



The Chanter

Newsletter



Dumfries

September 2024



The Nottingham Scottish Association

www.nottinghamscottish.org

The Braes of Killiecrankie

Whaur hae ye been sae braw, lad?
Whaur hae ye been sae brankie-o?
Whaur hae ye been sae braw, lad?
Come 'ye by Killiecrankie-o?

An' ye had been whaur I hae been
Ye wadna been sae cantie-o
An' ye had seen what I hae seen
On the braes o' Killiecrankie-o

I fought at land, I fought at sea
At hame I fought my auntie-o
But I met the Devil and Dundee
On the braes o' Killiecrankie-o

The bauld Pitcur fell in a furr
And Clavers gat a crankie-o
Or I had fed an Athol gled
On the braes o' Killiecrankie-o

Oh fie, MacKay, What gart ye lie
I' the brush ayont the brankie-o?
Ye'd better kiss'd King Willie's lofe
Than come tae Killiecrankie-o

It's nae shame, it's nae shame
It's nae shame to shank ye-o
There's sour ales on Athol braes
And the de'ils at Killiecrankie-o

From the President



This summer in June, Deryck and I enjoyed a fantastic holiday to the Canadian Rockies and then to Alaska on a cruise.

The reach of Scottish forebears is always evident: We arrived in Calgary, named after a Scottish beach, and travelled on to Banff, named after Banff in Aberdeenshire.

Banff was first settled in the 1880s after the transcontinental railway was built through the Rocky Mountains to link British Columbia with the rest of Canada. In 1883 three Canadian Pacific Railway workers stumbled upon a series of natural springs on the side of Sulphur Mountain. In 1885 Canada established a federal reserve of 26 square km around the hot springs and began promoting the area as an international resort and spa as a way of supporting the new railway. The area was named Banff in 1884 by George Stephen, president of the Canadian Pacific Railway, after his birthplace Banffshire, Scotland, now simply Banff.

Scots were amongst the earliest settlers in Canada. Scottish settlers began to arrive as early as the 1600s, but it was the large waves of immigration between 1760 and 1860 that saw thousands of enterprising Scots move to Canada to start new lives and make their marks in the New World.

Similarly, Scots were significant in the development of Alaska. So much so that, to this day, Scottish culture is marked by the Alaska Scottish Club which each year hosts the Alaska Scottish Highland Games. The games have become a popular annual event for those who enjoy watching feats of strength and athleticism.

Featured are various Scottish-themed activities such as bagpipes, heavy athletics, Celtic dance, drumming, kilted mile, scotch tasting, tea tent, salmon tossing, Highland Coo, tug-of-war, vendors, historical demonstrations, musical guests, axe throwing, and children's events. The Games are a celebration of Scottish culture and tradition and provide a unique opportunity for Alaskans to experience a part of Scotland in their own backyard.

The Alaskan Scottish Club sounds very similar to the Nottingham Scottish Association. Here is an excerpt from the membership page of their website:

“Want to learn more about the Scottish culture?
Join the Alaskan Scottish Club!
It’s camaraderie, learning and socializing with a
cultural flair. We host many events that will give you
the opportunity to enjoy the warmth of the Scottish
Culture.

An Alaskan Scottish Club membership gives you
access to some great events throughout the year that
celebrate the Scottish Culture in Alaska. From the
Burns Night Dinner, to St. Andrew’s Night, to Kirkin’ O’
The Tartan and the Alaska Scottish Highland Games,
there is plenty to participate in year round and
your membership gets you discounts to all ASC
event!”

Perhaps we should consider hosting a Highland Games event –
probably a step too far!

However, in the same way we also need to encourage new
members to our Association and I reiterate my plea from the
previous Chanter to spread the word and encourage your friends
and family to join.

Please also help to publicise our two Dinner Dances, St Andrews
on the 30th November and Burns on 25th January.

Rosie Allen

From The Editor

Thanks to all for their contributions to this edition of the Chanter.
Please, if you have not contributed a piece before, think about
doing so. Your experiences are so always so interesting. Please
share with us!

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

Andrew Morrison

Dates for Your Diary

2024

Wednesday 4th September:	Crazy Golf.
Thursday 5th September:	Scottish Country dancing re-starts.
Wednesday 18th September:	Papplewick Walk.
Friday 18th October	Skittles Evening.
Friday 25th October:	Walk. To be confirmed.
Saturday 30th November:	St. Andrew's Night Dinner and Ceilidh Dance.
Tuesday 10th December:	Christmas Lunch and Walk. To be Confirmed.

2025

Saturday 25th January :	Burns Night Dinner and Ceilidh Dance.
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As they become available, details of these events will be sent to all members.

Please note, also, that details of these events are posted on our website: www.nottinghamscottish.org

Garden Dance, Thursday 11th July



Sadly, after a series of good years our luck ran out – it rained. While dancing was ruled out, we enjoyed a pleasant social evening instead. Better luck next year!

Pleasley Walk

Saturday 10th August



This walk was originally planned for Hardwick, but unfortunately there was no availability for lunch there. Fortunately, the White Swan in Pleasley stepped into the breach and we enjoyed an interesting walk in Pleasley Vale.

Thirteen of us met at the White Swan for coffee and to order our lunch before we set out along the River Meden. This took us along the pleasantly wooded banks above the river. This path is part of the Archaeological Way which runs from Pleasley to Cresswell Crag. There are, we're told, Roman remains along the way but we saw no sign of them!

The first points of interest reached are the mills at Pleasley Vale. These were originally water-powered by the river Meden and date back to the 18th Century. They were the home of Viyella (a mix of cotton and merino wool) which was invented by James Sissons and developed in Pleasley in 1893.



The mills are now home for a number of small businesses and are smartly maintained. One is still allegedly haunted by the ghost a young mill girl who was brutally murdered by an abusive supervisor (as featured in TV's "Most Haunted")!



As well as the mills, several handsome dwellings remain in the vale. The Vale is enclosed by steep wooded hillsides and the resulting warm, moist microclimate is ideal for semi-tropical plants as seen in the garden above.



Why is this sign in Polish?



A very well-maintained War Memorial

From the mills, the road and path continues past a mysterious road sign warning of a low bridge with, for some unknown reason, a Polish translation. This leads to some open countryside with views to some handsome buildings of the community that grew up around the mills.

One of the fields contains a memorial to the many workers in the mills who fought and died in the World Wars. It is beautifully maintained and surrounded by bright flowers, but is, as ever, a sobering sight.



St. Chad's Chapel

Our final stop before returning to the White Swan for lunch was St. Chad's Chapel. This was built in 1876, by one of the mill owners, Joseph Paget, for use by the millworkers. After a disagreement "over the style of services conducted in the church" he had the church dismantled and rebuilt just over the River Meden boundary, thus moving it from the Diocese of Lichfield to the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham. Presumably he was happier after that! Thanks to Andrew for organising the walk and to Dieter and Dave for the photos.

Attenborough Guided Visit Thursday 15th August



Nottingham Scottish members received an invitation (via our President, Rosie, who had organised the visit) to join the Nottingham National Trust in a guided tour of the Attenborough Nature Reserve.



Attenborough Church

Our guide, Sue, was one of the the team who look after the Reserve and she was able to give us an insight into what goes on to maintain this valuable resource.

As soon as we arrived, we were able to see one of the issues that crop up regularly – a newly fallen tree had blocked the footpath into the reserve!

On our walk round, Sue explained that some areas are restricted for organised visits for groups of all ages from school children and adults.

There are also visits from corporate groups who pay to spend a day in the reserve doing voluntary work, such as removing Himalayan Balsam – a never-ending task, unfortunately.

She also showed us the various hides and talked about the variety of birds and mammals to be seen. A notable newcomer to the reed beds is a 'booming' bittern - sometimes heard but rarely seen. At one stage we were excited to hear a booming noise – only to be disillusioned when we realised it came from a mechanical source!

We did, however, spot various ducks, great crested grebes, cormorants – and a rather cute family of ducks!



Great Crested Grebe



Cormorant



Duck and Ducklings

After our visit, we joined with National Trust members for a pleasant lunch in the Corn Mill. Thanks to Rosie and the National Trust for the invitation.

(Photos courtesy of Sylvia, Dave and Andrew)

The Highs and Lows of the Southern Upland Way

Carol Mee

The rare sight of a marsh harrier flying above me at little more than head height definitely made up for the fact that my end-of-day lift to the campsite at St Mary's Loch had gone in the wrong direction and was going to be at least an hour late.

Wildlife spottings were one of the highlights of my solo 215-mile walk along the length of Scotland's Southern Upland Way in June. Perhaps the best, and certainly the most surprising, day for wildlife was the final leg where, just outside a static caravan site on the east coast, I saw deer, yellowhammers and shrews among other creatures.



Portpatrick

It had all started 14 days before at Portpatrick on the west coast. And, unfortunately, the first day's wet weather set the pattern for the rest of the trail, with fog, sleet, hail and a lot of bog still to come. But that's what waterproofs are for. After a couple of deceptively easy days, taking in coastal views, farmland and castle gardens, the going got tougher - much tougher.



The Ettrick Hills

Scotland's longest Great Trail crosses the Galloway, Lowther, Ettrick and Lammermuir Hills, with two peaks over 2,000 feet, which makes them mountains. Passing through Dumfries and Galloway, there is rather too much gloomy, dull plantation walking, although this has improved since the path was created 40 years ago due to some rerouting and the replacement of some of the pines with native woodland. And, of course, there's the inevitable west coast midge miasma.



Carol at St. Mary's Loch

There is a brief foray into South Lanarkshire then the second half of the walk is in The Borders where the path marking and

maintenance is noticeably poorer than in Dumfries and Galloway but, thankfully, the midges are nothing but a bad memory.

If the wildlife and scenery aren't enough to interest you on the sometimes nine or 10-hour days, there is the occasional artwork and even a treasure hunt along the way. I managed to find all but one of the cunningly hidden and often rusty 'coins'.

One of the great joys (or terrors, depending on your outlook), is the lack of other people on the route. In some of the most inaccessible countryside in Scotland, it's a long way between villages or even roads and, often, I would only meet one or two people all day. However, when you do, it's a pleasure to have a chat and find out about their adventures. I met a bloke walking from Land's End to John O'Groats and a lad from Carlisle spending a year cycling around southern Scotland and Northern Ireland.



Cockburnspath – the end!

Finally, after several drenchings, a couple of falls, just one major misnavigation and many 'wow' moments, I turned inland from the east coast for the final mile to the finishing point at Cockburnspath, where my lift (in the right place this time) was waiting in our camper van with a bottle of bubbly, bless him!

I'm already looking forward to tackling the Speyside Way next year!

The Inner Hebrides (part 2): Lismore

Margaret Barnes

Before I start, I have to mention that there is no longer a board to turn over at the Kerrera Ferry to call the ferryman – it has moved into the age of technology. You can book on your phone now. I discovered this on a recent visit this year. I think I liked the old way better. It made the ferry trip more interesting.

Continuing with my article about islands in the Inner Hebrides easily accessible from Oban and which I have actually visited, my final one is the Island of Lismore, easily recognisable by Lismore Lighthouse which can be seen clearly from Oban. Lismore Lighthouse, built in 1833 was designed by

Civil Engineer Robert Stevenson, grandfather to Robert Louis Stevenson and the first Keeper was Robert Selkirk, a descendant of Alexander Selkirk, the inspiration for Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe. It was automated in 1965.



The car ferry from Oban takes about 50-55 minutes, but it is also possible to take a passenger ferry from Port Appin, a 25 minute drive from Oban, taking you

into “Kidnapped” country. This takes only about 10 minutes and sails past Castle Stalker, a stronghold of the Stuarts of Appin. The Gaelic for Lismore is Lios Mor, which means the Great Garden, a reference to the abundance of wildflowers on Lismore, such as primroses, wild garlic, bluebells, cowslips and purple orchids. The

Island is composed entirely of Dalriada Limestone, which makes it very fertile.



Castle Stalker

Lismore is only 10 miles long and has a population of about 160, but has an amazing number of historical monuments, including the Lismore Grave Slabs which date back to the megalithic time. There are also Bronze age Cairns, Iron Age Duns and a Pictish Broch.



These Iron Age towers are unique to Scotland and mainly found in the Highlands and Islands. They had double walls for extra protection and had a staircase between the walls.

The earliest evidence of Man dates back to the Neolithic Age. The Island was Christianised by St. Moulag, who landed there around the time that St. Columba landed on Iona in 563 and until the 16th Century was part of the Bishopric of Argyll.

In the 8th Century the Island was one of many plundered by the Vikings, who locked the Monks in the Chapel and set fire to them. No mercy there.

I had visited the Island when I was much younger with my Dad and learned much about it from him, although I confess to using the internet to check some dates. We sailed there in his yacht and one of my strongest memories was being in the boat close to the Lighthouse when the tide turned. It was a really strange sensation and quite scary too, but Dad was a brilliant yachtsman, and it didn't bother him in the least.

I have a particular interest in Lismore as it is where my ancestors came from. My great, great, great grandfather was a boatbuilder on Lismore and my great, great grandfather continued the tradition by starting his own yard in Oban at Port Beag, which sits between Oban's South Pier and the Lighthouse Pier. My Dad traced the family back to the 1600's through the Church records.



When Chris and I visited Lismore, we drove out to Port Appin and took the shorter ferry. In spite of having a map, we got hopelessly lost. There is only one road which runs the length of the island, but there are lots of paths leading off from it and some of them didn't have signposts. Although it was a beautiful day, it was quite wet underfoot, so we were glad of our walking boots. Needless to say, we did eventually find our way back to the Ferry, by luck rather than skill at map reading.

There is much more to the history of Lismore than I have mentioned here, and it would certainly take longer than a day to visit the historic sites. Sadly, Chris and I didn't manage another trip to the island to do some more exploring. It is true that sometimes the places on your doorstep are the ones you visit least.

The Battle of Killiecrankie, 1689



The song, Killiecrankie, refers to the Battle of Killiecrankie during the wars that followed the accession of William of Orange to the British Throne. Although this is sometimes known as ‘the Bloodless Revolution’ it was far from bloodless in Scotland and Ireland!

The battle was between Jacobite forces and those loyal to ‘King Willie’. The Jacobites were able to intercept the Williamites as they entered the steep-sided gorge and scattered them by a Highland Charge.

The Jacobites were led by John Graham of Claverhouse (‘Clavers’ in the song), Viscount Dundee – known as ‘Bonnie Dundee’. He led the Jacobites to victory but received ‘a crankie (blow)’ which killed him. The Williamite forces were led by Hugh Mackay and ultimately triumphed.

The song is ostensibly written by a survivor of the battle and the message is one of anger and regret for the slaughter. It was first written (or possibly transcribed) by Robert Burns. Some of the meaning is obscure – the reference to ‘fought my Auntie-O’ in particular. Possibly this is a reference to the deep divisions within families during the Jacobite era.

Glossary of possible meanings:

Brankie: Ostentatious, showy

Cantie: Light-Hearted

Athol: Area of Highlands

Gled: Kite

Furr: Ditch

Gart: Made to do

Slaes: Sloes

Ayont: Beyond

Shank ye-O: Run off

Lofe: Hand

The Bauld Pitcur: The bold Pitcur (Laird of Pitcur)

(The meaning of the second use of the term ‘brankie’ is obscure.)

You can see the Corries version of Killiecrankie [here](#).

THE COUNCIL 2024/25

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