



The Chanter

Newsletter



March 2025



The Nottingham Scottish Association

www.nottinghamscottish.org

Hey, Johnnie Cope

By Adam Skirving

Cope sent a challenge from Dunbar: "Charlie, meet me an ye dare
And I'll teach you the art of war if you meet me in the morning."
Charlie looked the letter on, and drew his sword his scabbard from
"Follow me, my merry men, we'll meet Johnnie Cope in the morning!"

Hey, Johnnie Cope, are you waking yet
Are your drums a-beating yet?
If you were waking, I would wait
To gang to the coals in the morning

Johnnie, be as good as your word, try your faith with fire and sword
Don't flee awa' as a frightened bird chased from its nest i'the morning
When Johnnie Cope he heard of this, he thought it not to be amiss
To have a horse in readiness to flee away in the morning

Oh Johnnie, now get scamperin'. the Highland bagpipes make a din,
It's best to sleep in your whole skin, it'll be a bluidy morning.
Johnnie Cope to Dunbar came, they asked, "Where are your men?"
"The divil confound me gin I ken, for I left them all in the morning."

Now Johnnie ye werena blate, to come wi' news o' your ain defeat,
And leave your men in sic a strait, sae early in the morning.
"I' faith," quo' Johnnie, 'I got sic flegs, wi'
their claymores an' philabegs;,
If I face them again, deil break my legs!
Sae I wish you a' gude morning!.

(See www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbmCdUh9nlk to hear a version
of this song with lyrics and English words. See p23 for the
background to this song)

From the President



A warm welcome to you all once again on this heavily frosted morning with the sun shining and on the first day of meteorological spring.

Last night, Sylvia and I spent the evening in Nottingham for Light Night. It was the first time either of us had been and we thoroughly enjoyed it.

It was the perfect weather to show off the displays with clear skies; so much so, that while standing at the castle watching the light display on the wall, we could also see Jupiter and Saturn. We finished the evening with a coffee and cake at St Andrew's with Castle Gate Church where we were entertained with beautiful choral singing and fun ukulele playing (well done, Bob!). Our links with the church mean a lot to us and we thank them for all they do for us.

This is the last Chanter before our AGM on the 24th April which will mark the end of my first year as President.

When I began last April, I mentioned that I would need a great deal of support as a 'newbie'. That support has been overwhelming and I was right: I did need it! With that and the work of a massively committed Council it has been a really successful year.

Burns Night was a big change for all of us. The Council explored so many aspects and made quite a few changes. One that made a big difference was going to a new venue at Welbeck Hall in West Bridgford. Once we had negotiated getting there for the first time, it became apparent that the journey was not at all difficult, after all. With a new venue come many new decisions, but the staff there were superbly helpful and everything went very smoothly.

The evening itself was wonderful, everyone had such fun and all the traditions were kept with a piper, Highland toast, traditional Burns Night menu and even Iain Carmichael's accordion playing to give us itchy feet for the dancing.

Since then, we have enjoyed events which we have come to see as regular items in the calendar. However, we should not forget the hard work that goes into making them so successful. We thank

Dave, Don and Sue for putting on the quiz and supper once again. What a waste of time it was boning up about Scotland the day before! Dave flummoxed us by making that round about England instead! (They were difficult too!)

The Council are exploring a number of different activities for our members including a river boat trip and garden visit and, later in the year, a train trip with food. Do let us know if you have good ideas for things to do. Also, please try to support us and join in to help us remain a thriving Association.

Our membership year starts on the 1st April so I hope you will want to continue to belong but it would be great if you could also encourage family and friends to join as well.

Rosie

Membership Renewals

Our membership year commences on 1st April and so we invite you to renew your membership for the new year, 2025 to 2026.

Also sent with this issue is the Annual Membership and Renewal Form. It has been attached as both a Word and PDF document.

David Shore

It is with great sadness that we report the death of David Shore after a long fight against Motor Neurone Disease. Several years ago, the Association raised many hundreds of pounds for MND Research by means of a sponsored walk in his name.

David was the son of a former president of the Association, and the brother of Kate Potter. After moving back to Nottingham, he became a regular supporter of Association activities. We send our condolences to Kate and the rest of the family.

Dates for Your Diary

Friday 7th March:	North Sea Gas at the Boat and Horses, Beeston
29th March	Walk and Lunch, Strelley
24th April	AGM, St.Andrews with Castle Gate URC at 7.30pm.
25th April	Walk and Lunch, Bestwood Park
Saturday 10th May:	ASCDS Dance Festival, Retford
May	Walk and Lunch, date to be decided.
Wednesday 4th June	Walk and Lunch

...and make a note now of these dates!

Saturday 29th November 2025: St. Andrew's Night Dinner and Cèilidh

Saturday 24th January 2026: Burns' Night Dinner and Cèilidh

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 interesting. Have you enjoyed a recent visit to Scotland or elsewhere? Do you have a childhood memory to share? Do you have a piece of Scottish history to recount? Please share with us!

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

Andrew Morrison

St. Andrew's Night Dinner Saturday 30th November



Our traditional St. Andrew's Night dinner fell on St. Andrew's Day itself this year and members and friends met at the Nottingham Masonic Hall to celebrate. In the absence of our President, Vice-President Dieter Hecht welcomed the guests.

After the grace, an excellent meal was served by the catering staff followed by the tribute to Scotland, given by Past-President Dave Chapman.

The evening finished with a cèilidh called and led by Schuggie Macinnes, which filled the floor before Auld Lang Syne called a halt to proceedings.

With thanks to all whose hard work made for a successful evening.



New Year Walk Wednesday 8th January



It has become something of a tradition that the Nottingham Scottish greet the New Year by walking round the Attenborough nature reserve. Unfortunately, it has also become a tradition for the heavens to open just before we are due to walk!

So, for the second year in a row we were faced with a flooded Attenborough. Time for Plan B (or actually Plan C, since we used Plan B last year!).



Plan C started in Bramcote on a misty and very frosty morning and our hastily planned route took us across Bramcote Hills Park – and past this nicely decorated Post Box!

We then made our way across Derby Road (safely – via a pedestrian bridge!) to the high ground between Bardill's Island and Bramcote Village.

On an icy morning, we watched our feet with care – especially after a passing farmer told us we were crazy, and that A&E would be full already! Undaunted, however, we completed our walk and joined up with the non-walkers in the Corn Mill for Lunch and conversation.



Maybe not what we planned, but still a good way to start the year. Perhaps it won't rain next time!

Thanks to Andrew and Sue for planning and leading the walk.

Burns Night Dinner Saturday 25th January



This year's Burns' Night celebration took place, for the first time, in the Welbeck Masonic Hall in West Bridgford. Almost fifty members and friends joined for an evening of fine food and dancing.



The evening began with a welcome from our President and the Selkirk Grace. After a first course of Cock-a-Leekie Soup, one of the evening's highlights followed: the arrival of the Haggis, piped in with his customary skill by Bill Fernie.



Bob Logan then addressed the Haggis with great verve (and a fearsome knife) This was Bob's 50th Address to the Haggis and the company greeted it with enthusiastic applause before turning its attention to the Haggis and Cranachan to finish the meal.

One tradition kept alive by the Association is the Loyal Toast with Highland Honours. For this the men are invited to stand on their chairs with one foot on the table while the king is toasted and the National Anthem is sung. This was accompanied by Jan Chapman on the piano.



There is always a certain feeling of relief when the men are safely back on terra firma!



‘The Immortal Memory’ – a tribute to our national bard – is an essential part of any Burns’ Night celebration. Margaret Barnes gave this year’s tribute. She quoted extensively from the works of Burns and showed just why we continue to celebrate his life and works.

After the formal part of the evening finished – and a short break for refreshments - the floor was cleared for the cèilidh.





For the first time in a number of years, the cèilidh featured live music from Iain Carmichael who also called the dances. His music really got us going and a well-judged programme of dances kept us on our feet until the time came to close. We are immensely grateful to Iain, whose music was a real highlight.

The evening finished with Auld Lang Syne before we all made our way home – tired but already looking forward to next year's Burns Night.



Thanks to Bill Dall for overseeing the evening – and to so many people for their work in putting on this event. The evening could not have been a success without their hard work.

Wollaton Park and University Walk

Wednesday 12th February



Another cold, grey morning greeted our band of walkers at the Admiral Rodney as Dieter Hecht led us towards Wollaton Park and the University Campus.

Our route took us round the lake and across the Derby Road into the University Campus and through the Millennium Garden – a beautiful spot but looking a little sad on such a gloomy day! After that, we looped past the Orchard Hotel and crossed back into the park. While there, we were privileged to spot Fallow Deer, Red Deer, and a pair of Egyptian Geese. I bet they wish they had stayed in Egypt! Then it was back into the warm for a pleasant and convivial lunch in ‘the Admiral’



With thanks to Dieter for organising and leading this walk.

Nottingham Scottish Annual Quiz Night 2025

Saturday 15th February

Many of our team members will remember 'Quiz Programmes' on the radio when it was still called a wireless - programmes such as, 'Twenty Questions', 'Round Britain Quiz', 'Top of the Form'. Today, we have many quiz programmes on television, ('Mastermind' and 'University Challenge' probably the most watched) but they are nothing compared to Nottingham Scottish Annual Quiz Night!

We are in a league of our own with David Potter setting the questions and, as Quiz Master, keeping order when contestants tried to argue about an answer or two.



Adding to the evening, catering was in the safe hands of Don and Sue Pringle locked away in the kitchen surrounded by a selection of Pies, Beans, Peas and Gravy all heated to perfection following the final question. Mastermind have never done hot pies!

Thirty members and friends formed seven teams named by themselves, no points for originality, they were: - Walking Wounded, Monkey Puzzle, The Baxter's, Lunes & Quines, McGuess a Lot, Neeps and Tatties, We're Doin' Oor Best. The quiz was split in two parts with a wide range of subjects.

Everyone agreed that the questions were not hard, it was the answers that were tricky.

In the first section, the winners were the Monkey Puzzle team scoring 68/80, close behind were the Walking Wounded with 65/80.

The second part was entitled 'Seriously English Questions', it was won by 'McGuess a Lot' over 'Walking Wounded' in a tie-break. The tie-break question was, what is the distance between London and Moscow? Who could possibly know?



????????



It is only fair and honest to note our team, 'We'er Doin Oor Best' managed to come last in every section (except the pie-eating)!

The verdict was unanimous, Another great quiz night. A big THANK YOU to everyone who helped in any way, special mention must be made of David Potter, Don & Sue, our Council for the setting up and clearing up, last but not least, everyone who came along, and to We're Doin' Oor Best for being consistently last, it saved any other team the embarrassment.

Bill and Jeanne Dall

Leaders of "We're Doin' Oor Best"

Roaming the Glens

“Sounds as if you’d manage to pen a few words for The Chanter?” Casually, innocently, the suggestion was dropped into the general conversation from the other end of our table of eight. ‘Mmm... probably could.’ The response slipped out unbidden, taking no time for a cautious second thought.

To be fair, at that instant, I was busy rabbiting on in my cosy corner at the other end of the bay. Snippets, clearly recalled from a far distant youth were tumbling out as if there were no tomorrows. Fun things, the sort that seldom seem to occur nowadays. Not only because it was so long ago, but also because so much has changed. The world really has moved on.

This particular request, perhaps challenge, took place weeks ago. Well before Christmas in fact, before all the family get-togethers occurred. Or, as Visiting Granddaughter and Australian boyfriend called them, *gathos*. Great fun they were too.

Just to mention all this is quite beside the point but one has to wonder where the first couple of months in 2025 have gone. Why am I only beginning to ‘pen’ this now? To the tale, then, without further ado.

It’s about a holiday in the mid-sixties of last century, possibly one of our more memorable ones. The most unexpected part involved a tiny Isetta Bubble Car. A bit of an upmarket model, though. It flaunted four wheels and a tiny, shiny luggage rack at the back. But I get ahead of myself.



Hard working students, strapped for cash, Boyfriend and I planned a big summer adventure - *cycle to London* to visit his Auntie Dora and Uncle Ray. They’d love to see us. As would Brian, Boyfriend’s cousin. With the exuberance and certainty of youth and armed with the knowledge that it was *only just over* 420 miles away, we did a few local practice runs to get fit. Much to our surprise neither set of parents appeared particularly enthused by our plans.

'Fate', however, stepped in. At the last moment a minor incident involving a tumble from a bike put paid to the whole cycling concept.

But all was not lost. Boyfriend's lovely parents stepped in. Offered us the use of their car for a week or so. Reminded us that youth hosteling by car was permitted in Scotland to reach remote hostels



So we set off in "Susie" an old, but distinctive Standard 14, heading for the Highlands. Perhaps even as far as Skye, if there was enough time. Battleship grey, previous owner one Naval Officer stationed at Rosyth, she boasted a very dark grey square above the rear bumper where a learner's L had once been displayed.

She also had a reluctant orange lever indicator on the offside which generally only flicked up with a respectable thump from inside.

A roof hatch, too, though this was firmly wedged shut and with which we were strongly advised not to tamper. "An opened window will give you all the fresh air you need, son," Boyfriend's Mum emphasised. Later, once free to roam and make our own decisions we discovered the wisdom of her advice.

Now, I'm not suggesting anyone, who will remain nameless, fiddled with afore mentioned hatch. Suffice to say we had a 'built in' shower on the second day that most efficiently washed the steering wheel and surrounding area after a particularly heavy morning downpour just north of Pitlochry. Have to admit to a trace of passenger satisfaction that I was not driving at that moment.

Happily, the wet, blustery spell was short lived. The weather rapidly picked up. The sun was shining brightly by the time we reached the Great Glen next day. Mountain peaks and ridges soared high into an almost cloudless blue sky.

Susie, was proving to be a great old girl. Heavy, clumsy, slow and a guzzler of petrol she might be, but she never once faltered. She fielded everything the Highland roads flung at her in her stride - as long as she was driven with the respect her age deserved.

Frequent rests were essential to prevent her engine from overheating, especially during a hot spell like this.

By then I was accustomed to the odd concept of naming a car and very glad I'd avoided the temptation to voice those earlier thoughts. Susie had become a major player in our adventure.

We pressed on thoroughly enjoying our freedom, and before long Invergarry Youth Hostel was a fair distance behind.

Deep into the mountainous region by now, experiences of single track roads increased and offered extra excitement. They also slowed us down. So it was just as well we were in an area where one actually chose to take the time to drink everything in. From a practical point of view it saved petrol, too. The price of a gallon of petrol could be as much as 4/10d. Susie was forever thirsty! So we often lingered longer than needed in a passing place or at a convenient viewing point just for pleasure. Nature was there to enjoy after all.

It was late morning and we were idling along the hillside beside Loch Cluanie when we spotted a larger than average Passing Place less than a couple hundred yards away. Boyfriend picked up speed with a sigh of relief. 'Lunch stop ahead.'



The words had scarcely escaped when a rickety old bus rose over the crest ahead and parked with a grinding of brakes in that very same spot, leaving just enough space for Susie as well. Eagerly we jumped out, keen to stretch our legs and chat with another road user in this isolated area.

A lady of indeterminate age and ample proportions greeted us and the world with three loud toots of the horn.

Arrival announced, she emerged backwards, accompanied by a certain degree of huffing and puffing. Her yell of 'Library Bus today' echoing from the hillside only confirmed what the handwritten board propped on the dashboard had already informed us.

"Hetty, local bus driver." Loudly, she introduced herself as she hustled her way to the rear hold. 'They'll start arriving in a minute or two. She heaved the hatch open and began dragging an assorted

collection of books, newspapers and magazines as well as a variety of foodstuffs forward.

Before long a little crowd of locals, including children, began to appear as if from thin air as there wasn't a house in sight.

For a while chaos reigned as Hetty dealt with the steady stream of borrowers and shoppers. The food rapidly disappeared. Her borrowers took more care with book selecting but surprisingly soon everyone melted away again clutching newly stuffed bags as suddenly as they had come.

All the time there had been a non-stop exchange of information and gossip. Hard to follow much of it, rattled off as it was in a bewildering mixture of broad Scots, liberally sprinkled with The Gaelic. We did try to join in, with limited success.

It was a noisy, stimulating and fun 10 or 15 minute interlude, and by the time silence reigned once more, about all we were sure of was that Hetty approved of our current plans. She liked the thought that two young *lowlanders* were taking the time to explore their native land.

Finally, just before she left she offered some advice. "It's no just sheep, heather, hills and boggy ground, y'ken." The door shut with a bang.

"Ach, well then, I'd better be getting' back. The best views are no sae far now. Just a few miles further along the main road."

Her parting words were flung through the open window as the bus slewed around in an impossibly tight circle and she headed west again.

"Some things can't be rushed so take your time and enjoy it all."

It was well past midday by now and surprisingly warm. Besides we were hungry. So, relaxing in comfortable silence we nibbled our jammy sandwiches, let Susie's engine rest and idly studied the road gradually rising as it wriggled its way along the hillside bordering the loch. We'd need to take it easy if it got any hotter!

Evelyn Thomas ...to be continued!

The Forgotten Flyers.

It is often said that, while people remember who came first, nobody remembers who came second - but sometimes their achievements are worth recording. A recent mention of Alcock & Brown brought back memories of an incident in my childhood.

While I was at primary school, my father was a bank manager in Thurso where the ground floor of the building was shared with the offices of a solicitor and another group. One evening my father told me he had borrowed the key to the solicitor's office as it contained something special he wanted to show me. On the front wall there was a gap left in the wallpaper to reveal two faded signatures. Over the years I had forgotten the names but nowadays the internet can fill in the story.



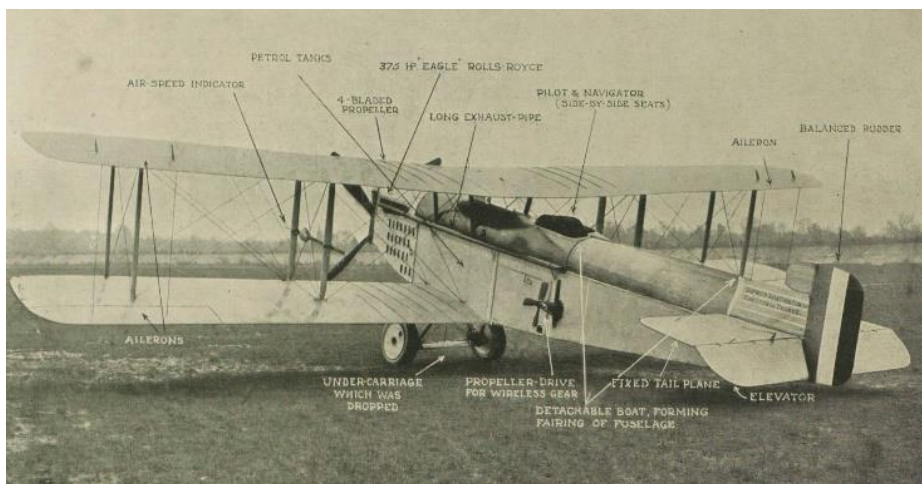
The Bank in Thurso



Harry Hawker

In 1919 a prize competition for the first team to fly non-stop across the Atlantic resumed after a break for WW1. Several British teams assembled on Newfoundland. The first to set off were pilot Harry Hawker and Kenneth Greaves (navigator) in a Sopwith Atlantic plane.

After 12 hours of flying, they noticed a problem with the engine cooling system. Deciding to play safe they changed course to reach the major shipping lanes.



This worked and they were picked up by a Danish freighter heading home. Since the ship had no radio, news of their rescue only happened when they sailed past the Butt of Lewis (the northern tip of the Outer Hebrides). [In those days there was an agent of Lloyds stationed at the lighthouse there to monitor the ships sailing to & from northern Europe around the north of Britain.]

Continuing its course, the ship paused to land them at Thurso - the first British port they were passing with rail connections - and that is how their signatures came to be written on that wall. I assume they took some of the Danish crew to the solicitor's office to record details of where and when they were picked up.

The pair were later rewarded with £5,000, equal to 50% of the prize and Harry Hawker along with 3 others founded the Hawker aircraft company. His Wikipedia page is an interesting summary of his progress from a first job repairing bicycles to chief designer & test pilot for Sopwith and then part-owner of the company that gave us the Hawker Hurricane.

With thanks to Hugh Malcolm for bringing to light this bit of forgotten history!

“Hey, Johnnie Cope” and the Battle of Prestonpans



The song “Hey, Johnnie Cope” was written by local farmer Adam Skirving in the immediate aftermath of the crushing Jacobite victory at Prestonpans in 1745. The government army was led by Sir John Cope and the song ridicules (probably unfairly) his hasty retreat.

Prestonpans was the first main battle of the rising and forced the government to take the prospect of defeat seriously. Sir John had commanded about 3000 troops, mostly inexperienced and poorly trained. He was also handicapped by poor intelligence. He had initially marched north to prevent the Jacobites using General Wade’s Road across the Corriearrack Pass – only to find that the rebels had already crossed and were marching on Edinburgh.

Cope decided that the fastest route back was by sea to Dunbar, but by then the Jacobites were in possession of Edinburgh. He set up a defensive position near Prestonpans with a marsh between him and Edinburgh to slow down any rebel attack. This was circumvented by the masterstroke of Prince Charlie’s Commander, Lord George Murray, who used a local guide to take them through the marsh to approach Cope’s forces from the east.

The rebels attacked early in the morning and the government forces simply melted away in the face of a highland charge – leaving Sir John Cope to abandon the fight and to make an ignominious retreat to Dunbar.

He was later charged with incompetence and court-martialled – but cleared of all blame!

THE COUNCIL 2024/25

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