



The Chanter

Newsletter



St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall, Orkney

June 2026



The Nottingham Scottish Association

www.nottinghamscottish.org

The Braes of Balquhiddar

*Let us go, lassie, go
Tae the braes o' Balquhiddar
Whar the blueberries grow
'Mang the bonnie Hielan' heather
Whar the deer and the rae
Lichtly boundin' thegither
Sport the lang summer day
On the braes o' Balquhiddar*

*I will twin thee a bow'r
By the clear silver fountain
And I'll cover it o'er
Wi' the flooers o' the mountain
I will range through the wilds
And the deep glens sae dreary
And return wi' their spoils
Tae the bow'r o' my dearie*

*Let us go, lassie, go
Tae the braes o' Balquhiddar
Whar the blueberries grow
'Mang the bonnie Hielan' heather*

*When the rude wintry win'
Idly raves roun' oor dwellin'
And the roar o' the linn
On the nicht breeze is swellin'
So merrily we'll sing
As the storm rattles o'er us
'Til the dear shielin' ring
Wi' the licht liltin' chorus*

Robert Tannahill

From the President



Well, what can I say? I am sure there are not many (if indeed any?) German nationals who get themselves elected to be the President of a Scottish Association. I feel very- honoured that the Nottingham Scottish Association felt they can entrust me with this office. It is with some trepidation that I accepted the task because I know that I have to step into some big boots.

I have learnt a lot from being Vice President for the last two years, but will still need a lot of help. I am therefore very pleased that most members of the Council agreed to stay on. I am sure I can rely on their advice and expertise which they have gained over the last two years or more.

I certainly cannot claim any Scottish ancestry, so what is my connection to Scotland and how did I get involved in Scottish Country Dancing? I think a fair number of you know the answer to the question, so here is the short version for those who don't know me that well. Whilst living in Bonn (West Germany) my then fiancée Marie (later wife), worked for the NAAFI which had connections to the British Embassy in Bonn. Often she received invitations to functions at the Embassy and on one of these occasions, a Burns Night Dinner, I was "introduced" to Scottish Country Dancing after a typical Burns supper. Having been hurled around the room, not knowing where to turn (I later learnt that this "dance" was called "Strip the Willow"), I was more than puzzled, but it gave me the incentive to learn more about Scottish Country Dancing. So we joined the Caledonian Society at the Embassy and attended regular dance evenings, although the instructions fell woefully short for me as a beginner. I learnt the patterns of a number of dances but that was about it.

However this changed when we moved to England (Yarm) and joined the RSCDS in Middlesborough. A wonderful instructor by the name of Elisabeth taught us the steps and etiquette of Scottish

Country Dancing and the rest is history. When we moved to Nottingham we had a few years' break from dancing, but then joined both the RSCDS and the NSA -and have stuck with the latter since 2002.

I am now looking forward to continue the excellent work of many predecessors and hope that the Council and I can offer enjoyable dancing venues and a varied program of non-dancing activities throughout the year.

I am writing this on the eve of the football world cup, where on 14 June Scotland will play their first world cup match since 1998. For the 5th time Brazil will be their opponent in the group stage. Let's not think of the 4 previous encounters, but hope that Scotland can do better this year and progress beyond the group stage and ... who knows?

Please keep an eye on our website:www.nottinghamscottish.org
and our Facebook site
www.facebook.com/groups/197249863657225

Dieter Hecht



Scourie Bay and Ben Stack, Sutherland

Welcome

A warm welcome to new member Pam Waite.

Dates for your Diary

Thursday 4th June	Crazy Golf. Highfields Park. 11.00 a.m.
Tuesday 9th June	Walk and Lunch. Gunthorpe.
Thursday 9th July	Garden Dance. Bramcote.
Tuesday 21st July	Walk and Lunch.
Wednesday 5th August	Short Lawn Bowls. Daybrook Bowls Club
Thursday 3rd September	Scottish Country Dancing restarts.
Thursday 10th September	Falconry Experience. Thoresby Park
Saturday 28th November	St Andrew's Night Dinner and Dance

Details will be emailed to members and will be posted on the website (www.nottinghamscottish.org) closer to the dates.

From the Editor



Your Chanter
needs you!

Thanks to all for their contributions to this edition of the Chanter - **and a plea for more!** Have you been somewhere interesting recently? Do you have a story to tell? . Please, if you have not contributed a piece before, think about doing so!

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

Andrew Morrison

Attenborough Walk Wednesday 18th March



In previous years, we have attempted to walk round the Attenborough Nature Reserve in early January and been regularly thwarted by rain and floods.

This time, in mid-March, we struck lucky with the weather. We arrived to be greeted by bright sunshine, blue skies and sparkling water. What a stunning place we have in Attenborough and how lucky we are to have it on our doorstep!





Dave and Jan had planned a route that took us along the banks of the Trent and back through Attenborough Village. Sadly, maintenance works prevented our return though the Village but that failed to spoil our morning.

We finished by returning to the Corn Mill where we met our non-walkers for an enjoyable lunch.



With thanks to Dave and Jan for organising and leading the walk.

Southwell Walk Saturday 29th April



Our April walk, starting and ending at the Hearty Goodfellow, took in part of the Southwell Trail, the golf course and the home of the Bramley Apple.

We set off on a sunny day with a brisk breeze, stopping for a group photo on the Southwell Trail. Rosie then led us though the golf course for a very welcome coffee stop where we sat out in the courtyard'

Along with the glorious Minster, the Bramley Apple is one of Southwell's claims to fame. The story goes that he first Bramley seedling grew from pips planted by Mary Ann Brailsford in her garden when she was a young girl in 1809. She subsequently married, moved away and sadly died without knowing that 'her' apple was to become famous.

The house and garden were purchased by a local butcher, Matthew Bramley and it is his name that is now given to the apple. Perhaps it is time to rename the apple as the Brailsford Apple!



At the Home of the Bramley Apple

After passing through the orchard we finished our circular walk back at the pub, where lunch awaited us.

Thanks to Rosie for arranging and leading the walk.



The Joy of Puddings!

ASCDS Dance Festival Saturday 9th May 2026



Nottingham Scottish Dance Team

When we entered our team for this year's Festival, we had a large enough team of dancers that most of us would need only to dance for some of the time. In the event it didn't quite work that way!

Who would have thought that no fewer than three dancers would have broken bones between January and May? Add to that the arrival of an awaited NHS operation and a unexpected invitation to a family wedding and you can see that we were significantly depleted!

However, the survivors all set to with a will and by the time of the Festival we were fully prepared and put on a display that we can be proud of. More importantly, we had a really enjoyable afternoon – as our most recent member, Clare, describes below.

From Clare Stewart

I started Scottish Country Dancing about two years ago and was surprised to be asked if I'd like to dance in the annual festival at Retford this year.

I had to learn all 12 dances, in case someone dropped out, and I soon learned that I was to be in 10 of those dances!! This seemed fairly insurmountable, but I thought, *Well, if they are asking me, it must be doable*, and went forth with gusto, watching Youtube videos over and over. I also taught myself to read the choreography crib sheets - well, I tried anyway, I found it very hard to picture what to do when just reading instructions on a bit of paper!

So I soon learned some mental short cuts to remembering such as *Oh yeah, the square dance one, or the Diamond Pousette one*. My partner, Peter, was great, very encouraging, and seemed, for some strange reason, to have confidence I could do it!! In fact, everyone was encouraging and helpful. And I don't mind at all when someone whispers, hints, yells or pushes me into place, I so much want the dance to go right (more or less), and not muck it up entirely!!

It was good to know that nobody would be watching because most people who are at the festival are actually dancing. And the MC at the gig was great too, saying a few times that the festival is not a competition, and that everyone is going to go wrong, just keep smiling and get yourself to where you think you should be at the time. It is supposed to be fun after all.

Great exercise for the brain and the body, a laugh when it goes wrong, truly satisfying when it goes right!! The music was great, the costumes fabulous and the shared goal of doing something as sweet and lovely as dancing together gives a sense of community. Particularly the last dance, the hilariously chaotic Borrowdale Exchange!

So, although it was hard learning all those dances, and quite worrying in the run-up, it was enjoyable and exciting on the day. It was a privilege to feel trusted by my team mates, and I think we all had a great time.



All Set!



The Borrowdale Exchange



The Braes of Balquhiddar

Robert Tannahill



'The Braes of Balquhiddar' is a song written by Robert Tannahill and published in 1822. Born in Paisley, Tannahill was a working class lad, apprenticed to his father as a weaver.

On completing his apprenticeship, he left home to work in Bolton for 12 years. It was when he returned to Scotland to look after his family that he began to write poems and songs.

The original words and music were adapted by Francis McPeake for the much better-known song "Wild Mountain Thyme".

You can hear "The Braes of Balquhiddar" [here](#) and, for comparison, "The Wild Mountain Thyme" [here](#).



The Braes of Balquhiddar

THE COUNCIL 2026/27

Office holders

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