



Nottingham Scottish Association

The Chanter

June 2011

The Chanter is the newsletter of the
Nottingham Scottish Association
www.nottinghamscottish.org.uk

Gray the fisherman is no trouble now
Who quoted me the vagrancy laws
In a voice slippery as seaweed under the kirkyard.
I rigged his boat with the seven curses.
Occasionally still, for encouragement,
I put the knife in his net.

Mansie at Quooy is a biddable man.
Ask for water, he gives you rum.
I strip his scarecrow April by April.
Ask for a scattering of straw in his byre,
He lays you down
Under a quilt as long and light as heaven.
Then only his raging woman spoils our peace.

Though she has black peats and a yellow hill
And fifty silken cattle
I do not go near Merran and her cats.
Rather break a crust on a tombstone.
Her great-great-grandmother
Wore the red coat at Gallowsba.*

From 'Ikey on the People of Helya'
by George Mackay Brown.

*'wore the red coat' - was burnt as a witch.

From the President

As your new president I realise that some members of the Association will not know me, so I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself, but first to say a big `thank you` to our past President, Andrew Morrison, for the sterling job that he, supported by his wife, Sue, has done for the Association over the past two years. A hard act for me to follow.

Briefly, a little about me (nothing exciting or exotic, I'm afraid) - I was brought up in Oban on the west coast of Scotland. My father's family were for several generations boatbuilders in Oban, moving there from the Island of Lismore around 1870, and my mother came from Lanark in central Scotland. I attended St. John's Episcopal School and then Oban High School, but decided, after getting my Highers, (much to my parents' annoyance) to rebel against furthering my education at University and left school at 17 to work as a shorthand typist in a Solicitor's office. After that I worked for Argyll County Police and later returned to the legal profession as a Secretary.

I have three children. My two daughters were born in Oban and my son in Nottingham. I also brought up my brother and sister, following the death of my mother at a young age, so as you can imagine a lot of my life was involved with children! As work and prospects in Oban were a bit thin on the ground at the time, in 1974 my husband Bob and I moved to Nottingham at Hallowe'en, not, I hasten to add, on broomsticks! As my children still live in Nottingham, I guess we must like it. Ten years later my husband died and I was left a widow at 38. However, much to my surprise, five years later I met and married Chris, whom many of you know. I also have three grandsons, who are now 16, 12 and 9.

I joined the Nottingham Scottish Association about 11 years ago at the

instigation of Dennis and Shona, whom I met at a Burns Dinner Dance. I had not done Scottish Country Dancing for about 30 years, but found I loved it just as much as in school, and everyone at the Nottingham Scottish made me very welcome. Those are the basics, so I will move on.....

At the AGM in April I am pleased to say that Bernice agreed to stand as Vice President and to continue as Dance Secretary, and her experience will be invaluable to me over the next two years. I understand Jeanne's reasons for stepping down as Treasurer; she will be greatly missed but assures me of her willingness to help when needed. I would like to welcome Diane as a worthy successor, and also Mark Lees as a new and enthusiastic Council member. My sincere thanks to all Council members for their support and hard work.

Bob Logan is now an Honorary Life Member in recognition of his invaluable service to the Association over the years (very ably assisted by Isobel) and he has agreed to serve as a Council member for one year.

A proposal for a rule change was carried at the AGM so that Associates who have been members for at least three continuous years, and served on the Council for two, may now hold the offices of President and Vice President. This two year rule will apply to all members. It has become increasingly difficult to find Ordinary members to fill these offices and there are loyal and very capable Associate members who are committed to the Association and its aims.

We have enjoyed a successful series of events in the last year - a garden dance at the President's home; a visit to the open-air theatre at Newstead Abbey for `Pride and Prejudice`; a fun-packed Hallowe'en

Cèilidh; the St. Andrew's and Burns' Dinner dances; monthly walks including a Christmas walk in thick snow, finishing with lunch at Bestwood Lodge Hotel; a slide show on the Borders by Dennis Willey, and finally Andrew's very professional President's Evening. Our Thursday night social dances have been well attended throughout the year and some of our beginners have been doing so well that they joined the team for the ASCDS Festival in May, which was a great success.

We have a varied programme planned for the year ahead, details of which will be in our newsletter, The Chanter and I hope you will continue to support us and bring your friends, especially to the Hallowe'en Ceilidh and the St. Andrew's and Burns'

Dinner Dances to enable us to guarantee the future of these events.

Our website at www.nottinghamscottish.org.uk gives details of all our activities; we are quite proud of it and grateful to Andrew for setting it up and keeping it up to date. Thanks also to David Page for editing 'The Chanter', and to Bob Logan and Bill Dall for their printing skills. So many people work very hard to make our Association successful that it is difficult to name them all, but please accept my sincere thanks.

I wish you all an enjoyable summer and look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at our future events.

Margaret Barnes

Welcome...

The Association was pleased to have welcomed the following new members during the past year:

Pauline Tarrington

Rosemary Allen

Diana Dainton

David & Christine Vincent

David & Marie Wayte

Pamela Murphy

Sylvia Hale

Sara Vance

Alan & Anne Willott

'Did the Earth move for You?'

Are you like me? Look at the bottom of the page to see who has written the article, then decide whether to read it or not. At least try this first sentence.

'Did the earth move for you?' conjures up some interesting thoughts. Margaret & I, whilst checking the next NSA walk, really did see the **'earth'** move. As we walked through the woods down a leafy path we came across a couple making

love in the middle of the path... "Quick, Margaret, take a photo!" She whipped her camera out of her back pack and got two super photos of **'the earth moving'**. I'm sure the couple won't mind when we put the pictures up on our photo board, as the **'moving earth'** was actually two very large toads.

Now for a few more **earth moving** experiences: I have just returned from nearly four weeks in New Zealand with my friend Angela. Our first four days were spent in Christchurch as we were attending the wedding of Angela's nephew. The earthquake last September had made the original church to be used unsafe, so the wedding was moved to the bride's parent's house 30 minutes' drive from Christchurch. Two buses were laid on for the guests to make the journey. The trouble was that neither of the bus drivers knew the way. Boy! **'Did the earth move'**, as the bus drivers put their foot down, then braked sharply to turn around. (This was repeated a number of times). No GPS, no mobile phone reception and guests new to the area, there wasn't anyone able to assist the drivers. What a dilemma. The bride waited 45 minutes for the sixty-plus guests to show up. The wedding got underway and the bride was piped in by her brother. He did a great job, as owing to an injury he was balancing on one foot at the time. From then on all went smoothly.

We left Christchurch on the Monday as the earthquake hit on the Tuesday. We felt very lucky as only the morning before we had been in the Cathedral which, along with the hotel we had been staying in, was badly damaged. It is one thing to be in your own home thousands of miles away watching it on television and quite another to be in such close proximity where almost everyone who lived in New Zealand had friends or relatives affected in some way or another. It was so emotional.

We were served by waitresses who had lost their homes, some had managed to

get belongings out, others had not been so lucky. Our tour guide's daughter lost her pet shop. The bride (from the wedding) had been working on the third floor in the building adjacent to the one seen on fire on television. To get out of the building she ran to the stairs to find they had dropped away 18 inches. She had no choice other than to jump for her life. **The earth DID move that day.** We were glued to the television, spending four days in Christchurch and surrounding areas; we felt drawn to it. The beautiful areas we had visited were now devastated.

From Christchurch we flew to Auckland and travelled one of the two roads (not counting tracks) up to Cape Reinga. It is the very top of the North Island where the Tasman Sea meets the South Pacific Ocean. What a sight; you can actually see the line where they join together. It was adjacent to here that the **'earth moved for me'** or, to be correct, it was sand. At Cape Reinga is the ninety-mile beach. Actually it is only seventy miles long - the man with the inch tape didn't do his sums right. We travelled this beach in a lorry pretending to be a bus. At one end of the beach there are sand dunes. Not the sand dunes of the Mablethorpe variety, more like the Ben Nevis variety. We jumped off the bus, collected pieces of board 18" x 36" approx & proceeded to climb 'Sand Nevis', the idea being to sand-board down. Of the sixteen on the bus four never tried, two tried and failed, eight did it once, one did it twice and yours truly did it three times. WOW the exhilaration! The **'earth moved for me'**, it was exhausting and the sand got everywhere. But a fantastic experience.

We had a very intensive seventeen-day tour doing the main NZ highlights (in which Scotland is prominent) too numerous to mention. At the end of the tour we were due to fly out of Christchurch, and luckily for us a hotel on Hadley Park had just reopened its doors. Otherwise we would have had to get from Greymouth to

Christchurch Airport - a four-hour journey in time for a 10 a.m. flight.

The evening meal was interrupted by an after-shock, which only seemed to concern the guests as the locals seemed immune to them. **'Yes, the earth moved'**. I woke up during the night; at first I thought my room was close to the lift and then I thought 'But that wouldn't rattle the windows..'. In my sleepy state I thought it must be a train (there were no trains in the vicinity). Then Angela said "Isn't it frightening?" You forget that you are told to take cover, even if it is only the door-frame; you just lie paralysed in your bed. Yes, it was very frightening. **The earth certainly moved me.** As I lay on the bed, whether it was the bed shaking or just my legs trembling I don't know, but the windows were making a frightening noise. It didn't finish there; at the airport there was yet another after-shock. This time the floor shook and the large glass panels in the airport terminal actually wavered like a flag waving in the wind. Yet again **the earth moved me.**

I was never so glad to leave a country; in the last seventeen days whilst we had been touring they had recorded over five thousand aftershocks. That, to me, is scary.

To end this résumé of my holiday (which ought to have been full of only happy memories) I must mention the flight from Auckland to Los Angeles. It included quite a number of US personnel returning home who had been helping out at the disaster. I would have loved to tell them what a great job they had done and what a great support they had been as I chatted to them in the queue for the loo, but I don't think the words would have come without tears and that was no good to anyone. As I said earlier, I found it so emotional.

On the day when we returned, Japan had their disaster. Bernice

P.S. Such was the holiday I could write a book, but here are two interesting asides:

- In the week before the wedding the groom's sister Olivia had won the 'coast-to-coast' involving running-cycling-kayaking.
- The bride's brother Richie is the captain of the All Blacks rugby team. The grandfather of our President, Andrew, also held that position in 1880 when the team was known as the New Zealand rugby team. I took a photo of Andrew's grandfather with the team to show Richie and what a coincidence, Andrew's grandfather had been a Master at the same High School that he had attended. It's a small world!

ASCDS Festival 2011

After weeks of beautiful sunshine the morning of this year's ASCDS Festival dawned with grey skies and heavy showers. However, by mid-day, the sun had shown its face and things looked considerably brighter. This year's sixteen-strong team from the Nottingham Scottish included four of our more recent members, who in spite of their misgivings about the wisdom of joining the team, really proved

their worth and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

We had spent several weeks practising the twelve dances, with quite a lot of dedication and much hilarity, not entirely convinced that it would be all right on the day. Bernice rewarded our efforts with supper at Tommywoods and spurred us on to greater effort, ably assisted by

Jeanne. Between them they knocked us into shape and we were quite pleased with ourselves on the actual day of the Festival. Of course there were moments when we lost the plot, but the rule was 'keep dancing and look as if you know what you are doing'.

The 31st Festival of Scottish Country Dancing was hosted this year by RSCDS Sheffield Group and the MC was once again Godfrey Cozens, who carried out his duties with his usual aplomb and the sight of sixteen Scottish Country Dance teams, with the ladies kitted out in white dresses and tartan sashes and the men looking very smart in their kilts, was pretty impressive.

We all enjoyed the demonstrations by several of the groups, which must have taken weeks of rehearsals and were deservedly enthusiastically applauded.

At the end of the afternoon event we tucked into a picnic tea. Although the weather had brightened considerably and

was very warm, after the morning's rain the grass was damp, so we had to content ourselves with sitting inside.

A few of us stayed on for the evening dance, which proved to be a challenging programme, to say the least. There were quite a few dances we didn't know, but we enjoyed dancing the ones we were more familiar with. It was a very hot and humid evening and many ladies' fans were in evidence - I wish I had remembered mine! Tea, coffee and biscuits provided by the host group were very welcome in the interval.

The Nottingham Scottish Association will be hosting the afternoon event next year, along with Watnall Ladies, who will be doing the evening stint, so be warned, we will be rounding you up at the beginning of 2012!

Thanks once again to everyone who worked so hard to make the Festival a success.

Margaret Barnes

Treasure Hunt

Saturday June 11th 2011 from 10.30am – 1.00 pm



Members of The Nottingham Scottish Association, friends and families are invited to join us for a walking Treasure Hunt on Saturday 11th June. We will start from The Watnall W.I Hall in Main Road, Watnall, (opposite Watnall HGV Testing Station) returning there for a 'wee cup o' tea.' We hope you will come and join in and enjoy about a two mile walk through woods, fields and side streets.

To make sure we bring enough tea-bags it would be helpful if you would let me know how many 'treasure hunters' you are bringing.

Please ring me or e-mail or even 'the good old post' - The more the merrier.

Jeanne Dall

Tel: 01773 765896 e-mail: w.dall@btopenworld.com

Mrs J Dall 2 Primrose Rise Newthorpe Notts NG16 2BB

President's Night - Scotland in Words, Images and Music

A personal invitation from the President to all members of the Association to his President's Night was appreciated by all who were able to attend this excellent evening of entertainment.

Our President, Andrew Morrison began the evening with a fascinating extract from our Scottish history. We were reminded about our origins and the question of whether we were Scottish or Irish. We were then told of the invasion by the Romans who conquered the whole of the British Isles except the Highlands of Scotland then named Caledonia. Bill Dall's rendition of the Matt McGinn poem '*Grigaloo*' explained why they never succeeded!

With the use of videos we were transported to pictures of those beautiful Highlands whilst we listened to the songs and music '*Scots, wha ha'e*' and '*Flowers of the Forest*'.

The next video, very appropriate as the following day Scotland were playing England at Murrayfield, was the stirring rendition of '*Flower of Scotland*' sung at Murrayfield for the England v Scotland match in 1990, which was the last time we had beaten the 'Auld Enemy'.

Some exercise was then required, so after a couple of wee jigs we settled down and were returned to the Clearances in 1853, and in particular those in Suisnish on the

Isle of Skye. As a result of the Clearances many Scots emigrated to far distant lands and the beautiful poem '*The Canadian Boat Song*' read by our vice-president Margaret Barnes, who hails from the Highlands herself, told of their longing for their homeland.

On the lighter side, and after an excellent supper, we heard Jean Dall read the poem '*Immortal Robert Burns of Ayr*' by the infamous poet William McGonagall. A royal telephone conversation then had the audience laughing as Bill Dall tried to persuade HRH Queen Elizabeth to reply to the Toast to the Lassies at the Burns Supper. Book your tickets now just in case!

Bob Logan read the very funny poem 'The Effan Bees' by Matt McGinn, which was particularly appropriate as Bob is himself a bee keeper. Taking us all back to the days of black and white television we watched the wonderfully funny Stanley Baxter and his sketch of the interpretation of the Scottish lingo called 'Parliamo Glasgow'. Were we any the wiser?

The songs '*Maggie Lauder*' and '*The Wild Mountain Thyme*' on video brought the evening almost to a close leaving us just enough time for a couple more jigs before making our way home feeling very proud and nostalgic for SCOTLAND.

Kate Potter

NSA Events and Dates for your Diaries

Saturday 11 June 2011

Treasure Hunt, Watnall, 10.30 a.m – contact Jeanne Dall for details
(w.dall@btopenworld.com)

Thursday 30 June 2011

Garden Dance - or contact Andrew Morrison for details (andrewmorrison@ntlworld.com)

Saturday 16 July 2011

Barn Dance and Super Supper– contact Bernice Young for details
(berniceyounglinby@yahoo.co.uk)

Tuesday, 6th September – ramble *

Tuesday, 3rd October – ramble *

Saturday, 29th October Hallowe'en Cèilidh – venue to be confirmed

Saturday, 5th November – ramble *

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

Tuesday, 6th December – ramble followed by Christmas Lunch*

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

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

Saturday, 28th January, 2012

Burns Night Dinner & Dance, Masonic Club, Goldsmith Street, 7 p.m. for 7.30 p.m. to midnight.

March, 2012 Scottish Fiddle Orchestra – details in September.

Other Dates for your Diaries

Friday 10th June 2011 Spanky's Cèilidh Night. Spanky Van Dykes, 17 Goldsmith Street, Nottingham. 8.30pm.

Friday 1st July 2011 Cèilidh night at the Boat and Horses, Beeston. Starts 8.00 p.m.

Friday 19th August 2011 Cèilidh night at the Boat and Horses, Beeston. Starts 8.00 p.m.
For all these events, contact Schuggie for more details (dmaci2000@yahoo.co.uk)

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, 7.30 p.m., bring & share, £4/£2