



The Chanter

Newsletter

September 2026



The River Tay, Perthshire



The Nottingham Scottish Association

www.nottinghamscottish.org

The Flowers of the Forest

I've heard them lilting at our ewe-milking,
Lasses a-lilting before the dawn of day;
But now they are moaning on ilka green loaning-
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At bughts, in the morning, nae blythe lads are scorning,
The lasses are lonely, and dowie, and wae;
Nae daffin', nae gabbin', but sighing and sabbing,
Ilk ane lifts her leglin and hies her away.

In har'st, at the shearing, nae youths now are jeering,
Bandsters are lyart, and runkled, and gray;
At fair or at preaching, nae wooing nae fleeching-
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At e'en, in the gloaming, nae youngers are roaming
'Bout stacks wi' the lasses at bogle to play;
But ilk ane sits drearie, lamenting her dearie-
The Flowers of the Forest are weded away.

Dool and wae for the order sent our lads to the Border!
The English, for ance, by guile wan the day;
The Flowers of the Forest, that fought aye the foremost,
The prime of our land, are cauld in the clay.

We'll hear nae mair lilting at our ewe-milking;
Women and bairns are heartless and wae;
Sighing and moaning on ilka green loaning-
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

Jean Elliot (c.1756)

From the president

What a summer it has been! We've had heatwave upon heatwave, a drought and even a hose pipe ban.

Nevertheless, I hope you've had a relaxing summer, whether you've been travelling or staying put. Actually, who needs a holiday abroad when the weather here is so lovely? Or was it too 'lovely'?

I hope none of you had booked a river cruise on the Rhine or Mosel this summer; both freight and cruise ships traffic was very limited!

In many ways, this summer reminds me of the summer of 1976 when I spent six weeks at Cambridge for an efficiency course in English. As a tennis player back then, I brought my racket with me from Germany, hoping to find someone to play with on an English lawn tennis court (no, not Wimbledon), but like this year, there was no green lawn to be found—just yellow, dusty surfaces.

Despite the heat, we enjoyed a walk in Annesley and Newstead Country Park in July and had a taster session of Short Lawn Bowls. We were lucky that the temperature was quite pleasant on both occasions. In August, Andrew and Sue led a pleasant walk around Sutton-Bonington. Again we were lucky with the weather and the footpaths were bone-dry.

In the latter half of August Marie and I spent some time in Dortmund, mainly to celebrate my mum's 100th birthday. We had a lovely day with a Champagne reception, followed by coffee and cake (may sound familiar to some of you), and then an evening meal. It was great to see so many close and distant members of the family making the effort to travel to Dortmund. Mum was in good form and still going strong at 9:30 p.m., usually her bedtime.



The Council is now looking ahead to the Autumn, planning a visit to the Hawkeye Falconry and a couple of walks. Most importantly, we are busy with the preparations for St Andrew's Night on the 28th of November. Details about this will follow soon. Make sure you check our website <https://nottinghamscottish.org> frequently for updates or follow us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/197249863657225>

The dancing season started on the 3rd of September. We were all a bit rusty after the summer break, but Andrew and Sue eased us in with some strathspeys, jigs and reels which were mercifully slowed down to a manageable pace. It felt good to be back and to catch up with everyone. Let's hope for a good and injury free season.

Best wishes

Dieter



Neil Gow (1727-1807) was the leading Scottish fiddle player of his time. He composed around 80 tunes, still played today at dances and ceilidhs.

Perhaps his best known composition is his 'Lament for the Death of His Second Wife' – hear it played [here](#).

He is reputed to have composed many of his tunes while sitting under the tree known as Neil Gow's Oak on the banks of the River Tay near Dunkeld.

Neil Gow's Oak

Welcome

A warm welcome to new member Anne Barry.

Dates for your Diary

Thursday 10th September		Falconry Experience, Thoresby Park
Saturday 12th September		Past-President's Night, St. Andrew's with Castlegate
Saturday 24th October		Walk and Lunch
Saturday 7th November		Walk and Lunch
Saturday 28th November		St. Andrew's Night Dinner and Ceilidh Dance, Welbeck Hall
Tuesday 15th December		Christmas Walk and Lunch
Saturday 23rd January		Burns Night Dinner and Ceilidh Dance, Welbeck Hall

Make sure that you have the dates saved for these events!

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

From the Editor

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

(Not) the Nottingham Scottish Open Championship

Thursday 4th June



Yes, there has been some rain this summer! While it had mostly stopped by the time we arrived, the course at Highfields was very wet. So, after a restorative coffee, our would-be golfers opted instead for a gentle walk around the lake.

Since our lunch had been pre-arranged, we made sure to be back in time for that and all agreed it had been a pleasant way to spend a damp(ish) morning.



It was certainly enjoyed by this Egyptian goose who joined us for a walk around the lake!

With thanks to Dieter for organising the event.

Trent and Gunthorpe Walk

Tuesday 9th June



On a mild, partly sunny June morning, eight of us completed a leisurely 4-mile walk along a route that gave us good views of a variety of landscapes.

First we followed the riverside pathway from Gunthorpe Lock for about 1 mile, next to the fast-flowing downstream course of the River Trent. A footpath then took us along the edges of fields with flourishing crops of winter wheat and barley.

In Caythorpe village we paused to rest and refresh ourselves with glasses of fruit smoothies before returning to Gunthorpe by more farm tracks and then roads. The Trent Hills decorated our eastern horizon throughout the journey.

Five more NSA friends then joined us for a convivial, relaxing and tasty lunch at our walk's starting place, the Unicorn Hotel's pub. It had all been a pleasure to take part in!

Dave and Jan Chapman

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

Garden Dance Thursday 9th July



In recent years our biggest worry has been whether or not it will rain. On a hot day in a hot month in a hot summer, our worry this time was about the heat!

We had originally planned a start at 6.30, but put that back for an hour to allow the garden to be shaded by surrounding trees. Just as well – the temperature hit 33C by late afternoon!

By 7.30, the shade had crept across the lawn and there was a gentle cooling breeze. Much to everyone's surprise (and relief) it was a perfect evening for dancing.

30 of us – from the Association, Beeston U3A and Nottingham RSCDS – got through a varied programme, finishing with Mairi's Wedding.





The rest of the evening was purely social as we enjoyed the handsome spread that everyone brought and caught up with friends. The bonus of a 'tropical night' was the ability to sit out in shirtsleeves until after 10pm.

We all agreed, I think, that it was a great evening and we'll look forward to doing it again next year.

Andrew and Sue



Annesley Walk Tuesday 21st July



Eight of us set off from the Badger Box in Annesley to explore Newstead Country Park and old Annesley, including streets with miners' houses featured in the TV show 'Sherwood'. Great weather, a new area for most, an interesting walk, pleasant company, and a good meal back at the Badger Box, made it a fantastic day out.

Dieter Hecht



With thanks to Dieter for a well-planned and enjoyable walk.

Short Lawn Bowls

Wednesday 5th August



Our group of 16 members enjoyed a delightful morning of short lawn bowls. We split into two groups, each taking part in two sessions. Both groups made excellent progress, with our bowls regularly landing near where we aimed * – a satisfying achievement!

Playing short bowls proved to be the perfect choice; a longer distance would have been beyond us, and we were just about able to bend down for our deliveries without turning them into shot put attempts.

The weather could not have been better – sunny yet comfortably mild. A big thank you goes to Hazel and Teresa from the bowls club, who kindly demonstrated the techniques and supervised our efforts with patience and encouragement.

Dieter Hecht

(Well, sometimes – see photo overleaf! Ed.)*



Possibly not the best 'end' of the morning!



With thanks to Dieter for organising this successful event.

Sutton Bonington Walk Saturday 15th August



What a good day for a walk it was! After a succession of baking hot days, Sutton Bonington greeted us with a cooling breeze and a sensible summer temperature in the low 20s.



Starting at the King's Head we headed through the fields to the River Soar, passing some friendly sheep on the way.

Turning along the river, we enjoyed watching the world of the river go by – rowers from the nearby Rowing Club, paddleboarders, barges and a very excited (and wet) dog.

We also admired a heron infiltrating a flock of geese, and devouring his catch.

Towards the village of Zouch, a short 'cut' allows boats to avoid a bend in the river. We followed the canal us past a working lock, before we turned back across the fields to Sutton Bonington.



The walk finished with an efficiently served meal in the King's Head and some convivial conversation.

“Safe Oot! Safe In!”

Coldstream Civic Week 2026

The Ride to Flodden; An account from the Saddle

By Dr. Cristal Crooks

Coldstream Civic Week is Scotland's youngest Common Riding event, but it carries one of the oldest memories. Every August the town rides over the border to lay a wreath where King James IV and his army fell at Flodden in 1513.

Coldstream Civic Week started in 1951 as a sequel to the Festival of Britain. The event was a success, so they repeated it again in 1952, when Alan Leishman led a mounted cavalcade to Flodden Field. In February 1953 the town officially formalised it. The festival would be called “Presenting Coldstream” and led by a Coldstream lad elected by the town. That first official Coldstreamer was Kenneth Palmer in 1953.



Two histories give Coldstream its claim; It is the nearest Scottish town to Branxton battlefield (the field itself is only about 4 miles over the border) and in 1650 General George Monck raised his Regiment of Foot there, the Coldstream Guards.

Photo: Coldstream Guards

Photographer: Veronika Zolotoverkha Photography



This year, 2026, Civic Week ran from 2nd to 8th August. This year's Coldstreamer was Josh Kerr, his role as the "Coldstreamer" is important as he is the main figurehead for the whole town.

During Civic Week he is Coldstream; carrying the town's standard (flag) at the front of every ride out, he leads the cavalcade and represents the town.

With the help of the "Coldstream Riders Association" and "Presenting Coldstream", Coldstreamer Josh Kerr made this an event to remember.

Photo: Coldstreamer Josh Kerr

Photographer: PH Photography

Why do we shout "Safe Oot! Safe In!"?

If you have ever been to a Scottish Common Riding, you will hear this shouted all day.

The tradition of Scottish Common Ridings goes back to the 13th and 14th centuries when towns rode their common boundaries, or marches, to check no neighbour was stealing land or livestock. To ride out was dangerous because of border reivers. So the town cried "Safe Oot!" as riders left, and "Safe In!" when they returned with boundaries secured and every rider accounted for.

In Coldstream, and at all the Scottish Common Ridings, we still use this expression. Every time we leave and every time we ride back home, the crowd shouts it.

Coldstream Civic Week from the Saddle (2026)

Monday (Norham Ride Out)

Approx 80 riders, riding out around 20 miles, starting from Coldstream and setting off for Norham. A long loosener to get horses settled.

Tuesday (Hirsel Ride Out)

Approx 100 riders, riding around 18 miles including the Hirsel Estate, a historic 5,000-acre property located just northwest of Coldstream. This estate has served as the principal seat of the Earls of Home (the Douglas-Home family) since 1611, famously housing notable figures including former Prime Minister Sir Alec Douglas-Home..

Thursday 6th August (Flodden Ride Out)

The main event with approx. 200 riders, riding around 20 miles in total, which includes a galloping charge across Flodden Field.

The day starts with horse riders gathered in Coldstream on the High Street from 10.30am. The Coldstream Flodden Ride Out this year was led by Number 7 Company Coldstream Guards and this year we were honoured to have The Household Cavalry. We left to the cry of "Safe Oot!" with the Coldstreamer carrying the town standard at the front.



Photo: Household Cavalry leading the Coldstream Flodden Ride Out

Photographer: PH Photography

At Branxton Hill we were met by the Coldstream Guards and a ceremony was held at the Flodden Memorial, where Coldstreamer Josh Kerr laid a wreath. The ceremony on Flodden Hill was led by speaker Fiona Armstrong (ITV Border presenter, author and former Lord-Lieutenant of Dumfries).

We were there to remember what happened in a short three-hour battle on 9th September 1513. Some 4,000 English soldiers lost their lives, while amongst the 10,000 Scots killed were 9 earls, 13 barons, 5 heirs to titles, 3 bishops and the Scottish King James IV himself.

Afterwards, we turn for home (Coldstream), entering Coldstream from the roadside you hear the cries of, "Safe In!", as we ride back over the Tweed and into town for the Abbey ceremony.



Photo: Coldstream Ceremony

Photographer: Veronika Zolotoverkha Photography

Not just for horse riders

Wednesday 5th August, 10pm, Coldstream Torchlight Procession. This is one of the most community parts of Civic Week and you do not need a horse to take part. The Coldstreamer leads a procession through the streets at night, with locals carrying flaming torches, Pipe Bands playing, and hundreds of families lining the route. Children, community groups and visitors all walk together; noisy, smoky, and a real celebration of Coldstream coming together, the procession finishes with fireworks.

What next?

The Scottish Common Riding season is not yet over!

I will be riding the last Scottish Common Ride of the year, the “Edinburgh Riding of the Marches”, which is on Sunday 13th September 2026.

The spectacular cavalcade is a re-enactment of the return of the Captain of the Trained Band (responsible for keeping order within the City) to Edinburgh with the tragic news of the defeat at the Battle of Flodden in 1513, linking directly with the Coldstream Civic Ride.

Approximately 280 riders and a 26-mile route. The ride goes past Holyrood Palace and finishes with a grand cavalcade up the Royal Mile to St Giles' Cathedral. Crowds of spectators in excess of 20,000 line the Royal Mile from midday onwards awaiting the arrival of the cavalcade.

You do not have to ride to be part of this event. If you can get up to Edinburgh, please come and shout us home, “Safe Oot! Safe In!”



Photo: Dr. Cristal Crooks during the Edinburgh Riding of the Marches, 2025.

Cristal Crooks

The Flowers of the Forest



Flodden Field Monument

Jean Elliot, who wrote 'the Flowers of the Forest', was writing in memory of the fallen at the 1513 Battle of Flodden. As Cristal has written above in her piece on 'Common Riding', the battle was probably the biggest military disaster in Scottish history.

It happened when James IV rashly chose to invade the north of England in support of the Auld Alliance with France. James had a larger army and was confident of victory. Although he chose a strong position for his army, he lost the advantage by charging downhill into a wet and boggy field, which broke up his formations. There he met the English who had better artillery, archers and more effective weapons. He himself was killed in battle, leaving his troops leaderless. The upshot was a slaughter which destroyed much of Scotland's nobility.

His baby son by his wife Margaret Tudor, sister of Henry VIII, succeeded him as James V - grandfather of James VI of Scotland and I of England who unified the two kingdoms under Stuart rule in 1603.

You can hear it sung by Isla St Clair, followed by the bagpipes [here](#). Played by pipers, the tune is traditionally reserved for honouring fallen service members and remembrance services. Notably it was played at the funerals of the late Queen and Prince Phillip.

THE COUNCIL 2026/27

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