSA Dates for your Diary

Tuesday, 3rd October – ramble

Saturday, 29th October Hallowe'en Cèilidh and Fish and Chip supper £8 – Papplewick Village Hall contact Bernice for tickets.

Saturday, 5th November – ramble

Tuesday 19th November Special Dance ..see feature page 7

Saturday, 26th November St. Andrew's Night Dinner & Dance, Masonic Hall, Goldsmith Street, 7.30 p.m. for 8.

Sunday, 27th November Church Service for Saint Andrew's Day, Saint Andrew's with Castle Gate, 11 a.m.

Tuesday, 6th December – Christmas Lunch and Ramble
£14 booking is essential ..please contact Bernice

NB For all rambles, please telephone Bernice - 963 7228 - before turning up.

Advance Notice

Saturday, 28th January, 2012 Burns Night Dinner & Dance,

March, 2012 Scottish Fiddle Orchestra

Other Events

Saturday 24th September Nottingham RSCDS Branch Social, Lowdham Village Hall
7.30 p.m. bring and share, £5/£3.

Saturday 15th October Nottingham RSCDS Walk Through Dance, Wightman Hall,
West Bridgford, 7.30pm., bring and share £4/£2



Bernice's Old Gals & Geezers [Boggs] [or How I met Bernice]

As most of you are aware Bernice collects all sorts of waifs and strays during her march through life strange as it may seem her life is based on a true story: they vary from stern magisterial types, to quiet kind and conscientious types who have a well developed sense of space and function with a rich inner world of observations about people whilst being extremely perceptive of other's feelings. Okay more of the former than the latter.

"I never saw a bar of chocolate until I was fourteen" or "Why did I come upstairs again?" are the most common phrases used by Boggs

Your Editor intends to use this space for contributors of the NSA to give more details of themselves [if they wish] whilst explaining how they became one of Bernice's Boggs.

How I met Bernice....Dave Vincent

I retired from work some 3 years ago [as a land reclamation officer in local government] and decided to learn how to play bridge – I've always been a decent card player and after taking lessons decided to join Linby and Papplewick Bridge Club so phoned the contact number and of course it was Bernice. She obtained for me a partner [Alan Ratcliffe] who is a brilliant card player and has been very helpful in teaching me the game. The Club is very much a social one with having a good time



more important than the game. From Bridge to walks to the Nottingham Scottish.

How I met Bernice.... Chris Vincent

I first met Bernice when a friend I wanted to raise money for street children in South America. He had been so moved by the plight of these children he felt he wanted to do something, so he organised a barn dance with a caller and a hog roast. However ticket sales were really low until Bernice came on board and roped in her posse to buy tickets and saved the Day!!...

"From ghoulies and ghosties and long-leggedy beasties and things that go bump in the night, good Lord deliver us."

The walking group's outing in August proved to be quite different from any other! Bernice wouldn't tell anyone where we were going or what was happening (and everyone who knows her will realise it how hard it must have been for her to keep mum!), but she managed to intrigue over 40 members and friends enough to sign up for whatever was in store.

We set off from Bernice's house by car and our destination was the now derelict Annesley Hall. We were off on a ghost trail! We were welcomed with a glass of Bernice's very moreish damson gin, with refreshing slices of melon for those who didn't wish to partake and the evening began with a film about the history of the hall. Well, that was the plan - were the ghosts at work already? To say we had some technical details was putting it mildly.

Eventually the film got underway, but not for long. It crashed about halfway through and it was decided that rather than endure any sarcastic remarks and wolf whistles from the (so far) patient audience, we would carry on with the rest of the proceedings.

Our guide was Dick Starr, who had worked at the hall in the 1960's and was an absolute mine of information about the history of the hall and the various families who had owned it. He had lots of anecdotes about the family and his experiences during that time, which really brought the whole thing to life for us.

We walked round the grounds, with Dick pointing out things of interest, adding fascinating little snippets about the Chaworth-Musters who owned it during his time there. Unfortunately, due to the heavy rain in the afternoon, the ground was very wet underfoot so we shortened the walk a bit, but Dick pointed out some quite rare and interesting trees in what had once obviously been a very beautiful arboretum.

We headed back towards the house after hearing stories about the exploits of one of Annesley's near neighbours, Lord Byron, who often stayed at the Hall. We were greeted with a sumptuous spread in the candlelit great hall, prepared by Bernice, but decided since it was now such a lovely evening, we would eat outside. There were copious amounts of beer, wine and delicious food and the lovely views from the front of the hall made it all the more enjoyable. The surrounding trees were wreathed in gold as the sun went down and the general mood of the group was mellow and relaxed, but not for long.

Once we were all replete, Dick gathered us all together again and we went back into the hall, which by now was pitch black inside and went to the various parts where sightings of orbs and strange mists had been regularly recorded. Dick had brought along a medium, and whatever anyone felt about ghosts, they had some interesting stories to tell. Unfortunately or otherwise, we had no strange encounters that night - perhaps there were too many of us - who

knows! The remains of a serving maid who had gone missing after becoming pregnant were found in one of the downstairs rooms, but even in that room, there was no spiritual activity. Dick told us that the bones had been carbon-dated and found to belong to the period in which the maid went missing, but the family were extremely reticent about the whole incident.



We eventually gave up, but by the time most people had gone and there were only a few of us left, the hall felt decidedly more spooky than it had all evening and I definitely would not like to be there on my own!

It seems criminal that the hall is being allowed to fall apart. It was once home to many valuable paintings and artefacts which the F.A. who bought it in 1973 stripped out and sold off. Even the wood panelling was stripped from the walls in what surely was little better than vandalism. They then sold it on to another group who did nothing with it and let it fall into disrepair and the present owner, a billionaire builder, has shown no interest in restoring it. It is to be hoped that some preservation organisation will take it over and prevent any further deterioration and maybe even do some restoration work.

Everyone agreed we had had a really interesting and enjoyable evening and our ghost walk finished off a summer of really great walks with the NSA walking group and on behalf of the group I would like to say a big thank you to Bernice for all her hard work and hospitality. We all look forward to next series of walks and in particular to the Christmas one, which proved to be a great hit last year. Look out for details in The Chanter.

Nottingham Scottish Association

A SPECIAL DANCE EVENING

£3 St Andrews Church 19th November 7.30 until 10pm

A special dance evening has been arranged for more experienced dancers.

You will be able to read the crib sheet in advance to see if you can, with only a minimum walk through, take part in the dances.

Contact Bernice for the crib sheet.

Dances

R...Nottingham Lace
J... Farewell Auchterarder
S...Moray Rant
S Bonie Lass of Accord
R Rolharrow Burn
R Bratach Bana

Newspaper Cuttings from the Archives

April 1915

Mr J Crawford presided over the Annual Meeting of The Nottingham Scottish Association at The Mikado Café last night. The Council's Annual report showed that there were 84 Ordinary Members, 80 Lady Members and 14 Country Members. The average attendance at the meetings had not been maintained during the past season, various aspects of the war being no doubt responsible. Six members, five of whom, were, or had been members of the on Council, had responded to the call of King and Country, and 20 sons of members or of former members had also been ascertained to be in various branches of the services.

Financially, The Association was in a strong position, the balance in hand having been increased from £15 at the outset to £22 at the close of the year.

Office bearers were re-elected.

19th April 1921

Scottish Association Revived After a Six Year Lapse

After a lapse of about six years, owing to the war, the Nottingham Scottish Association was 'Revived' last night, when a pleasant social evening was spent at The Mikado Café.

Mr J Crawford, the genial President welcomed 140 old and new members of the Association, and expressed the hope that the society would continue, and thus give Scottish residents in Nottingham an opportunity of gathering together. The remarks were endorsed by Mr J Currie, Secretary, who along with the President was responsible for the 'resuscitation' of The Association. It was decided that the Association should be carried on, and two more meetings be held, during the present season.

It was mentioned that 34 members had served with the colours during the war and three members had made the great sacrifice. Several lady members had proceeded abroad in the service of The V.A.D. The social evening was rounded off with a whist drive and light refreshments.

Jeanne Dall

A 'Country Member' was someone who lived outside the city, paid a smaller subscription and was excused from regular meetings owing to time and cost of travelling in 1921. V.A.D. this was the Voluntary Aid Detachment

Many of our members will be aware I retired from the role as Treasurer at the last A.G.M. my position was taken by Diane Robertson. Unfortunately Diane is unwell at the moment and I am Acting Hon Treasurer until she is ready to continue. I am sure you will all join with me in wishing Diane a speedy recovery.

On checking membership subscriptions I find there are still several members who have not yet paid for the current year. I should be obliged if all unpaid subscriptions are sent to me without further delay.

Jeanne Dall, 2 Primrose Rise, Newthorpe, Notts
NG16 2BB

Carry on Skiing

Doncaster, Robin Hood Airport, Sunday morning at 4.30am is not the most hospitable point to embark on our latest trip. We re-acquainted ourselves with Joe, who we see just once a year for this event and met Nikki, who is Una's colleague from work. In fact she is Professor of Nursing at Nottingham University and for a dusty academic and Guardian reader, she turned out to be rather good fun.

This must be at least in part due to having to share a room with Bernice for the week. Anne was apprehended at the airport for carrying a concealed offensive weapon and would have to complete the flight to Turin without nail scissors.

After checking in at the hotel, we went into the town for lunch where we learned the legend of the Dahü. This animal, part chamois, part squirrel, has long legs on one side of its body and short legs on the other. Hence it is ideally suited to walking around mountain peaks but must take care to do so in the same direction otherwise a fall would ensue; an experience most of us would "enjoy" before the end of the week.

A walk up to Campo Smith to collect our kit and an evening meal, where we met Allan and his girlfriend Janice from Scotland, followed by an early night completed a long and tiring first day. Next morning after breakfast we eagerly walked back up to Campo Smith.

We were all excited at the prospect but I remembered that in the previous four trips someone has had a bad fall which has precluded further skiing. This trip would be no different. After the first chair lift we were all assessed for ability. Nikki was a beginner and was in a group herself. Bernice, Joe, Alan, Anne and Janice were understandably put into the Advanced group. The rest of us were in the Intermediate group apart from Una, who because of her superior poise and style, something I've never quite been able to understand, was put in with the Advanced group.

Lessons then progressed and we re-learned all the things we had forgotten since last year. At the end of the first day we walked back to the hotel for a nice meal but physically exhausted. Of course it didn't impair the vigour of the après ski activities which included the usual selection of games together with a few new ones. However, by 10.00pm it was decided that our bodies could take

no more and we retired for a deep and rewarding sleep.

By next morning, most of us had got our ski legs and it occurred to me everyone had developed their own skiing personality. This in fact may be quite different from that which they would normally exhibit in everyday life. In fact, our little gang resembled not so much a group of sporty people but more like the cast of a Carry On film. This is my observation of the cast.

Bernice - always at the centre of things with an avalanche threatening laugh - Sid James.

Andrew - skis urbanely down the slopes in a most dignified manner, glaring at the rest of us intermediates who have an inferior technique - James Roberson Justice.

Alan and Anne - both great skiers, seems like they're only with the group on secondment

Joe - Big friendly giant, amiable and unassuming - Bernard Bresslaw.

Allan and Janice - romantic Scottish man with Scottish firecracker girlfriend. He'll have trouble in keeping her quiet back at the croft.

Una - does everything annoyingly perfect, always smiling - June Whitfield.

Nikki - Jovial, lots of largesse, a traditional matron, who else but Hattie Jacques.

On Wednesday, we advanced up to more challenging slopes. At one point the Intermediates were on the same slope as the Advanced. As I sped down the slope in a usual uncontrolled manner I saw what looked like a grizzly bear in a bonnet. It was the giant Joe meandering down the slope on a collision course. The laws of physics being what they are, I felt like a sparrow that had just flown into a meteorite. Bruises but no breakages seemed a lucky escape. A later fall when I ran into a pole, sadly not a human one, resulted in yet another bouquet of bruises and a sore back. Typically after a fall, fellow skiers are very helpful in retrieving the left pole, the left ski, me, the right ski and the right pole which have been distributed at 30 metre intervals up the mountain.

The evening's après activities were both amusing and educational. Joe became more familiar with Andrew's activities and Bernice was introduced to the works of the Marquis de Sade. The best part came at 9.50pm when conscious of the 10.00pm curfew imposed by Nikki, Bernice introduced a 10 minute game. Of the time available we spent 8 minutes in By Friday the Advanced skiers were supremely confident and ready for a real challenge. This would include the bottom half of the slope from the 2006 Turin Winter Olympics. Bernice and Una tried to coerce me to go along with them but remembering Janet's injury from last year I was having none of it. Apart from aching limbs and a bad back I was terrified of the prospect. However, Una prescribed a couple of "happy pills" and by the time I'd walked up to Campo Smith I was ready for the challenge. Those pills are really something; I'm going to use them on Thursdays when Bratach Bana is on the programme. So off we went and with Bernice at the front and Alan behind as custodian to pick up any ski poles that I'd discarded, I acquired a degree of confidence that was hardly justified. Two hours later after a fall on my nemesis slope Les Arnauds, we reached the top of the slope called Sellette, 2230 metres high. The view was spectacular and the ski down was the best yet.

Meanwhile, Andrew and Sue had extra lessons to improve an already superior skiing technique and Sue had a fall. There is no good time to have a serious fall but the end of the week is as good a time as any. A sprained calf muscle put an end to Sue's skiing for the week and she spent the rest of the holiday in Strathspey time, and very good it was too. In the evening, some of us ate out, some stayed in the hotel but Una, still in madcap mode, persuaded me to accompany her on a downhill ski by torchlight – in other words, in total darkness. Another hazard was safely negotiated, at least by us but not by the unfortunate girl I ran into.

At the end of the week we all concluded that it had been a truly fabulous time, organised and led superbly by Bernice. However, I must acknowledge the great contribution made by Alan and Anne through their skiing skill, guidance and calmness. It is encouraging that as a group we can expand and improve. So to any members of NSCDC who feel you might like to join our group, you need to ask this question.

Can you handle this much fun?

Alan Ratcliffe