

# **The Chanter**



**Newsletter**

**March 2019**



**The Nottingham Scottish Association**

## From the Editor



I was very encouraged when I did a quick count of who did what for the content of this issue. Apart from the bits I put in as editor, nine different people contributed an article or report; four of these, and also five others, provided photographs.

Peter Dale was kind enough to lend me his precious collection of old dance books with music (see later article) and *From Scotland Through her Country Dances*, an interesting volume which threw up many surprising snippets which I will share with readers in due course (a couple appear in this issue). My thanks go to every one of you.

If **you** would like to be numbered amongst the contributors for the June issue, please volunteer (preferably in advance) to write a report of an NSA activity you take part in. Or write an article to share your knowledge and/or experiences with the rest of us. If it has a Scottish theme, so much the better.

Just e-mail anything you write, to me, at: [chanter@nottinghamscottish.org](mailto:chanter@nottinghamscottish.org) or send it by post, by mid-May, to The Chanter, 13 Haileybury Crescent, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG27BH.

Scottish celebrations and traditional fare are covered in some depth in the pages that follow but you can't beat Asda's suggested recipe for a January treat - "Haggis Scotch eggs with Irn-Bru dip"!

**Christine Oldfield**

## New Members

**Alisdair and Christine Baxter** have recently joined the Association. They are very welcome and it is hoped that they will participate in some, if not all, of the activities on offer.

**The Chanter is available to view on the website, where you can blow it up to whatever size you wish to give a bigger and better view of both text and photographs.**

<https://nottinghamscottish.org/news>



**under The Nottingham Scottish Association**

## President's Page

Wow, cannot believe that we are already into February and producing notes for the next edition of The Chanter, which is due to be published in March. Since our last edition we have had two very successful events in The Masonic Hall - St Andrew's Dinner Dance in November and last month our Burns celebrations. I know that I'm stating the obvious, but such events don't just happen; many members give up much of their time to *make* them happen. Numbers were a bit low for St Andrew's, but 110 attended Burns. This year our St. Andrew's event will be on the actual day, 30<sup>th</sup> November, and our next Burns' Supper also will fall on his birth date - 25<sup>th</sup> January 2020. So, it's time to put the dates into your diaries.



So far this year we have had two walks and, by the time you are reading this, our Annual Quiz night will also have been and gone. I wonder who will eat the most pies on the night. Like all of our quiz/games evenings, I'm sure it will be very competitive – and I don't mean the eating!

Further on in this edition you will be able to see what else is organised for the next two or three months.

As well as the good information we currently receive in The Chanter, we also have our website, <https://nottinghamscottish.org>, and our Facebook page 'Nottingham Scottish Association'. As you probably know, all three are pretty active in helping us to spread our news and activities.

Our AGM will be on the 16<sup>th</sup> May this year. If you are wondering why it's not in April, it's because producing the Annual Accounts for an April meeting has become more difficult each year. Holding the AGM in May eases that situation. If you would like to become a member of The Council, please do not hesitate to volunteer, as new faces, with fresh thoughts and ideas, will be most welcome. A notice will be issued prior to the meeting detailing what you need to do to make it happen.

I have thoroughly enjoyed this year as your President. Past Presidents and Council have been very helpful, which is greatly appreciated.

Wishing everyone good health and happiness for 2019 - the year of the Pig, according to the Chinese Zodiac. (Are we back on pie eating?)

Looking forward as usual to seeing and meeting you at our future events during the year.

Gach dùrachd,

Don

[Ed: The Pig is the twelfth of the 12-year cycle of animals which appear in the Chinese zodiac related to the Chinese calendar. All those born in a 'Year of the Pig' can expect good luck and happiness this year!]

# Christmas Walk & Lunch

Monday 10th December 2018

Our annual Christmas walk started from the Toby Carvery in Colwick. Sixteen of us set off around Colwick Country Park on a crisp but clear, dry morning to work up an appetite.



Mick Horrocks had clearly done his research and he informed us, amongst other things, of the route of the original River Trent before the construction of the Colwick sluice gates. After passing the ruins of the old church, we heard about the long

history of Colwick Hall and its links with well-known Nottingham families -

the Byrons, the Musters and the Chaworth-Musters. When it was taken over by the City Council in 1965, it was in a state of ruin and consisted of a one room pub and a toilet! And today it's a hotel. See, we were listening Mick!



Back to the Toby Carvery where twenty-seven of us dined 'a la Christmas menu' with free-flowing glasses of Prosecco included.

A raffle was drawn and Chris Barnes won the meal for two, donated by the Toby Carvery, (I hope he will take Margaret) and Don Pringle won a Bottle of Prosecco.

It was a very well organised, pleasant and joyful start to the festive season. Mick, thanks, you've got a job for a life.

**Dave Potter**



# St Andrew's Day in St Petersburg, 2018



St Andrew is not only the patron saint of Scotland, but also of Russia, and the saltire was used by Peter the Great as the principal Russian order of knighthood. According to Wikipedia, "The **Order of St. Andrew the Apostle the First-Called** [pictured left] is the highest order of the Russian Federation. Established as the first and highest order of chivalry of the Russian Empire in 1698, it was abolished under the USSR before being re-established as the top Russian order in 1998."



The Russians do like to party, so it's not surprising that in many Russian cities they gather to celebrate St Andrew's Day. In St Petersburg, for twenty-one years, the celebration has taken the form of a Caledonian Ball, organised by Petersburg Caledonia. This elaborate do is always well supported, surpassing itself three years ago when there were eight Consul Generals in attendance.



Anna Edgoose-Zagorskaia was on the committee of Petersburg Caledonia until recently when she married Carl. Some of our members will remember that Anna and Carl attended our St Andrew's Night dinner and ceilidh in 2017 and they also came along a few times to our Thursday night dancing.

In 2018, St Petersburg's Hotel Astoria hosted well over a hundred dancers. Music was provided by the Edinburgh ceilidh band, Teannaich (in Gaelic the name means tighten, close, draw or crowd together). The five members of the band, led by Michael Ross on the cittern, met in Edinburgh and, as well as many years of performing in Scotland and England, they have toured widely. Their overseas trips have included Italy, Spain, Netherlands, Ireland, Russia and more. And in St. Petersburg they kept some revellers reeling on until 3am.



*Photo by Sergei Semkin*

## **Some Memories of Times Gone By Words of Sarah, Countess of Leicester, 1986 to 2008 (seen at Holkham Hall, Norfolk, by Iris Dale)**

"We gave many New Year's Eve Scottish Reeling Parties in the Statue Gallery. Parents and children were taught how to reel throughout the year, in various village halls, by Madeleine Lyon – a fierce teacher with a police whistle!



New Year's Eve at Holkham was the most popular party in Norfolk. We gave 110 children and their parents dinner, black tie, in the Audit Room and a Piper piped us up to the Statue Gallery after dinner, where a small Scottish band played the reels. Everyone had dance cards and danced

every reel. We gave them all breakfast at 2am."

**Ed.** "Police whistle"! Now *there's* a thought for Thursday nights! And I imagine the reeling of the English guests at Holkham Hall was quite sedate – unlike what is described by George S. Emerson in the book *From Scotland Through her Country Dances* (published 1967 and lent to me by Peter Dale):

*"The Scotch Reel: The Scots are indefatigable in this dance, and while engaging in it, seem to become almost intoxicated. They snap their fingers, throw their arms and legs about in a wild manner, cry aloud, and perform difficult steps so quickly that the eye can scarce follow them."*

Nothing much had changed, then, from what he quoted from 150 years previously in London 1817:

*"Snapping the fingers, in Country Dancing and Reels, and the sudden howl or yell (introduced in some Scotch parties) ought particularly to be avoided, as partaking too much of the customs of barbarous nations."*

# Attenborough Nature Reserve

**Monday 7th January**

What could be better than starting the New Year with a cup of cappuccino in the Attenborough Nature Reserve café and chatting with like-minded walkers of our NSA, some of whom we had not seen for quite a while.

Oh yes, and then there was the walk itself, of course. The shorter route (2.5 miles) was quickly dismissed. All were volunteered for the longer (3.5 miles) route for 2 reasons: a) to burn off more calories after the festive season's extravagances and b) to justify our lunch in the Corn Mill pub after the walk.

The weather was pleasantly warm for this time of the year, no rain - and so we made good progress. Occasionally we stopped for some bird watching



as apparently there had been sightings of a rare little bird – a firecrest. Unfortunately, we didn't spot it. It was also too early in the day to witness the starling murmurations as shown on local TV. But this did no harm to our enjoyment. The firm footpath (no mud) did not demand full concentration as to where to place the next step and so we could walk in a relaxed way, able

to chat to our fellow walkers. A most pleasant event.

Following the walk, a tasty lunch accompanied by friendly and efficient service was appreciated in the Corn Mill.

Thanks to David Potter for organising another successful walk.

**Dieter Hecht**



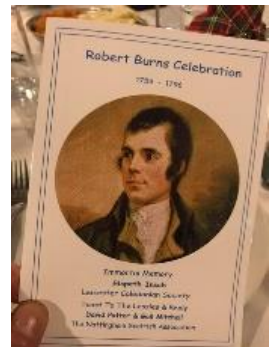


## Snippet from the Association's Archives

In 1876, eighty years after Robert Burns' death, the Nottingham Journal of Wednesday 26th January carried a report of the "*First Annual Festival (Burns Night) of the 'Scottish Society of Nottingham' at the George Hotel*". Now, 143 years on, The Nottingham Scottish Association and other bodies all over the world, still honour him in much the same way. Read on .....

### Burns Night Dinner and Ceilidh Dance Saturday 26th January

Although this was only my second-ever Robert Burns Night celebration, my ancestor (as indicated by my surname) was a Billy Chapman of 'Tam o' Shanter' vintage [Ed. recall the opening lines 'When chapmen billies leave the street...'] and Burns' poetry has therefore always struck a special chord with me. This is true especially of the musical versions of 'Ae fond kiss and then we sever' (ah, the Corries!) and 'Ca' the Yowes' (beautifully sung for us by Stewart Rae, accompanied on the piano by Gary Cawthorne, after dinner). So I want to record for you some of my most vivid, personal 'beginner's' impressions of what was for my wife Jan and me an extraordinarily enjoyable evening in Nottingham's Masonic Hall.



The interest that Burns Night awakes in the wider community here in Nottingham had been brought home to us a few evenings before, when the Notts TV cameramen had turned up at dancing. [Ed. See next article] And the worldwide appeal of this quintessentially Scottish cultural event became one of the main topics of conversation for us over dinner as we found ourselves seated in delightful company. John MacNaughtan described to us some of the distant places in East and South-East Asia in which he'd been able to join in Burns' Night gatherings over the past forty years. My memory also wandered back to 1980 and to the remote Central Asian capital, Ulan Bator, where I had last heard the Address to the Haggis.

It was the swirl of the hot water in the British Embassy's central heating pipes rather than the skirl of the bagpipes that brought good cheer to my heart on that winter's night as I stepped indoors from the minus 20°C temperature outside. As political relations between the UK and Soviet Mongolia were also partly frozen and out of *kilt*-er, our piper hadn't been granted a visa (nowadays, fortunately, our countries' relations are back in *trews*, sorry I mean 'in true'). The Queen's Messengers had, however, delivered a haggis with the diplomatic mail (not a bawbee one, either, but freshly shot on the highland haggis moors and of high quality) and a bottle

or two of double-malt (as Burns said, 'Freedom and whisky go together'). This all happened because the Ambassador was from Aberdeen and we were all proud to be able to represent Scotland in this way for the Asian and East European guests. By the way, an Indian diplomat told me a punning joke he'd heard about Burns: "Robert Burns walks into a pub. The barman refuses to serve him and says... 'You're Bard!' [da,dahh!]"



And the Bard's presence was strongly felt in the ceremony and entertainment that punctuated our evening in the Belgrave rooms. After a classic, delicious Burns Night dinner, the guest speaker, Dr Elspeth Inch O.B.E., presented us all with a detailed account of Burns' life and set it in the context of contemporaneous historic events, such as the French Revolution. The Bard himself personified the 'Braw

Wooser' of his song of that name: 'Last May, a braw wooser cam down the lang glen, And sair wi' his love he did deave me...' This is fundamental for the charm of his poetry and, indeed, the hold that his Immortal Memory has over us. David Potter's speech 'to the Lassies' had us rolling in the aisles, as did the Reply from Gail Mitchell. The sort of banter that went on between them might be reduced to the following: Q: 'Why do men like smart women?' A: 'Because opposites attract.'



The ceilidh that brought us all onto our feet for the last part of the evening was a joy in itself, so many thanks to Schuggie for his choice of dances and expert calling. My venerable forefather, Billy Chapman, would have been in his element and, like us, he'd be rushing to put his name down for next year so as not to miss such a popular fun-filled event.

**David Chapman**

## Out and About in January

What a busy quarter it's been, especially the period just before the end of January. On Thursday 24th, our President had only just been seen giving an interview on ITV, on the thorny subject of HS2, when he turned up at dancing to greet a reporter from Notts TV. Normal service was suspended as dancers were asked to quietly walk through a dance in the background while Bill Dall was interviewed – apparently he had the best Scottish accent!



We must have walked through *Mairi's Wedding* about a dozen times while Bill was asked all sorts of questions about Burns' Night and The Nottingham Scottish Association. I managed to pick up only one of them – "So it's not all just haggis and tartan, then?" And Bill reported that when asked "Why do you come here?" he had been tempted to answer "Because I make the teas"!



The dancing of *Mairi's Wedding* was filmed then the cameraman decided he wanted a clip of Bill dancing – so Mairi got married all over again!



Since the last issue, our dance demo team has been busy – they performed at a National Trust meeting early in January and at Ruddington Manor Care Home on 25th January. Here, we treated the residents to a demonstration of three Scottish country dances just before lunch - which put them in the mood for the reading of some Burns' poetry and a Scottish quiz which was on their calendar for the afternoon. Peter and Iris Dale both looked very much at home as they relaxed with a coffee after our dancing – the 'Jimmy hat' was one of half a dozen obviously bought in specially for the occasion and laid on the sofas as cushions.



*See you Jimmy!*

In the early evening of the 25th, the Notts TV film footage, severely cut, was shown on the programme *Ey Up Notts!* But any publicity is good publicity!

And you have already read of the success of the main event on the NSA calendar on the 26th - which also happens to be Australia Day!

# The Scottish Country Dance Society and its Books

Have you ever wondered where the instructions for all the Thursday night dances come from? Dancers will have noticed the 'crib sheets' that are used by the callers. These contain just abbreviated instructions downloaded from a website called 'MiniCrib'. But for detailed guidance you need to look at the original instructions. Below you will discover how 52 'official' books came into being as well as a little bit about the group that made it happen.

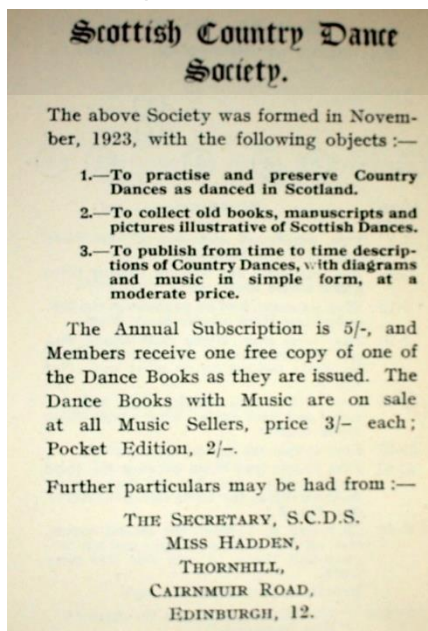


The SCDS was founded by Dr Jean Milligan and Mrs Ysobel Stewart in November 1923. It became the RSCDS in 1951 after receiving the Royal Warrant, and the Queen became Patron in 1952. In the late 50s, a large Georgian property at 12 Coates Crescent, Edinburgh was established as the Headquarters. It is from there that publications and other items can be purchased.

On the right is a photo of a rather faded last page in the pocket volume of books I, II & III. In object No. 3, "*from time to time*" in fact turned out to be quite often. Though many different dances and books of dance collections have been published over the years, and all over the world, not all have been approved by the Society – and certainly not by Miss Milligan. The Society's own output consists of many books, booklets and leaflets, but the main series, currently comprising 52 books, is still considered to be the 'Bible' of Scottish Country Dancing. The introduction to the very first book, published in 1924, bears the following explanation of the origin of the dance instructions:

*"The dances published by the Scottish Country Dance Society are traditional both in steps and formations. Their present form has been arrived at from available manuscripts, old books and from the experience of dancers during the last 150 years."*

The original tiny pocket books of instructions were designed to fit easily into a lady's handbag or man's sporran so that instructions could be reviewed before a dance began. A few of the books contain a selection of 'graded' dances compiled especially with children in mind.

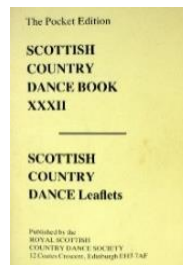


Pocket books have been reprinted many times and are still available up to



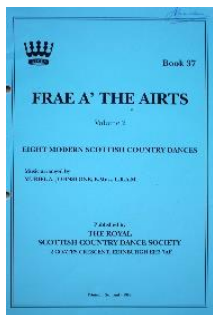
Book 45. Roman numerals appear on Books 1-38 but the larger size books, containing music, bear Arabic numerals.

From 1924 to 1938, 12 books were published, one every 1 or 2 years then, after the war, 33 books, one every 2 or 3 years, from 1945 to 2005.

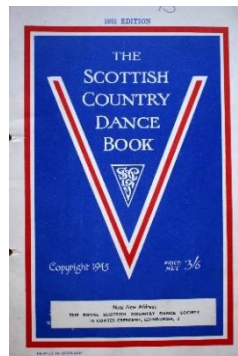


On the right is Book 13, called the Victory Book, published in 1945. This includes *The Reel of the 51st Division*. Book 17, 1953, is the Coronation Book and Book 31, Diamond Jubilee Book, celebrated 60 years of the (R)SCDS in 1983.

In 1990 and 1991, Books 36 and 37 were published with the title *Frae A' The Airts*. There were eight dances in each volume and it was explained that: "To reflect the international character of the RSCDS,

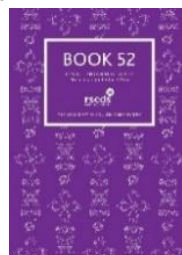


*it was decided to publish a selection of newly devised dances. Each Branch of the Society was invited to hold a competition and to submit one dance for consideration. 107 submissions from Branches in 12 countries were received. The Publications Committee made a final selection of 16 dances."*



Amongst these were Wisp of Thistle, The Nurseryman, Follow Me Home and Gothenburg's Welcome, all of which we have danced on Thursdays over the past years. Book 41, from 2000, is The Millennium Book and Book 43, from 2003, includes the Golden Jubilee Dances to mark the 50th Anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne.

When Book 45 was published in 2005 "*the intention was that it would be the last in the conventional series and that, in future, relatively fewer dances would be published. However, members continued to produce new dances in large numbers. As a result, books in the traditional format were reintroduced, commencing in 2010 with Book 46, which contains detailed instructions for 13 dances.*" Book 52 just came out in 2018 but our NSA dancers have already become familiar with Trip to Timber Ridge and Slytherin House – Harry Potter fans will recognise this as one of the four houses at Hogwarts!



# Walk around Sandiacre, Stapleford & Bramcote

**Monday 4th February**

We met up at Sue and Andrew's on a rather dank morning – not the most inspiring weather for a walk. But, undeterred, ten of us headed out, bus passes at the ready, to hop on a bus to Sandiacre.

There we joined the canal path to start our walk, and quickly reached the beautifully refurbished Springfield Mill. Originally a Victorian lace mill dating back to 1888, this grade II listed building now houses 104 apartments.

We continued along the canal to reach Bridge No.12 built in 1779, also grade II listed, where we stopped for a photo call.



Across the field and over the road, our route headed uphill. Andrew did offer a low-level option but everyone was up for the challenge and we made it to the top, albeit a bit puffed.



After a quick stop to admire the view and get our breath back, we continued along a rather muddy, slippery path - Don demonstrated a magnificent downhill, rear-ended slide. Luckily Jan, being the ever-ready Granny, produced tissues and wipes to remove the mud.

We joined the footpath running alongside the Erewash River, where we were treated to a sighting of a great white egret taking flight over the marshy field.

Continuing up to Pitt Lane, we joined the path running below the Hemlock Stone and out onto Bramcote Park – to blue sky and sunshine! Muddy boots were changed before heading back to the Sherwin Arms for lunch.

Gracias to Andrew & Sue for a lovely walk – and Muddiass from Don!!!

**Sue Pringle**



Ed: It seems that we have a new queen of puddings! Surely they can't *both* be yours, Jan?

# Quiz Night

**Saturday 16th February**

This friendly, but very competitive, quiz night has become an annual event which is much looked forward to. Don and David, our quiz masters for the evening, welcomed everyone, as members and guests formed themselves into teams around the tables that were set out. The answer sheets were distributed and much laughter was heard as team names were selected.

Round 1 came and went without too much trouble, but the 'car' round proved to be a little trickier. Then we had to place the letters 'ant' to run consecutively within a word – well, that proved to be more than a little thought provoking, but we got there!

The picture round, with some very old and odd pictures was quite amusing and nostalgic.

6. RIP



8. The first western musician to perform live where?



Would **you** have known number 6 was Our Gracie? Or that number 8 was the first musician to perform in Russia? The Scottish round, as always, was very popular, but not very good for us sassenachs, I'm afraid.

Quiz over and papers being marked, it was time for supper. With a choice of chicken, beef or vegetarian pies, with a good dollop of beans or mushy peas, what more could anyone ask for? Well .... cheesecake or profiteroles to finish – wonderful! [Ed. No mention of who ate the most pies this time though!]

The winning team was 'KAMA' – **K**en, **A**rthur, **M**arian and **A**nn. They've quizzed together before and happily accepted their reward. [Ed. Some of the chocolates were generously shared with dancers the following Thursday evening]

I am sure all thirty-four members and guests who participated would like me to say a big **Thank you** to Don and David who entertained us throughout the evening with their quips and well thought out quiz. All the hard work and effort in the kitchen as they and their helpers provided our supper was also greatly appreciated. Thank you and we look forward to another entertaining evening next year.

**Sylvia Hale**

# Future Programme

## NSA Events

**Saturday 9th March Sponsored walk (£5)** and lunch in aid of Motor Neurone Disease at Gedling Country Park. Meet in the cafe at 10.00 for a 10.30 start. For more information contact Dave Potter on 0115 849038. Even if you can't do the walk, donations would be appreciated.

**Wednesday 10th April Walk around Southwell.** Contact Dieter Hecht at dieter.hecht@me.com. More details to follow.

**Saturday 11 May ASCDS Festival,** Retford Oaks Academy, Retford.

**Monday 13 May Walk around Netherfield lagoons.** Meet at the Ferry Boat Inn, Riverside, Stoke Bardolph, NG14 5HX, 10.15am for a 10.30am start. More details later. Contact Christine & John Oldfield, 0115 945 2166.

**Thursday 16th May AGM** Upper Hall of St Andrew's with Castlegate Church, 7.30pm. Coffee and tea available in the lower hall afterwards. More details and the agenda will follow later.

## Other Events of Interest

**Friday 1st March North Sea Gas Folk Concert** at the Boat and Horses, Beeston, £10. Turn up and pay on the night.

**Friday 8th March, 12th April, 10th May Beeston Ceilidhs,** Boat and Horses, Beeston. Contact Schuggie@Ceilidhcalling or on 07875718702.

**Nottingham RSCDS Social Dances 7.30pm – 11pm:**

**Saturday 16th March** Lowdham Village Hall 7.30 – 11pm

**Saturday 18th May** Lutterell Hall, West Bridgford

60th Anniversary Celebration Dance

Details and cribs at <https://nottinghamrscds.org/events/>

**Sundays 17th March, 19th May, 16th June Springy Reelers** 10am – 12noon. Scout Hall, St Michaels Square, Bramcote, NG9 3HG. No experience required. Adults £2.00, kids free. Optional 12.30pm lunch at The Nurseryman. Contact Schuggie as above.

**Monday 18th March Beeston Wildlife group.** Talk on Scotland's Northern & Western Isles. Trent Vale Infant School, Trent Road, Beeston Rylands. 7.30-9.30pm, £3.00 inc. refreshments. Just turn up on the night.

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**Ed. According to the Daily Telegraph “more than 100,000 bottles of rare whisky were sold at auction in 2018 ... and “a world record of over £1m was paid for a 60-year-old bottle of Macallan 1926 Scotch whisky”. Must go and check my cellar!**

