

The Chanter



Nottingham Scottish Association Newsletter June 2017

[Para Handy is the crafty Gaelic skipper of the *Vital Spark*, a Clyde puffer (steamboat) of the sort that delivered goods from Glasgow to Loch Fyne, the Hebrides, and the west coast highlands of Scotland in the early 20th century. The stories partly focus on his pride in his ship, "the smertest boat in the tred" which he considers to be of a class with the Clyde steamers, but mainly tell of the "high jinks" the crew get up to on their travels.

Para name is an anglicisation of "Para Shandaidh", which means "Peter (Paraig) son of Sandy", and he is content to describe himself as "Chust wan of Brutain's hardy sons".]

From the President

I have come to the conclusion that we now have five seasons in the year, Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter and now the new one, The Election season.

Last year we had two elections locally, one for the Police Commissioner and the now infamous Referendum.

This year it is the local elections and a surprise General election and, if a certain young lady (I use that term loosely) north of the border gets her way, another independence election. The latter one reminds me of Southern Ireland that had a vote concerning the EU a few years ago when the country said No and then the government went back to the people two years later with the same question. A case of we'll keep asking until you give us answer we want.!!

That's enough of Politics for, in case you hadn't noticed, its actually the start of the Summer season, thoughts of endless hot days (dream on), cream teas and listening to the sound of willow on ball as we relax watching a cricket match. Question: - are there any cricket grounds in Scotland, does anybody in Scotland play cricket, does it have a national team?. What do children play in school in summer when the football season is over apart from perhaps tossing the caber! As an Englishman, I do not know but I would love one of our Scottish members to write an article for the next Chanter with answers.

And where are we all going on holiday this year, anywhere exotic? Kate and myself recently had a trip to Lanzarote followed by a short break in the Lake District and hopefully another trip away in September. Again, perhaps this is an opportunity for any one to compose a short article for the Chanter to share your experiences.

Where ever it is I hope you all have an enjoyable time and manage to avoid YET ANOTHER ELECTION.

We have also been fairly active in the Association recently, an interesting walk in Bestwood Country Park, and 10 of our members represented the Association at the annual RSCDS Dance Festival at The Emmanuel School in West Bridgford. Unfortunately, Sue Morrison suffered a horrific fall during the final practice after slipping on a loose shoe lace. Result was a fracture of the femur which required surgery and a weeks stay in Hospital. All our thoughts go out to Sue wishing her a speedy recovery and with advice from our health and safety representative for the future. Wear pumps!

We also have several things arranged for the summer period. A Spy Mission /Treasure Hunt takes place in early June followed by a walk and bbq in early July and a garden dance later in the month. August sees a Derbyshire walk for the more energetic and also a local ramble. All too quickly it will be back to September and the re start of dancing on the 7th.

Have a good summer and don't forget the suntan lotion and rain coat!

David

Note:- We have brought forward the annual treasure hunt (this year a spy mission) to the 11th June. This will be a 2ish mile walk around West Bridgford and Trent Bridge, followed by Tea and cakes at Graham and Lyndsay Lyas's. 1.30 start in West Bridgford. Contact me for more details and let me know if you want to participate.



ASCDS Festival May 2017



Rehearsals for this year's 37th ASCDS Festival started well and we were getting quite confident we would cope on the day. The euphoria didn't last. In week five of the rehearsals Peter called from the Lake District to say that Iris had hurt her leg again and would have to withdraw. Naturally this meant a re-shuffle, but we would cope. Then on the final rehearsal two days before the Festival, disaster struck!

Sue Morrison had a fall, crashing down heavily without warning. Poor Sue was in agony and when it became obvious that she couldn't move her leg an ambulance had to be called. Sue was taken to A&E and it turned out she had broken her femur in four places. We were now another dancer short, and one of our best at that. We decided to abandon that evening's rehearsal and do another one on the Friday night. We didn't know if Andrew was going to be able to dance, but we were very thankful that on the day he came up trumps and appeared at the Festival – relief all round. The grey day suddenly became a little brighter and we just about coped with the twelve dances.

We were conscious that we were all a bit stressed, but some members who came to support us said we did okay and in fact did better than some of the other teams. I am not sure if they were just being nice to us. The first dance "Good-hearted Glasgow" is fairly easy and helped our confidence as we got through it without a mistake. Perhaps the good-hearted citizens of Glasgow were metaphorically behind us. Peter and I led off in "The Gentleman" and coped well with that one too – so far so good. They didn't all go as well as the first two, but hey, it was a Festival of Dance, not a competition. I have to say that Keith and Una came to rescue a few times and stepped into first place on more than one occasion. However, I think we all gave a sigh of relief when we finished with "Crom Allt" (The Crooked Burn), which flowed rather well.

It was now time to relax and enjoy our picnic tea before the evening dance. Those of us who stayed on had a really enjoyable evening and even when we were unsure of a dance, there were plenty of people there to point us in the right direction or give us an occasional push or pull.

I am happy to report that Sue is doing well and now going through physiotherapy. I expect it will be a considerable time before she is dancing with us again, but we wish her all the best for a speedy recovery and Andrew plenty of energy to look after her till she is back to her usual self, minus Zimmer frame and crutches.

Margaret Barnes.

Bestwood Country Park 13th May.



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Before the annual Christmas dinner, we have always walked in the Bestwood Country park near to the Bestwood Lodge Hotel.

This walk, at Bernice and Christine's suggestion, was at the other end of the Park and started at the Dynamo cafe and Winding house in Bestwood village.

There were 10 of us who set out to explore the paths and trails, and, when we passed over the main road through Bestwood village on a disused railway bridge, we discovered two large lakes surrounded by trees and bushes and which is now a nature reserve.

Dave Vincent was involved in the construction of these after the Bestwood colliery was closed down and the land around reclaimed for recreational use. A beautiful and tranquil setting and shows what can be done to old industrial land if thought and effort are put into it.

After a very enjoyable walk we ended up at the Dynamo cafe for tea and a picnic.

The cafe is manned by volunteers of the country park on a Saturday morning and any proceeds are used to support the Park. They had stayed open especially for us as the cafe normally closes at 1 o'clock.

The adjacent winding house is operational, although the old steam engine has been replaced by an electric motor. Ex miners have restored the building and they open it for visitors between 10 and 12 on Saturdays and bank holiday. Well worth a visit to see what is now just part of our heritage in an area that used to have an abundance of working mines.

David Potter

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY				
FOR MORE INFO PLEASE PHONE THE MEMBERS MENTIONED: IF YOU WANT TO GO ON THE WALK AND BBQ PLEASE LET BERNICE KNOW BEFORE THE 20TH.				

JUNE	11TH	SPY MISSION	DAVE POTTER	0115 8490638
JULY	20TH	WALK AND BBQ £5.00	BERNICE'S	4PM
	13TH	GARDEN DANCE	ANDREW'S 0115 916 4691	7PM
AUGUST	1st	COLWICK HALL STROLL AND AFTERNOON TEA/LUNCH	PHONE CHRIS VINCENT FOR MORE DETAILS	11.30
	12	DERBYSHIRE WALK	DAVE POTTER	
SEP	6TH	WALK AND LUNCH AT GREENS MILL	CHRIS VINCENT	
	7TH	DANCING RESTARTS	BERNICE YOUNG	

Tam O' Shanter (continued)

Warlocks and witches in a dance:
 No cotillion, brand new from France,
 But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
 Put life and mettle in their heels.
 In a window alcove in the east,
 There sat Old Nick, in shape of beast;
 A shaggy dog, black, grim, and large,
 To give them music was his charge:



He screwed the pipes and made them squeal,
 Till roof and rafters all did ring.
 Coffins stood round, like open presses,
 That showed the dead in their last dresses;
 And, by some devilish magic sleight,
 Each in its cold hand held a light:
 By which heroic Tom was able
 To note upon the holy table,
 A murderer's bones, in gibbet-irons;
 Two span-long, small, unchristened babies;
 A thief just cut from his hanging rope -
 With his last gasp his mouth did gape;
 Five tomahawks with blood red-rusted;
 Five scimitars with murder crusted;
 A garter with which a baby had strangled;
 A knife a father's throat had mangled -
 Whom his own son of life bereft -
 The grey-hairs yet stuck to the shaft;
 With more o' horrible and awful,
 Which even to name would be unlawful.
 Three Lawyers' tongues, turned inside out,
 Sown with lies like a beggar's cloth -
 Three Priests' hearts, rotten, black as muck
 Lay stinking, vile, in every nook.

 As Thomas glowered, amazed, and curious,
 The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;
 The piper loud and louder blew,
 The dancers quick and quicker flew,
 They reeled, they set, they crossed, they linked,
 Till every witch sweated and smelled,
 And cast her ragged clothes to the floor,
 And danced deftly at it in her underskirts!

Now Tam, O Tam! had these been young girls,
 All plump and strapping in their teens!
 Their underskirts, instead of greasy flannel,
 Been snow-white seventeen hundred linen! -
 The trousers of mine, my only pair,
 That once were plush, of good blue hair,
 I would have given them off my buttocks
 For one blink of those pretty girls !



But withered hags, old and droll,
 Ugly enough to suckle a foal,
 Leaping and flinging on a stick,
 Its a wonder it didn't turn your stomach!

But Tam knew what was what well enough:
 There was one winsome, jolly wench,

That night enlisted in the core,
Long after known on Carrick shore
(For many a beast to dead she shot,
And perished many a bonnie boat,
And shook both much corn and barley,
And kept the country-side in fear.)
Her short underskirt, o' Paisley cloth,
That while a young lass she had worn,
In longitude though very limited,
It was her best, and she was proud. . .
Ah! little knew your reverend grandmother,
That skirt she bought for her little granddaughter,
With two Scots pounds (it was all her riches),
Would ever graced a dance of witches!

But here my tale must stoop and bow,
Such words are far beyond her power;
To sing how Nannie leaped and kicked
(A supple youth she was, and strong)

And how Tom stood like one bewitched,
And thought his very eyes enriched;
Even Satan glowered, and fidgeted full of lust,
And jerked and blew with might and main;
Till first one caper, then another,
Tom lost his reason all together,
And roars out: ' Well done, short skirt! '
And in an instant all was dark;
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees buzz out with angry wrath,
When plundering herds assail their hive;
As a wild hare's mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts running before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When ' Catch the thief! ' resounds aloud:
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
With many an unearthly scream and holler.

Ah, Tom! Ah, Tom! You will get what's coming!

to be continued.

Quiz Night 18th March 2017



Enter the 'Vital Spark'!

The year would not be complete without a quiz night, not just a quiz night but a Nottingham Scottish quiz night. There were nearly 50 of us waiting expectantly in the Church Hall and we were not disappointed.

David Vincent led us through the music quiz and, although the songs got the feet tapping, the memory couldn't always quite remember who sang what and when,

On to a quiz about collective nouns which ended in an open competition to come up with a new collective name for a group of Scottish dancers, a giggle and a forgetfulness were some of the ones on offer, more in reference to our ages and abilities than anything else.

Before supper was served, three witches arrived and began stirring things in a large cauldron, shouting out hubble bubble eye of bat and legs of newt and other things not to be found in a Delia Smith cookbook. This turned out to be the Macbeth catering services who were responsible for the Forfar Bridies which we then had for supper. As you might have guessed the chief witch was Bernice.

Then onto the model making, It's amazing what you can do with a packet of plasticine, after a short time quite a few even resembled the Loch Ness monsters we were trying to make.

Finally, the Piece de Resistance (that's French but my computer doesn't have an accents key). The lights were dimmed, the curtains drawn and there before us was a vista over the Clyde near Glasgow I'm sure I saw the Erskine Bridge in the distance! From the gloom came the soft chug of an old puffer, or was that David our President! The Vital Spark was the ship in Para Handy carefully skippered by our very own Captain Bernice. After a very entertaining sketch they were very nearly sunk by the largest Liner ever to cross the church hall, courtesy of Christine Vincent together with a bellowing sound from its horn, at least that was the intention but the sound had been turned down.!

Many thanks to all those whose hard work made the night so entertaining. What are we going to get next year!

Quiz Night 18th March 2017 – Part 2...

Yes, it was all down to us! We were to blame!

That strange and quirky quiz night, the food, the music. Et al.

So often you go to a quiz night and it is the same cleaver clogging people who walk away with the prize perhaps because the questions have been just gathered from the quiz pages of the internet or a book. However, from the outset this NSA quiz night was not going to be like that.

The main criteria was to try to pick questions that would be relevant to most people in the U.K. but also could be linked to Scotland thus making us all appreciate the contribution Scots make/made to British culture.

When starting to research the questions Dave and I were amazed at the number of singers, artists, actors, sportsmen and especially explorers that have/had their roots in Scotland. Singers like Annie Lennox, sports men like Jackie Stewart and the actor with the Italian sounding name Peter Capaldi, currently playing Doctor Who.

As Dave and I compared notes, we both said that when reading of scientific discoveries, exploration and inventions you always seem to find a Scot in there somewhere. Though perhaps not because they are more inventive or talented (mustn't let them get too big headed about themselves or they might want independence!) than the other races of the British Isles but because their unique Scottish accents make them stand out. This made researching the quiz questions a learning curve for us, and we hope it did the same for all who came along to the quiz night.

Yes, I bet you did not know before you came to the quiz that Tunocks Tea Cakes exploded at high altitudes did you!

In order to make the evening an entertainment as well as an education, we tried to throw in a few trick questions.

Our strange sense of humour was not appreciated with all of the questions though. As when we asked, 'Where did William Wallace get his woad from'. We were hoping that people would know that William Wallace did not wear woad. This depiction of Wallace wearing woad was just generated by the film Brave Heart. We were rather hoping that people would have seen the film so we could jump in and say He got it from Australia where he came from!! Referring to Mel Gibson, the actor who played William Wallace, who was Australian. However, the joke fell flat and so we were confronted with almost fifty blank faces ...whilst tumble weed drifted across the floor!

Another more understandable inspiration for the quiz was a book called Daundlerlust: Dispatches from Unreported Scotland by Peter Ross. In this book Peter Ross gives us a snap shot of modern Scotland. In his articles, he paints a picture of a diverse range of communities. From the naturalists of *Inchmurrin* to the men and women who paint and maintain the Forth Road Bridge. It's well worth a read.

And of course, the final self-indulgence of the evening was the wonderful characters of 'The Vital Spark' being brought to life by NSA members - Bernice and the two Margaret's.

But I think the star of the show had to be Norma as 'Doogie', complete with 'There has not been one inessential toot!' and the wagging finger! Thanks for bringing the sketch to life and creating such fun ladies!

And to the rest of the Nottingham Scottish.....

as they say

Thanks for Watching

What is a Senior Citizen?

*A Senior Citizen
is one who was here before;
the pill, television, frozen foods,
contact lenses, and credit cards....
and before man walked on the moon.*

*For us, "Time sharing" meant
togetherness, not holiday homes,
and a "chip" meant a piece of wood.
"Hardware" meant nuts and bolts,
and "software" wasn't even a word.*

*We got married first, then lived together,
and thought cleavage was
something butchers did.
A "stud" was something that fastened a
collar to a shirt, and "going all the way"
meant staying on a double decker
to the bus depot.*

*We thought that "fast food" was what you ate
in lent; a "Big Mac" was an oversized
raincoat and "crumpet" we had for tea.
In our day; "grass" was mown,
"pot" was something you cooked in,
"coke" was kept in the coal house and
a "joint" was cooked on Sundays!*

*We are today's SENIOR CITIZENS.
A hardy bunch when you think
how the world has changed!*

In Memory of Catherine Hill

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;*

*But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

We also sadly report the death of Mary Dove, wife of Sidney Dove who was a
Nottingham Scottish Association President
from 1972 to 1973

We believe Mary passed away last summer although we have only recently been
informed.

If you would like anything to be included in the next
Chanter then please send it to
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The end of August 2017

www.nottinghamscottish.org.uk