



Dictionaries of the Scots Language  
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### **When Scotty said “Scunner”**

**Gregor Steele**

Ah wis at ma gran’s, we wir watchin Star Trek,  
Ah dinnae mind much o the plot,  
Whit cooried doon in ma heid yon nicht,  
Wis a word frae Engineer Scott.

Licht years awa, in a strange new warld,  
He cried a baddie a scunner,  
And Ah gied a wee smile and ma grannie asked why,  
Ah said, ‘It’s about twa thoosan three hunner’.

‘And dae ye really think they’ll be usin auld words,’  
‘Like scunner and dreich and douce,’  
‘And glaikit and dwam and fleg and stane,’  
‘And cuddie and neb and hoose?’

*And ma grannie thocht for a wee minute  
And said*

Ah dinnae sae ‘hoose’ because Ah canne say ‘house’,  
Af coorse Ah can, wha cannae?  
It’s the name that Ah crie the place whaur Ah bide,  
Like ma maw and ma paw and ma grannie.

And ma grannie’s gran and *her* grannie’s gran,  
And her maw and her gran’s maw’s gran,  
And *her* grannie’s gran, and her gran’s grannie’s gran,  
And her gran’s grannie’s maw’s gran’s man.

And *his* maw’s paw’s gran and her grannie’s gran  
And *her* grannie’s gran’s grannie’s gran’s maw,  
And the fermers and priests and sodjers o the day,  
And the kings and the queens and aa.

*And Ah thocht for a wee minute  
And said*

Ah ken whit ye mean, these are aa braw words,  
And they're words Ah'm gonnae keep sayin,  
And mibbe in time Ah'll be merrit wi a hoose,  
And Ah'll pass these words tae ma wean.

And the words wull pass tae ma wean's wean's wean,  
And *their* wean's grandwean's wean's grandwean,  
And their grandwean's weans, and their wean's grandweans,  
And their freens weans if they've nane o their ain.

And *their* grandwean's weans, and their wean's grandweans,  
And their grandwean's grandweans and aa,  
Richt up tae the time when Scotty is born,  
In the year twinty-twa-twinty-twa

Sae gaun yersel, Montgomery Scott,  
Stert up yon ship's warp core,  
Tae tak these words and gallus-lik gang,  
Whaur nae words hae ganged afore.

Commissioned by Dictionaries of the Scots Language in celebration of Scots and its extensive history as a lasting tribute to *A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* and all those involved in its making. For further background, see <https://dsl.ac.uk/aitken100/>.