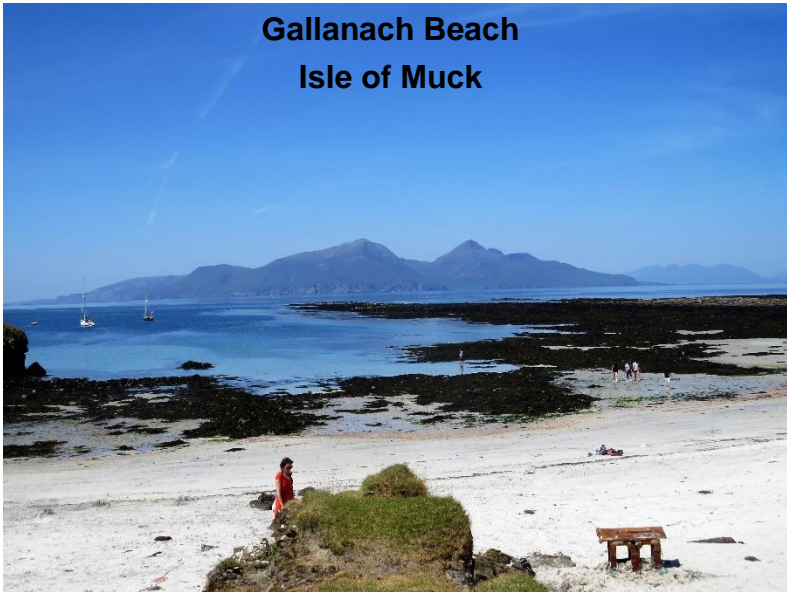




# The Chanter



**Gallanach Beach  
Isle of Muck**

## Newsletter

### September 2021



## The Nottingham Scottish Association

Honorary Patron Sir Andrew Buchanan Bt. KCVO KStJ

[www.nottinghamscottish.org](http://www.nottinghamscottish.org)

## The Old Tongue

When I was eight, I was forced south.

Not long after, when I opened  
my mouth, a strange thing happened.

I lost my Scottish accent.

Words fell off my tongue:

*eedyit, dreich, wabbit, crabbit*

*stummer, teuchter, heidbanger,*

*so you are, so am ur, see you, see ma ma,*

*shut yer geggie or I'll gie you the malkie!*

My own vowels started to stretch like my bones

and I turned my back on Scotland.

Words disappeared in the dead of night,

new words marched in: ghastly, awful,

quite dreadful, *scones* said like *stones*.

*Pokey hats* into ice cream cones.

Oh where did all my words go -

my old words, my lost words?

Did you ever feel sad when you lost a word,

did you ever try and call it back

like calling in the sea?

If I could have found my words wandering,

I swear I would have taken them in,

swallowed them whole, knocked them back.

Out in the English soil, my old words

buried themselves. It made my mother's blood boil.

I cried one day with the wrong sound in my mouth.

I wanted them back; I wanted my old accent back,

my old tongue. My dour soor Scottish tongue.

Sing-songy. I wanted to *gie it laldie*.

**Jackie Kay**

*Darling: New & Selected Poems* ([Bloodaxe Books](#), 2007)  
by permission of the publisher.

## President's Page



It is a pleasure and an honour to send you greetings in my first Chanter as President.

On behalf of the Council and the members, I would like to thank Don for his sterling work, especially as he was President for an unprecedented three years. We have enjoyed the quiz nights which he and Sue have masterminded and which helped to keep us going when

we couldn't meet in person. We still have his President's night to look forward to.

I'd like to introduce myself to those of you who don't already know me. I didn't have the luck to be born in Scotland, but I count myself a Scot by marriage.

My first of many visits to Scotland was to see Scotland beat England at Murrayfield in 1972 and I have been a Scotland supporter ever since. When I say "see", I didn't see much of the action as I was not tall enough to look over the heads of the crowd, but the atmosphere was terrific.

These days, we make many trips to Scotland every year and still have plenty of family there, many in enviable locations. I am a lover of countryside and wildlife and Scotland has many fine animals and birds to admire, but I have still to learn to love midges, clegs and ticks!

I spent much of my working life at Boots head office in Beeston. I worked on IT projects in Taiwan, Thailand and Hong Kong, but as my job was on the computer, I never made it to anywhere more exotic than another building on site.

Before I took up programming, I spent a little time teaching. My students in Brunei were delightful and I found it rather more testing returning to teach in the UK. Fortunately, our Scottish Country Dancers are easier to work with than some of my Maths classes.

Like many other members, I have thoroughly enjoyed our return to group walks and, of course, lunches. Now I'm looking forward to restarting Scottish Country Dancing and our wonderful Burns Night and St. Andrew's dinner dances.

I hope to meet many of you there.

**Sue Morrison**

## John Rawson

We are sad to inform members of the death of John Rawson, a good friend of the Association. John, with his wife Anne, regularly attended Association dinner dances. Our condolences go to his family.

### From the Editor

Taking over the Chanter from Christine has given me an appreciation of just how good a job she (and her predecessors) did! The Chanter depends on your contributions, so many thanks to all those who provided material for this edition. Do keep them coming!

You can email them to me at [chanter@nottinghamscottish.org](mailto:chanter@nottinghamscottish.org).

**Andrew Morrison**

### Attenborough Nature Reserve Walk

**19<sup>th</sup> May 2021.**



A bumper crop of 25 members took part in a morning walk round Attenborough Nature Reserve followed by lunch at the Corn Mill pub.

The weather forecast had looked decidedly unpromising but the day turned out to be so warm and sunny that jackets and coats were removed!

Everyone was so happy to see each other again after such a long time and it was lovely to see old friends and familiar faces and catch up with what we'd all been doing (not a lot obviously during lockdown!)

Dave Potter had kindly arranged a 4.5 mile walk around the reserve or, for those who didn't want to do the full walk, the opportunity to leave the walk after 2 miles and meet up with the rest of us later for lunch.

The birds were singing; the hawthorn trees were in full bloom; the ducks and geese had plenty of babies for us to admire and, as it was a weekday, there was a happy lack of cyclists and joggers to avoid!

We had all worked up an appetite for our lunch (probably due to all the talking more than all the walking) and continued our conversations over a very good value meal (and lovely puddings!) at The Corn Mill.

We all agreed that we're looking forward to when we can all get together again for another lovely social occasion.

**Elinor Fisher**

"Lady emails Weightwatchers...

Dear Weightwatchers,

Is it really true that I have to have cookies to use your website?"

With thanks to Rosie Allen.

## Lowdham Walk 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021



On Thursday 12<sup>th</sup>. of August I managed to negotiate the tortuous route through the centre of Nottingham and on to Lowdham. I arrived in good time to meet up with 18 intrepid walkers.

We placed our orders for lunch before setting off behind our leader Dieter. His first task was to guide us safely across a very busy dual carriageway by bravely standing in the middle of the road to hold up the traffic! We soon got away from the hurly burly of the traffic and enjoyed a walk through fields and wooded pathways.

We passed some stunning mansions, a beautiful Church and ventured through a field of curious cattle. The weather was perfect for walking and the company convivial as usual.

After a walk of 4 miles we arrived back at the Magna Charter for a well earned lunch. We were able to sit outside to enjoy a fine good value lunch and a welcome drink. Thanks must go to Dieter for organising what was a very enjoyable walk.

**Sid Pritchett**





*New-found friends!*



*A well-earned meal!*

## Bothy Nights

“There’s a bothy directly ahead,” said Paul, “-no wild camping for us tonight; it’ll be much more comfortable!”

That’s great, I thought. We had been more than a bit cramped together in our two-man [-person!] tent, although the strenuous hike over Rannoch Moor and points beyond from Corrour railway station on day 1 had ensured that we slept quite soundly, nonetheless.



*Meanach Bothy 1975 and 2017*

On that walk to Fort William via Ben Nevis in the spring of 2017 we only made that one bothy stop; otherwise we were bedding down under canvas amidst the superb Highland scenery. It was Meanach Bothy that sheltered us on that May night and little did I realise at the time that I’d stayed there many years earlier. Photo 1 shows Meanach as it was in October 1975, and it’s thanks to my research for writing this article that I’ve at last linked the two occasions.

I’ve been enamoured of mountain bothying from the very start, although my appetite for doing more of it has been far from satisfied to date.





Paul, my expert camping friend, and I spent a night of restful slumber on Meanach's sleeping platform after eating our fill of the ready meal that Paul had heated up in the bothy's kitchen area on his stove. We had the place completely to ourselves.

42 years previously I'd been staying in that same place with a hiking party made up of the ten members of the Outdoor Education course from the Plas-y-Brenin Mountaineering Centre in North Wales. We were spending a week en route between Fort William and Aviemore and ascending the 4000-foot summits along the way, from Ben Nevis to the Cairngorms.

According to my logbook, we camped out for 3 nights and stayed in bothies for another three, at Meanach, Corrour and Culra. Arthur, our group instructor and leader, had prepared us thoroughly for the expedition and in our backpacks we were carrying all the necessary equipment and food supplies for those 7 days in the hills. My memories of the bothy stopovers are especially fond ones. It was so sociable and such fun. We could sit together far out in the

countryside and have our meals in the candle-lit space of a characterful local stone house. Sometimes there were other hikers sitting among us and sharing their often humorous tales of adventure 'out on the road'.

At Culra, as I recall, I gathered handfuls of blooming heather and spread it, mattress-like, beneath my sleeping bag. A mischievous guy in our party stepped outside late at night into the moonlight and acted as if he were the ghost of a long-departed ghillie. The Ben Alder cottage bothy nearby was said to be haunted by a similar spectre. "Ha ha ha!" he chortled, "I've scared the ladies!"

Camusunary Bay at the southern end of the Isle of Skye was the place for my other great stay in a bothy. That was in May 2006 and I was accompanied by Paul, again, and another adventurous friend, Michael. Due to problems with its maintenance, it has recently been replaced with a new building on a neighbouring site (1 km. distant). Arriving there in the afternoon we were fortunate to find our three spaces in what was clearly a popular and much-visited bothy. We soon got down to the task of collecting fuel to burn in the fireplace of the main living room in anticipation of quite a chilly night; snow was still lying on the upper slopes of the Black Cuillin overlooking the bay.

As we scoured the shore for driftwood, we enjoyed the fine views over the sea to the hills of Rum and Eigg and also, on our left, to Elgol on the most southerly coast of Skye. On the beach we came across the remnants of a wooden crate that was marked with the details of a New York manufacturer – wow! What a long ocean voyage it had made to get here!

At 8 a.m. the next day we set off on a lengthy and enchanting hiking trail that took us from Camusunary up into the Cuillin and returned us, quite exhausted, to the bothy in time to settle down to sleep at 2 a.m. Our first destination was Loch Coruisk and the route took us along the hillsides above the sea loch Scavaig. "We're coming to the Bad Step, lads," said Paul, "so make sure that your rucksacks are firmly fastened."



*The Bad Step*

Here's a Scottish hillwalker's recent description of that feature: 'The Step is a rock slab that drops straight into the sea, where an overhang forces you to scramble out onto a shelf and along a rising crack' (Photo 2). As we tiptoed our way along that crack we tried not to keep looking down at the waves lapping the shore some 40 feet below and joking was strictly forbidden – that wasn't the place to be shaking with laughter (but with fear, perhaps yes). We made it safely across the Step and then enjoyed a day of spectacular walking, scrambling, sliding about on scree slopes and other fun. However....

On the return journey we reached the Bad Step late at night. Negotiating its crossing in the darkness would be done while wearing head torches. I said that I'd rather do it in daylight and wanted to spend the night in my survival bag tucked under a boulder on the hillside but my companions weren't in favour of that (too risky for an old guy like me). So I entrusted my valuables to



Michael to carry them across the Step for me in case I should ever plummet into the waves; he's 20 years younger than me (I'd never let him have my wallet under normal circumstances, never!). Surprisingly, crossing the Step was less formidable at night, mainly because I could concentrate on the vital bits, illuminated as they were by that focused beam of light, instead of being distracted and alarmed by the view of the sea below.



*David with Paul and Michael at Camasunary Old Bothy, 2006*





At breakfast the next morning we shared out stories of the hike with some of the other residents of the bothy before setting off for another gorgeous walk along to Glen Sligachan. The highlight of that outing was the chance it gave us to watch two golden eagles circling over the Cuillin slopes. On that last night in the bothy we shared a splendid meal before sleeping the sleep of the just in the warmth spreading out from the embers in the hearth. I pay my sincere tribute to the Mountain Bothy Association and its volunteers who continue to sustain those buildings, to the immense benefit of their users.

David Chapman

## Highland Honours



Those who are regular attenders at the Nottingham Scottish Burns Night celebrations will be familiar with the custom of a toast with Highland Honours. It appears, however, to be a rather less fearsome custom than it used to be. The passage below is taken

from the 'Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character' written by Dean Ramsay in 1857:

"Sometimes certain toasts were accompanied by Highland Honours. This was a very exciting, and to a stranger a somewhat alarming, proceeding.

I recollect my astonishment the first time I witnessed the ceremony – the company, from sitting quietly drinking their wine, seemed to assume the attitude of harmless maniacs, allowed to amuse themselves. The moment the toast was given, and proposed to be drunk with Highland Honours, the gentlemen all rose, and with one foot on their chair and another on the table, they drank the toast with Gaelic shrieks, which were awful.

I am indebted to the kindness of the Reverend Duncan Campbell for the form used on such occasions. Here it is in the Gaelic and the Saxon:

'So!' (Prepare!)

'Nish! Nish!' (Now! Now!)

'Sud ris! Sud ris!' (Yon again! Yon again!),

'Nish! Nish!',

'Thig ris! Thig ris!' (At it again! At it again!),

'A on uair eile!' (One cheer more!).

The reader is to imagine these words uttered with yells and vociferations, and accompanied with frantic gestures."

That must have been some dinner!

## Andrew Morrison



**The Clyde Puffer** was once the lifeline of the Western Highlands and Islands, bringing all manner of supplies from central Scotland. This immaculately restored example now carries tourists and steam enthusiasts!

## Dates for Your Diary:

**Friday 3rd September:** Dancing restarts. (Subject to confirmation)

**Wednesday 8th September.** Walk. Rushcliffe Country Park. Details from Dave Chapman (0115 9232763) and here.

**Saturday 9th October:** President's Night. Details to follow.

**Tuesday 12th October.** Walk. Baslow. To be confirmed. Details to follow.

**Saturday 27th November:** St. Andrew's Night Dinner and Ceilidh. Details to follow.

**Saturday 22nd January:** Burns Night Dinner and Ceilidh. Details to follow.



*Edinburgh Castle from Arthur's Seat*

## **From the "Scottish Women's Rural Institutes Cookery Book" (1960)**

These bits of advice and pithy sayings were found and submitted in a book belonging to my mother. What they were doing in a cookery book, I have no idea!

"Ladies who wish to keep their spouses  
Content and happy in their houses,  
Must learn that food to be a blessing  
Must not be ruined in the dressing.  
It's very nice to be good looking,  
But that will not excuse bad cooking;  
And men have got such funny natur's,  
They'll judge you by your beef and 'taters  
So if you want to rule and lead them,  
You'll do it if you nicely feed them."

"Copy the kettle; though up to the neck in hot water it  
still continues to sing."

"It's not what we hae, but what we dae wi' what we  
hae, that counts."

"Never pick a quarrel, even when it's ripe."

"Do what you can, being what you are;  
Shine like a glow-worm if you can't be a star."

(A second helping from the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes will appear in December's Chanter. Ed)

**Elinor Fisher**



## The Makar

‘Makar’ is a word used to describe a poet writing mainly in the Scots language. It came into use during the Scottish renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, particularly during the reign of James IV (1488-1513). The Makars included a number of notable poets of whom William Dunbar is the best known example.

The term ‘Makar’ was revived in 2004 when the Scottish Parliament used it for the newly-created position of National Poet for Scotland.



The current Makar is Jackie Kay. Jackie was born in Edinburgh to a Scottish mother and Nigerian father. She was subsequently adopted by a Scottish couple and brought up in Bishopbriggs, a suburb of Glasgow. She is a widely published poet, novelist and playwright. She was appointed as the third modern Makar in 2016, following Liz Lochhead. She was awarded an MBE in 2006.

Her poem, ‘The Old Tongue’, was written for Carol Ann Duffy, her partner at the time. Carol Ann Duffy, who became Poet Laureate in 2009, was born in Scotland but moved to England as a child. The poem is a lament for her lost accent. You can hear Jackie’s recital of the poem at <https://poetryarchive.org/poet/jackie-kay> .

The poem is reproduced by kind permission of the publisher, Bloodaxe Books ([www.bloodaxebooks.com](http://www.bloodaxebooks.com) )

## THE COUNCIL 2021/22

### Office holders

<b>President</b>	<b>Sue Morrison</b> <a href="mailto:president@nottinghamscottish.org">president@nottinghamscottish.org</a>
<b>Past President</b>	<b>Don Pringle</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Dave Chapman</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Margaret Barnes</b> <a href="mailto:secretary@nottinghamscottish.org">secretary@nottinghamscottish.org</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Ann Widdowson</b> <a href="mailto:treasurer@nottinghamscottish.org">treasurer@nottinghamscottish.org</a>
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	<b>Rosie Allen</b> <a href="mailto:members@nottinghamscottish.org">members@nottinghamscottish.org</a>

### Members

**Norma Smith**

**Jan Chapman**

**Marian Pierce**

**Sylvia Hale**