

**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE EAST OF
SCOTLAND BRANCH OF ATAXIA UK
LASSWADE HIGH SCHOOL CENTRE,
SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2009**
<http://www.ataxia-east-scotland.org.uk>



Present: Derek Main (Chairman), Ronnie Browne, Liz & Pete Dalby, Penny Gardner, John Reid, Richard & Anne-Marie Thomson, and Frances Wright.

Apologies: Andrea Bothwell, George Foulkes, Anne Green, John Hunter, Susan McPheat, Jim Shepherd, Dr Jon Stone, Tom & Doreen Vandeppear.

1. Welcome and Minutes of last Meeting

Derek welcomed everyone no need for the usual introductions as we all know each other. The report of the May 2009 AGM will be sent out later.

2. Chairman's Remarks

Derek welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. Speaker: Ronnie Browne

Ronnie opened by saying he was going to tell us a true story, based on the beginnings of the Corries. In 1954 he enrolled at Edinburgh College of Art. Roy Williamson was also studying there and they knew each other, but not well. Roy played for Edinburgh Wanderers and Ronnie for Boroughmuir. In 1959 they both went to Moray House teacher training college and Roy was in a skiffle group, then in a folk trio. One night a member of the trio got glandular fever and Ronnie stood in, he knew 2 songs & joined them – it was called the Corrie folk trio. A corrie is a dip in a hillside; these were used for religious meetings all over Scotland so the name seemed appropriate.

Their first engagement was in the Waverley bar on a corner of the High Street. Sandy Buchan owned a coffee house called the Tryst, and engaged them for 3 weeks of the Edinburgh Festival in 1961. They were booked for 4 x half hour sessions with coffee & biscuits. To start with, only 8 people came – but the same people kept coming back even though they only knew a few songs and repeated the same sessions 4 times. The next night people brought their friends and by end of week 80 people were coming. During the interval, 80 would go out & join queue for the next half hour. Thought they had it made! Got £5 a night compared to £11 a week as a teacher. Over the next year or so they played small places eg in Dunfermline, got ferry over and came back with Wendy Wood Scott in the Patriots' white van, via the Kincardine bridge.

Their name was noticed by W Gordon Smith, a BBC producer, and they did a pilot show in London. In USA the Hootenanny show was big – in 1963 Corries to host the show in BBC London. They did seven shows in the BBC place in Victoria Street, their first shows for TV. Ronnie showed us the cover of the first EP they produced. All of them were still working in their day jobs as teachers and an architect, and commuting to do the shows. When the hootenanny show took off, Ronnie needed to be in London for 3 weeks and had to give up teaching. The contract stretched to 40 shows, and their name became widespread.

They became the Corrie folk trio with Paddie Bell; eventually she left to have a baby. At first, they all shared equally but this led to some disagreements. Ronnie insisted that the bar closed while they were on, but the venues benefited as they sold more overall. On 1 Jan 1966 they had a booking at the Royal Jubilee Arms Dykehead, and Bill didn't turn up. Roy & Ronnie drove up with Pat and did the show on their own, got £100 fee & a bottle of whisky each. Then decided Ronnie would learn the guitar. In 2 weeks, he had worn his nails down. The first show was at a folk club in Elie, on stage at 8.30 he changed his first chord at 9.15pm!

In all this time working and singing, they finally decided to come out of the folk club scene and agreed to put on a show at Broughty Ferry for 3 nights, then were asked to do 4 then 5 nights; hundreds of people attended. They decided to book a hall so they could get all the people in, so did the bookings & advertising themselves. They did manage to create a club atmosphere even in the bigger venues. They got a bigger audience by doing the concerts. Their name was advertised as the Corrie Folk Trio & Paddie Bell (she was much smaller).

Pat (Ronnie's wife) knitted all their early jerseys, and Pat's mother made the red shirts. They had no manager and no agency so did well. Cliff Richard paid 76% of gross out to them all. The reason they did so well: they were always clean, on time, well presented, everyone got an autograph. 20 years ago in 1990 12 Aug Roy died. No one could fill his boots. Audiences were very loyal, and Ronnie continued to do solo concerts until he retired 7 years ago. He has done 13 Hampdens in a row and loves it – 62,000 people, their hearts in your hand, not nervous because in the middle of friends. Tartan army likes the way he does it. SRU approached him in 1990 for Flower of Scotland instead of God Save the Queen. Ronnie sang at Cardiff the following week, because the Welsh anthem was twice as long – Ronnie came back for a 2nd verse. He's very pleased that Roy was still OK to see it.

The Corries have been professional every since they gave up their full time jobs in 1961. He has been together with Pat all that time as well. Gavin

(Ronnie's son) runs the Corries website and manages the licenses & Flower of Scotland. There may be recordings in the BBC archives.
www.corries.com

Ronnie finished by saying that he never gets tired of singing Flower of Scotland.

Derek thanked Ronnie for such an interesting insight into the band and remembers 40 years ago meeting Ronnie for the first time.

4. Treasurer's Report

Since the May AGM income has included two collecting cans from Lasswade totalling £30.96. Andrea's 60th birthday party at the end of June asked for donations and she sent a cheque for £1,000. The usual standing orders from the Smiths and Shepherds were £10 per month. Frances had received a sad email from Fay Young whose brother Nigel had CA. He was active person before diagnosed, then became depressed and died in May, a collection at funeral raised £350 for the Branch. Frances has emailed to confirm receipt and sent thank you card. Anne-Marie brought £40 from her knitting along to the meeting.

Expenses were £12 for teas & coffees at the AGM in May. The balance at the bank is currently £2770.45. We agreed to send £2,000 to HO.







5. Social Events

There will be a meal on 14 November at Lasswade, names to Derek please.

6. Dates of Next Meetings

The next Branch meeting will be held on Saturday 14 November 2009 at Lasswade.

YOUR BRANCH COMMITTEE

Chairman: Derek Main		0131 477 4371 derek@ataxia-east-scotland.org.uk
Secretary and Vice-Chair: Penny Gardner		0131 332 5218 penny@ataxia-east-scotland.org.uk
Treasurer: Frances Wright		0131 467 9023 frances@ataxia-east-scotland.org.uk
Committee Member: John Reid		johnreid@ataxia-east-scotland.org.uk
Committee Member: Liz Dalby		liz@ataxia-east-scotland.org.uk
Email committee Member: Susan McPheat		Contact through: susan@ataxia-east-scotland.org.uk

USEFUL WEB LINKS

If there are any suggested additions to this list please let us know

www.ataxia-east-scotland.org.uk: our Branch website

www.ataxia.org.uk the Ataxia UK website, it has many good links.

www.ohbother.co.uk: by an Ataxian and full of very useful information.

www.bbc.co.uk/ouch for an inside view on disability news.

www.evoc.org.uk: for local disability information in Edinburgh.

www.digg.org.uk: Glasgow's online resource for disability information.

www.gig.org.uk Genetic Interest Group

www.matchinghouses.com: re: accessible holiday house swaps.

www.skill.org.uk information & advice for disabled students

www.simr.org.uk/pages/news/index.html seriously ill for medical research

<http://www.vocal.org.uk> VOCAL

ADDRESS FOR MAILING:

East of Scotland Branch of Ataxia UK,
Penny Gardner, Branch Secretary
3 Craigleith Gardens
Edinburgh EH4 3JW

E MAILED REPORTS

If you would prefer an e mail instead of a hard copy, please let us know your e mail address:

Name _____ Telephone No. (optional) _____

E Mail address _____

Please post to the Secretary, Penny Gardner, at 3 Craigleith Gardens, Edinburgh EH4 3JW or e mail penny@ataxia-east-scotland.org.uk

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MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Please send a contribution if you can - £5 per household is suggested,

Please send a cheque, payable to East of Scotland Branch of Ataxia UK to: Frances Wright, 55 Carrick Knowe Road, Edinburgh EH12 7BN.