

The Chanter



Newsletter

December 2019



The Nottingham Scottish Association

Honorary Patron Sir Andrew Buchanan Bt. KCVO KStJ

From the Editor



On 31st October, driving to our usual evening Scottish Dancing session, I had a real eye opener. All along the route, there were parents and children, all decked out in bespoke (and expensive) Halloween outfits and, closer to town, large groups of 'young people' dressed (or rather, *undressed*) for a night in the cafes, bars and clubs. It's all a long way from what I remember from my childhood - 'dooking for apples' and 'going guising'. Of course, the first of these is now banned in Scotland for health and safety reasons. The first dance on that evening's programme was *Hallo Halloween* and the last was called *Desperation*, reflecting the date and the fact that we were *still* in the EU!

But there have been plenty of celebrations this quarter, all documented in later pages – and there are a couple of extra pages in this website version which could not be fitted into the paper copy.

Thank you to all those whose photographs and articles appear in this issue. I look forward to receiving your submissions for the **next** one. Please post them to The Chanter, 13 Haileybury Crescent, West Bridgford, NG2 7BH or attach them to an e-mail in a Word (or some other) document and send to me at chanter@nottinghamscottish.org to reach me by mid-February.

As we move inexorably into the British winter, maybe this picture, from The Postie's Jig (Newsletter of the RSCDS, Perth, Western Australia), will make you feel warmer. Have a Merry Christmas!

Christine Oldfield



New members

Erstwhile members **Ron and Wendy Clements** have re-joined and are a welcome addition to the dancing group.

Alison Smith, a Scot, born and bred, is following in her mother's footsteps and competently converting her ceilidh dancing to our more formal version.

We hope they will also be tempted to join in some of the other NSA events.

Ed. Whilst it is pleasing to welcome new members, it is always very sad to have to say goodbye to an old one. Don uses his page this quarter to do just that, on behalf of all of us.



Chris Barnes

28th February 1937 – 21st November 2019

Chris, a long-standing member of The Nottingham Scottish Association. was born in Nottingham. He completed his schooling at Ellis Guilford School in Basford, from where he went to work at the Boots Printing Works in Station Street, Nottingham. Chris did his National Service in The Royal Navy as a Radio Operator and spent many years in The Royal Navy Reserves.

He and Margaret were married in 1988 and he was a much-loved stepfather to Aileen, Karen and Andrew.

He was a keen sports person, who played hockey for the Boots Company team. He also enjoyed walking, which he and Margaret did almost weekly in the Peak District.

He also took part in and enjoyed squash, badminton and sequence dancing.

On retirement he enrolled on a course in floristry, sharing his knowledge with Margaret, who has provided all the floral arrangements for our formal events for a considerable number of years.

Despite being unwell for some time, Chris continued to attend functions when he could. He was a quiet person who was very good company at social events.

He will be sorely missed by Association Members, his friends and family.



Crazy Golf & Football Golf

Wednesday 25th September

After some days of torrential rain and strong winds, the thought of water hazards on the golf course brought even the more experienced of us out in a sweat. But, nevertheless, twenty-two members and friends descended on Highfields for a repeat of last year's golf tournament. We were told that the nine holes bearing a flag were playable. Yeah right!! At the clubhouse (sorry cafe) we decided on the order of play and watched as staff busily set about trying to brush water off the remainder of the course.



Well, the blue painted 'river' didn't need the paint as it was ankle deep in places. I could have sworn I spotted fish in one area. The actual holes were mostly full of water and the balls just floated when we managed to 'sink' the final putt. It was more like playing water polo than golf. But did it dampen the enthusiasm of the Nottingham Scottish golfers? Never - we just paddled along as our

scores just kept going up!! Fortunately for us the rain stayed away and, eventually, all the holes had been declared 'playable'.

The more adventurous amongst us also tried the foot golf - a new addition since last year. To state the obvious, it's played with a football which you kick down the fairway to hole it. Big hole, no clubs!

Even with the water hazards, several of our golfers still managed the occasional hole in one. Personally, I think it was a case of luck rather than skill! Considering the



state of the course and the impact this had on our scores, it would have been unfair to award a winner for the day. So, after we retired to the Lakeside cafe for lunch, still with a certain dampness around the feet, it was all declared a draw.

Maybe next year, with the way the weather is changing, we could be playing in snow.



Dave Potter

Some Scottish Sports News

A bit of a Stir!

“Calamity for Scotland!” was the subject line of an e-mail from a friend. And no, it wasn’t that Scotland had just failed to reach the quarter finals of the Rugby World Championships. He’d read that an *English* woman had won the World Porridge Making Championship title on the previous day.

As explained on the website ‘goldenspurtle.com’, this event has been taking place annually since 1994 in Carrbridge, in the Scottish Highlands. People come from all round the world to the “oaty cook-off” to compete for the Golden Spurtle® trophy and the title of “World Porridge Making Champion”.



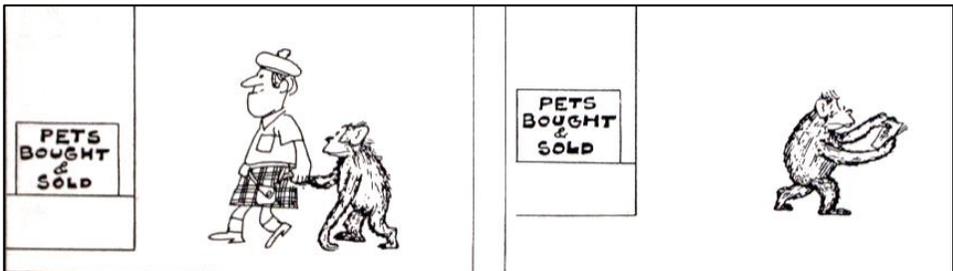
The title is awarded for the best traditional porridge using just three ingredients - oatmeal, water and salt. And on Saturday 12th October 2019 it was won by Lisa Williams from Suffolk. Her winning recipe was made with half Scottish oatmeal and half pinhead oatmeal, along with Maldon sea salt. She had dreamed of winning since first entering the competition in 2015 and is still clearly captivated by the occasion, saying

"It's hard to describe, but from the flags and the tartan, to the people from the village who organise everything, the ladies who serve the porridge, the volunteers who wash up our equipment, the porridge parade, the bagpipes - it's just magical."

Christine Oldfield

Cricket

Scotland have secured a place at the T20 World Cup which will be held in Melbourne in November 2020. They managed a convincing 90-run win over their hosts, United Arab Emirates, in their play-off in the qualifiers in Dubai back in October.



Treasure Trail in West Bridgford

Sunday 27th October

Following torrential rain on the Saturday, it began to look as though any treasure to be found in West Bridgford was going to be more than a little soggy! Fortunately, Graham and Lyndsey had arranged a bright, shining morning as well as an intriguing trail to follow. So, we set out in good heart.

Each group was given a fiendish list of clues to follow on our trek through West Bridgford. Would you know how to identify a house situated in the wrong street? How about the abode of a birdman? The list went on.

Undaunted, our intrepid explorers looked for burglar alarms, post boxes, the elusive Alphonse and a reason why more limbs might be welcome. Some we found with ease, others with more difficulty and some eluded us entirely (I'm referring to myself here!). However, we pressed on, learning a lot about West Bridgford that we didn't know – like the foundation date of the Lutterell Hall, the Rector of St Giles Church and the amazingly large number of different companies selling burglar alarms!

Judging by the amount of time we spent peering at other peoples' houses, it is amazing that no one set the dogs on us – fortunately they're a friendly bunch in West Bridgford! Most of us failed utterly to find 'Joan's Delight'. But this plaque is a tribute to our own Joan Lamb who has been tending the garden of the WB Baptist Church for many years.



Lunch time took us back to our start where we were greeted with a hearty lunch and as much cake as you could eat. After a run through of what we *should* have found, the worthy winners were found to be Hugh, Sid, John and Christine. Well done to them – and commiserations to those who were less successful (like me!).

Many thanks to Graham and Lyndsey for a well-planned and challenging itinerary, their hospitality and good food and company.

Andrew Morrison

Ed. Some of the other interesting things we had to find...



For your amusement and with no disrespect to any religion

Rats in Churches

Submitted by Bill Dall

The Presbyterian Church called a meeting to decide what to do about their rat infestation problem. After much prayer and consideration, they concluded the rats were Predestined to be there and they should not interfere with God's Divine Will.

At the Baptist Church, the rats had taken an interest in The Baptistery. The Deacons met and decided to put in a water-slide on The Baptistery and let the rats drown themselves. The rats liked the slide, and unfortunately knew instinctively how to swim, so twice as many showed up the following week.

The Lutheran Church decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creatures, so they humanely trapped them and set them free near The Baptist Church. Two weeks later the rats were back when the Baptists took down the water-slide.

But the Catholic Church came up with a very creative strategy, they baptised all the rats and made them members of the church. Now they only see them at Christmas and Easter.

Not much was heard from the Jewish Synagogue.
They took the first rat and circumcised him.
They haven't seen any more!

And from Chic Murray, some more humour

Do you know what type of lighting was used in Noah's ark?

Flood lighting!

A Scot is a man who keeps the Sabbath

and everything else he can lay his hands on.

Born in Greenock, just over a hundred years ago, on November 6th, 1919, Charles Thomas McKinnon (Chic) Murray, made his name as a Scottish comedian and actor. He kept many of us amused through his radio and TV shows, especially in his double act with wife Maidie. He also appeared in various films, including the 1967 version of *Casino Royale* and *Gregory's Girl*, and in 1984 he portrayed Bill Shankly, the Liverpool Football Club manager, in the musical *You'll Never Walk Alone*. He died in Edinburgh in 1985. [Ed]

Lots of Celebrations!

Birthdays



The 10th and the 17th of November are the dates of birth of three of our Scottish Country Dancers. All three of them are Scots, born and bred, and together, on the 14th, they marked a total of 230 years between them – with a large birthday cake.



ASCDS Dance Devising Competition

On 27th November the Chairman of the ASCDS sent out an e-mail saying:

Dear Fellow Dancers,

I am very happy to announce we have a competition dance winner: It is **"20-20 Vision"**

And the deviser of that dance was our very own Andrew Morrison! As we understand it, there were nine or ten dances submitted by the clubs in the region and they were all tried out (after they had been “anonamised”) by “a team of friendly seasoned dancers”. They had “a difficult choice” so, very well done Andrew! His ‘prize’ will be having the dance included in the programme for the 40th Anniversary ASCDS Festival in 2020.

St Andrew’s Night

Saturday 30th November

The night began with the arrival of Mr Don Pringle (President) and wife Sue, Mr Les Wilkinson and wife Sue and Mr Christian Murray Leslie (President, Derby Scottish Association & Burns Club)) and wife Margaret.

Mr Don Pringle then announced the very sad news of the death of long serving member of the Association, Mr Chris Barnes, after a brave fight with a long illness. Sympathy was sent to his wife Margaret (the NSA secretary) and their family and Margaret was thanked for helping with preparations for the night, including table decorations, under such very difficult circumstances. A minute’s silence followed.

After prayers we all enjoyed a delicious three course meal. Guest speaker, Mr Les Wilkinson, then surprised us by starting with a great rendering of a Robert Burns song. He went on to tell us that, although he is not Scottish, he has spent many good holidays in Peebles and attended St Andrews University. He said that most of his career has been spent at Nottingham High School where he taught English and Drama.



Les then went on to say that he has a strong interest in Scottish literature and talked about Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), whose novels included Rob Roy, The Talisman, Waverley and Ivanhoe (influencing the perception of Robin Hood). Scott also influenced such things as architecture, finding the Scottish Crown Jewels, Scotland and Scottishness, reviving highland tartan dress, the Scottish Bank Note and Abbotsford Gift Shop.



After a short interval we enjoyed some dancing with 'The Ceilidhman', Schuggie MacInnes. A very good time was had by all.

Grace and Geoffrey Bestwick

Celebrating the Festive Season

Scotland in the Forties and Fifties

Christmas, being considered a Popish or Catholic feast during and after the Protestant Reformation, was scarcely celebrated as a festival in Scotland until well into the 20th century. But the Scots made up for this at the turn of each year. Tradition had it, that by midnight on Hogmanay, 31st December, certain things had to be attended to, such as giving the house a thorough clean, removing the ashes from the hearth and paying off all debts – all in an effort to create a clean slate for welcoming in the new year.

Tradition, or rather superstition, also dictated that, in order to bring good luck to the house for the year ahead, the first person across the threshold after



midnight must be a dark man bearing symbolic pieces of coal, shortbread, black bun and a wee dram, in contrast to the days of the Vikings, when a big fair stranger on



the doorstep, carrying a large axe, would surely be bad luck.

My short-term memory is sadly declining, but I am more frequently recalling incidents and traditions from my childhood. And, as Christmas and New Year approach once more, I'm remembering how I used to celebrate them.

We didn't make much of Christmas. A few days before the 25th December, Dad would come home from work with a small, but living, Christmas tree which he wedged in a metal pail with bits of wood and covered it with red crepe paper. My three sisters and I would then be put to work with scissors, string, sticky coloured paper, cotton wool and pinecones from the garden, to make decorations. Our few presents would be considered meagre these days but to us they were real delights, even down to the tangerines in our Christmas stockings. Mum cooked a proper Christmas dinner and my aunt, uncle and cousin would join us for the day. We had all been saving up our halfpennies because after lunch we always played Newmarket.

Sometime after Boxing Day, Dad visited the local off-licence and stocked up on supplies for New Year - whisky and beer for the men, Babycham and cherry brandy for the ladies and raspberry cordial for the children. And, of course, there was always a new soda siphon. On the evening of the 31st of December, we all helped set this out, along with lots of glasses, on a clean lace cloth on a table in the sitting room. Mum would add a box of dates and some 'marzipan potatoes' which she had made specially for this big occasion. Hogmanay was also my eldest sister's birthday, so we then had some of her birthday cake. And the glass of cordial with it was a rare treat. We were also allowed to stay up just long enough to see the New Year in.

At about ten minutes to twelve Dad would don his overcoat, Lindsay tartan wool scarf and trilby hat. He'd go out of the back door, pick up a piece of coal from the coal box and walk round to the front. Almost everyone in the street had their radio on, tuned to the Scottish Home Service, and as soon as Dad heard Big Ben's pips he knocked on our front door, stepped over the threshold, and presented Mum with the piece of coal. I don't recollect any of us feeling relieved that it was not a fair Viking with an axe. But we were always told that Dad, being so dark (reflecting his gypsy blood!), was the perfect 'first-foot', ensuring that we would have good luck that year.

My sisters and I were then packed off to bed, but we stayed awake for as long as we could, listening as a succession of neighbours arrived, bearing small gifts of food and drink. Some stayed just long enough to drink a toast to the household and have a nibble or two of the snacks before moving on to the next neighbour's house to continue their 'first-footing'. But several would stay for quite some time, making inroads into the refreshments, and it was usually a merry crowd that took their leave in the early hours.

But we were always up bright and early on New Year's Day. After breakfast we'd all help to clear up and replenish the drinks and snacks. Then it was open house for anyone who had not first-footed already, and they would start arriving around 10am. This time, we were allowed to mingle and serve the snacks – and have another delicious glass of cordial! But we were told not to eat too much because, this time, we were due at our aunt's house at 1pm for a New Year's Day meal and another game of Newmarket!

Christine Oldfield

From the Scottish Press

Jenners set to quit Princes Street

From the Edinburgh Evening News 26th November 2019



“The Jenners brand name is set to disappear from its iconic Princes Street location as the building's Danish billionaire owner unveils plans to reinvent the historic building. The project's plans include “total restoration” of the Category A listed building's facade including the sensitive reinstatement of lost original elements.

It will see Jenners leave the street it has called home since 1838 with a potential move to St James Centre or another city location on the cards.” [Photo:TSPL]

Pavement Parking Ban

“The Scottish parliament has today (10 October 2019) passed a bill to implement a nationwide footway parking ban.

This is the first nationwide ban put in place in the UK and represents the culmination of over a decade of campaigning by Living Streets Scotland and disability charities.”

The Loch Ness Monster

Loch Ness is the largest and second deepest body of fresh water in the British Isles and for as long as any of us can remember, and going all the way back to 565AD, there have been many weird and wonderful tales of sightings of the monster that lurks in its depths. The tourism business exploits (and some say initiates) these tales and thrives in the process. The legend of *Nessie* has spawned untold numbers of investigations, soft toys, books, TV programmes and even three Scottish Country Dances all called *The Loch Ness Monster*.



Numerous theories have been put forward as to what might actually have been sighted, but most people these days are just happy to accept it as a myth. However, others still insist on pursuing the truth. Neil Gemmill, a geneticist from the University of Otago in New Zealand, recently lead a project to collect DNA from the loch, and back in September it was reported in the global media that the lake’s fabled monster might be a giant eel.

The DNA project found no evidence to support the idea that the monster is a long-necked ancient reptile called a plesiosaur, and they found no sign of shark DNA, no catfish DNA or any evidence of sturgeon, all of which have been suggested in the past. But they **did** find an awful lot of eel DNA.



However, the largest European eel ever caught and recorded weighed in at under 12 pounds and Neil Gemmill commented, when he was pressed by reporters, “*Doesn’t sound like a monster, does it?*” He admitted that “*I am unashamedly using the monster as a way to attract interest so I can talk about the science I want to talk about.*” And “*People love a mystery; we’ve used science to add another chapter to Loch Ness’ mystique.*”

[Photo: Associated Press undated]



**Best wishes to everyone for a very
Happy Christmas and a Guid New Year**



Future Programme



NSA Events

Friday 6th December Christmas Walk and Dinner Toby Inn, NG2 4BP, Colwick. Meet in the car park at 10am for a Walk followed by Dinner at 12.00 onwards. [It may be booked out by the time you read this; but contact Don Pringle to check.]

Scottish Country Dancing - Thursdays

12th December Party Night, bring a plate

19th December End of term 1, unless you hear otherwise

9th January Start of term 2 [Note change]

Saturday 15th February Social Dance, usual dance venue, tbc

Monday 6th January New Year walk Attenborough Nature Reserve. 10am for 10.30am start. Pub lunch after. Contact Dave Potter on 0115 849 0638

Saturday 25th January Burns' Night Dinner and Dance. Belgrave rooms, 7pm for 7.30pm, £29.50. Guest speaker Donald Macarthur. Contact Margaret on 0115 920 0461. See separate flyer for further details

Saturday 14th March Murder Mystery Night Who killed the President? - was it the Treasurer or the Secretary or one of the members? 2-course meal included. More details nearer the time.

Other Events of Interest

Tuesday 31st December RSCDS Hogmanay Dance, 8pm – midnight, Lowdham Village Hall. Details at <https://nottinghamrscds.org/events>

Contact Schuggie@Ceilidhcalling or on 07875 718 702 for the following:

Friday 6th March North Sea Gas 40th Anniversary Tour 7.45-10pm. Boat & Horses, Beeston Tickets £10, or £8 to NSA Friends & Family.

Friday Ceilidhs 10th Jan, 7th Feb, 13th Mar, Boat & Horses, Beeston

City Centre Ceilidh The Belgrave Rooms, Sat 22nd Feb with Freds Folks Ceilidh Band. £8 in advance, £10 on the door. 7.45pm-11pm

Springy Reelers, Sundays 8th Dec, 2nd Feb, 1st Mar 10am–12noon Scout Hall, St Michael's Square, Bramcote NG9 3HG. No experience needed. Adults £2.00, kids free, 12.30pm, lunch(opt) The Nurseryman

THE COUNCIL 2019/2020

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