

The Chanter



Nottingham Scottish Association
Newsletter
March 2018

www.nottinghamscottish.com

From the President

Well, my two years are nearly up and time to rest my quill! Never could get the hang of modern technology.

Its been an interesting time, two St Andrew's nights and two Burn's Suppers with lots of walks, treasure trails and dance nights. Kate and myself have also enjoyed representing the Association at several functions held by neighbouring Associations in Derby and Chesterfield including giving the Toast to the Lassies and the reply.

The Association has been constantly well supported and hopefully for the future this will continue, but as always, we continue to look for ways to get new members.

Don Pringle will take over from me in April and I wish him well and look forward to supporting his Presidency over the next two years.

We will also be saying good bye to Christine Vincent, this will be her last Chanter as editor and on behalf of the Association, I would like to thank her for all her work and input, not only to the Chanter but to the many events which she has helped organise and participated in over the last few years. I recall her as a very convincing Spitfire circling the Queens birthday party in 2016.!!! For those with a quizzical look please refer to pictures in back editions of the Chanter.

It would also appear that to become Chanter editor, it is essential to be called Christine, so welcome to Christine Oldfield who will taking over in April. I know Christine will be very receptive to any articles you may want to have published, you never know, this may be the start of someone's budding literary career. Just remember JK Rowling started putting pen to paper in a cafe in Edinburgh!

Can I also take this opportunity to ask you to consider joining the Council when the AGM is held in April? Some of our council members will be retiring and we do need new faces. The future of the Association does need to be considered as, dare I say it, we all get a little bit older. So, as Kitchener said in the First World War, THE ASSOCIATION NEEDS YOU!

There are also a few things to let you know, Burns this year was very well supported to the extent that we had a few people at the last minute who ended up on a waiting list, so make a note in your diary now for the 26th January 2019. We are also trying to raise the profile of St Andrews on the 24th November 2018. Last year the numbers of 44 were a little disappointing and are at the point when we must consider its viability for the future, so please try and come along to both events if possible.

We have already booked Schuggie to lead the cèilidh dancing at both evenings.

So, once again, thanks to you all for supporting the Association over the last two years.

Here's to another successful year in 2018/19

David

St Andrews Dinner and Dance 25th November.

44 members and friends of the Association gathered at the Belgrave Rooms in Nottingham, to celebrate St Andrews Day with the annual Dinner and Dance. We were joined by Alec Stalker, current President of the Derby Scottish Association and Burns Club together with his wife Joyce.

The evening's delicious meal comprised of Cock-a-Leekie soup (made in the traditional Scottish way with prunes) followed by Chicken Diane and then a gorgeous lemon pavlova.

We listened to our member Rosie Allen give an informative and very well received Toast to Scotland. Rosie is a retired Headmistress and when asked afterwards how she felt it went replied "it was just like holding an assembly!"

After a short interval, Shuggie Mcinnies led everyone in a splendid evening of Ceilidh dancing ranging from Dashing White Sergeant to a very lively Strip the Willow. Are the years catching up with me or are the dances getting faster! We look forward to Schuggie leading the dancing again at next years St Andrew's and the Burns night in 2019.

All too soon 11.30 came and we all gathered together to sing Auld Lang Syne.

Our President David thanked everyone for coming and a special thanks to those who had helped to make the evening so successful. His final words were "haste ye back", I think we will all look forward to the next "Gathering".

Christmas Walk and Dinner 12th December

Our annual Christmas walk took place at Colwick Country Park followed by dinner at the nearby Toby Carvery. On the Sunday prior to the walk the first heavy snowfall of winter had left the area blanketed in snow but fortunately a mild thaw had made all the paths very walkable, with care only needed in parts.

The day of the walk, despite an early forecast of freezing fog turned out to be bathed in sunshine but very cold. Minus 4 when I left home and rose to the scorching 1 degree by 11.00. I wish I'd put my shorts on. Colwick Country Park was beautiful, not a breath of wind and a sharp frost and a little remaining snow left the whole area white over. The lake was frozen in parts and flocks of ducks and seabirds skidded and slid across the surface as they must have wondered where the water had gone to. After a brisk 90 minute walk 16 of us arrived back at the Toby inn and met the rest of the members who had joined us for dinner.

Dinner was the Festive special and comprised of three courses including a carvery main course followed by mince pie and coffee. The food was delicious and plentiful with waitress service for the first and last course. A lovely Christmas venue with crackers and party hats provided by the Inn.

Our thanks go out to Mick Horrocks who did all the organising and led the walk. You could have got the job for next year Mick.

David

January Walk



The weather reports warned "stay indoors unless your journey is necessary", airports were closed, hordes of shoppers flocked to supermarkets to stock up on water and tinned food (providing there was something left after they had closed for one day at Christmas!). *Storm Eleanor* was about to unleash her wrath upon the British Isles.

Did this affect the Nottingham Scottish walkers? Of course it didn't, there was the opportunity for a bracing walk alongside the River Trent at Attenborough Nature Reserve followed by a lunch at The Corn Mill Pub.

Ten of us met up for coffee in the visitor centre before setting off to brave the elements. Off we strode down to the River and through the nature reserve. At one point we decided it was so pleasant we extended the walk by a further mile and came back through Attenborough Village itself, stopping off to have a look around the historic Church before meeting back in the car park.

An area at the Corn Mill had been reserved and we enjoyed a pleasant two course meal with good company and conversation.

Were we as brave as we made out? No. Fortunately for us, the wind died down just before we set off and resumed its fury just as the walk finished.

In the end it was a lovely walk and a good day out.



Properties for rent at Attenborough Nature reserve



Lunch in the Corn Mill

Burns Dinner and Ceilidh Dance, January 20th 2017.

100 people booked for this years Burns night, just one more than last year, and we even had a waiting list.!

The event, as usual was held at the Belgrave rooms and, after pre-dinner drinks we took our seats to await the Piper, Bill Fernie pipe in the President and honoured guests.

Our President gave his welcome to everyone and in particular the speakers. After Grace was said by the Vice President Don Pringle the pipes started up again and through the doors from the kitchen came the Piper followed by the chef carrying the biggest Haggis I had ever seen. Through

the room they paraded until it was placed on the Presidents table. Bob Logan then gave his address to the Haggis, how he remembers those words I'll never know. One thing I am sure of though, is that the writings of Burns would never receive a Plain English Award! Our President then exchanged quaichs full of whisky with the chef, piper and of course with Bob, who promptly turned it upside down over his head to show it was empty. What a quaint Scottish custom!

After an extremely good meal of 'Haggis wi' Tatties and Neeps' followed by Blade of Beef and finally a baked raspberry cheese cake we came to the part of the night that always gives cause for concern.

Toasting the Queen with Highland honours. In reality this entailed the men folk only, although a few ladies joined in, placing one foot on their chair and their second foot on the table whilst we all sang the National anthem - quite a sight with about 40 men, mostly in full highland dress!

Our first speech was delivered by John Brebner, of the Derby Scottish

Association and Burns Club who gave the immortal memory. He was aware that our President David had spent most of his working life as a Customs and Excise Officer, the same as Burns and made reference to Burns being a Commissioned Officer (see next article). John had also worked in the Invergordon distillery and told us the story of him leaving work one day with a colleague who had put neat whisky into his windscreen washer bottles and had used them to great effect to clear a frozen windscreen!

John quoted from Burns and gave us a further insight into the poems of the Bard until eventually we stood and raised our glasses in silence to Robert Burns.

The toast to the Lassies was given by Roger Neale who mentioned that some of Scotland's more notable women, mentioning Nicola Sturgeon and Ruth Davison, he would not like to meet on a dark night. He did however acknowledge that women are men's intellectual and social superiors and also asked us to consider a women's ability, when everything Fred Astaire did, Ginger Rogers did it backwards and in high heels. Overall he came to the conclusion that men cannot live without the fairer sex and with that we all stood and toasted the lassies.

Doreen Johnson responded on behalf of the ladies and thanked Roger for his eloquent speech but asked us to consider that a man was only eloquent when he could describe Dolly Parton without using his hands!

She thought Judy Murray was perhaps the one woman we should be frightened to meet on a dark night!

She mentioned that Burns was aware of the rights of women and in that area was ahead of his time. Unfortunately, he still remains ahead of many modern men in his views and thought Donald Trump should consider this aspect.

Doreen finally left us with the thought that behind every successful man there is a surprised woman!

Not to be outdone she then asked the ladies to stand and raise their glasses to the men.

After a short break to allow the room to be re arranged we returned to start the dancing which was being organised by Andrew Morrison.

We started off with the Gay Gordons and several other Ceilidh dances. The last few years have seen Stewart Rae and Gary Cawthorne entertain us with a few Scottish songs. Unfortunately, this year Stewart had lost his voice so instead of this, 8 members of the Association, led by the President David, gave a demonstration dance of 'Mari's Wedding' to the applause of the rest of the guests.

All too soon it was time for Auld Lang Syne and we all joined hands around the room after listening to David thank all those who had worked so hard to make the evening a success and wish us a safe journey home.

Another year, another Burns, roll on 2019!



David and Kate Potter with (from the left) John Brebner, Roger Neale, Clare Neale, David Shore and Doreen Johnson.



David Potter with past Presidents

Customs and Excise Commission

In the speech given by John Brebner at our Burns Dinner and Dance, he made reference to Robert Burns being a Commissioned Excise Officer, this Commission being granted to him by the wise and influential men of Edinburgh. In fact, if it hadn't been for that, Burns had been about to embark for Jamaica, and what would have happened then!.

The Commission was an important document which also allowed Excise Officers to call upon members of the Armed Forces and Coastguards and latterly Police Officers to assist if necessary when carrying out their duties enforcing the collection and preventing the evasion of Excise duties (any tax collected by Customs and Excise i.e. on tobacco and spirits) and in more recent years in seizing prohibited and restricted goods such as drugs and firearms.

The one thing I have in common with Burns is that I too was a Commissioned Officer, and still have that Commission.

Unfortunately, all active Commissions were cancelled in 2005 when HM Customs and Excise merged with the Inland Revenue to form HMRC.

Another interesting and unique way in which Customs and Excise differed from normal Police procedures was in the use of our own Search Warrant, known as a Writ of Assistance which I believe dates back to the 1700's

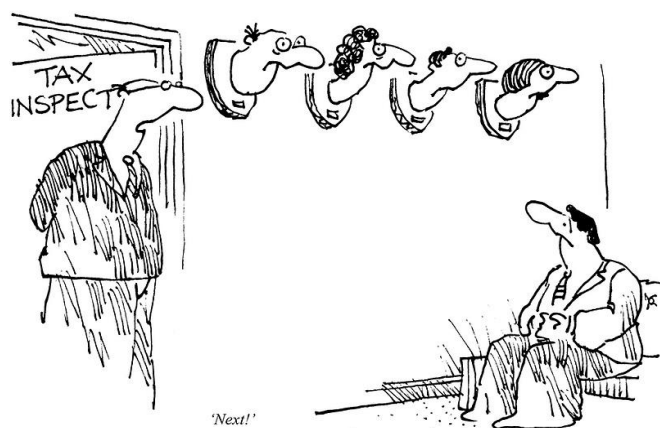
The authorised use of this was granted by a Senior Customs Officer and, unlike the Police, we did not need to seek the approval of the Courts to search property. Police Officers were only required to attend with us during the hours of darkness. Another useful element of this was that it allowed the holder to "follow the goods". This meant that if we went to say 65 Smith Street to search the property and found the goods had been moved to 75

Smith Street we could just go and search that property. Police unfortunately would usually have to go back for a further search warrant. Nobody messed with the Exciseman!!

I recall one instance when I was about to use the Writ to force entry into a house and phoned the local Police station to ask for a Constable to attend. Within seconds I heard a cacophony of sound in the distance and soon 6 police cars with sirens and blue lights pulled up at the side of me, out jumped numerous burly Policemen. The Sergeant in charge told me he had been waiting years to help the Customs use a Writ of Assistance.

Fortunately, the house was full of tens of thousands of smuggled cigarettes!

David



February Walk



The Erewash Canal

The Nottingham Scottish February Walk fell on a gorgeous winter's day. Our walkers enjoyed the sunshine on the Erewash Canal near Trowell and finished up with a convivial lunch in the Festival Inn. Thanks to Don and Sue for organising it.

Folk Night with North Sea Gas

Friday the 23rd February saw 11 of our members meet at the Boat and Horses Public House in Beeston Rylands. Our past Secretary Schuggie had managed to book a Scottish Folk Group "North Sea Gas" and had asked if we wanted to come.



Well, what a night, beautiful harmonies, songs from Scotland that even as an Englishman left a tear in the eye as they sung about Caledonia.

Look them up on You tube and they are a must if they visit this area again.

David.

Quiz Night

Did you know that Doc Holliday of Wild West fame was a dentist, or that Tina Turner's birth name was Anna Mae Bullock? Perhaps you knew that the first Scottish Football club to reach the UEFA Cup Final was Dundee United and not as you might expect Glasgow Celtic or Glasgow Rangers. These were the answers to some of the questions at the Nottingham Scottish Association Quiz Night on 24th February. 31 members and friends gathered to show off their general knowledge, or lack of it, at a most enjoyable evening at St. Andrew's with Castle Gate small hall. We were permitted to bring our own drinks, even alcoholic ones (with permission from the Church of course) and nibbles to help the brain cells work and figure out the answers to the questions compiled by David and Don, our President and Vice President respectively. We were informed that their wives, Kate and Sue, had given them permission to say that the Question Masters' decisions were final in any dispute over the answers!

We had a News Section, a Radio Times cover section which showed some pretty old pictures of almost forgotten faces, one where the answers all began with P or Q, a Geography round (I forgot to ask Rosie if she got all these questions right – for those who don't know, Rosie was a Geography teacher!) and another about Scotland, where some folks thought that William Wallace led the Scottish army to victory at Bannockburn. As Wallace had been dead since 1305 and the great victory was in 1314, it seems unlikely, and even the film "Braveheart" was accurate on this point. He may have been there in spirit though.

The Wipe-Out round was a challenge as we had to get every answer right or forfeit all the points. Ten correct answers gave us five extra bonus points, which was definitely a help with the final score. We also had a "Serious Scottish Round" of 29 Questions plus a Tie-breaker which asked how old would "Renee Macintosh" be if he was alive to-day. We assumed correctly that the compilers meant Charles Rennie Mackintosh. The answers given were pretty diverse, ranging from 147 to 270. Our team was chuffed to get a prize for the closest figure. Incidentally, Mackintosh was born in June 1868. One wag suggested Renee may have been his sister.

One of the questions in the Wipe-out Round asked which character from Greek mythology fell in love with his reflection. David assured us that the answer was not Donald Trump. To round things off we had a Dingbats round, which fortunately for our team was only for fun and didn't count in the final score.

We all had a fun evening and I am sure most of us learned something from it as none of the teams got all the questions right, but on the whole I think everyone did pretty well. Jeanne Dall asked for a round of applause to thank David and Don for the work they had put into the questions – I wonder how many they would have got right if they didn't have the advantage of the Internet to provide the answers. Many thanks to them both for an enjoyable evening.

Margaret Barnes.

Programme

Tuesday 3rd April. ...Walk alongside the River Trent followed by Lunch.

Meet at 10.30 for 11.00 start at the tram stop at the Wilford Toll Bridge
(on the Clifton line). Contact Lyndsey Lyas for more details. Tel 0115 9232832

Saturday 14th April

Presidents night, 7.30 at St Andrews Church Hall.

Try your hand at indoor Kurling. Supper provided. Please let David know if you are coming for catering. tel 0115 8490638

Saturday 21st April.....Dance at St Andrew's Church hall. 7.30. Dancing to Live Music. Bring and share supper £5.00. This is the final dance started in Chilwell in October and aimed at beginners and developers. There will be some dances for more the experienced.

Thursday 26th April.....AGM. 7.30 St Andrew's Church Hall.

Wednesday 2nd May Walk. 10.00 for 10.30 start. Details to follow. Contact Dave 0115 8490638.

Thursday 14th June Afternoon walk followed by bar b que at Don Pringle's. Times to be advised.

Sunday 22nd July.... Treasure Hunt around Holme Pierrepont. Tea and cake afterwards at Lyndsey and Graham's. Full details to be advised.

Curling

Evidence that curling (Kurling) existed in Scotland in the early 16th century includes a curling stone inscribed with the date 1511 uncovered (along with another bearing the date 1551) when an old pond was drained at Dunblane, Scotland. The world's oldest curling stone and the world's oldest football are now kept in the same museum in Stirling. The first written reference to a contest using stones on ice coming from the records of Paisley Abbey, Renfrewshire.

The word *curling* first appears in print in 1620 in [Perth, Scotland](#), in the preface and the verses of a poem by Henry Adamson. The sport was (and still is, in Scotland and Scottish-settled regions like southern New Zealand) also known as "the roaring game" because of the sound the stones make while travelling over the *pebble* (droplets of water applied to the playing surface). The word *curling* is formed from the verb *curl*, which describes the motion of the stone.

Kilsyth Curling Club claims to be the first club in the world, having been formally constituted in 1716 and it is still in existence today. Kilsyth also claims the oldest purpose-built curling pond in the world at Colzium, in the form of a low dam creating a shallow pool some 100 × 250 metres in size.

In the early history of curling, the playing stones were simply flat-bottomed stones from rivers or fields, which lacked a handle and were of inconsistent size, shape and smoothness. Some early stones had holes for a finger and the thumb, akin to ten-pin bowling balls. Unlike today, the thrower had little control over the 'curl' or velocity and relied more on luck than on precision, skill and strategy. The sport was often played on frozen rivers although purpose-built ponds were later created in many Scottish towns.

So, don't forget President's Night Kurling on the 21st April!

To Keep up with the news from NSA and

Find us on our web pages

www.nottinghamscottish.org/news/

or on Facebook under

The Nottingham Scottish Association

If you would like anything to be included in the next Chanter then please send it to Christine Oldfield at:- nottscots+editor@gmail.com **by the 30th April**

One day Jock bought a bottle
of fine whisky and while
walking home he fell. Getting
up he felt something wet on his
trousers. He looked up at the
sky and said, "Oh lord please I
beg you, let it be blood!"

What do you call a Scots
woman with one leg?
Eileen.

A woman and a man from
Aberdeen were stranded on a desert
island after a shipwreck. Their
clothes were in rags and their food
running out.

'I suppose it could always be worse,'
said the woman.

Oh, aye, it could,' agreed the
Aberdonian. 'I might have bought a
return ticket.'