

# Nottingham Scottish Association The Chanter March 2010

## THE GOOD THIEF

heh jimmy  
yawright ih  
stull wayuz urryí  
ih

heh jimmy  
ma right insane yírra pape  
ma right insane yírwanny us jimmy  
see it nyír eyes  
wanny uz  
heh

heh jimmy  
lookslík wír gonny míss thí gemm  
gonny míss the GEMM jimmy  
nearly three a cloke thínoo  
dork innít  
good jobe they've got thí lights

TOM LEONARD

## **From the President**

This has been another busy few weeks for the Association and the remainder of the year looks like being equally busy. Burns Night in January saw a gathering of members and friends who were treated to good food, good speeches and energetic dancing. February took us off to the Isle of Skye for a virtual tour courtesy of Dennis Willey with an excellent turn out for a cold winter's evening. Bernice Young has continued to organise rambles at regular intervals, with a sunny January ramble in the snow being a particular highlight.

Coming up, we have our Annual Dance, another ramble, the ASCDS festival of dance and a Barn Dance, so we will continue to be active well into the summer. The activities we put on depend on the hard work of the Council and on the contributions of other members who give their time freely. I would like to thank them all for their contributions.

Also, as spring approaches, so does the Annual Meeting. I would like to encourage members to consider putting themselves forward for election to the Council - if you are not sure what that would involve, please ask any member of the Council. I will hope to see you there.

Andrew

## The Sound of Skiing

After several weeks' intensive pre-ski training exercises, topped off by a vigorous Orcadian 'Strip the Willow' at the Burns Night festivities, we were ready to embark on another skiing holiday. For the first time Bernice was our leader and, as you would expect, things were pretty laid back. So much so that I was rather apprehensive we'd ever get there after a frantic phone call the day before departure to secure another passport photo. Nevertheless, seven of us, namely Bernice, Andrew, Sue, Una and I, together with previous ski trippers Joe and Janet, made it to the flight from Robin Hood Airport on Sunday. This was just six hours after the end of the Burns Night experience; none of us having had any sleep in the meantime.

Having checked in at the hotel we trudged along the icy road to the ski camp to secure our equipment before the first skiing day. As our happy little band sauntered down the road, admiring the mountains (and getting lost on the way) we felt like the Von Trapp children with Julie Andrews!

A skiing holiday demands assembling a whole series of equipment on your various body parts, and that's just before breakfast. I refer to the various items of clothing such as thermal underwear, fleeces, ski suit and socks. Most skiers came down to breakfast suitably half-dressed but I always came down in pyjamas. Nobody noticed. The other half of the kit was kept in lockers at the ski camp. This involved boots, gloves, goggles, helmet, skis and ski poles and need to be put on in a logical order which takes a bit of time. At this time, Bernice showed real leadership qualities in bringing spares for any hapless members of the party who had forgotten things. Er... that would be Una and myself who had forgotten our gloves and goggles.

On Monday morning, having met Allan, a previous ski tripper, who'd flown there direct from Glasgow, we completed the twenty minute walk to the ski camp. There we put on our boots and collected our skis and poles. From the ski camp to the slopes was a short but treacherous walk through a very icy pass, bordered by ten-foot snow drifts. Without actually falling, Sue got stuck in the pass, unable to move in either direction. Soon a queue of angry Italians had formed behind at the pass, desperate to get skiing. Some of them, holding their skis, climbed over the snow drifts and I used the same tactic to get on the snow where at last I put on my skis. Eventually Andrew got Sue moving, the log-jam was removed and order restored. The incident gave me a renewed admiration for Hannibal and his elephants.

Finally on the snow, we were assessed by Italian trainers after which Bernice and Joe were put into an advanced group; the rest of us were classed as beginners/intermediates. Our trainer was Fabrizio who directed us to the chairlifts, which whisked us skyward and we were soon mobile. Everyone had a

great first day and we felt that we were skiing very well. I was pleased that I'd fallen only four times, three of these were when I was going upwards and the other one backwards, so they don't really count.

Back at the hotel for an evening meal, Sue impressed us all by producing an Anglo/Italian dictionary and trying to communicate with the waitress in Italian. By the end of the week, she attained such mastery of Italian that she was able to order a bowl of stewed prunes from our unsmiling waitress. In fact, getting the waitress to smile was one of the challenges we set ourselves. This we achieved by Wednesday, but repeating it with her colleague, a Myra Hindley look-alike, proved beyond us. Also our resolve to eat fifty boiled eggs in the week was abandoned when the warm eggs stopped being warm in mid-week.

As Bernice and Janet were sharing the biggest room, before and after dinner we assembled there for drinks and a whole series of party games. These must have been good as the only time any of our party declined to be there was when they were totally exhausted after a day's skiing. There were many hilarious moments; my favourite being when on Andrew's birthday we all sang "Happy Birthday Mr. President" in true Marilyn Monroe style, although he was unable to oblige us with a "Suggestive Comment" later. On Monday night, I had heard some noisy kids, running along the corridor. However, as our après ski partying got noisier as the week progressed, by Wednesday the kids had requested that their room be changed to a less noisy part of the hotel. Revelry is all very well back in the hotel, but when Bernice joined us at lunchtime after morning lessons on the mountain, the noise was almost enough to start an avalanche.

Tuesday morning saw us bristling with confidence and looking for a greater challenge. Bernice and Joe suggested they should take us down a more difficult slope further up the mountain after lunch which we agreed. Big mistake. At the first corner Janet had a bad fall and although nothing was broken or sprained, she was unable to ski properly for the rest of the week. Bernice and I manhandled her up the slope to the chair lift from where she was taken down to Base Camp 1 and was then carried by Skidoo down to the bottom of the mountain. The rest of us got down safely but scared and with our earlier confidence shattered.

By Friday our confidence and technique had returned, so Fabrizio tried us out on a speed test on a slalom run. I was the slowest down, taking about ten minutes to complete the course, nine minutes of which was the time it took me to get up having fallen yet again at the first post. In case you think nine minutes is a long time to get up, I should say that if you fall, you sometimes have to take off one ski to stand up and if that one slides down the hill you have to go after it. Then if, having got your skis on, one of the poles slides down the hill, you have

to start again. If home movies had been made of all my falls there would have been enough material for a whole series of Jeremy Beadle programmes.

A skiing holiday is a unique experience. There is a lot of technical stuff to take into account but the rewards are more than worth it. The spectacular beauty of the snow-capped landscape gently passing by as you are lifted to the heights by the chair lift, followed by the exhilaration of coming down under your own force of gravity is a tremendous contrast. When this is supplemented by a lively après ski agenda, it makes this a must do repeat exercise, even taking into account the possibility of injury.

Apart from the injury to Janet, this was a successful holiday in every way. In this respect we need to acknowledge the huge debt of gratitude we owe to Bernice. She not only selected this resort and hotel from all other possibilities, but administered the booking and transport details to and from the resort. Even when in the hotel, she organised the après ski and drinks parties. It just would not have been as good without her.

Julie Andrews would have approved.

(Any references to real people or events appear to be purely coincidental – and, for the record, the president's birthday is not in January! Ed.)

**Alan Ratcliffe**

### **Membership Renewals**

Annual membership renewals will be due on 1<sup>st</sup> April. Our financial year runs from 1st April 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. The Council have agreed to hold membership fees at last year's levels. It would help me greatly if all fees were paid promptly by completing and returning enclosed form, without us incurring additional costs chasing up late payers again this year.

Thanks

**Jeanne Dall**

## NSA Walk Friday 12<sup>th</sup> March

The Walking Group is going from strength to strength. After a week of lovely weather, Friday 12<sup>th</sup> March dawned wet and miserable. However, undaunted by the ominous grey skies, seventeen of us set off under the indomitable leadership of Bernice. Clad in waterproof jackets, trousers and walking boots we looked quite like seasoned walkers. Alan however, always the rebel, was decked out in green wellies, a decidedly tatty brown leather jacket. A black hat with earflaps completed this rather unconventional walking gear.

We headed for Bestwood Country Park and fortunately the rain was fairly light. We stopped at the lake for a photo shoot and to admire the swans, while Bernice reminisced about paddling, fishing, playing and “whatever” in the stream – her words and we didn’t pursue the “whatever” any further!

On our way again, we saw clumps of snowdrops and pussy willows and catkins, reminding us that Spring was on its way. Heading for Bestwood Country Park Hotel for morning coffee, we took a slight detour and stopped off at the children’s playground where some of the men showed their prowess on the parallel bars (not very impressive) and Dave from the Bernice’s bridge club decided to have a go on the slide. He reached the bottom much quicker than expected, forgot the childhood method of sticking his feet straight out in front of him and landed in a rather ungainly heap among the mud and leaves. A pause for another photo shoot and we went on our way to the hotel.

Goodness knows what the hotel guests and staff thought when our motley crew walked into the lounge bar. We did however knock the mud off our boots and settled down to enjoy coffee and some very posh biscuits.

After a pleasant half hour we donned our jackets again and set off on the next leg. The rain wasn’t too heavy, but one member of the group insisted on an umbrella (fair weather walker!!). We were fairly sheltered walking through the wood and the going was quite easy till we came to a very steep diversion from the main path. One or two of the more sensible in the group walked round the longer way while some of us brave souls put our best foot forward and gingerly went downward. Not Alan though, he took it a run and came down with the same finesse with which he approaches skiing with Andrew following in a slightly more controlled style.

On approaching a field which we had to cross to regain the path, we had to assure Jeanne that there were no cows around – she has a bit of an aversion to them to say the least. There were only a few friendly horses thankfully. I am not quite sure what she would have done if there had been any cows and a bull didn’t bear thinking about.

After a very pleasant six and a quarter miles, we arrived tired and hungry at the Swan at Hucknall Golf Centre to enjoy a tasty lunch. The distance was calculated by one of the guys who was wearing a pedometer and he assured us it was accurate. Bernice had the foresight to order in advance, so we didn't have long to wait. We had just sat down when the heavens opened and there was a torrential downpour. Someone up there must have been looking after us.

We all agreed that in spite of the rain, we had had a great day and are all looking forward to our next walk scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> April, which is a Saturday, so that those of you who are working will be able to join us. Do come along and enjoy the scenery, exercise and convivial company.

**Margaret Barnes**

### **The Isle of Skye**

Friday 19 February in the coldest winter in recent years may not seem to be the best time to pay a visit to the Isle of Skye. However, a good number of our members did just that. Well, more or less...

In reality, our tour, with the expert guidance of Dennis Willey, never got further than St Andrew's with Castle Gate. Dennis has been a regular visitor to and lover of Skye for many years and his slides and commentary brought the Island to us.

The tour started with the crossing to Skye – the traditional way, by ferry, and headed north round the island. This took us through Portree and up to the startling landscapes of the Storr and the Quiraing with their strange forests of rock pillars. It continued round to Dunvegan and on to the Cuillins – Scotland's most jagged and spectacular range of mountains. These were viewed from the remote tracks and sea lochs which surround them.

It certainly reminded me of just what a varied and hauntingly beautiful island it is - and definitely encouraged me to return to it. It was a great evening and our thanks go to Dennis for his expert photography and interesting and informative commentary.

**Andrew Morrison**

## **Coming Events**

**Saturday 17 April 2010**

St Andrew's with Castle Gate, Church Hall, 7.30pm  
Annual Dance  
Tickets £5.00

**Thursday 22 April 2010**

Annual General Meeting  
St Andrew's with Castle Gate, Church Hall, 7.30pm

**Saturday 24 April 2010 at 10.00 am : Ramble**

Contact Bernice Young for details (Tel: 0115 9637228)

**Saturday 14 August 2010**

**Barn Dance and Super Supper**

Contact Bernice Young for details (Tel: 0115 9637228)

## **BURNS NIGHT DINNER & DANCE, 23 JANUARY 2010**

Saturday 23 January saw the 251<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns. While 251 doesn't have quite the same ring as 250, we celebrated in good style with 90 members and friends in attendance.

The speaker to the immortal Memory, Nigel Sturrock, brought us a view of Burns as he might have been in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and developed his theme with appropriate humour and insight.

Bill Dall proposed the Toast to the Lassies and his wife Jeanne replied. As might have been expected this was a fine exhibition of marital abuse and it is a relief to see, so far, that they are still together! Bill also acted with his customary skill as croupier and Bob Logan addressed the haggis with much aplomb .

The speeches over and the tables cleared, the dancing began with Bernice Young directing us and a pleasant social occasion drew to a close shortly before midnight.

## New Members

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

Chris Barnes, Geraldine Cassidy, George & Gill Duly, Valerie Norris, Mark & Janine Lees, Anne Rawson, Dr Nigel Sturrock, & Mrs Susan Sturrock and their three girls Abbey, Beattie and Caitlin.

## BETRAYAL IN MORNINSIDE

Embrow my ain, ye are aye meant  
tae be a city o' middle class douceness  
blue nosed mediocrity  
bourgeois obtuseness  
but  
(listen tae whit I'm tellin' ye!)  
the ither nicht  
in the Morninside chippie  
I was confrontit by nae fewer than ten  
O' the reuchest an' the teuchest haurd men  
O' yer haurdest-haurd haurd men

- and (O Gode!) Hoo I wished I was in Glasgow.

Donald Campbell