



# The Chanter



*Crail, The East Neuk of Fife*

## Newsletter

**December 2022**



**The Nottingham Scottish Association**

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

# **The Seasons: Winter**

## **by James Thomson**

LO! from the livid East, or piercing North,  
Thick Clouds ascend, in whose capacious Womb,  
A vapoury Deluge lies, to Snow congeal'd:  
Heavy, they roll their fleecy World along;  
And the Sky saddens with th'impending Storm.  
Thro' the hush'd Air, the whitening Shower descends,  
At first, thin-wavering; till, at last, the Flakes  
Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the Day,  
With a continual Flow. See! sudden, hoar'd,  
The Woods beneath the stainless Burden bow,  
Blackning, along the mazy Stream it melts;  
Earth's universal Face, deep-hid, and chill,  
Is all one, dazzling, Waste.

*From 'The Seasons: Winter'*

## From the President



Since the last edition of the Chanter came out in September, we have moved from the end of a warm summer into the dark days of November.

On a personal note, Andrew and I were fortunate enough to have enjoyed a break in California where we were able to visit our daughter and her family for the first time since the start of the pandemic.

The Association has also been busy in that time. Our walks programme has continued, with leadership from a number of our members – to whom go our thanks. These are great opportunities to get together and, for those who do not walk, you are always welcome to join for the post-walk lunch!

Our dancers have been back in action since September although we were severely disrupted by a Covid outbreak among us, forcing us to miss several weeks of dancing. Covid also prevented the continuation of the Gaelic class as Alasdair Baxter, our Gaelic speaker, was also badly affected by Covid. Thankfully, he is now recovered and we hope to be able to resume in the New Year.

Also, for the first time, some of our members enjoyed a morning of pétanque – or ‘boules’ if you prefer! This was courtesy of the Nottingham Pétanque Club.

Our St. Andrew’s Night celebration is also fresh in the memory. As ever, it was a very enjoyable occasion. There will be a fuller report on this in the next edition of the Chanter. The Council is planning a programme for the first half of next year so watch this space – and don’t forget that all the information you need will be on the website!

None of these events takes place without the work put in by those who organise and run them. My thanks, on your behalf, to all who have helped with them.

A very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!

Nollaig Chridheil agus Bliadhna Mhath Ùr!

**Sue**

## 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

*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!*

**Sunday 4th December:** St. Andrew's Day Service at St. Andrew's with Castlegate Church. 11.00am.

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

**Thursday 5th January:** New Year Walk and Lunch

**Saturday 21st January:** Burns Night Dinner and Dance

**Saturday 25th February:** Quiz Night (to be confirmed).



**Kilchurn Castle, Loch Awe**

## Nottingham University Walk, Monday 5th September

Ten members met at the Lakeside for our tour of the Nottingham University Campus, led by our knowledgeable guide, Teresa Allen. She has walked the Campus regularly and has an impressive level of knowledge relating to the beautiful Campus and its wildlife.

Our route initially took us past the Portland Building – surely the grandest Student Union in the land – from where there is a magnificent view of the lake.



After passing the imposing Portland Building we visited a number of the historic buildings which can be found dotted around within the Campus. Teresa was able to tell us about each building as we reached it.







As well as the buildings themselves, there are a number of curiosities to be seen – including fossils embedded in the pavement of the Trent Building and an errant boulder, known as an “erratic”, dropped by a retreating ice sheet.

The tour continued across the open space of ‘the Downs’, through the Millennium Garden and back to the lake. As we walked past the lake, we spotted a terrapin (what was he doing there?) herons and cormorants.



Our final stop was at the Nurseryman for a convivial lunch. Many thanks, Teresa, for such an enjoyable and informative tour.

**Andrew Morrison**

## Pétanque, Tuesday 4th October.

Pétanque? In case you're wondering, pétanque is another name for the French game of Boules. Possibly 'pét-anque' is the sound made when one boule hits another? Or perhaps not!

Anyway, the Nottingham Scottish tried its hand at this sport courtesy of the Nottingham Pétanque Club under the capable instruction of Neil. After learning the rules, it was time to try our hands at the game.



I don't think anyone would claim that we mastered the fine arts of the game but a good time was had by all!



Thanks to Rosie for organising this event and to Neil and the Nottingham City Petanque Club for hosting us.



## Stoke Bardolph Walk, Wednesday 28th September



Now I'm not really a walker.

Despite having been brought up in, and lived in, some of the most scenic parts of Scotland I remain unenthusiastic about strolling, walking, hiking or ambulation in all its pedantic, plodding forms.

So I was doubly surprised to be asked to give an account of a recent NSA walk from Stoke Bardolph, along the Trent to Netherfield Lagoons. Then the penny dropped... this walk was organised by my better half (Gail Mitchell), so the commissioning editor, Sue Morrison 'kent weel' I'd have to deliver!

So here goes: Apologies to Ewan MacColl.\*

Oh it was a fine and a pleasant day  
Out of Bardolph Car Park I was faring,  
As an old codger, on an NSA outing  
I was following shoals of explorers.

Dodging ducks and geese and the fishermen too,  
Trent locks were soon our bearings....

Cough, cough...

Then we walked another four miles and went to the pub!





### **Footnote:**

Gail says this was a triumph of female navigation!

**She set off with ten, returned with ten and naebody fell in!**

The cast (not in order of appearance) was: Sid Pritchett, Teresa Allen, Liz Matthews, Dave Potter, Kate Potter, Gail Mitchell, Steve Sinclair and their friend, John Bennett, Sue Morrison, Andrew Morrison.

We were joined by three extra diners at the Old Ferry Inn who were Isabel and Bob Logan and Hugh Malcolm.

Fit a brow day!

### **Steve Sinclair**

*\*Apologies to Ewen MacColl, indeed! If you want to hear the original you will find it [here](#). Ed.*

## Shipley Park Walk, Tuesday 8th November



The weather gods were on our side today - just a bit of fog and one short shower/drizzle.

10 NSA-members met in the car park of the Newdigate Arms, kitted up, and started the 4.5 mile walk from the pub into Shipley Country Park at 10:30. After about 1 Km 2 walkers left us to make their own way back to the pub which opened at 11:30.

The route took us first down a hill and then along the former railway track, which once linked the Manners Colliery in Ilkeston and the West Hallam Colliery. We then headed uphill towards Mapperley and then back down again past the Mapperley Reservoir. By the way - did I mention that the terrain was undulating?



Further on we reached Derby Lodge tea rooms, unfortunately closed on Tuesdays - so no coffee. We then carried on via Shipley Lane, the Mapperley Reservoir back up to the pub, where we found the 2 early returners who had been joined by 2 non-walkers busy, all sampling a variety of drinks from the drinks menu.

We all enjoyed a tasty lunch at very reasonable prices from the 'Golden Year's menu', before saying good-bye and thank you to Dieter.



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## **Summer 2022 - a Holiday Remembered**

**By Margaret Barnes**

This year we decided we would have a family holiday, but the question was where and when and how far do we want to travel? We also had to find somewhere that would take dogs (we have five between us). My younger daughter Aileen took on the task of searching the internet for somewhere agreeable to all, suitable dates and with accommodation for 11 adults. She spent hours on the internet trying to find something that would suit everyone. She says she is NEVER doing it again!



The biggest problem was finding a week when everyone would be available. We really wanted to go to Scotland, but the choices were mainly far up in the Highlands and not only were they very expensive, it meant a really long journey – not ideal for the dogs, who were going in two cars. A great deal of food, drink and various other necessities would be going in the other two. Quite apart from these problems, everywhere that appealed was fully booked!



Aileen eventually managed to find a large farmhouse with an annexe which would sleep 12 people in North Wales. We had to make a quick decision. The next big discussion came when we had to decide who would cook what on each night. Luckily, we have some very good cooks in the family, so no arm up the back was necessary.

We decided we would do our own things in the daytime and sort out our breakfasts according to what time people got out of bed. Generally we all wanted to be out and about as soon as possible, but there were a couple of occasions when we left my grandson Ewan and Stuart's son Matt behind as they were still in bed, hadn't showered or had breakfast, when the rest of us were itching to explore.

Our destination was about nine miles from the town of Bala in Snowdonia National Park. We were very pleased when we arrived at a beautiful and very old farmhouse and converted barn annexe in quiet surroundings, with enclosed gardens and great views.

While some of us unloaded the cars and chose our bedrooms, my son Andrew and daughter-in-law Themie starting sorting out the meal for our first evening. They had prepared some of it before leaving home, so it wasn't long before an excellent feast was on the table. There are three vegetarians in the family and they too were well catered for. The family decided that as I had been ill, I wouldn't have to take a turn at cooking. I love cooking, but it was lovely to have a break from catering for sometimes up to seventeen people.

My oldest grandson Alexander and his girlfriend joined us for the weekend, but as they only decided to come at the last minute (typical), they had to stay at a B&B because there was no room at the farm.

As usual in our family, things didn't go quite as planned! Eva took ill on the second evening and Alexander had to drive her 40 miles to the nearest A&E! They spent the whole night there, and decided to go home the following day as, in spite of having a scan, the medics didn't seem to know what the problem was, but the poor girl was in agony. They simply advised her to see her G.P. when she got home.



The sun was shining the following morning and we were all keen to make the best of it. Some decided to climb one of the local peaks, others a more sedate walk. I knew Wales had a lot of sheep, but they seemed to be everywhere, which meant the dogs had to be kept on leads a lot of the time. They were remarkably well behaved.

The scenery around us was stunning and very, very green. Proof that it does indeed rain a lot in Wales.

The wild flowers were beautiful, but the bluebells had to get top marks. I have never seen so many since I lived in Oban. The sun shining through the trees made them look like beautiful shimmering sapphire lakes and every country lane was lined with them.



We visited Harlech and spent some time on the beach, but my dog absolutely refused to go in the sea. The following day we tried again.



My son-in-law Rush (his real name is Ian, but don't ask), managed to get him in to about three inches of water and as soon as a wave came he was out again (the dog I mean). I don't think he has ever seen the sea and even walks round puddles. The other dogs had a wonderful time while Barnie was content to join me as I sat on the sand and enjoyed the sunshine.

The next day Karen and I decided to take a trip on one of the little trains round Lake Bala while the others hired canoes. For once I was not the one who came to grief. Aileen and Stuart managed to capsize and I am told the water was absolutely freezing. I took their word for it and remained on dry land. No way was I tempting providence.

While the unfortunate pair dried out, we watched a number of war planes flying at high speed above us. This area is used for exercises. The noise was deafening and the speed they flew at was unbelievable. They were out of sight in the blink of an eye. Sam, my middle grandson and his girlfriend Izzy and Andrew and Themie decided to do a bit of mountaineering that day, so they saw more of the planes and unlike the rest of us were able to identify them.

We had been very lucky with the weather and on the only showery day we were either in a pub or café or having our evening meal when the heavens opened. I have experienced holidays in Wales where it rained every day, so Mother Nature was indeed kind to us.





Like every holiday, it had to come to an end, so once again the cars were loaded up and we set off for home, feeling relaxed and refreshed and also in my case very tired. I am sure though that the holiday helped build up my strength after having pneumonia, as I managed quite a bit of walking, admittedly with several rests along the way. We saw loads of wildlife and in particular, plenty of red kites and buzzards, heard a cuckoo and of course – lots and lots of (tame I think) sheep.

Disappointed as we were that we hadn't found somewhere in Scotland to accommodate us all at a suitable time, Wales proved a very enjoyable alternative and I enjoyed being pampered for once.

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## James Thomson



James Thomson (1700-1748) was born in Roxburghshire and educated in Edinburgh, where he studied for the ministry. After the publication of several of his poems in Edinburgh, he moved to London to develop his literary career.

The publication of 'Winter', the first of the 'Four Seasons' proved to be a success and he became a significant figure in literary circles.

As well as poems, he also wrote several plays and masques – for one of which he wrote the words to 'Rule Britannia' which was sung to the music of Thomas Arne.

## THE COUNCIL 2022/23

### Office holders

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