



Lanark Rocks

lanarkcurlingclub.org

Season 2011/12

January

European Edition



**LANARK CLUB MEMBERS GO TO PRAGUE TO TAKE
PART IN THE KOLIBRUS CUP 2011.**

The Magazine of Lanark Curling Club

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PRAGUE 2011

By Wilson Heatlie

In a follow-up to Lanark's first international sortie, to Copenhagen last November, Anne, Jack, Alistair and Wilson headed for Prague in early September. This arose from meeting a team of delightful Czech ladies at The Gathering last March at Murrayfield, who invited Lanark to enter their early season competition.

It quickly transpired that this was a different league from either The Gathering or Copenhagen. At least half the teams present were serious internationalists, including some extremely noisy young Russian women, plus Canadians, Norwegians, Dutch, Hungarians and Finns.

Our first opponents were the Hungarian national team, more used to playing David Murdoch & Co than a wee club team! Their Danish coach videoed the game and computer-analysed every shot, theirs and ours too. We didn't win. However, we never lost more than two shots in an end, indeed mostly only one, so we didn't disgrace ourselves.

Our next encounter was with a group of delightful young Czech men who were heading for a coaching week in Interlaken ahead of a competition in Switzerland. We did rather better here, and with a favourable wind could have won, but in the end lost with honour intact, 7 – 5.

Curling is relatively new in the Czech Republic. There is only one dedicated curling rink in the whole country, opened ten years ago, with four sheets of ice. Thus most of the local players we met were young and very committed. While for our generation the Fall of Communism still seems quite recent, most of these locals were either toddlers or not even born at the time. A salutary realisation!

Further improvement was seen against our second Czech team, but we still couldn't get over the winning line, which would have meant a fourth game in the opening round ahead of the knockout stages. We lost 7 – 6. However, we were then free to attend the evening party, held conveniently close to our city centre apartment, with excellent food and company.

For the record, we came 17th out of 25, one behind the Czech ladies, and the Hungarian hot-shots only came 5th overall!



But hey, there's more to life than curling! We had decided to spend 8 days in Prague, to allow a bit of sight-seeing. We made the most of it. Our apartment was a short walk from Wenceslas Square, and right opposite a metro station (for travel to the suburban ice rink), a tram stop with endless tram traffic (note to Edinburgh) and a convenient Tesco (UK points cards not recognised).

We did all the regular tourist sights, walked miles, went to a "Black Theatre" show and a recital in a baroque church and found an excellent Thai restaurant underneath our flat (OK, not very Czech but delicious). We also took a train trip to Kutna Hora, an hour away, a medieval town built on a silver mine. A beautiful place, once we found the centre from the desolate station on the edge of town.

The highlight had to be the Church of Bones. Reading the guide book did not prepare one for piles of human bones in pyramids, skulls arranged in artful patterns on the walls, chandeliers made from leg bones and even a family crest constructed of all types of bones. Creepy, or a gesture of respect?

All in all, an excellent week, new friends made and our curling mettle tested. Many thanks to Anne for doing all the organisation and seeing to arrangements for transport and accommodation. But a warning: if ever using Jet2 (don't!), get your name right or they'll screw you for £35 each way!



THE KUTNA HORA EXPERIENCE

By Anne Hood

We all decided to visit Kutna Hora which involved a one hour train journey plus a smaller gauge train to take us to Kutna Hora itself—this train journey was incredibly cheap ie approx £5 return per person. The train was similar to that seen in the Harry Potter films ie we were sitting on two bench seats facing each other.

We started our visit with a coffee before walking around the village. As Wilson has stated earlier, the town grew rich on its silver mine and we not only found a nice museum about this but they held a tour of the mine—so, nothing daunted, off we went. We were dressed as miners in those early days (so forget anything about health and safety). After getting into the miners clothes we then had to walk through the village to the mine entrance itself—I thought it was so funny that a group of people were dressed in hard hats and white coats that I started to sing “Hi Ho, Hi Ho, it’s off to work we go” and a few of the group burst into song. How do you like our styles?



Dressed as miners.

No prizes for the fashion stakes then!



During the mine tour we were told that there would be very narrow corridors in the mine. I'm not too keen in confined spaces but I managed to get through the mines until we reached the last part where we were told that the mine would become narrower! At this point Jack was in front of me (to pull me through if necessary) and I told Alistair to push from behind if needed. Our Vice President was pleased to oblige but in the end it wasn't required as the narrow corridor had height. (I can't cope with squeezing through narrow passages with low ceilings)! During this section of the tour Alistair hummed the theme song to Indiana Jones and the group joined in—it lightened the moment.

It was an interesting visit which we followed with lunch and wine whilst sitting out in the sunshine.

Our day in Kutna Hora saw us visiting the impressive Cathedral before getting the train to the next village (Kutna Hora—Sedlec) to visit the Church of Bones. Nobody was prepared for what we saw! Have a look and decide for yourself—all 'structures' are made entirely of human bones.





**There was even a family coat
of arms made of bones! -
yuk.....**





Alistair and Jack waiting for the train home.



CURLING...

The Kolibrus Cup allocates prize money to the top few teams so it attracted some national curling teams. Our first game was against Hungary and we became suspicious of serious play when we saw the Hungarians doing extreme warm up exercises at the side of the ice—I mean, some of them were doing press ups!. As normal, Lanark took it all in our stride and we stepped over the Hungarian National Team to step onto the ice wearing our Scottish Bunnets! Everybody loved our attire and the games were played in great fun and enjoyment. After playing the Hungarians we played against a young Czech team who were heading for the European Championships. They asked if we were playing in the Europeans—"no, not this time" was our reply!

Prague has a lovely new ice rink—here are more pictures to help present the scene.



Entrance to the Ice Rink (above).

Wilson enjoying an ice cream in the viewing gallery of the ice rink.



Inside the ice rink—a 4 sheeter.



Everybody knew who were the Scots!

The young Czech team



Some interesting Prague facts.

1. Our Vice President, Alistair, travelled to Prague with a bag weighing 7.8 kgs. Alistair states he always travels lights but, wow, that is some extra weight allowance you gain Margaret each time you go on holiday with hubby!
2. Alistair is a keen cook and decided that a pasta meal we had planned for an evening required some 'spicing up'. He went and bought the necessary ingredients and we thoroughly enjoyed the meal he prepared. We enjoyed his culinary skills.
3. Our rather spacious apartment in Prague contained 11 single beds.
4. Wilson is a great holiday guide—we simply took the easy option and tagged on like a little class. He even gave us a grammatical quiz to undertake during the week.
5. Everybody we met at the curling was extremely friendly and made us feel welcome. They enjoyed having us visit their country and we were delighted to reunite our acquaintance with the Czech girls that we met at Edinburgh.
6. Wencelas Square is really a rectangle.

Prague is a beautiful city and we leave you now with some pictures of the city.....

We hope that you have enjoyed our account of this visit.

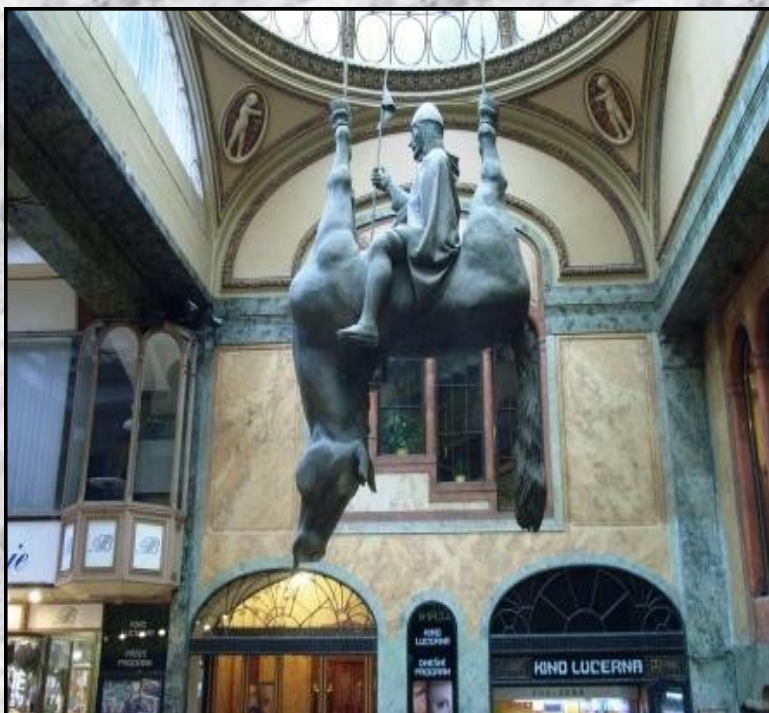
From

Anne, Jack, Alistair and Wilson





Lanark members picking up their trophies after winning their Section at the International Gathering in 2011. Above pictures show our Czech friends—yes, they curl in mini skirts as well as drink pints!



An interesting suspended statue inside one of the shopping malls in Prague.





Interesting water fountains.....

“Rarely have I seen such an expression of delight” - Wilson.



These ‘babies’ were also attached to the huge TV transmitter in Prague making it an interesting viewing point.

“Look behind you, Jack”.....



Wencelas Square at night.

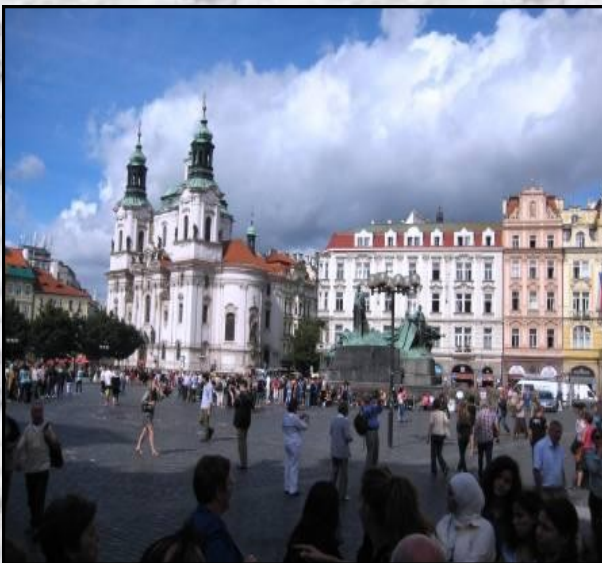


**Inside one of the
Art Nouveau pubs.**





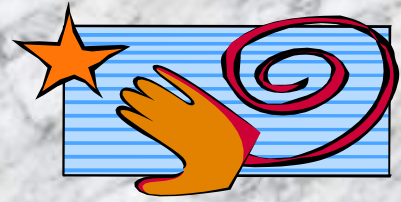
Perhaps the trams will run in Edinburgh one day!!



Some of the beautiful buildings.
Alistair enjoying a soup bread bowl.



In-Turns Events



INTERNATIONAL GATHERING—MURRAYFIELD.

Lanark has again been invited to attend the above competition on 23, 24 and 25th March 2012. Some members have already shown interest but if you wish to participate then please contact the Secretary asap.

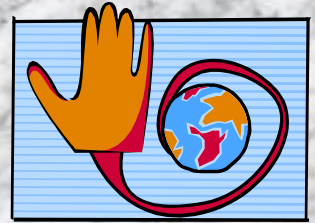
Prize-Giving - March

Remember to keep Friday 30 March free in your diaries for the annual prize-giving and end-of-season event. The event will, once again, be held in The Popinjay hotel.



Pick-Ups

Members' Snippits



NEW GRANDCHILDREN have arrived.

Sandra and Keith have a new grand-daughter.

Bill and Lillas Tennant have a new grand-daughter.

Hugh has a new grandson.



CONGRATULATIONS.



Happy Birthday to Tom Steele who celebrates a special birthday in March.

CONGRATULATIONS to Richard Gray and Wilson Heatlie who were selected for the RCCC Canadian tour next year.

Also going to Canada in the Rotarian Canadian Tour are Alistair Mackintosh and Bill Jackson.

We hope your livers will cope with the experience lads! Great curling.....



