

## **'Fast Forward' to Nottingham**

*A weekend well spent at the 2001 NWR National Conference,  
by Helen Dougal, Falkirk and District group*

We travelled to the conference in comfort and style.  
In Danielle's car we chatted as drove on mile by mile.  
We registered at ten to four, got keys and rooms and beds  
And then at the appointed hour went over to be fed.

The food was nice, the hall was fine although a little cold  
And the evening's entertainment took a long time to unfold.  
A 60's quiz in many parts, then a wonderful dance band  
Got many ladies waltzing- twisting- jiving hand in hand.  
Too tired to stay we went away to sleep with satisfaction  
Next morning ate our breakfast and went to find the action.

The lecture hall was far away and rainy was the weather  
But some of us still did the hike and had a little blether.  
But – the campus is a hilly one, thankfully for us,  
If we didn't want to walk there was provided a free bus.  
A little late we all filed in and the conference began  
With a welcome from the infamous Sheriff of Nottingham.

Jean Townsend then addressed us and talked for quite a while  
On the antics of our royalty: Queen Victoria made us smile.  
It seems the Queen was quite sex mad (she had nine kids of course)  
And poor old tired Albert was considering divorce.

The lecturing continued with a talk on body mass  
Which some considered interesting while other thought it crass.  
But. like or not, the facts are there – they're plain to see  
The nation's getting far too fat – it's called obesity.

After that we went for tea, discussion (and a biscuit!),  
Asked lots of questions on return then lunch before we missed it.  
Time is short in which to feed so many of the stalwart  
Again the buses waited for we ladies to 'fast forward'.  
A look at stalls and notice boards – new posters to procure.  
A visit to the ladies loos our comfort to ensure.

Back inside the lecture hall Erin Pizzey had begun  
To tell us her life story – a very troubled one,  
Yet from abused beginnings, feminist thought and caring need  
Had sprung up something special and very good indeed.  
When at first it opened up response to it was huge.  
Of what is it I am speaking? – a battered wives' refuge.  
Talking about relationships and how they look today  
She said she really thought and hoped marriage was here to stay,  
But, wed or not, if partners shared and communicated better  
The partnership was often strong and marriage didn't matter.

More coffee and a toilet stop before important business –  
Our AGM – boring or not, would anybody miss this?  
Reports and presentations to retiring Trustee faces

And welcome introductions to the ones taking their places.  
The membership being stable, no extra subs to pay,  
Discussion was conducted in an amicable way.

Quick march again, this time to shower and dress in something finer,  
Then a raffle, punch, tombola before heading to the diner.  
Conference dinner? – nothing special but the speaker, Frankie Janes',  
Enthralled us with her verses – she really has got brains  
To make up all those ditties about things from everyday  
And recite them to an audience in such a humorous way.  
With wine on hand freely supplied and care gone to the dogs  
We thoroughly enjoyed her 'Marvellous Monologues'.  
More drinks for some and much more talk on many different matters  
Then back to halls – tiptoe upstairs avoiding noisy clatter.

A sunny start to Sunday morn, another busy day –  
An early breakfast for some girls so's they could get away  
To go on walks around the town, an interesting place  
With canal, castle, Robin Hood and of course the famous lace.  
Workshops galore for many more, something for everyone –  
Pilates, Tai Chi, graphology, Wine Tasting, Depression,  
Many more I can't recall - things to learn to do or make –  
And, before our speaker was to start, another coffee break.

For those with time another chance to look at all the stalls  
Which in the foyer near the hall were laid out round the walls.  
Books, cards, fine lace and jewellery, toys, plants (no Boots to spy!)  
For loved ones left at home or just for us to satisfy.

The speaker started in the hall by filling us with joy –  
He reassured us that he had not stall set out in the foyer!  
Robert Holland, an undertaker, is with a company  
Dealing with mass death with respect and dignity.  
The company, called Kenyon, is waiting in the wings  
To deal with air disasters and other frightful things.  
They pick up all the bodies, child or adult, he or she,  
And, using many methods, restore identity.  
Then taking care they make repairs and often it can be  
They send a body homewards fit for family to see.  
The job is sad, conditions bad, but very necessary  
To give a family back someone to mourn and then to bury.

Next were slides of the many sides of Guildford we will see  
If we sign up for the conference in that 'colourful' city.  
Another year to pass and time to save for the expense  
Of the 2002 NWR National Conference.

Once more to eat and friends to meet before our last address,  
A very worthwhile speaker if your garden's in a mess.  
A man who really knows his plants, and know just where to place them,  
A master of garden design, his name was Alan Mason.  
He showed us slide, he gave us tips and much more information,  
(and if we need his services he'll give us a quotation).  
A lighter note on which to end, out from the hall we all poured  
I only wish I had the power to Guildford to fast forward!

Another tired committee travelled home, a job well done.  
I'd like to give them all our thanks – to each and every one  
Who's striven for eighteen months our pleasure to secure.  
You did marvellous job this year, of that please be assured.  
No doubt there will be some complaints. It always is the case.  
Some don't like the speakers, food, the halls or just the place.  
Things do go wrong – something backfires – however much you rue it.  
To need less moaners I'd just say 'Get off **your** butt and do it!'