

**The Chanter**  
Nottingham Scottish Association  
Newsletter  
October 2008

O licht amo' the hills,  
S'uld ye gang oot,  
To whatna dark the world'll fa',

Nae mair the thocts o'men  
'Il traivel 'yont the world  
Frae aff some shinin' Ben.

Nae mair the glint o' snaw  
Oot ower the world's wa'  
'Il mak men doot  
Gin they've their e'en or na.

O licht amo' the hills!

Nan (Anna) Shepherd

## FROM OUR PRESIDENT

We greatly enjoyed our first trip to Arran. A few gentle walks, a Ceilidh, local history, a sample of the island's distillery, good food and of course the local ice cream, all helped to make it a memorable holiday. And we had good weather (for Arran).

Our first promotional Ceilidh, held in Beeston, was a great success, thanks primarily to the hard work of Shuggie McInnes. Our next one in Bestwood Village in November should be a sell-out.

I hope you all can come to my Presidents Evening at the end of October. A bit of a party, with songs, poetry, dances and a wee bite to eat. As we would like to have some idea of the numbers to cater for, please ask any member of council for your free ticket.

It won't be long before the **St Andrew's Dinner and Dance** and Andrew has found extra evenings locally that may be of interest, the details are on the back page.

Our **St Andrew's Day Service** is on Sunday the 30th Nov and will be led by the new minister (from Shetland) at St Andrew's with Castle Gate, the Revd Ian Wiseman.

Please support your Council at our events; they work hard to arrange your evenings.

If you have the means, please check out the website [www.nottinghamscottish.org.uk](http://www.nottinghamscottish.org.uk)

Bob

The next edition will feature an article by Bill Dall in a planned series entitled '**Back Hame**'. Many of us will, I am sure, be able to contribute an article about the town, village, clachan or city of their origins or allegiance. Let's be hearing from you!

## New Honorary Life Members

At the AGM Bill Gabriel and Dick Hutchinson were given Honorary Life Membership, as thanks for all their work for the Association over the past 50 years. Both Bill and Dick have been our President and have also been council members of long standing. Indeed, they both still serve us as our Honorary Trustees and long may that continue.

Dick has been a life member for many years but to show to show our high regard Council still thought that he and Bill should be honoured in this way. So congratulations to both of them.

## Here's one to beat Gerald Hoffnung and The Barrel

Remember my 'exciting' holiday, visiting my son and family in Ecuador? Read on for my Faulty Towers experience in Yorkshire, April 2008. It was a Saturday in April and we were eight ladies, our ages ranging from 52 to 72.on a three-night walking holiday in Yorkshire. Our three-star hotel looked quite busy and promising. Before our first five-miler we decided that some soup, rolls and a coffee would keep us going until dinner, but we were not allowed in the dining room; the dreaded bus parties were using it. All four different groups of them& They gave us soup on our knees (*Most of us would expect a plate. Ed.*) in the reception lounge. Somehow we were never charged. Off we went for a good walk in the Tadcaster area.

One of our rooms had a window that wouldn't open; the other three had windows that wouldn't close. My friends' plan for a quick shower before we ate turned to catastrophe when it was discovered that the shower could not be turned off and the bath plughole was blocked. Once, twice and thrice they rang Reception during the 45 minutes it took for the bath to fill, but only as the water was running down the outside of the bath did anyone respond. We went in search of a local pub meal, leaving the hotel to sort out the problem. We returned to find their room uninhabitable, so it was all hands to the pump (so to speak) to get them moved to their new abode, and thence to my room to find solace in the gin, whisky, wine, home-made damson gin and home-made blackberry gin, to name just a few. We all went to bed in a happy frame of mind.

Sunday arrived very wet and miserable, so we went to the Eden Camp 'modern history museum' at Old Malton. But first, breakfast had to be endured. The four bus trips had priority for breakfast, so when we were let in at 9 a.m. most of the food had disappeared, but as you can't keep a good woman down we made sure of our just desserts. (*At breakfast?*) All this led to our being offered two free bottles of wine as we were eating in the hotel that evening. All was perfect, the food was fantastic, the staff very attentive, the chef came out and insisted we had free sweets - I just couldn't manage one - and we were treated like royalty. Obviously the hotel wanted to create an impression.

They certainly succeeded and Monday saw pleasant weather and we travelled to Sutton Bank visitor centre near Thirsk for a rather strenuous five-miler and beautiful views over the Yorkshire dales. On our return I took advantage of the heated indoor pool/sauna whilst the others showered. We only had about one hour to get to the pub where our table was booked. They needed the time to beautify themselves, whereas I find that unnecessary. (Am I beautiful enough or don't I care?)

I showered in lukewarm water in the pool's changing rooms; on returning to the room I discovered the others had had the same experience with the added bonus of no heating in the rooms to warm up afterwards. What started out as a super day was going a little pear-shaped. On the way out to the pub we left the reception aware of our discomfort and our expectations on return. A truly delicious pub meal was had by all, so back to the fray!!!

Reception met us with heartfelt apologies and gave us keys to four new rooms – remember, this was our last night! We felt unable to move all our gear but thought just to sleep in a warm room and have hot water would be worth using two rooms for each couple. Off we trotted to the new rooms, also devoid of heating and hot water...!

We now move to plan B: the management brought room heaters into our original rooms. Only one snag: we'd had four rooms and they only had three heaters. Half of us (including myself) with the 'heaters' gave up at this point and said we would just stay put as it was our last night. Of the others, one asked for towels to be pushed into the gap in the window to stop the draught and stayed where she was. Her room mate and the one in the other room were not so easily appeased. Throughout all this we must stress that the skeleton staff dealing with us were doing their utmost to help; it was getting towards midnight now! . Finally the last two were given a large family room each with hot water and radiators and all went to bed exhausted. So you think that's the end of it, after all we're leaving in the morning? No way!

At 7 a.m. I'm in the pool. It *did* seem cooler than on previous mornings, and guess what - the pool showers were *stone cold*. As I was annoyed at this time I wasn't embarrassed at what I did next, it's only looking back on it I feel my toes curl just a little... Smelling of chlorine, dripping water and with only a towel around me I proceed to Reception, which as it's now nearly 8 a.m. is full on businessmen booking out. Of course they all make way for this damsel in distress.

The choices are 50/50 - ask the audience or phone a friend. I choose the latter. I phone my friend to see if I can use her hot shower, but no, unfortunately her hot water and heating has given up half way through the night. Can you believe it? At this point I felt like lying down on the floor and having a paddy, but then thought better of it. On my way to the room I met the manager, she who left the night before believing that we were all sorted. Boy! Was this the right time to meet her? After putting her in the picture I explained that I was about to put the kettle on to get some warm water to have a body wash in the sink. But once I had soaped my body and rinsed out the flannel, the water was too soapy to take away the soap suds. There was now no option, **I had to rinse off in a cold shower!**

The management or whatever you care to call it was pants, but the staff members throughout were as pleasant as they could be. We had bought them a large tin of chocolates, handing it over at breakfast when the manager came to see us. I think she understood our appreciation of the staff. We appreciated her offer of two nights' bed and breakfast, one dinner and a room upgrade for the eight of us. After leaving the hotel we did another five-miler, stopped for an hour or so at a shopping centre (first time we had seen a shop in three days) and returned home.

We can't wait for our return. As we pull in, the staff may run out!

Bernice

## FIRST STEPS – or ‘How did you start Scottish Country Dancing?’ Some reminiscences of Long Ago by one of our members (continued)

**9.2.62** Colin, our teacher, mentioned that he was going to choose a team for a Scottish dancing competition. On Wed. he watched our feet all the time; it was most unnerving and made me dance worse than I otherwise would have. At one point, after watching my footwork, he buried his face in his arms in despair! However, he later named the eight for the team, including ‘Twinkletoes’ (me!). I was really surprised and delighted. I never thought I would get in after his rude remarks about my footwork. He’s a hard taskmaster but we all like him very much. Gosh, Mum, how hard I shall have to practise before May!

**4.12.62** I had to go to a rehearsal for the Christmas Show through freezing fog. We couldn’t see more than a few feet in front of us, and took our torches more to avoid being run over than to find our way. After the final run-through we were rather hungry so a deputation was sent out for fish and chips. A couple of incriminating photos, entitled ‘*Scottish Dancers rehearsing*’ were taken of us sitting in a semicircle waving hunks of fried fish. We were scheduled to appear at **12.15 a.m.** but luckily things went better than expected, and everyone was finished by midnight. Of course, none of the men had their cars out as it was impossible to drive, so we had a long, cold walk home through thick fog, on icy, slippery pavements. At the Dress Rehearsal it was interesting being made up for the first time; people looked pretty horrible close up! We girls had to have our arms done – *and the men had their legs done, too! How about that, fellers?* **To be continued**

Iris Dale

## TRAGEDY AND TAPESTRY

*‘I hae never seen the gless sae low’* remarked a fisherman – a barometer in neighbouring Burnmouth registered 27 inches of mercury, or 912 millibars – but nonetheless many of Berwickshire’s fishing boats put out to sea on the fine, calm morning of Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> October, 1881. At Eyemouth local custom had it that, should one boat set sail, the others were more or less bound to follow. The town’s fishermen, led by one Willie Spears, otherwise ‘Kingfisher’, had since mid-century been involved in a bitter dispute with the Church over tithes which might otherwise have been spent to make the harbour safer.

The boats had shot their lines about four miles off the coast when they were struck by a violent northerly wind accompanied by torrential rain and mountainous seas whilst, in the words of the ‘Berwickshire News’, *‘a dense thickness set down and totally obscured the land.’* The savage coastline offered no easy refuge.

Lines were let go and the Fifies and cobbles scattered; a fortunate few were beached and many of their crew members saved by desperate acts of bravery. Some boats, trying to make the harbour, were beaten to pieces on the rocks yards from safety and in full view of their crews’ friends and families whilst others capsized and sank out at sea. Somehow four Eyemouth boats ran before the storm to reach the Tyne and safety at South Shields, the news bringing joy to their families who had believed them lost.

Almost two days later another exhausted crew entered harbour with the ‘*Aerial Gazelle*’ of

Eyemouth: they had ridden out the tempest for twenty-two hours at sea. On that day the Berwickshire fishing ports lost 189 men, all but 60 from Eyemouth, leaving 93 widows and 267 children, a few as yet unborn, without a father. Thankfully, generous subscriptions to a relief fund provided some support.

In the town's excellent little museum a beautiful tapestry commemorates all the lost men and their boats by name, and its fourth and last panel points to a brighter future; not far away from an improved and busy harbour stands the statue of 'Kingfisher' himself whose hard-fought campaign for the harbour bore fruit, but too late for so many of his fellow men. As at Hartley Colliery in 1862 and on the Great Northern Railway of Ireland at Armagh in 1889, it would take an appalling disaster to bring about a change for the better.

**DP**

## **The Robert Burns World Federation**

Members of the Nottingham Scottish Association are justly proud of the fact that it is one of the oldest such Associations in England. Founded originally in 1871, it is older than the Burns Federation, and at No.17 it is one of the earliest members. There are at present 302 clubs on the Federation Roll and also 451 individual and family members. Each year a conference is held at which the usual business of an A.G.M. is conducted. This year it was held on 6th September – the day of the deluge! – at Seaton Burn, just north of Newcastle on the A1. More than 200 members and delegates were present.

Unlike most A.G.M.s, this was a lively and convivial affair where old friends and acquaintances met and newcomers were greeted with equal accord. They are all looking forward to a host of events next year which will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns.

The most significant of those will be the establishment by the National Trust for Scotland of the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway. The Trust will assume ownership of the present birthplace cottage and adjoining museum and work is in progress to extend and improve all the facilities, including the collection of more than five thousand items associated with the poet. This will take seven or eight months and the work will not be completed until the summer of 2009.

Naturally the cost is great, and contributions to the already large fund will be welcomed. Make a visit yourselves next year to see for yourselves the result of an enthusiastic effort. The immediate Past President of the Federation, John Haining, is looking forward with great interest to being with us on Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> January at our Burns Anniversary Dinner. He is a very lively, outgoing person and you can be sure of a stimulating 'Immortal Memory'. Don't miss it!

P.S. For those able to gain access to it, look up the Federation's website. [www.worldburnsclub.com](http://www.worldburnsclub.com) For an additional unexpected pleasure, try also John Cairney on [www.johncairney.com](http://www.johncairney.com) .

Dennis Willey

Did you hear about the guy who ate nothing but bricks and mortar for a fortnight?

Ach, well, he's awa' noo!

## **Een Orange walk-through met Schuggie?**

As you read this we will have had the first of two Cèilidh nights, in Beeston, with the second to follow in Bestwood Village. There is another planned for Friday, 16th January at the Arts Organisation on Station Street, Nottingham.

For those more adventurous amongst the Association there is also a Cèilidh being held in Holland on Friday, 27th March to celebrate an Auld Dutch Alliance forged in September 08 in Macedonia & Pip and I were on holiday there along with two thousand other Scots from the Tartan Army, most of whom went to Iceland for the second half of the double header that month. They got chatting to some Dutch fans, ended up with tickets for the Macedonia v. Netherlands game and started talking about the March 09 Scotland match over there.

+I've been bandying the idea of a Cèilidh in Holland about for a while and it's all come together nicely. The venue will either be the hall at the British School of Amsterdam or maybe even at the British School of the Netherlands in the Hague. The music will be by Craig McCallum and family (his wife is the pianist) who live over there. The MC will be Margaret Lambourne who is involved in some SCD clubs over there.

There will be a big orange fans' bus - look on [www.oranjefans.nl](http://www.oranjefans.nl) and while you're there in the Dutch language section, click on the Macedonia match link for some photos.

There will be some simple SCD dances and lots of cèilidh dances. If you fancy joining Pip, The Tartan Army, myself and the Dutch Happy fans for what promises to be a memorable weekend, let me know after Christmas. I can't guarantee a match ticket though !

Schuggie

## **Membership Renewal 2008 -09**

Many thanks to all members who renewed their membership back in April and to those who responded to the reminder sent recently. Please note; if you received a reminder and have not yet paid subscriptions, sadly your membership will be allowed to lapse.

*Jeanne Dall*  
*Hon Treasurer*

Q: Ten cows in a Scottish field - which one's nearest to Iraq?

A: Coo Eight!

## FROM THE DRIVER'S SEAT DATES FOR DIARIES

**Saturday, 18th Oct:** Newark SCD Soc. Annual Dance, Ollerton Leisure Centre, 7.30 p.m.

**Saturday, 25th Oct:** Waltham SCD Group, Annual Dance, Waltham Village Hall.

**Saturday, 7th November Ceilidh,** Bestwood Village

**Saturday, 29th November – St. Andrew's Night – see flyer enclosed!**

**Sunday, 30th November St. Andrew's Day Service. 11a.m.**

**Saturday, 6th Dec:** RSCDS Nottingham, social dance, West Park Pavilion, 7.30 p.m., recorded, £5/£3

**ADVANCE NOTICE – Burns Anniversary Night , Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2009, 7 for 7.30 p.m. Flyer in the next issue**

## ADDITIONAL DATES OF INTEREST

**Sunday 7th Dec 08** Under One Sky (Concert, Albert Hall)

**Saturday 21st Feb 09** Battlefield Band, Derby

**March 09 Scottish** Fiddle Orchestra, Harrogate

Saturday 24th May 09 Short walk/picnic/pub lunch

**June/July 09 Outdoor Theatre – Nottm Castle/ Newstead Abbey**

**Sunday 19th July 09** Ashbourne Highland Gathering

**Fri-Sat-Sun 14-15-16th Aug 09** Tattoo/Burns Trip

For more information see our website or contact Andrew Morrison

## Flagship Functions

For many years we have looked upon our St Andrew's Day Dinner & Dance and Robert Burns Celebration Dinner Dance as our two 'flagship' events. To ensure we can continue to hold both functions in the Belgrave Rooms we need your help and support. We urge you to come along and enjoy a great meal in great company and complete the evening with a couple of hours of Scottish Dances, with the help of a caller.

We are delighted to be able to hold the ticket price at £23 per head for St Andrew's Night. This is great value for money. Let's see if we can fill the ballroom. The booking form is just waiting to be completed.

We hope to see you there!

**PLEASE keep those articles coming!!**