

The Chanter



*How many more times do I have to tell you?
2 meters, you tit!*

Newsletter
June 2020



The Nottingham Scottish Association

Honorary Patron Sir Andrew Buchanan Bt. KCVO KStJ

President's Page



It looks as though the current situation may be slowly coming to an end and I'm hoping everyone is well. As soon as possible after everything is back to normal, we will get on with the activities we all enjoy together. I would like to say in this article that we will be having the AGM on a particular date but, sadly, I am unable to say that. We cannot book a room at St Andrews until they are back to normal; we will also have to wait and see

what decision is made about our particular age group. Walks might be OK, but things like meetings and our garden BBQ may have to wait a bit longer.

There has been some discussion about using ZOOM for face to face video communications. This could be arranged, and it is quite a good tool. But is not so good if you only have a phone rather than a laptop, tablet or PC. I'm not sure that it would work well for the AGM, as we might preclude some members from participating.

One of the great things about this situation, for Sue and me, has been the ability to go out walking locally. After watching a pair of swans for about sixty days they finally showed us their nine delightful cygnets and, contrary to the song, they are not ugly ducklings. Some coots have also



kept us entertained, but they are not the best of parents; they appear to let the eggs hatch, quickly

decide how many they can support then, sadly, kill off the ones they are not going to support.



A big thank you to Dave - his messages, jokes and quiz questions have been greatly appreciated, I would also like to thank Christine for her continuing production of The Chanter. For some time now, most of you have been receiving your copy by email and reading it online. This quarter, only a limited number of paper copies are being sent out. The idea of moving away from printed copies has been discussed before and will be on the AGM agenda again when we eventually meet.

Hopefully, by the time you get to read this we will all have a good idea about how things will develop for the rest of the year. I'm looking forward to meeting and seeing you all soon.

Kind regards
Don

Vale

With regret, we report that Past President, Brian Slatcher, passed away peacefully at the beginning of May. Brian, along with his wife Fiona, served The Nottingham Scottish Association very well, particularly by promoting Scottish Country Dancing. And it was Brian who 'recruited' Sir Andrew Buchanan to become our Honorary Patron.

Brian was President from 2003-2005, working his way up from being a Council Member and then Vice President for two years. From 2005 he served two more years on the Council as Past President. Throughout the years, along with Fiona, he helped the beginners' group, set programmes and called the dances for our Thursday evenings and whipped us into shape for several Festivals and many demonstrations.

Following their move to Southwell, Brian and Fiona found the travelling in the winter months a problem so our loss was Newark Scottish Dance Group's gain. They continued to dance there and to fit in just about every Saturday dance throughout the area. Just over nine years ago, Brian suffered a stroke which stopped his dancing and hill-walking, his other great love. However, he continued to get his kilt on and accompany Fiona to dances where he could enjoy the music and meet old friends. He 'scooted' around Southwell doing what he liked best, being outdoors and meeting people. His two other passions were Fine Wines and Travel. He said, "You don't have to be mobile to enjoy a class of a fine white wine sitting in your garden". Fiona researched holidays in the UK and abroad suitable for a wheelchair user and some of the trips they took were testing but very worthwhile.

On 28th May, Jeanne and I 'attended' Gedling Crematorium for Brian's funeral service. 'Lockdown' restricted the physical attendance to twenty-one, but many more of their family and friends 'were there' like us, by the way of a webcam relay. Whilst it is not the same as showing respect in person, this may become the norm for some time to come.



In closing, and on behalf of The Nottingham Scottish Association, we send our deepest sympathy and take this opportunity to thank Brian and Fiona for their many years of support.

Bill and Jeanne Dall

A puzzle from the President:



With an estimated age of about 1,000 years, and a girth of 12.3m, the tree on the left may be England's oldest oak tree. It's known as the *Bowthorpe Oak* and can be found on Bowthorpe Park Farm, Bourne, in Lincolnshire. The oak tree on the right is



growing in a field about 600m from Don Pringle's house in Trowell.

Don and Sue have measured it and found that it has a girth of 5m. How old do you think this tree is and what important events were happening in Scotland when it was a seedling? Answers later – solve before you look!

From the Editor

The NSA Newsletter archives show that on November 2nd, 1915, it was “*unanimously agreed that all meetings for the season be abandoned*”. It was not until January 1921 that the advisability of reviving the association was discussed – and agreed. Hopefully the current curtailment of activities won't last quite so long. At least we have the opportunity to meet ‘virtually’ these days. Many thanks to Andrew and Sue for getting the virtual dancing going and to Dave (no doubt with some great support from Kate!) for keeping us all busy and amused with weekly emails and attachments.



Thanks also to all those who have contributed to this issue – you have provided an excellent variety of entertainment for members! It remains doubtful that we will have more activities to report next time so please continue to send me articles of interest. I'm still waiting for your memories of ‘poor-oot’ and ‘doon the watter’ – and I'm adding ‘scaffy’ and ‘tattie howking’! And what new things have **you** learned or done during lockdown?

For logistical reasons, and until restrictions are lifted, paper copies of The Chanter are only being sent to the seven households without an email connection – and these will be in black and white. All others will receive only an e-mail copy and those of you who actually **prefer** a paper copy, can always print one yourself if you wish. I hope everyone will understand. And you're getting more for your money - this email copy contains a few extra bits and pieces which I could not fit into the paper copy!

Submissions for the next issue, required by mid-August, can be sent to The Chanter, 13 Haileybury Crescent, West Bridgford, NG2 7BH, or by email to chanter@nottinghamscottish.org.

Christine Oldfield

Dancing Together - Apart...

After a few weeks of Lock Down and slowly developing knowledge of video meetings, we decided, with some trepidation, to follow the example of some other groups and move our weekly dance meetings on to Zoom.

There were (and are!) a few hiccups! Not everyone has the technology and the technology doesn't always seem to work as advertised. We sometimes find ourselves broadcasting a set of family snapshots or our email inbox rather than dance music - fortunately nothing too embarrassing so far. Some dancers mysteriously appear and disappear (to be replaced by a black screen!) for no apparent reason. However, we persevere.

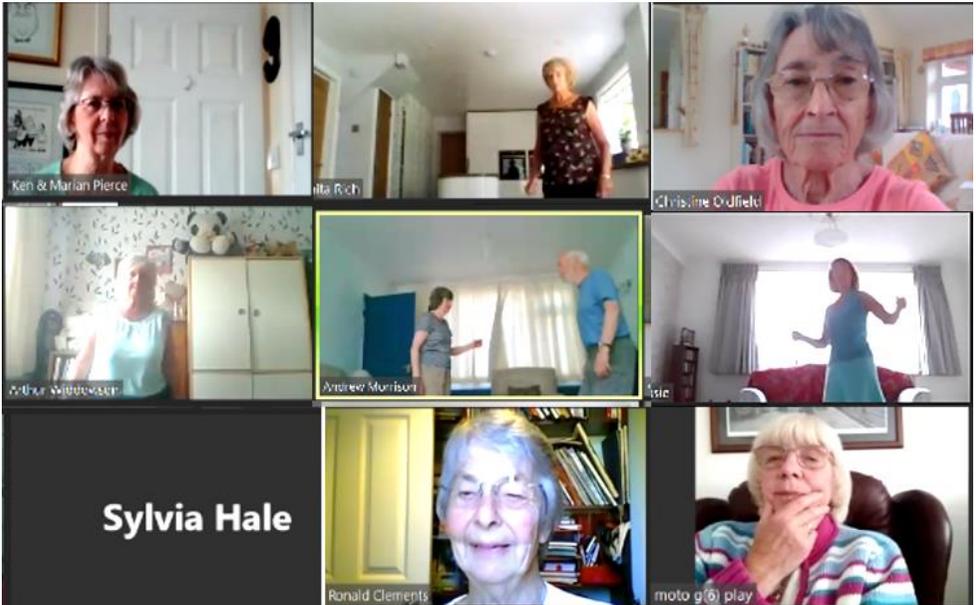


The basic idea is that we all dance the same dance to the same music at the same time, but in our own homes. This means that the rest of the set is entirely imaginary – although it is useful to have markers to represent where the other dancers would be. The RSCDS approved markers are toilet rolls – and, indeed, someone has compiled the ‘Toilet Roll Jig’!

This does lead to some problems. The toilet rolls tend to stay put rather than joining in the reels, and they just will not step up when instructed. It's also difficult to dance a Grand Chain, for example, if you can't actually see the person whose hands you should be taking as you go round. You also can't tell the difference between a reel and a figure of eight! On the plus side, there's no one to complain when you go wrong. And the 'mute' button can be used to keep the dancers quiet while under instruction – a function sadly lacking in the St Andrew's Church Hall!

More importantly, it is a bit of fun in a hard time and it has been good to keep in touch with at least some of our fellow dancers while we wait for a chance to return to normal. Let's hope that is not too long.

Andrew Morrison



Ed. The two pictures are 'collages' from two or three meetings. The actual screenshots I took, show all the hiccups that Andrew described, with some individual screens almost black, almost white, blurred, showing only blank walls etc. So, I picked the best individual screens and put them together. It's not surprising since each of us has different lighting and positioning of our screens and most of us don't have a lot of technical expertise.

Margaret Barnes counts her blessings:

Perks of Reaching 60 and Beyond

Kidnappers are not very interested in you ... In a hostage situation you are likely to be released first.

No one expects you to run – Anywhere.

There is nothing left to learn the hard way.

Things you buy now won't wear out

You can live without sex, but not your glasses

You can eat your supper as early as you like

And your supply of brain cells is finally down to a manageable size.

Members' Memories

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning

Saturday Evening 1950

...or any Saturday evening in many houses throughout Scotland - talking of a long, long time ago. This was the era of radio, usually called 'wireless', with a big Eveready battery and, this'll take you back, an accumulator. The big battery lasted months but the glass accumulator needed charging regularly at the local garage and had a nasty habit of going flat in the middle of your favourite programme.

After we had had our tea, mega-silence followed when we switched on the Scottish Home Service. My dad listened to the football scores, checking his 'treble chance' (which we used to call a 'terrible chance') hoping every week to win £75,000. Alas, this never happened. Following the enforced silence, we all enjoyed and followed a weekly serial called *The McFlannels*. This Scottish family were surrounded by others also named after materials. I remember a Mrs McCorduroy and a Mrs McCotton and many more. I am sure it will just be our not so young members who recall the programme; younger members may think I am making this up or I am BONKERS.

Next up was half an hour of Scottish Dance Music featuring a different band every week. Many of them were the bands that we danced to at the Friday night dances in our local town-hall where there would be 150- 200 dancers, in kilts or white dresses, and about 100 spectators watching from the balcony, feet-tapping to the music. Our local band was Jimmy Shand with his six-piece band. They all had full-time jobs but played in various venues every weekend. That dance programme on the radio started in 1930 and is now entitled 'Take the Floor'. It's the longest running programme on the Home Service, now called BBC Radio Scotland.



For my 70th birthday, on 17th November, Jeanne devised a new Strathspey called 'Seventeen Eleven'. Ian Cruickshank had written the original tune for the dance and he called it 'Jeanne Dall's Strathspey'. He and his band featured it on Take the Floor in 2009. I tune in on BBC iPlayer every Saturday 7-9pm and the request show, Sunday 5-7pm. Give yourself a treat, tune-in. I am sure you'll enjoy it. Just make sure your accumulator is fully charged! And look up Take the Floor and The McFlannels on Wikipedia.

Bill Dall

The Sunday Post

Lyndsey Lyas says: I was a services child with a Scottish mum, born in Edinburgh, and a dad who was a navigator on air sea rescue helicopters in the RAF. So, wherever we were posted, was near the coast. We were in various places, both home and abroad, but no matter where we were, we



had the Sunday Post! My uncle would send it to us if we were abroad, so as children, my brother and I were able to keep up with Oor Willie and the Broons! When the parcel arrived via BFPO there was huge excitement! We used to have sweets sent out too, so we had a gobstopper or liquorice or lemon sherbets to eat at the same time as reading. "Ooh", Happy memories indeed!



And from the Editor: Sunday mornings in Edinburgh meant reading the cartoon strips. Oor Wullie was always getting into scrapes and was not too happy when his dungarees were removed and he was put in a kilt in 1968. The Broons, billed as being 'the happy family that makes every family happy' lived in a small tenement flat at 10 Glebe Street, Auchentogle. There were eleven of them - Granpaw Broon along with Paw and Maw Broon and their eight children. Granpaw and the 'bairn' got on famously!



When I started my second teaching post in Colombia in 1968, I still looked forward to reading the copies my dad sent out to me. They arrived in Bogotá having been flown in by BOAC on their regular Saturday flights.

But I also remember how *useful* the Sunday Post was. I always looked forward to the occasions when Dad went out to buy fish'n'chips – they came wrapped in pages from the Sunday Post, thick enough not to let any vinegar escape and to keep our supper piping hot.

And we did something a bit different when we'd finished reading *our* copy. We'd tear each single page into four pieces and put them in a pile. Dad

made a hole in one corner and tied a loop of string through. With this hung on the toilet door we never needed to panic buy toilet rolls!

For those who don't know, The Sunday Post, a tabloid size newspaper, first produced in 1914, is a Dundee publication. According to Wikipedia "*Sales of the Sunday Post in Scotland were once so high that it was recorded in The Guinness Book of Records as the newspaper with the highest per capita readership in the world.*" And, even in 1969, "*its total estimated readership of 2,931,000 represented more than 80 per cent of the entire population of Scotland aged 16 and over.*" It is interesting to note that this newspaper backed a "No" vote in the referendum on Scottish independence.

Tourism and Travel

Liz Matthews remembers: Tales from Hazel Bank, Windermere, (nearly in Scotland!)

In the eighties, my husband and I ran a guest house, for only six guests – too small to employ staff, so it was hands on full time for both of us.

I provided meals, usually for pre-booked guests, occasionally for people sent down from the Tourist Information Office. On one occasion, with four overnighters, I checked at breakfast as to whether a fish meal would be acceptable that evening, I carefully explained that char was a very special Windemere delicacy, difficult to obtain, but that my butcher was a char fisherman, and as I was a good customer, I had the chance of getting some. (I didn't tell them it was also very expensive and would probably cost me more than they were paying for their meal). The reaction from the very dour Yorkshire husband was "D'ya not do cod?" I realised the char, filleted and delicately fried in butter, would probably be wasted on them. But I think they did enjoy it, though would have still preferred cod – in the days before cod became more acceptable as it became scarcer.

We had many Scottish visitors. There was the dedicated Munro bagger and avalanche surveyor, whose wife insisted on taking hair straighteners up Helvellyn in case the mist caused her hair to curl; Nessie, who told us about the jumping sheep which were banished to an island because of the damage they were causing; and the lady who fell into the river at Ambleside who needed a complete change of clothing, and laundry for all her wet clothes. Her bloomers on the line are still fondly remembered.

It was great fun but hard work, and we're glad to be retired now. We are still in touch with several of our regular visitors, who still ask Glyn to lead them on walks as they always get lost.

Over the Sea to Skye: Eilean a' Cheo – “Island of Mists”

A camping trip with Peter Dale

It's May 1983. After an overnight camp by Loch Lomond, we're heading for Kyle of Lochalsh. As we pass Eilean Donan Castle, on its little rocky islet in Loch Duich, we know it won't be long before we join the queue for the car ferry to Kyleakin on Skye. There was no bridge in those days; it wasn't completed until 1995 and there was a toll until 2004!

The bridge crosses Eilean Bhan - 'The White Island' - home in the 1960s of Gavin Maxwell, author of Ring of Bright Water. Here he developed a wildlife park of Scottish mammals and birds, including his beloved otters.

Pitching camp at Glen Brittle, we couldn't fail to appreciate the rugged grandeur of the Cuillin; the pointed peaks, sharp ridges and deep corries of the mountain range stretched before our eyes, towering above us.

Next day we climbed to the ridge at 2900 ft but turned back as thick cloud enveloped us as we ascended the final snow slopes of Bruach na Frithe, a Munro at 3143ft. But we did finally get to the summit in 1992, in clear conditions, and enjoyed superb views along the ridge.

We visited Dunvegan Castle, home of the chiefs of Clan MacLeod for over



800 years. Boswell and Dr Johnson stayed there awhile on their 'Tour of the Hebrides in 1773. You can climb the stair of the Fairy Tower where they were accommodated, and view, as we did, the tattered remnant of the Fairy Flag. Said to be a gift from the fairies, it was more likely captured from the Saracens during a Crusade! Waved in battle, it has twice brought victory to the MacLeods.

To the south of Dunvegan are two distinctive flat-topped hills, known as MacLeod's Tables. We climbed the higher of the two, Healabhal Bheag (1601ft), in 2008, struggling up through dense bracken, but rewarded by the sight of two white-tailed eagles circling over the forest below.

The long Trotternish ridge dominates the most northerly part of the island. Here, numerous landslips have created a landscape of pinnacles, gullies and tumbled rocks. Outstanding features are the Old Man of Storr and the Quiraing, where we scrambled up by the 'Prison' and the 'Needle' to picnic on the flat grassy 'Table'.

From the little port of Uig, on the west coast of Trotternish, ferries depart for Harris and North Uist, but that's another story

Iris Dale looks back at this extract from a letter to her Mum whilst she was in second year at the University of Reading

“This week looks really busy:-

Tues – Scottish Dance Practice

Weds – English Country Dancing

Thurs – new Israeli Dancing Group

Fri – Ballroom Dancing or Scottish Dance at Bracknell

Sat – Jazz Band Ball

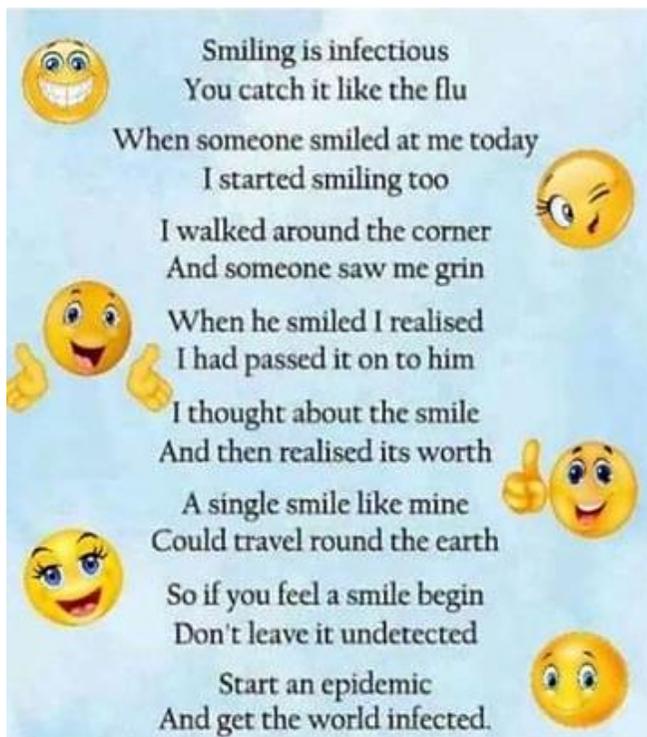
Sun – Scottish Dancing (afternoon)

If I don't get slimmer on all this exercise, I shall despair! Colin, (our Scottish Dance teacher & medal-winning Highland Dancer) has told me of some other events:- A Halloween Party at Maidenhead, Reading Pipe Band Social and his Scottish Concert at Maidenhead.”

How nice it was to be 18 and fit enough to dance every day!

Smile!

Thank you to Bill Dall for sharing Spike Milligan's poem



Saltire on Show in Cotgrave

Ed. The background: As lockdown began, Holme Pierrepont Running Club organised a virtual relay event. One person from each of two teams would run one leg each day lasting (Covid) 19 minutes, and they had to carry an imaginative baton. There was a mop, toilet roll inner, Chinese radish, bottle of beer, a banana and lots more. John and I, stranded in Australia at the time, took part, but couldn't come back, even with our boomerang baton!

Anyway, this is what Scot, **Gordon Barnard** says about his baton decision:

"Being from north of the border I decided to take my Scottish flag (saltire), bound up using my first ever race finisher's medal. Quite apt really as it is now 25 years old 😊 being from my hometown of Glasgow Half Marathon (or Great Scottish Run, to give it its posh name!) back in 1995."



And he has told me a bit about himself: "I lived for the most part of my pre-exile years in the village of Killearn, out Loch Lomond way. I moved to the East Midlands not long after that Great Scottish Run, due to work reasons and have been around here ever since. I married a Nottingham lass and we have two grown up daughters. I have lived in Newark and Bingham and am currently living on the doorstep of Cotgrave Country Park. It kind of reminds me a little of home, though on a much smaller scale!"

Ed. Coincidentally, John and I also ran in that same race in 1995. And I **have** invited Gordon to join the NSA!

The virtual event that the club organised to follow that relay was the **HP LeJogLe (Land's End to John o' Groats and back)**. Four teams of twenty-one members had to walk, jog or run as much as they could each day to make up the total distance of 1960 miles. Shortly after the border was crossed, the following message was posted on Facebook from former HP club member, **Ian Grant**, now based in Scotland:

"I am here in Edinburgh (physically not virtually) and have just had Nicola Sturgeon on the phone asking about these English runners marauding through her country. I've cleared up the misunderstanding that HPRC is definitely not the Houses of Parliament Running Club (as Ian Blackford had mischievously tweeted). She relaxed further when I told her that Ant Squire owns a kilt, the Oldfields have run every inch of the Pentland hills and that Mike Wells once ran the Highland Fling in a tartan tutu. She wishes you all safe passage and just asked that you don't stop for picnics, sunbathing or a game of golf (as all still banned in Scotland). Good luck".

A couple of items from *The Postie's Jig, RSCDS Western Australia*

Lauraine Cameron, the Editor, provides some words of hope

I have been reminded of something from my own ancient past lately – during my first year of school in the 1950s, we were given a picture to colour in. It showed a large cake of soap with little stick legs and arms wearing boxing gloves. The caption read “*To fight the polio germ we must wash our hands*”. More than six decades later it seems that some things never change. Fortunately, before I grew much older, a vaccine was developed which took care of that particular scourge and I'm sure it won't be long before one is available for this latest horror.

And for our NSA dancers: On Thursday nights you can't fail to have heard the name *John Brenchley* mentioned. He is originally from Kent, and now lives in Western Australia. He is the compiler of many popular dances including



Torridon Lassies, Orpington Caledonians and *Glengarry Homestead*, all of which we have danced. We are also familiar with *Perth Meets Perth*, a dance written by Pat Stevenson for the booklet, *Perth 800*, which, in 2010, celebrated the 800th anniversary of Perth, Scotland.

Pat was originally from Darlington, UK, and for Pat's 80th birthday in March 2020, John compiled *The Darlington Dancer*, a medley of strathspey and reel. The photo shows John presenting Pat with the dance instructions – just a day or so before lockdown! I am expecting to receive a copy of the instructions at some stage. I suspect the dance will be as intricate and well-crafted as all his dances and a good challenge for us. And knowing John's previous dances we can be sure that it will flow.....!

Subs

Ed. If you are one of the many who have not yet paid fees for 2020/2021 you may be wondering if you are still considered to be an NSA member. I think you can take it that you **are** – since, the last I heard, the President himself had not paid! Something will no doubt be arranged in due course.

Answers to the President's Puzzle:

It took some complicated calculations, using the girth to determine years of growth. Don and Sue found that their oak tree was 417 years old - so it started life in 1603. There were two very notable Scottish events that year: On March 24th, Queen Elizabeth I died and the Scottish King James VI, son of Mary Queen of Scots, became King James I of England, thus joining the English and Scottish crowns. His coronation on July 25th made him the first Scottish king of England and also created the kingdom of Great Britain.

Future Activities

We all feel frustrated at not being able to get together to socialise. But there is no excuse for anyone to feel bored! There is spring cleaning, DIY and gardening! But the Association is providing several other ways to help keep you all connected and occupied. There's *The Chanter*, of course, but check out the list below for other offerings.

From NSA

Dave's Diversions Information, puzzles, quizzes, video clips, cartoons, jokes – you name it, Dave Potter provides it - by email on a regular basis.

Virtual Dancing (via Zoom) Every Thursday at 6,30pm for 40 minutes. Email the Editor or contact Andrew and Sue Morrison.

Phone contacts Several members are already keeping in touch with others. If anyone feels, at any stage, that they need someone to talk to, please make use of the phone numbers on the next page. Council members will be happy to have a chat.

Radio

Take the Floor - Live Scottish Dance Music and Scottish songs
Saturdays 7pm – 9pm and Sundays 5pm – 7pm. BBC Radio Scotland, 92-95 FM, 810 MW, via BBC Sounds, BBC iPlayer or listen on your TV - Virgin channel 930, Sky 116. You'll have read Bill Dall's rave reviews!



Find us on
Facebook

If you're not already a member, why don't you join
The Nottingham Scottish Association
Facebook group?

You can also find us on our website

<https://nottinghamscottish.org/news>

THE COUNCIL 2019/2020

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