



The Chanter

Newsletter



The Eildon Hills, Scott's View

March 2024



The Nottingham Scottish Association

www.nottinghamscottish.org

Ainster Fair

Wha' wad-na be in love wi bonnie Maggie Lauder?
A piper met her gaun to Fife, and spier'd what was't they ca'd her.
Richt scornfully she answered him "Begone, you hallanshaker!
Jog on your gate, you bladderskate! My name is Maggie Lauder!"

"Maggiel!" quoth he; "and, by my bags I'm fidgin' fain to see thee!
Sit down by me, my bonnie bird, in troth I winna steer thee;
For I'm a piper to my trade; my name is Rab the Ranter:
The lasses loup as they were daft when I blaw up my chanter."

Piper quo' Meg, "hae ye your bags or is your drone in order?
If ye be Rab, I've heard o' you; live ye upon the border?
The lasses a', baith far and near have heard o' Rab the Ranter;
I'll shake my foot wi' richt guid will if ye'll blew up your chanter"

Then to his bags he flew wi' speed; about the drone he twisted;
Meg up and walloped ower the green, for brawly could she frisk it!
"Weel done!" quo' he. "Play on!" quo' she. "Weel bobb'd!" quo' Rab the
Ranter".

It's worth my while to play indeed when I hae sic a dancer!

"Weel hae ye play'd your part!!" quo' Meg; "Your cheeks are like the
crimson!"

There's nane in Scotland plays sae weel sin' we lost Habbie Simpson.
I've lived in Fife, baith maid and wife this ten years and a quarter;
Gin ye should come to Anster Fair, spier ye for Maggie Lauder"

Francis Sempill of Beltrees (c1616-1685)

From the President



This year's Burns Dinner/Dance was a joyous occasion, thanks in large part to the contributions made by our Society's stalwart past presidents. It was heart-warming for me to be approached at the end by some young newcomers to our event, after the ceilidh, and to hear their enthusiastic comments about the whole evening. The highlights for them had been the deeply Scottish aspects of the ceremony, such as the piping, the toasts, Schuggie's dance

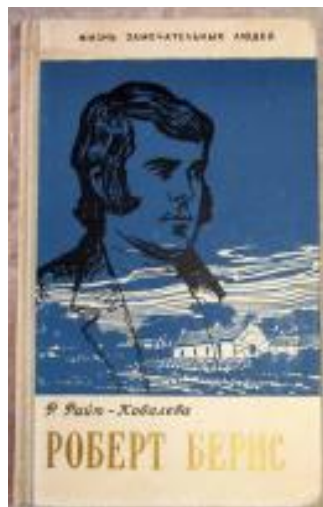
choices, and the humorous speeches, which had amused them greatly.

In this piece I'd like to devote my thoughts and memory to the celebration of the bard in a pair of distant countries in which I've spent some time, Mongolia and Russia. In 1980 the British Ambassador to Outer Mongolia was a Scot from Aberdeen, Tom Haining, and he would often invite me to dine in the embassy and to take part in his staff's leisure activities. My job as an English teacher at the capital city's university brought me into close touch with local people and their culture and Tom wanted to assist me in furthering those connections.

The guests for Burns night stepped gratefully into the warmth of the embassy, which contrasted with an outside temperature of -20°C. The dinner was preceded by a beautiful slide presentation about Burns, with excerpts from his poems and background pipe and ceilidh music. I sang a couple of Scottish folk songs from the Corries repertoire – not for the first time in public in Mongolia!

Russia is a country in which the poetry and personality of Burns have been subjects of great interest to the people for almost 100 years, following the publication of translations of his work into their language. When I told my Russian language teacher recently about our NSA Burns commemoration, she immediately remembered

learning 'A Red, Red Rose' and 'A Man's A Man For 'A That' at her school for English-language specialist pupils in Moscow. How did Burns come to feature in their curriculum? And to have his portrait appear in 1956 on Russian postage stamps?



In Soviet Russia Burns starred as the people's poet because he grew up close to the realities of peasant life and expressed his empathy for the poor and oppressed ordinary folk. The translations, nevertheless, sometimes distorted the original poetry's meaning in order to bring Burns life and work more into line with communist ideology. I've just found out how 'chapman billies' from 'Tam O'Shanter' was put into Russian, by the way: 'the jolly salesmen', good!

Lastly, the Corries song that I sang on prime-time Saturday evening TV in Mongolia 44 years ago was 'Mairi's Wedding'. Was I nervous? No, because I was singing at a university concert and I assumed that they were just filming it for their own archive, hence the big camera and spotlights. Nobody told me that it had been broadcast nationwide till a local friend phoned me to say that she'd enjoyed my performance. There was another pleasant consequence too, but I'll tell you about that in the next, Spring, edition. Best wishes to you till then.

David 'Billy' Chapman

Editor

Thank you to all those who have contributed to this edition of 'The Chanter' with written word or photographs. Please do continue to contribute – not only does it make my life much easier but it's great to have a variety of items! What is your favourite place in Scotland – and why? Do you have a memory of a Scottish childhood, or a visit to Scotland you can share? What about a snippet of lesser-known Scottish history that you happen to know? Or maybe just your favourite photos? All will be welcome.

You can send anything to me at chanter@nottinghamscottish.org.

With (hopeful) thanks in advance!

Andrew

Diary

Friday 1st March. North Sea Gas (Scottish Folk Group). Boat and Horses, Beeston. Details sent by email. Discounted tickets via Schuggie Macinnes.

Wednesday 13th March 2024: Walk and lunch. Brackenrust Estate. Details sent by email and on the web site.

Saturday 20th April 2024: Scottish Entertainment Evening. St. Andrew's with Castle Gate. (See below)

Saturday 27th April: Walk and Lunch. Woodborough. details to follow.

Saturday 11th May: ASCDS Dance Festival. Retford.

Scottish Musical Evening

As mentioned at our recent Quiz Night, there is to be an informal music evening on **Saturday 20th April at St. Andrews with Castle Gate URC**. Please make a note of the date. If you are interested in contributing with a musical item, poem or short account of childhood memories, island holidays, etc., please contact Dave Chapman by email to davidjmchapman@btinternet.com or phone: 07375661093. More details will be sent out nearer the time.

Christmas Walk Tuesday 12th December 2023



It has become a tradition of the Association to meet before Christmas for a walk at Colwick Park followed by a lunch at the Toby Inn. Our walkers met on a rather grey, damp morning ready to walk around the Colwick Lakes.



After a pleasant stroll and much conversation, the group returned to the Toby Inn to meet the non-walking group.



The pre-chosen starters are eaten, drinks have been bought and now all roads lead to the Carvery! Which meats to choose? How much of the trimmings can you fit on a plate? Nice dilemmas to have! And then, of course, the pudding.

With many thanks to Dave and Jan for organising the event and to Ann for her normal efficient job as treasurer.





**New Year Walk, ~~Attenborough~~ Bramcote
Thursday 4th January 2024**



Well, the New Year forecast said it was going to rain – and did it ever! By Tuesday, it was apparent that half of the county was going to be under water. By Wednesday it was. Our New Year Walk was scheduled for the Thursday...

We have often chosen Attenborough for the first walk of the New Year – meeting for a coffee at the Visitor Centre and then a

pleasant walk along the riverbank. We were looking forward to it until we realised that most of the reserve was underwater and was closed to all visitors!

That gave us the choice of cancelling or moving the walk – and, if so, where would we find a route that wasn't either underwater or so muddy that it wasn't worth doing? We decided to take the easy option of a walk close to us that we knew well.

So, we gathered at our house and set off for a walk around Bramcote, starting with Bramcote Hills Park. It turned out to be a lovely morning for a winter walk, with sunshine and a clear blue sky!

The main feature of the park is the well-wooded hill and, particularly, an abundance of dry(ish) paths. We walked round the hill and entered the main area of the park, where we were tempted by a cup of Mr.Frothy's coffee but resisted. We did not, however, resist the offer of a glass of glühwein (generously provided by Dave and Jan Chapman) with which we toasted the New Year.



Glowing from the 'Glow Wine' (thanks to Dieter for the translation), we moved on round the park and through the Walled Garden. This

gives an excellent view of the Hemlock Stone, and it was there that we took our group photo.



In the woods – but what are they pointing to?



After that we made our way back and relocated to the Corn Mill for an enjoyable lunch – some of us even managed puddings!

Burns Night Dinner and Dance Saturday 27th January 2024

The Burns Night Dinner and Dance is always one of the highlights of the year and this was no exception. The President and his guests were piped in, and the President then welcomed 50 members and friends to the event.

After the Selkirk Grace and the first course, the Haggis was paraded in by the Chef accompanied by our piper before Bob Logan 'Addressed the Haggis'. Bob first gave the address way back in the 1970s and his bravura performance was just as powerful this year as it doubtless was then!



After the meal we were entertained by 'The Immortal Memory' given by Jim Costello. As well as a selection of quotes from Burns and some typically Scottish humour, we learned that Burns might well have changed his celebrated 'Ode to a Mouse' to refer instead to a computer mouse. I suspect we may have more sympathy for the original tim'rous wee beastie than for his modern plastic counterpart!



The gathering was then treated to a rematch between Bill and Jeanne Dall as they proposed to and answered the 'Toast to the Lassies'. It was touch and go last time as to whether their long marriage would survive, so we hope it will survive this further exchange of hostilities. As ever, the verdict went, on points, to the lassies!



The evening finished with a lively cèilidh, led by Schuggie Macinnes and, after 'Auld Lang Syne', we all went happily home.



With thanks to all members who helped make this event possible – and a reminder to put next year's date in your diary: Saturday 25th January 2025!

Quiz Night Saturday 3rd February 2024



Quiz Master at Work!

This year's quiz brought over 30 members and friends to St. Andrew's with Castle Gate on a cold February evening.



This was another chance to test our memories against Dave Potter's fiendish armoury of quiz questions. All credit to the winners pictured below!



Half-Time was celebrated with hot pies, prepared by Don and Sue Pringle – a welcome respite before the challenge resumed. It finished with a special 'stick or twist' round which allowed an all or nothing gamble on getting every question right. Most of us took the coward's route and chose to 'stick'!

Many thanks to Dave, Don and Sue for a very enjoyable evening.

A Photographic Tour of Scotland

I have now managed to visit Scotland every month over the last 23 years, completing December last year. I love visiting Scotland and have had the opportunity to visit Arran on a few occasions whilst a friend was living there. I have also done a lot of the West Coast during coach holidays in Scotland. I just love it.



Isle of Arran



Glenfinnan Monument



Loch Lomond

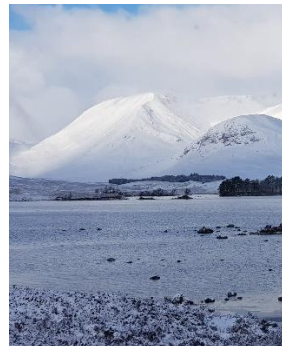
My favourite city in Scotland is Glasgow which I have visited on numerous occasions and each time I am amazed by its architectural and cultural magnificence and friendliness. I have also been to the Edinburgh Tattoo on three occasions and have managed to stay dry!



Glasgow Murals



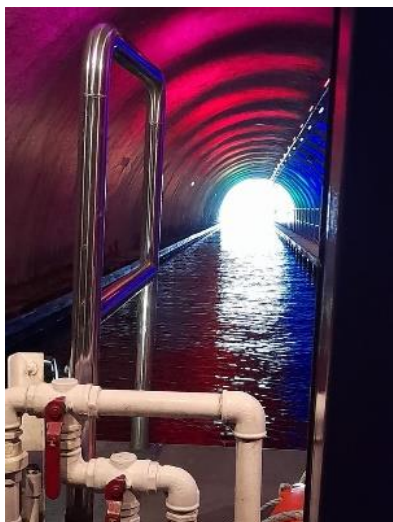
Inveraray



Rannoch Moor

I was in Scotland when the late Queen died and had the opportunity to stand on the side of the M90 when she passed through en route to Edinburgh with a visit to Ballater later that week and a trip to St Giles Cathedral on the following trip.

One of my passions is taking photographs and I would like to share some of these with you. I am always asked why I like to go to Scotland and my answer always is the people, the scenery, the surroundings, and the weather - sometimes four seasons in one day!



Falkirk Wheel



St Giles Cathedral



Kelpies



Edinburgh Tattoo



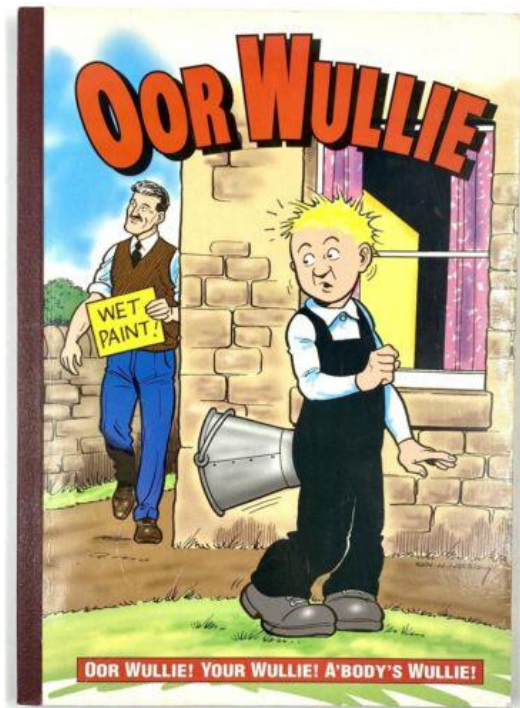
Kilchurn Castle



Commando Memorial

Emma Bradley

Famous Scots



Any list of famous Scots should surely include Oor Wullie! He made his debut in D C Thomson's Sunday Post in 1936 and is still going strong today.

With his friends, Wee Eck, Fat Bob and Soapy Souter they have now been roaming the streets of Auchenshoogle for the best part of 90 years!

Ainster Fair



Ainster (or Anstruther) is a fishing village on the Fife Coast. The song refers to the annual fair in the village which attracted people from near and far. The poem, also known as 'Maggie Lauder', is usually attributed to Francis Semple who lived in Renfrewshire in the middle of the 17th Century.

It recounts the meeting – on the way to Ainster Fair – of Maggie Lauder and Rab the Ranter. They clearly strike sparks off each other while he plays and she dances. There is a historical reference to Habbie Simpson who was a noted piper towards the end of the 16th Century.

There are some who detect a few double-entendres in the lyrics! The song has become a staple of the modern folk song repertoire with versions by Ewen MacColl, Dick Gaughan and the Corries among others.

You can hear it sung here by the Tannahill Weavers.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rx1-QNI_ntk

THE COUNCIL 2022/23

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