



# The Chanter



## Newsletter

September 2022



**The Nottingham Scottish Association**

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

# Bright is the Ring of Words

Bright is the ring of words  
When the right man rings them,  
Fair the fall of songs  
When the singer sings them.  
Still they are carolled and said -  
On wings they are carried -  
After the singer is dead  
And the maker is buried.

Low as the singer lies  
In the field of heather,  
Songs of his fashion bring  
The swains together.  
And when the west is red  
With the sunset embers,  
The lover lingers and sings  
And the maid remembers.

**By Robert Louis Stevenson**

*(See p19)*

## President's Page



We have had a busy few months since the last Chanter came out in June. After the fickle weather at our Queen's Diamond Jubilee Garden party, when we set everything up outside just in time for the rain, the weather really was good for our Garden Dance.

The lawn looked more like a desert and crunched a bit underfoot, but we enjoyed the dancing, sat outside for the food - and weren't eaten alive by mosquitos!

Andrew and I had a lovely trip to Scotland for a family Golden Wedding celebration in Dunkeld, a lovely little town on the banks of the River Tay. After that, we spent a few days in the Trossachs, an ambition of mine for a long time.

We didn't have time to take a cruise on Loch Katrine, but did have a lovely walk along the shore and had lunch in the scenic café. It is a beautiful area and we had several more walks in the countryside surrounding Callander. We actually saw a little more of Callander than we planned as a major road closure on our route back from Fort William sent us on a long diversion through the town!

We had another beautiful afternoon for Don's postponed President's evening when there was a terrific turn-out and we enjoyed the company of many of our members. Don and Sue certainly know how to put on a good spread.

I am looking forward to starting to learn Gaelic in September with Alasdair Baxter and quite a few of our members. I'm also looking forward to the Petanque which Rosie Allen is organising for us with a friend who can instruct us in the art.

There is plenty for us all to enjoy with the dancing restarting, a quiz evening, the St. Andrew's Night and the Christmas lunch and walk, and that is just in the next few months.

Finally, a plea!

Our membership numbers have been slowly declining for many years, so do try to spread the word among Scots and anyone interested in Scotland. We are producing some flyers so let us know if you can find a good place to publicise our association. The more members we have the more we can do and that means more fun for all of us.

Please help us in building up our membership.

**Sue Morrison**

# **St. Andrew's Night Dinner and Cèilidh**

**Saturday 26th November 7.30-11.30pm**

Masonic Hall, Goldsmith St. Nottingham

The Nottingham Scottish Association invites you to an evening of dinner, dancing and revelry in honour of our Patron Saint! Three Course Dinner and a Cèilidh with a caller.

A good time is guaranteed!

**Tickets: £30.**

**Access by tram or bus. Free parking.**

Tickets from Margaret

Tel: 0115 9204463

email: [secretary@nottinghamscottish.org](mailto:secretary@nottinghamscottish.org).

**Please bring your friends and support this event!**

## From the Editor

Thanks to those who have contributed with words, photos and ideas. It is your Chanter, so please do continue to support it by continuing to contribute.

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

**Andrew**

### Dates for Your Diary

**Thursday 1st September:** Scottish Country Dancing resumes. St Andrews with Castle Gate Church. 7.00pm

**Monday 5th September:** Nottingham University Campus Walk and Lunch. Details on website. Contact Teresa Allen.

**Wednesday 28th September:** Stoke Bardolph Walk and Lunch. Details to follow. Contact Gail Mitchell.

**Tuesday 4th October:** Petanque morning. 10.00am. Details to follow.

**Saturday 8th October:** Quiz Night. Details to follow.

**November:** Walk and Lunch. Date and Details to follow. Contact Dieter Hecht.

**Saturday 26th November:** St. Andrew's Day Dinner and Dance. Nottingham Masonic Hall. 7.30pm

**Wednesday 7th December:** Christmas Lunch and Walk.

**Thursday 15th December:** Scottish Country Dance Party Night. To be Confirmed

*The programme is available to view at [www.nottinghamscottish.org](http://www.nottinghamscottish.org) and will be updated when further details are available. Watch this space!*

## Oxton Walk, 16th June 2022



On a sunny June morning Helen Beeby was an expert guide for our group of six as we went on a 4½-mile walk along hill paths, across fields and through beautiful mixed woodland in a former mining area to the northeast of Nottingham.

The weather was kind to us; warm but not too hot and the walking was very easy with only very minor undulation and almost entirely off-road taking a circular route through the countryside for around 4.5 miles.

We soon crossed to fields and forests owned by Oxton Estates. Gamekeepers leave the bracken and foliage to give good ground cover for pheasants and partridges to nest.

On the northern side of the path we could see the private wood where Red Kites nest. These birds are frequently seen and heard gliding over the area but were not seen on the walk. There are trees favoured by owls and birds of prey. That reminded Dave of his only previous (winter) excursion close to Oxton, when he had watched an ornithologist based on a local farm showing off his awesome collection of falcons, harriers and a Siberian steppe

eagle. The eagle must have felt quite at home that January in the snowy landscape!

The next phase took us up through the Watchwood Plantation which has many paths and biking trails.



The Polish Cross Memorial marks the spot of a fatal air crash in October 1940. Polish bomber aircraft returning from France could not land as the airfield was blacked-out as under attack.

Crews had to make forced landings when fuel ran low and one Fairey Battle crashed in Watchwood Plantation, killing the crew.

It was touching to see how well the memorial to the Polish airmen, who sadly died there, was looked after. The surrounding area was completely overgrown and it was difficult to imagine a plane coming down there.

We were walking close to the site of the Calverton colliery when members of our group began chatting enthusiastically about the BBC TV drama series 'Sherwood', set during the years following the 1984-85 miners' strike.

It was filmed in and around Annesley and Newstead, i.e. very close to our route that day with Helen. It was enthralling to watch the series subsequently whilst enjoying the familiarity of the setting, thanks to Helen's walk. So much of the action in 'Sherwood' takes place outside in that landscape of hills, fields and woods!

The route back to Oxton took us past lakes, across a field of poppies and through woodland again, and then past the village church.





Our final photo shoot happened courtesy of the barmaid at the Admiral Rodney pub in Calverton where we met up after a short car ride. She stood on a nearby table to take our group picture. It was lovely, as ever, to have the time to converse and to learn so much more about our Scottish connections and other life events that can bind us more closely.



A Group of Happy Walkers!

The walk finished with a very enjoyable lunch at the pub in the adjacent village of Calverton.

Alastair reports that the bacon and egg roll went down a treat, as did the beer!

**Text and Photos: Dave Chapman, Alastair Newton and Helen Beeby**



## Garden Dance, 8th July 2022



It is two years since we have felt able to hold our annual garden dance, so it was a great pleasure to be able invite members and friends from Beeston U3A to join us this year.

Happily, the weather behaved itself perfectly – a beautiful summer evening. The evening began with a selection of familiar dances: Granville Market, Miss Gibson's Strathspey and other favourites. Naturally we finished with Mairi's Wedding!





After the final 'Big Circle' we moved on to our feast! With our appetites duly whetted, we dug into the wonderful spread provided by all our guests. With a cup of tea or a glass of wine, we then returned to the garden for another hour or two of catching up with friends.

As the light gradually faded, it was time for our guests to head for home and for us to reflect on how much we enjoyed the evening. We'll look forward to doing it again next year!

**Sue and Andrew Morrison**

### **Congratulations...!**

... to Stephen Stagg, his son Duncan and daughter Charlotte who have received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QVAS) in the Jubilee Honours List. This is for services to scouting in Nottinghamshire. It has a status equivalent to an MBE.

## Walk and Buffet Meal, Thursday 4th August

On a beautiful Summer's day, a large number of the NSA members met in Trowell for a walk and a buffet meal to celebrate and to thank Don Pringle for being our past President.

Being such a lovely day, it was a little too warm for some members to do the walk, but as always there were others who decided to venture out.



The intrepid dozen, led by Don himself, set off just after 1.45 and went along the canal in Trowell which actually provided quite a few areas of shade and also some sightings of the local nature ( I mean birds!!) We saw loads of ducks, some coots, a really cute family of moorhens and, of course, passed other walkers.

It was a circular walk of approximately 3 miles and at one stage we had to time our walk across a field which was being combined with the usual harvester, creating huge plumes of dust. We waited until the combine turned away from us and went up the incline to the other area of the canal.



We all made it without getting a faceful of dust, but on our way back, the combine got its revenge, as it suddenly was on the other side of the hedge, so we did arrive back at Don and Sue's slightly dusty, but delighted to have a cool drink and a seat for our slightly weary limbs! (We are all over 21 remember!)



Please join us on future Walks, as it's a great chance to catch up with everyone and have a good old chinwag!



*(See the upcoming programme of walks- and other events - on p5 of this newsletter. Ed)*



With many thanks to Don and Sue for their hospitality and excellent catering – and to Don for his extended stint as President.

**Lyndsey Lyas**

# The Midges

A song by Kenneth McKellar



The midges, the midges, I'm no  
gonnae kid ye's,  
The midges is really the limit,  
Wi teeth like pirhanas, they  
drive ye bananas,  
If ye let them get under yer  
simmit!\*

The Lord put the Garden of Eden on earth,  
And it's north of the Tweed, we believe,  
Ay, Scotland's the place, and the whole human race,  
Started off with MacAdam and Eve!  
In six days or under, he finished this wonder,  
Except for the Forth and Tay Bridges,  
Then always a bloke for a practical joke,  
He made Scotland the home of the midges!

Back in 1314, the proud Edward was keen,  
To take Scotland into his care,  
But he made a U-turn when he reached Bannockburn,  
Just a few weeks before Glasgow Fair!  
For the midges let loose by King Robert the Bruce,  
Straight into the English they tore,  
So they ran off in tears, and for six hundred years,  
They've been blocking the A74!



Now never forget, when the sun's going to set,  
And the midges arise on Loch Eck,  
Like the vampires you see, played by Christopher Lee,  
They will give you a pain in the neck!  
You can smack them and whack them; in vain you'll attack them,  
For they know every move that you make,  
If you manage to kill yin, another half million,  
Are ready tae come tae the wake!

Now Torquil the piper's a giant of a man,  
With a sporran as long as your arm,  
And in Oban he's known, for the sound of his drone,  
And a pibroch of real highland charm!  
But they're sighing and sobbing, the ladies of Oban,  
For Torquil is not what he was,  
Since a midge in Glenbranter got hold of his chanter,  
And carried it off in its jaws!

The midges, the midges, I'm no gonnae kid ye's,  
The midges is really the limit,  
Wi teeth like pirhanas, they drive ye bananas,  
If ye let them get under yer simmit!

You can watch Kenneth McKellar's stirring version [here](#).  
(\* A Simmit is an undergarment – usually a vest.)



**Thanks to Bill Dall for  
drawing our attention to  
this wee gem of Scottish  
culture!**

# The Battle of Highbridge



It is 17th August 1745. Prince Charles Edward Stuart has recently landed on Loch nan Uamh and raised his standard at Glenfinnan. The Jacobite Rising has begun!

*Memorial Cairn on Loch nan Uamh*

Most of the British forces are stationed at Fort Augustus at the western end of Loch Ness. The Governor decides to strengthen the garrison at Fort William, which is on the rebels' direct line of march! 85 men under the command of Captain Scott set off for Fort William on General Wade's fine new road (see p18). All goes well until they reach the High Bridge over the gorge of the River Spean.



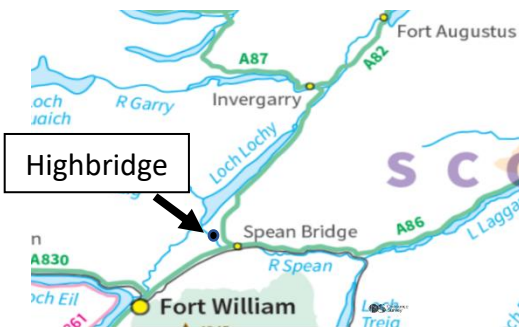
The steep banks of the river can only be crossed by the bridge – and they must cross to reach Fort William. It is a prime spot for an ambush!



Major Donald MacDonald receives news of the advancing redcoats.

He hastily gathers 11 clansmen (and a piper) armed with swords and muskets. They set out to defend the Bridge!

Major MacDonald orders his men to give the impression of a much bigger force. They flit in and out of the cover with highland war cries. The piper moves around so the sound of the pipes seems to come from several different places. Captain Scott is deceived and sends two of his men forward to try and negotiate.



The Jacobites take them both prisoner and Major Scott orders a retreat. This is the signal for the clansmen to open fire on the retreating force from both sides of the road. The redcoats continue to retreat along the shore of Loch Lochy, heading back to Fort Augustus.

Unfortunately for them, they are passing through the lands of MacDonnell of Glengarry who has come out for the rebels! Exhausted by his long march, surrounded, and with some wounded men among them, Major Scott has the choice of surrender or annihilation.

He accepts the inevitable, is taken captive and the 1745 is underway with a morale-boosting first Jacobite victory!

*Highbridge is now a picturesque ruin just about a mile away from the main road bridge on the A82, which largely follows General Wade's Road to Fort Augustus and beyond.*

**Andrew Morrison**

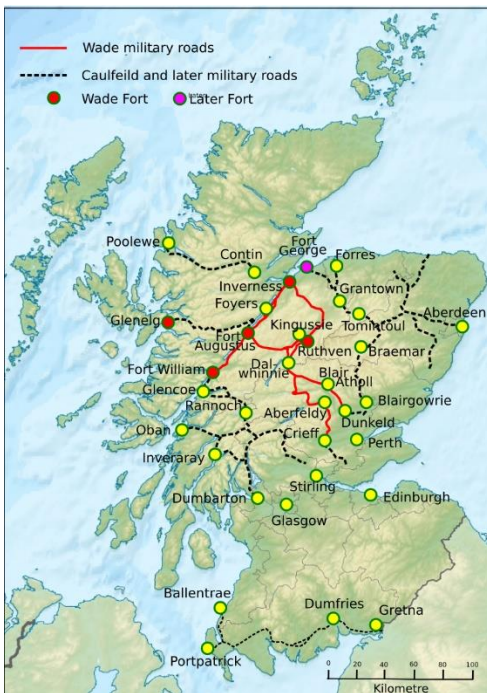
## General Wade's Roads



After the Jacobite rising of 1715, General George Wade was appointed as Commander of British Forces in Scotland.

He rapidly realised that “*more than half of the 22,000 men capable of bearing arms in the Highlands and Islands were ready to create new troubles and rise in arms to favour the Pretender* (James Stuart, the son of James II of England and VII of Scotland).”

As a response to this threat he planned a network of new roads to allow the British Army to travel easily round the Highlands. With the assistance of Major William Caulfeild, he rapidly built many miles of roads linking the major Highland centres south of Inverness.



The roads have been a blessing and a curse for the Highlands.

After Culloden, they enabled the Duke of Cumberland (“the Butcher”) to exact a terrible retribution on the Highland Clans.

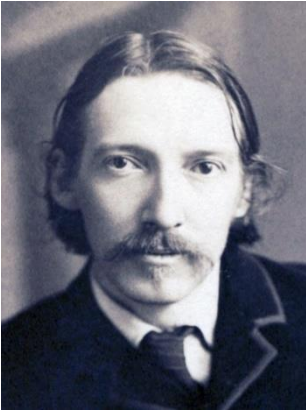
Ultimately this contributed to the destruction of the Highland Clan System and a way of life.

On the other hand...

*Had you seen these roads  
before they were made,  
You would lift up your hands  
and bless General Wade!*



## Robert Louis Stevenson

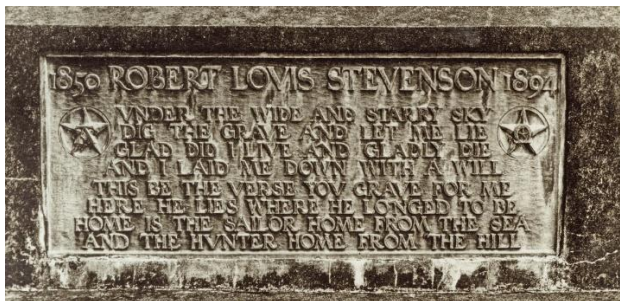


Robert Louis Stevenson was born in Edinburgh in 1850. He was the son of a well-known lighthouse engineer and spent school holidays travelling to all parts of Scotland with his father. He later made use of the knowledge he gained from these trips when he wrote '*Kidnapped*' and other novels based in Scotland.

He was never in good health and suffered periodic bouts of illness. In spite of this, he travelled widely in the United States, spending time in Monterey, San Francisco and surroundings – where there is a State Park named after him.

After marriage to Fanny and further travels in Europe, he set off for the South Pacific and finally settled in Samoa. While there, he became a vocal advocate for the Islanders at a time when Britain and the USA were growing colonial powers in the area.

During his busy life, he wrote a number of best-selling novels – including '*Treasure Island*' and '*The Black Arrow*' as well as short stories and poetry. He died suddenly in 1894.



"Home is the sailor, home from the sea,  
And the hunter, home from the hill."

## THE COUNCIL 2022/23

### 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>
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<b>Membership Secretary</b>	<b>Rosie Allen</b> <a href="mailto:members@nottinghamscottish.org">members@nottinghamscottish.org</a>

### Members

**Norma Smith**

**Jan Chapman**

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