

The Chanter

Nottingham Scottish Association
Newsletter

The Date of Easter (in Scots)

*First comes Candlemas.
An syne the new meen,
The first Tuesday aifter that
Is Fastern' Een.
That meen oot,
An the neist meen's hicht,
On the first Sunday aifter that
Is Pess richt.*



March 2017

From the President.

Well a belated Happy New Year to everyone. I hope you all had a good Christmas. Ours was the usual hectic few days with seven of us on Christmas day for a traditional Christmas dinner and presents, and 16 family and friends on Boxing Day, when we had lots of fun playing games and of course eating and drinking.

Burns Night Dinner and Dance has now passed and what a good night it was. I would like to thank everyone who helped on the night to make it a very enjoyable event; in particular, the speakers who entertained with the right amount of information, homage to the great man, and humour. There's a full article later on for you all to read.

Kate and myself were also invited to Chesterfield Scottish Association's Burns night in January when we gave the Toast to the Lasses and the response. A lovely night hosted by their President and his wife Ian and Eileen Gordon with good food and good company.

I am writing this on the 9th February and the weather is still very mild. Where's all that snow, I don't know about you but I do like snow, not lots of it, just a few days when everybody's garden looks the same and I feel as though we're having a bit of winter. I've noticed that we now have daffodils coming out which have beaten the snowdrops. I can't recall that happening before. Perhaps I should plant out some iceberg lettuces that seem to have been in short supply after the poor weather in Spain. Did anyone see the news article about some budding entrepreneur who was selling them on e-bay at £60 each!

We have lots more activities coming up in the next few months including walks, quizzes and dance nights so hopefully I look forward to seeing you all there. If anyone has a favourite walk they would like to share, then please let us know and we can get it arranged.

We've had a temporary guest at home during the last few weeks who has had us running around after him like a pair of demented Grand parents. Our son Paul and his partner have a little Westie called Hamish who's been having sleep over's with us. We are completely smitten by him and he's already trained us well to supply him with walks, food and cuddles. It's nearly 20 years since we last had a dog and I had forgotten what good company they actually are.

(See page 6 for photo of Hamish)

David Potter

A walk around Attenborough Nature Reserve

Our first walk of 2017 around Attenborough Nature Reserve took place on a cold but fine day. The 2.5-mile route took us along by the river and into Attenborough village, following the well-defined tracks.

On arrival, we were greeted by numerous Coot, Canada Geese, mallard ducks and swans, close to the visitor centre, and an especially colourful red billed duck. David explained that the Wildlife Trust had taken over responsibility for the nature reserve and Broxtowe Borough Council for the Tea Rooms. The area was prone to flooding - the cricket pitch in the village having recently experienced 3ft of water, and as part of flood defence works an attractive red -brick wall was built, in appearance quite different to the usual basic flood defence walls.

On route, we took the opportunity to view the wildlife from one of the 'hides', whilst those with binoculars debated the species on view – for those without binoculars we just admired the lovely scenery.

We followed the red brick wall into the village and stopped by the house where Henry Ireton was born in 1611. This gentleman was a great parliamentarian working closely under Oliver Cromwell, so much so that he married his daughter Bridget. He studied law at Oxford but never practised and fought in Limerick, finally dying of swamp fever there in 1651.

We then moved on to St Mary's Church yard which holds the graves of those killed at the Chilwell Munitions factory explosion in July 1918. One hundred and thirty-four were killed but unfortunately only about 30 were recognisable or could be named. This was the largest number killed in any one accident. Alongside was also a separate grave for a baby who lived only 1½ hours.

The outing was ended with lunch at The Corn Mill and then we all went home for a bit of 'feet up' after all that chatting, exercise and fresh air. BUT – there was one thing missing – a photo shoot!

Carol Baseley

The Secret 7 & a Dog!



This was the walk at Rushcliffe Country Park on Saturday 4th February. It was a wonderful sunny day and we all met at the Nottingham Knight for 10.30 and a coffee if needed. Graham led the walk, giving various pieces of historical information as the area had at one time been a bomb ordinance factory.

Once we'd finished the walk, we retired to the pub for a welcome drink and some sustenance; then all went off home to enjoy the rest of the weekend.

Thanks to Lindsay and Graham for organising the walk .

Hugh Malcolm

Sorry Enid!



Burns Dinner and Dance 21st January 2017.

It was that time of year again, so out came the dinner jackets, Highland dress and posh frocks. The weather this year was very mild compared to the snow and ice we have had in the past as we set off to the Masonic Hall in Nottingham, which has become a regular venue for the Nottingham Scottish Association functions.



Our President David and his wife Kate met us as we arrived and welcomed us to the evening. Off we went for pre-dinner drinks and to order the wine. Our croupier Bob Logan invited us into dinner and we entered the main dining room which was beautifully decked out in tartan with Past Presidents banners hanging from the walls. The tables, and there were 10 this year, as nearly 100 people were attending, were beautifully dressed with all the tartan centre pieces and tartan napkins. Everyone had a small bag of Scottish Tablet on their side plate tied with a MacDonald tartan ribbon which we were told is the Presidents tartan.

Then we heard the Pipes starting and in walked the Piper followed by the President and his lady and guests. After a short welcome by the President and the Selkirk Grace from Don Pringle, the pipes started up again and from the kitchens came the Piper followed by the chef carrying the biggest Haggis I had ever seen. They paraded around the room and finally the Haggis was placed in front of the President. Good heavens I thought, is he going to eat all that!

But no, up stepped Bob Logan to give the traditional address to the Haggis ending in more whisky being shared on the top table.

What followed was a lovely meal of haggis with neeps and tatties followed by a pork loin steak and finished off with bread and butter pudding with drambuie custard.

We then had what has become a traditional event that appears to be fairly unique to the Association. We toasted the Queen with Highland Honours. In reality this meant that the men stood with one foot on their chair and the other one on the table whilst the toast was given to the Queen, we then all sang the National anthem. Quite a sight with all those kilts around the room.

Andrew Morrison took over as Master of ceremonies for the rest of the evening and, with coffee in front of us we sat back to hear the speeches. Alistair Watt from Derby Scottish Association entertained us with an insight into the life of Burns and to why he is so loved amongst so many

people from all over the world. He also strayed into more modern matters and briefly mentioned Nicola Sturgeon although this was only to inform us that a colleague of his, when using a dryer to dry his hands in a restaurant had likened the experience to one of her short speeches!

The Presidents brother in law David Shore and his daughter Fiona Shore then battled with the toast to the Lasses and the response. It was clear from the participation of the audience that this is becoming a more gladiatorial part of the evening; various comments were made about a ladies ability to speak fast and that a mans place is more to listen. Fiona was able to respond that with natural development she was aware of more and more men who were becoming faster speakers in particular her own brother! Both speeches were excellent and at the end I think you could say it was a draw.

After a brief break, we then came back into the main hall for some Ceiledh dancing led by Bernice Young. A chance to lose some of those pounds we had put on during dinner.

Off we went up and down the hall, The Gay Gordons, and other favourites came and went all too quickly. During one break in the dancing, whilst we caught our breath we were entertained by Stewart Rae singing and Gary Cawthorne on the piano. Stewart sang the Burns song Di'els away wi' the Excise Man as he was aware that our President was also a retired Excise Officer. "Well fancy that!" some said, and I always thought he was a nice person!

After Auld Lang Syne at Midnight we all bade our farewells and went hame to bed. Another year gone and a thoroughly enjoyable evening. Can't wait for 2018.



The President with past Presidents



Piper Bill Fernie



The perfectly posed and pampered Presidents Pooch!

Tam o' Shanter"
a ripping yarn by
Robert Burns
Illustrated by Joan Lamb



When the peddler people leave the streets,
And thirsty neighbours, neighbours meet;
As market days are wearing late,
And folk begin to take the road home,
While we sit boozing strong ale,
And getting drunk and very happy,
We don't think of the long Scots miles,
The marshes, waters, steps and stiles,
That lie between us and our home,
Where sits our sulky, sullen dame (wife),
Gathering her brows like a gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath, to keep it warm.



Oh Tam, had you but been so wise,
As to have taken your own wife Kate's
advice!
She told you well you were a waster,
A rambling, blustering, drunken boaster,
That from November until October,
Each market day you were not sober;

During each milling period with the miller,
You sat as long as you had money,
For every horse he put a shoe on,
The blacksmith and you got roaring drunk on;

That at the Lords House, even on Sunday, You drank
with Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied, that, late or soon, You would be found
deep drowned in Doon,
Or caught by warlocks in the murk,
By Alloway's old haunted church.

Ah, gentle ladies, it makes me cry,
To think how many counsels sweet,
How much long and wise advice
The husband from the wife despises!



But to our tale :- One market night,
Tam was seated just right,
Next to a fireplace, blazing finely,
With creamy ales, that drank divinely;

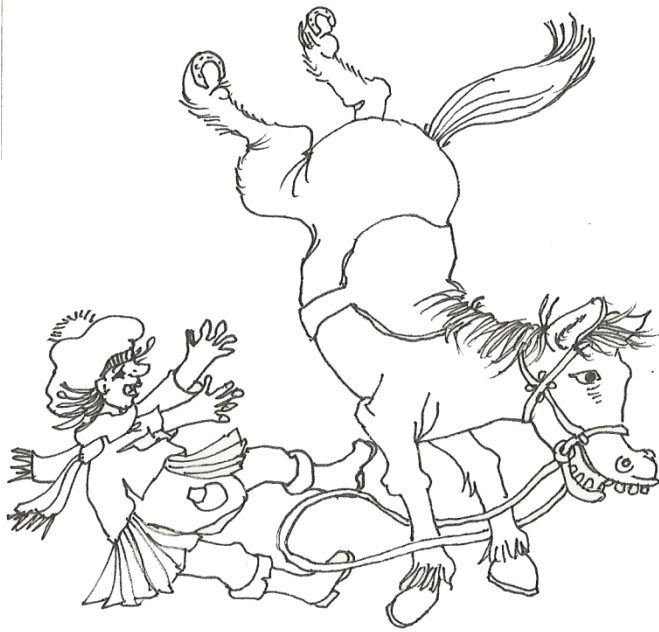
And at his elbow, Cobbler Johnny,
His ancient, trusted, thirsty crony;
Tom loved him like a very brother,
They had been drunk for weeks together.
The night drove on with songs and clatter,
And every ale was tasting better;
The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
With secret favours, sweet and precious;
The cobbler told his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
Outside, the storm might roar and rustle,
Tam did not mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man so happy,
Even drowned himself in ale.
As bees fly home with loads of treasure,
The minutes winged their way with pleasure:
Kings may be blessed, but Tam was glorious,
Over all the ills of life victorious.

But pleasures are like poppies spread:
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow fall on the river,
A moment white - then melts forever,
Or like the Aurora Borealis rays,
That move before you can point to their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form,
Vanishing amid the storm.

No man can tether time or tide,
The hour approaches Tom must ride:
That hour, of night's black arch - the key-stone,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in
And such a night he takes to the road in
As never a poor sinner had been out in.

The wind blew as if it had blown its last;
The rattling showers rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallowed,
Loud, deep and long the thunder bellowed:
That night, a child might understand,
The Devil had business on his hand.



Well mounted on his grey mare, Meg

A better never lifted leg,
Tom, raced on through mud and mire,
Despising wind and rain and fire;
Whilst holding fast his good blue bonnet,
While crooning over some old Scots sonnet,
Whilst glowering round with prudent care,
Lest ghosts catch him unaware:

Alloway's Church was drawing near,
Where ghosts and owls nightly cry.

By this time he was across the ford,
Where in the snow the pedlar got smothered;
And past the birch trees and the huge stone,
Where drunken Charlie broke his neck bone;
And through the thorns, and past the monument,
Where hunters found the murdered child;
And near the thorn, above the well,
Where Mungo's mother hung herself.
Before him the river Doon pours all his floods;

The doubling storm roars through the woods;
The lightnings flashes from pole to pole;
Nearer and more near the thunder rolls; When,
glimmering through the groaning trees,
Alloway's Church seemed in a blaze,
Through every gap, light beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring, bold John Barleycorn! (whisky)
What dangers you can make us scorn!
With ale, we fear no evil;

With whisky, we'll face the Devil!
The ales so swam in Tam's head,
Fair play, he didn't care a farthing for devils.
But Maggie stood, right sore astonished,
Till, by the heel and hand admonished,
She ventured forward on the light;
And, vow! Tom saw an incredible sight!



to be continued in the next issue of the Chanter

A Scot Abroad (Continued from December Chanter)

In 1986 I began a three-year contract in Dubai, teaching in Sheikh Maktoum's school. The Dubai Caledonian Society ran weekly Country Dancing sessions in a works social club – and there was a bar, which made for lively evenings! After two years as a member, I became Honorary Secretary and one of my roles was to produce a magazine for the 12th Dubai Highland Games to be held in January 1989. This was a huge event with pipe bands and heavy-weights competing for generous prizes, with adjudicators from the Strathclyde Police Pipe Band.

The Dubai Police pipe band were as usual, resplendent in their Al-Maktoum tartan kilts. The Maktoum dynasty had ruled Dubai since 1833 and the tartan is now officially recognised by the Scottish Register of Tartans. Apart from the administrative necessities, I included a variety of features in the magazine. One of them I wrote myself - a scholarly article on *The Desert Haggis*, detailing habitat, diet and breeding habits, and pointing out how it was becoming endangered due to increasing demand from the Scottish expatriate community. And there were some people who were keen to be taken out into the desert to see if they could spot one of these small mammals!

Later on, in 1989, when I moved to Bophuthatswana and found no evidence of a Scottish community, I was disappointed. 'Bop' was one of the Southern African *Homelands*, described as "a scattered patchwork of individual enclaves". Sun City was in one of these and Mafikeng (known by the British as Mafeking) in another. As November approached I put a small ad in The Mail to see if there might be any interest in a celebration of St Andrew's Day. And it brought Scots crawling out of the woodwork, including several pipers, an accordionist, a Highland dancer, a penny whistle player and lots of country dancers - and a butcher who made his own haggis.



Caledonian Ball, Dubai

During a seven-course meal, the haggis was ceremoniously piped in and enjoyed by about forty folk, along with the regulation wee dram to loosen everyone up for the entertainment that followed. The *Molopo Sun*, the local hotel, had never seen the like as tables were pushed back and patio doors thrown open to accommodate The Gay Gordons. Barley Bree, The Dashing White Sergeant, Hamilton House and Strip the Willow. In between, we listened to musical offerings and joined in some auld Scots songs. Soon after that event, we hired a local hall to house our new Scottish country dancing group and, that year and the next; both St Andrew's Day and Burns' Night were celebrated appropriately. The Bophuthatswana Scottish Community was alive and kicking again.

Christine Oldfield



“What Clan Do You Belong To?”

Future activities

Walks

April Thursday 6th Colwick Park with Afternoon Tea at the Colwick Hall.

Meet at the Car park of Colwick Hall at 11 am for a leisurely stroll around the park. Very easy going and arriving back at the hall for about 12.30.

Colwick Hall have a special offer: Two for £20

This includes selections of finger sandwiches, soup or quiche and a selection of cakes and pastries. Tea and coffee.

THIS MUST BE PRE-BOOKED so if you want to join us then phone Colwick Hall on 0115 9500566

May Saturday 13th Bestwood Park 10.30am starting from the Winding- Engine House. Contact Bernice for details

June Sunday 11th Derbyshire walk to celebrate Christine's birthday who will lead the walk, which will be from Youlgrave car park. Please contact her on 01159 523006 for more details.

Social Events

Fancy a visit to the Castle Rock Brewery? Let us know!

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The 115th Annual General Meeting of the Nottingham
Scottish Association will be held in the
Upper Hall of St Andrew's with Castle Gate Church
on

Thursday the 27th April at 7.30pm

See [here](#) for further information.

The Date of Easter

The date of Easter is a mystery to most people - it moves around the calendar in March and April and without a diary to provide the date, most folk would not know when to celebrate the festival (or, more likely these days, have a long weekend break). But in the days before most of the population had a diary, it was necessary for people to be able to work out when Easter should be. This little poem was designed to provide the answer, in Scotland at least.

The Date of Easter (in English)
First comes 2 February.
And after the new moon,
The first Tuesday after *that*
Is Shrove Tuesday.
That moon passes,
And the next full moon,
On the first Sunday after *that*
Is Easter by rights.

The more usual way to work out Easter Sunday.
It is the first Sunday after the first Full Moon after the Vernal Equinox.
This year, VE is March 20th. FM is April 11th. So, ES is 16th April.

If you would like anything to be included in the next Chanter
then please send it to vincent.christine@ntlworld.com

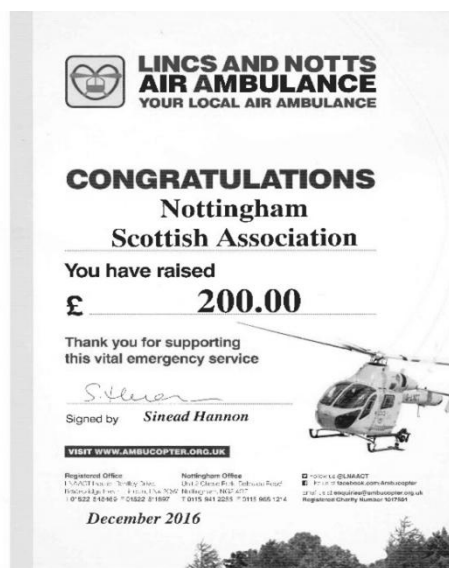
or

The Chanter

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telephone 0115 952 3006

Please send before the end of May 2017.

Find us on Facebook or at www.nottinghamscottish.org.uk



Thanks to everyone who came to
Race night, we were able to
donate £200 to a very worthy
cause