



# The Robert Burns World Federation Newsletter



Issue 7 March 2014

Perhaps it will come as no surprise that much of the content of this edition of the newsletter comes in the form of reports from Burns Suppers from far and wide and reflecting participation of young and old alike. Such has been the response that I've had to hold some articles over to the May edition so I apologise if your report did not make the cut. Unfortunately the email version of the January Newsletter did not reach everyone but it is available on the Federation website [www.rbwf.org.uk](http://www.rbwf.org.uk) under the 'News' tab.

## In this Issue:

	Page
- Dunblane Youth Burns Club	1
- Helen (Nellie) Waddell Tribute	2
- Burns Suppers	3-5
- Iain Rogers Tribute	5
- Wreath Laying in Edinburgh	6
- Kilbryde Burns Club Supper	6
- Milwaukee and Ukraine	7
- Dumfries 'Big Burns Supper'	7
- Walter Scott and Burns	8
- Burns Howff Club Supper	8
- Burns Club of Atlanta Burns Supper	9
- Burns 'Afton Water' Manuscript	9
- First Haggis of the Season	10
- St Michael's Church Dumfries – Tours	10
- Overseas Schools Report	11
- Craig Rodger a Tribute	11
- John Lapraik Competition	12

## A Song for Spring

The flowery Spring leads sunny Summer,  
The yellow Autumn presses near;  
Then in his turn comes gloomy Winter,  
Till smiling Spring again appear.  
Thus seasons dancing, life advancing,  
Old Time and Nature their changes tell;  
But never ranging, still unchanging,  
And I adore my bonie Bell.

*Bonie Bell* by Robert Burns

Tune: Bonie Bell

## Dunblane Centre Youth Burns Club



The Dunblane Centre Youth Burns Club held its seventh Annual Burns Supper on 24<sup>th</sup> Jan 2014. Twenty young local artists entertained the company with superbly delivered speeches, music, recitations and songs. Scotland's First Minister, the Rt Hon Alex Salmond (rear centre), delivered a humorous and informative Immortal Memory. The event featured as part of the Burns Homecoming timeline project, an interactive digital timeline portraying the life and works of our national bard. See also [www.scotland.org/burns](http://www.scotland.org/burns)

Registered Office: Dean Castle Country Park, Dower House,  
Kilmarnock KA3 1XB Company Registration No 196895  
Scottish Charity No SC029099 e-mail: [admin@rbwf.org.uk](mailto:admin@rbwf.org.uk)  
Website address: [www.rbwf.org.uk](http://www.rbwf.org.uk)

Newsletter Editor -Mike Duguid (Literature Convenor)

Email [mike.duguid@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:mike.duguid@dsl.pipex.com) Tel: 01557 860040

To unsubscribe please email [admin@rbwf.org.uk](mailto:admin@rbwf.org.uk)

## Helen (Nellie) Waddell Remembered



*When death's dark stream I ferry o'er,  
A time that surely shall come;  
In Heaven itself, I'll ask no more,  
Than just a Highland welcome.*

On Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2014, Helen Waddell – Nellie - passed away. Nellie was a very special lady and we all loved her dearly. She always showed great interest and concern for all her Burns friends.

As well as being a member of several Burns Clubs including Ayr, Skelmorlie, Belfast and Allanton Jolly Beggars, where she was secretary for the past 22 years, she was also actively involved with the Lanarkshire Association of Burns Clubs (LABC) during this time and was a regular visitor at the Fauldhouse and Crofthead and the Larkhall Burns Club meetings.

She worked tirelessly for the local, area and national Schools Festivals helping children and adults find their way around unfamiliar venues, distributing programmes and settling any last minute nerves and excitement among participants and adjudicators alike!

Nellie was also an enthusiastic trustee of the St. Petersburg Forum and had travelled to Russia on several occasions for the annual Knowledge of Scotland competition. She also welcomed the Russian winners here and was part of the group hosting, funding and organising the programme of events for these young visitors. Nellie and Helen Morrison ensured their guests were driven all over the country to take in as much of our national Bard and our Scottish culture and heritage during their visit.

It was a delight to be present at last year's RBWF Conference to see Nellie awarded Honorary Membership of the Federation. She was both surprised and gracious in accepting the accolade, one she richly deserved. A true ambassador for our Bard, most recently Addressing the Haggis – word perfect, of course - at this year's Allanton Jolly Beggars Supper, appropriately enough on 25 January!

Nellie will be sorely missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her but she will remain in our hearts and minds forever. Her funeral took place on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February where her family and friends as well as a large turnout of her beloved Burns family joined in a celebration of her life.

Fare-thee-weel, thou first and fairest!

Fare-thee-weel, thou best and dearest!

[Submitted by Patricia Leslie, President, Lanarkshire Association of Burns Clubs.]

## Friends in St Petersburg Also Pay Tribute to Nellie

We have learned with deep regret and great sadness of the death of Nellie Waddell, a Trustee of the St.Petersburg Forum, a lover of Russia and St Petersburg, a person who dedicated so much of her time and energy to the noble cause of strengthening relations between our countries.

We fully understand that by her passing St.Petersburg Forum has lost one of very dedicated members. We had the privilege of meeting her and know well about her dedication to her country, its history and culture and the great sense of pride with which she spoke of her family and friends from Forum.

Nellie had gained love and respect of members of St.Petersburg Association for International Cooperation and Scotlinks Organization. She was an extraordinary person with charisma and charm, energetic and kind, very positive, who never spoke of her own problems. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her here.

We all join here in expressing our sympathy to you all. Yours sincerely,

Margarita Mudrak and family, Julia Volkova, Tatiana Emelyanova, Nina Tsvetkova, Freda Zaitseva, Natasha Mecheva, Irina Shabunina, Leonid Seleznev and all members of St Petersburg Association for International Cooperation who knew Nellie.

## GLASGOW'S FIRST TARTAN & TURBANS BURNS SUPPER

A unique cross-cultural event took place in Glasgow on Sunday 26 January 2014. East Dunbartonshire Councillor Manjinder Shergill and Linsay Given Black, who runs The Jaskomal Foundation in Scotland organised a Punjabi/Scots Burns Supper to raise awareness of the critical need for more ethnic minority bone marrow donors and to raise funds for The Jaskomal Foundation and Delete Blood Cancer, one of the leading charities in this field. With some donations still to come in, the total raised for the charities is around £3,100.



The event was hosted by Hardeep Singh Kohli, a great supporter of blood cancer/bone marrow charities and included both traditional Scottish and Punjabi entertainment – including two members of the North Atlantic Trio (guitar and harp), a piper accompanied by two dhol players to pipe in the haggis. DjHarri Glasgow provided the music and staging.



There was also a fashion show featuring the new Pride of India tartan, designed for Glasgow's forthcoming Commonwealth Games, a tartan sari and catwalk tartan and velvet dresses, courtesy of Psychomoda in Edinburgh.

Political figures from across Scotland showed their support. First Minister Alex Salmond signed a copy of the Devolution White Paper auctioned on the night, while three MSPs, Jackie Baillie, Hanzala Malik and Graeme Pearson have donated lunch for two, tickets to First Minister's Questions and a tour of the Scottish Parliament. Anas Sanwar, MP has also donated a lunch for two in Westminster and tour of the Houses of Parliament.



Dr Amanjit Jhund, Scottish Sikh parliamentary candidate in 2015 delivered the toast to the haggis. The Lord Provost has also donated a prize, as have Rebus author Ian Rankin and Gruffalo creator Julia Donaldson.

[For a related but separate expression of Scottish/Asian culture see Sanjeev Kohli - Tae a Samosa at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odCD09A1F6E&feature=youtube\\_gdata\\_player](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odCD09A1F6E&feature=youtube_gdata_player) Ed]

## STRATHEARN BURNS CLUB



The 115th Annual Burns Supper of the Strathearn Burns Club took place in Crieff Golf Club, attended by over seventy members and guests. Chairman Bill Clark welcomed the gathering and Piper Jamie Roddick led in chef Richard Collingwood carrying the haggis. Pete McCarra addressed the haggis with great vigour and evident feeling for the noble beast. Fiona Souter said the Selkirk Grace and the company then enjoyed another excellent golf club meal. For full report see the 'News' section of the Federation website: [www.rbwf.org.uk](http://www.rbwf.org.uk)

[Left to right: Kenneth Maciver, Bill Clark, Ann Morrison, Carl MacDougall, Peter McCarra, Edna Auld, Irwin Keith, David Sloan and Michael Kidd.]

### Thornhill and District Burns Supper



On Saturday 25th January 2014 the Thornhill & District Burns Club held their annual Burns Supper at the Thornhill Community Centre. The President, Ronnie Cairns, introduced Jimmy Law who delivered the Immortal Memory. The Toast to the Lassies was given by Peter Moran and the reply by Jean McMillan-Forster. The haggis was piped in by William Prentice, carried by Ian Millar and addressed by Ronnie Cairns. There were recitations given by Colin Gibson. Jimmy Law, William Crawford and Les Byers who also sang. Rev. Ella Pennington played a medley of Burns songs and the vote of thanks was given by Randal McDonald. [At the top table from left to right are Jean McMillan-Forster, Jimmy Law, President Ronnie Cairns, Halina Cairns, Peter Moran and the Rev. Ella Pennington.]

### Seton Burns Club

Seton Burns Club held its Lads & Lassies Burns Supper in Cockenzie and Port Seton Royal British Legion on 22 February

Chairman Iain McLeod welcomed the company, before the haggis was piped in by Colin Sturrock, followed by croupiers John & Lyn Marshall. The haggis was addressed by David Morgan and after the Selkirk Grace by Beth McDonald, the company tucked into an excellent meal of traditional fare.

Jane Brown, the current President of the Robert Burns World Federation delivered a superb Immortal Memory both as herself and as Jean Armour, Robert's long-suffering wife!



Songs were performed by local favourites Alex Hodgson and Gareth Evans. Colin Sturrock on the pipes provided additional music during the evening. Billy Horne (The Twa Dogs) and Jim Baillie (Tam O' Shanter) gave great renditions of Burns' poems during the evening. The Toast to the Lasses was given by Robert Brown in hilarious form and Val McLeod spared no punches with her Toast to the Laddies. Duncan Morgan proposed a tremendous Toast to Oor Village.

[The haggis party left to right is Colin Sturrock, John Marshall, David Morgan, Lyn Marshall, Jane Brown, Iain McLeod (Seton Burns Club Chairman), Willie McGaughie (Legion Chairman)]

### Irvine Lasses Celebrate



Irvine Lasses Burns Club held its 39th Annual Dinner on 1st Feb in the Menzies Hotel, Irvine. President Annie Small presided and Past President of Irvine Burns Club, Tim Swan, delivered the Immortal Memory. Pat McPhee, a former Provost of Irvine toasted the Laddies, while Fr Willie Boyd, another Past President of Irvine Burns Club replied. Piper Jimmy Cook, Reader Julie Holden and singer Karen Stewart, accompanied by Ann Miller, provided the evening's entertainment.

## Friends of Ellisland Celebrate the Bard



On Saturday the 1st February 2014 The Friends of Ellisland held the first of their Burns suppers in the threshing barn. The haggis was piped in by Arron Gibson and addressed by Kieran Nordon. Jane Brown, the President of the Robert Burns World Federation delivered the Immortal Memory. Toast to the lasses was given by Russell Williamson and the reply by Fiona Evans. Entertainment was provided by Lee McQueen on accordion, Natalie Stewart singing, Kieran Nordon on fiddle and a recitation of Holy Willie's Prayer and Aaron Gibson baggiping. The vote of thanks was given by Donald Urquhart.

At the top table from left to right are Russell Williamson, Halina Cairns, Chairman Ronnie Cairns, Jane Brown and Fiona Evans.

## Ellisland Supper No 2

On 8<sup>th</sup> Feb the Friends of Ellisland held their second Burns supper in the threshing barn at Ellisland Farm. The haggis was piped in by Chris Gray and addressed by the Chairman Ronnie Cairns. William Crawford proposed the Immortal Memory. The toast to the lassies was ably given by Stephan Hastie and an entertaining response given by Dr Maureen Milton. Chris Gray is not only an accomplished bagpiper but he also entertained the company on the Irish whistle. Vocals were by Victoria Hastie who has a beautiful singing voice, the curator Les Byers recited Tam O' Shanter, Avril Kerr gave two recitations in her own inimitable style, Lee McQueen performed an accordion medley and the vote of thanks was given by Tom Johnstone.



In the photo from left to right are Dr Maureen Milton, William Crawford, the Treasurer Betty Haining, William Crawford, Chairman Ronnie Cairns, Halina Cairns and Stephan Hastie.

## Iain Alasdair Rogers - A Tribute



Friday 10th January 2014 saw a service of thanksgiving for the life of Iain Alasdair Rogers of Dumfries and latterly Lockerbie who passed away on Christmas Eve. Iain was an ardent Burnsian and his love of the works of the Bard influenced his life considerably. His good friend Rev. Basil Platt was tasked with following Iain's instructions which he had made before his death, including his choice of poem, 'To a Mouse' which was kindly read by Jane Brown, R.B.W.F President. His choice of music was both folk and traditional.

His family, wife, sons, daughter and grandchildren saw the Chapel of Rest filled to capacity with old friends, both local and from outwith the area. Friends from Thornhill Burns Club, The Saltire Society, Friends of Ellisland, An Comun Gaidhealach (Iain was a fluent Gaelic speaker) the local M.S.P., friends from Dumfries

S.N.P and Dumfries & Galloway Councillors, past and present, were there to pay their respects and celebrate his life with laughter and some tears.

Iain was a gifted artist specialising in pen and ink; an example here is shown of the Burns Mausoleum in Dumfries. He was a man who loved Burns, his enthusiasm affected all who met him and he will be very sadly missed. [Halina Cairns, Thornhill & District Burns Club]



## Wreath Laying Ceremony at Scottish National Portrait Gallery



On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2014 the Edinburgh and District Burns Clubs Association (EDBCA) held its Annual Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. After an opening song by Jim Weatherston beside the Flaxman statue, Gordon Jamieson, Secretary of EDBCA, gave a welcome address. Jim Shields, President of EDBCA laid a wreath and remarked on the life of Robert Burns. Various official bodies laid wreaths including the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Donald Wilson, Zoja B. Bazarnic for the American Consulate in Edinburgh, Fiona Hyslop on behalf of the Scottish Government and the Scottish People, the Provincial Grand Lodge of Scotland, the National Trust for Scotland, the Depute Provost of East Lothian and the Provost of Mid Lothian along with Christopher Baker, Director of the Scottish National Portrait Galleries. Fiona Hyslop delivered a most interesting talk on Burns and the importance of Edinburgh in the poet's life. We were very pleased that Jane Brown, President of the Robert Burns World Federation, was able to attend and lay a Wreath on behalf of the Federation.

The party then sang "A Mans a Man for a' that" before adjourning for tea and coffee. Jim Shields presented the Director of the Scottish National Portrait Galleries with the latest Robert Burns Encyclopaedia as a mark of his kindness in the continued support of the EDBCA.

## Kilbryde Burns Club Supper

The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Burns Supper was held in the Village Bowling Pavilion on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February. President, Jim Leslie, chaired the evening. The Selkirk Grace was said by the Vice-President, Wendy McNab. The Haggis, carried by Philip Brown, was piped in by Gordon Campbell and The Address was given expressively by May Lobban.

After the supper, the evening continued with a fiddle medley of favourite Burns songs, by Geoffrey Halyburton.

L to R: John Campbell, May Lobban, Geoffrey Halyburton, John Hutcheson, Wendy McNab and Bobby Kane.

Seated: Neena Hughes (Peter's wife), Peter Hughes, Patricia Leslie, President Jim Leslie, and Karen McPhail



A warm welcome was extended to the main speaker, Dr. Peter Hughes O.B.E., Junior Vice President of the Robert Burns World Federation, particularly as Peter was resuming his engagements following illness over Christmas and New Year. Peter's Immortal Memory was humorous, entertaining and punctuated by quotes.

A witty and cheerful Toast to the Lasses was given by Fauldhouse and Crofthead's, Bobby Kane, and his partner, Karen McPhail, gave The Reply, offering her opinions on male "shortcomings."

John Hutcheson, gave an explanation of his choice of songs and fine renditions of 'Now Westlin' Winds', 'Rattlin, Roarin' Willie' and 'Sic a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation' were enjoyed by all.

The company was also treated to hilarious recitations of 'Tam o' Shanter' and 'Holy Willie's Prayer' by Fauldhouse and Crofthead's John Campbell, who not only dressed for the parts but managed to gallop round the hall on an imaginary Meg! The vote of thanks was given by Wendy McNab and the evening concluded with the obligatory Auld Lang Syne. [Photo: Wendy McNab with John Hutcheson looking on]



## Milwaukee Burns Club's Link to the Ukraine



The Robert Burns Club of Milwaukee Burns Supper was held at their long-time watering hole, Klemmers Williamsburg Inn in West Allis, Wisconsin. President Priscilla Kucik gave the Welcome and President's Address and Vice President Ian Day performed his signature dramatic rendition of Burns' "Address to a Haggis".

Their newest member Theresa Staab's Immortal Memory centered on Robert Burns' popularity in the Ukraine. The Robert Burns Club of Milwaukee encouraged and helped a grade school in the Ukraine change their Robert Burns "Room" into the Robert Burns "Museum", home of the Ploske Junior Burns Club, under the direction of Taya Khriplova. Wisconsinite Theresa Staab recently returned from twenty years in the Ukraine and noted that even under the severe censorship of the Stalin regime, Robert Burns poetry was allowed in the classroom. In the "Toast to the Lassies" and the "Lassies' Reply" Russell and Jessie Read (photo), shared the wisdom of their 33 years of marriage with the younger, more inexperienced laddies and lassies.

The Milwaukee supper was only one of many held in the USA and Canada; full reports on several of them can be found on the RBANA website: [Burns Supper Reports - RBANA - Robert Burns Association of North](#)

## Big Burns Supper Festival in Dumfries



Dumfries recently played host to the third annual 'Big Burns Supper' Festival. The event was an opportunity to showcase various facets of Scottish art and culture as well as celebrating the Bard's life and works. Undaunted by the dreich weather over most of the festival, over 2000 people participated in the homecoming carnival, which marched through the town centre. Pipe bands, Highland dancers and drum ensembles provided a stirring introduction to the weekend's events. Local pubs hosted a series of musical events including popular musician [Jamie McLennan](#) in the intimate surroundings of the Globe Inn, Burns' 'favourite howff.'

The main venue for the festival was a 1920s Spiegel tent, recreating the atmosphere of a post-war, smoky Berlin cabaret club. A rousing brass band [The Hackney Colliery Band](#), who featured at the Olympic closing ceremony, proved a real hit with their eclectic mix of musical genres.

Provocative acrobatics from male and female dancers featured in a 90-minute burlesque Burns Supper *Le Haggis* which saw them perform to musical folk arrangements inspired by the works of Burns while the audience tucked into their haggis, neeps and tatties.

Folk legend [Dick Gaughan](#) entertained the packed tent with his anecdotes and gravely singing voice. Comedian Fred MacAulay had the crowd laughing, whooping and chuckling at his irreverent humour while Jordon Chisholm won the 'Emerging Artist' award for her stunning one-woman show. The festival reached its climax on Sunday evening with the legendary band [Big Country](#) holding centre stage and enthralling the audience as they played their greatest hits.



Reflecting on the hectic three-day Festival, the Director Graham Main is already looking at how next year's Big Burns Supper can be made even better. "Scotland's Burns Night celebrations have huge potential. They can become a really important and eagerly anticipated part of Scotland's rich cycle of public cultural events and festivals."

## Walter Scott Meets Robert Burns at Sciennes Hill House



Walter Scott was a generation younger than Burns. 'I was a lad of fifteen in 1786/7, when he came first to Edinburgh,' he recorded, 'but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry.' Scott despaired of meeting the famous poet but eventually they were both invited to the house of a mutual friend. Scott was too young to take part in conversation but his moment came when he alone was able to remember the name of the author of a half-forgotten poem that had impressed Burns. Scott whispered the poet's name to a friend, who mentioned it to Burns, 'who rewarded me with a look and a word, which though of mere civility, I received, and recollect, with very great pleasure'. This is the incident that Charles Martin Hardie records in his oil

painting of 1893. This painting hangs in the Dunedin Public art Gallery in New Zealand. There is another version of it at Abbotsford, Sir Walter Scott's home in the Scottish Borders. The two paintings are very similar in the content details but differ in size: 1205x1815 mm (Dunedin) vs. 690 x 1025 mm (Abbotsford).

## Burns Howff Club Celebrate in Style

The 125th anniversary dinner of the Burns Howff Club took place in the Globe Inn, Dumfries on Monday, January 27. Piper Callum Watson piped in the procession of office bearers and guests before piping in the haggis. President Godfrey Bedford addressed the haggis in an endearingly gentle north-west of England patois, much appreciated by the company. Brian Taylor, the BBC's political editor, proposed the toast to the Immortal Memory and, using his mastery of the English and Scots language to full effect, he spoke of how Burns in his prose and letters sharply and succinctly demolished the establishment. The final toast of the evening was The Lassies, O' and this normally witty and acerbic discourse was in the hugely capable hands of John Glover.



David Smith's excellent report of the evening can be seen at the Club website: [www.burnshowffclub.org](http://www.burnshowffclub.org)

[Photo: President Godfrey Bedford welcomes the haggis with Brian Taylor on his left and John Glover on his right. Jane Brown as "Poesie Nancie"]

## Yorkshire Tartan Ball

Visit Yorkshire in the spring when a warm welcome will be extended on Saturday 12 April 2014 to the Tartan Ball at the Ardsley House Hotel, Doncaster Road, Ardsley, Barnsley S71 5EH.

Iain MacPhail and his Scottish Dance Band from Edinburgh will entertain and dinner is a three course with menu choice, all for a very reasonable price of £30.00.

The special rate for those wishing to stay overnight in the hotel is Standard Twin/Double Room - £50.00; Single Room £30.00 including full breakfast and use of the leisure facilities

Book direct with hotel on 01226 309955 stating you are attending Tartan Ball

Further details and application forms from hon. secretary May McGuffog E-mail [mmandhmcg@aol.com](mailto:mmandhmcg@aol.com) Tel.No 01274 582577



## Burns Club of Atlanta



The Burns Club of Atlanta celebrated its 119<sup>th</sup> Burns Supper on 25<sup>th</sup> Jan 2014 in the evocative setting of the full-size replica Burns Cottage, built in 1910. During the evening the Presidential chain of office was handed over by outgoing President David Grant to the new President Berryman E (Woody) Woodruff. Henry Frantz piped in the home-made haggis to be addressed enthusiastically by Richard Graham. Edward Morgan enthralled the audience with a rendition of A

Man's a Man for a' That. Your Editor had the singular honour of delivering the toast to the Immortal Memory and the photo shows President Woody presenting me with a memorial mug. Andrew Thomas Jones proposed the Toast to the Lasses (subtitled 'Yes Dear') and his wife Judy gave a robust response in verse. Despite being nominally an all-male club, the ladies play an integral part in the proceedings of the club and are ardent supporters of the monthly talks and events.

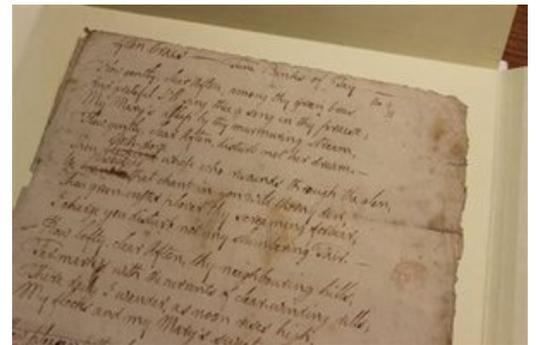


## Burns Manuscript Unveiled at University of South Carolina



On Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2014 the University of South Carolina (USC) in Columbia, S.C. unveiled a single page, browned 1789 manuscript of Burns' song *Afton Braes* also known as *Flow Gently Sweet Afton* or *Afton Water*, one of only three copies known to exist. The photo shows me discussing the item with Elizabeth Suddeth, Director of the Irvin Department of Rare Books & Special Collections in the Ernest F. Hollings Special Collections Library. The manuscript became part of the university's 5,000-item Scottish literature collection, the largest outside the United Kingdom

The manuscript was acquired to honour of the collection's originator, the late USC English professor G. Ross Roy, a noted Burns scholar and teacher who passed away last year. The "Afton Braes" song has a special resonance with USC which made it especially apt as a memorial to Dr Ross Roy. In 1837, the poem was set to a tune composed by Kentucky lawyer, Johnathan Spilman. That music was later used as the music for the university's "Alma Mater" school song.



I had the privilege of being shown round the library by Professor Emeritus Patrick Scott, a dear friend of Professor Roy, and a dedicated custodian of the collection, prior to Elizabeth Suddeth.

Digital images of the collection can be found at <https://www.sc.edu/libraries> then clicking on 'Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections' and 'British Literature'

**A Reminder:** One of the most exciting aspects of this year's Robert Burns Association North America (RBANA) Conference is that it is being held in conjunction with the University of South Carolina and access to the Ross Roy Collection will be made available. For booking details of the conference see:

[Next Conference Details - RBANA - Robert Burns Association of ... www.rbana.com/nextconference.htm](http://www.rbana.com/nextconference.htm)

## First Haggis of the Season



For the brief ceremony at the Scottish Parliament for the “arrival of the first Haggis of the season” a prize winning butcher- Joe Findlay- a member of the Scottish Federation of Meat Traders Association was on duty. Complete with prize-winning Haggis, which Joe Findlay had delivered, Dr Alasdair Allan MSP (centre) and Willie Coffey MSP (left) duly welcomed in Gaelic and Scots respectively the groaning trencher of the best of Scottish Haggis.

With a reputation built on quality and service and using traditional ingredients sourced from impeccable suppliers this expanding

independent company, founded in 1974 had to relocate from the centre of Edinburgh to more spacious premises in Portobello. The increasing demand continues locally and for nine years an overseas demand has seen Joe Findlay and ingredients travelling to Bergen in Norway.

Following the acquisition of appropriate premises for production, the Haggis is made in Norway to supply an increasing demand. The initial buyers were the Bergen Scottish Society and the popularity of Findlay’s Haggis means an increasing trade year on year. Every year is a Year of the Haggis for Findlay’s of Portobello at home and abroad.

For a bit of fun; Get Haggis Hunting - <http://www.huntthehaggis.co.uk/>

## St Michael’s - Tours on Offer



St Michael’s and South Church is the church most commonly attended by Robert Burns during his time in Dumfries and faithfully by Jean Armour until her death. Inside the church you can see marked the pew where he sat. Also of interest are the two pictorial stained glass windows of Burns and Jean Armour installed in 2009 to commemorate 250 years since his birth and a marble bust of the Bard gifted by the Robert Burns World Federation to mark the occasion.

The historic churchyard contains the original gravesite of Burns and also the Italian marble mausoleum, where Burns, Jean and several family members have their final resting place. The recently sculpted Burns’ Rock is sited outside the church gates and across the road stand the bronze statue of Jean Armour and Burns House where the poet spent his last years and sadly died. In the town itself there is more of Burns’ story including the Robert Burns Centre and the Globe Inn, his favourite howff.

[Photo © Copyright [Andy Farrington](#) and licensed for reuse under this [Creative Commons Licence](#)]

It is easy to understand why Dumfries, and in particular St Michael’s Church, are visited by Burns enthusiasts from around the world. Guided tours are on offer to visitors from April to September between 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday. Groups of 20-50 can pre-book a light lunch (soup, filled roll, tray bake and tea or coffee) at a cost of £6 in the church hall before or after their tour. For further details contact Ethel Inglis on 01387 263458 or Esther Preston [prestoncraigavon@supanet.com](mailto:prestoncraigavon@supanet.com).

## Overseas Literature Report



### Essay Competitions: St Petersburg Winners

There were 38 entries from the topic 'An honest man's the noblest work of God' taken from Burns' poem *The Cotters Saturday Night*. Elizabeth Clark, Chairman, St Petersburg Forum and her team selected ten which were passed to the RBWF panel of Isa Hanley, Schools Convener, Helena Anderson Wright and Helen Morrison, who make this final choice:

1. Anastasia Salukhova (School 61)
2. Olga Borisova (School 349)
3. Daria Novikova (School 67) Highly Commended Daria Khirina (School 254)

The essays were of a very high standard and Helen presented a Quaich to two young people in recognition of their tremendous effort: Vladislav Afanasiev (School 46) and Yana Gerina (Gymnasium 67)

### Australian winners

1. Rebecca Kellet
2. Kirsty Evans
3. Kara Azzopardi H/C Megan Baker

### Ukraine winners

1. Ivan Nyzhnyk
2. Daria Chubuk
3. Andriy Mazur H/C Mykola Kurinnyi

The Adjudicators were Jane Brown, RBWF President, RBWF Co-ordinator Isa Hanley and Helen Morrison RBWF Co-ordinator for overseas national literature competition.

## St Petersburg Burns Supper

Helena Anderson Wright gave very creditable speech and was assisted on the fiddle by her friend Elizabeth Naik. Kay Blair addressed the Haggis and Craig Easton piped the lament following the toast. Sally Thomas & Leona Evans entertained the audience with their wonderful singing. Their visit had been sponsored by Dave Scott from The Borders Association of Burns Clubs. Craig Easton, a piper, was sponsored by Fauldhouse & Crofthead Burns Club. They were a credit to the Federation, their families and their sponsors. If you would like to sponsor a young person to accompany the delegation or come on the trip yourself please contact Helen Morrison through the Federation office.



## Craig Rodger Remembered



Cupar Burns Club is lamenting the loss of Craig Rodger, the club's highly respected Bard. A very keen Burnsian, Craig was elected to the Committee of Club in 1998. He composed many high quality poems for all types of occasions and his Greetings from the Cupar Club were sent out each January to many Kindred Clubs worldwide.

Craig was always magnanimous in asserting that it was his teacher of English at Greenock High School, Mabel Irving, who encouraged him to develop his undoubted ability at writing poetry. He certainly had a classic mentor in the muse with Mabel, because, like Craig, she herself was the Bard of Greenock Burns Club the "Mother Club" for many years. It was always a joy to see the pleasure and enjoyment on the faces of the residents of Northeden House and, of the staff and pupils of Kilmarnock School, when Craig performed "To a Mouse" with the wee stuffed 'moose' perched on his thumb.

Having assisted the Fife Association of Burns Clubs at the Annual Fife Schools' Burns Competitions for a number of years, Craig was duly elected as Treasurer of the Association in October 2011. Needless to say, Craig applied himself to that post with his usual diligence and precision and his abilities will be sorely missed by all of us in the Association.

[With thanks to Robert Stewart Past President RBWF]

## John Lapraik Speaking Competition

Muirkirk, in the hills of Ayrshire, is the place to be on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2014. That's where, for the last 7 years, the World John Lapraik Competition has taken place. This event is now well established on the Robert Burns 'competitive poetry' circuit and all the big names in poetry reading vie to take home the Muirkirk Enterprise Group (MEG) trophy. Previous winners have included Wull Horne, Alistair Sim, Cameron Goodall, Jimmy Law, Bobby Jess and Ian Buick.

It is more than just a competition. Apart from the pleasure of hearing several different interpretations of Burns' 'Epistle to J Lapraik', the audience is entertained by the 'warm-up' readings of the competitors and lively event-hosting of Angus Middleton.....and the delights of a plate of haggis n' neeps for the journey home after a tense and exciting, but fun-filled, afternoon. See <http://www.lapraikpoetryfestival.co.uk>

Muirkirk is also working hard to develop some 'Lapraik' competitors of the future, as the local primary school runs a 'Young People's' competition on the morning of the event. The hardworking Lapraik judges usually 'volunteer' to get up early and take on the significant challenge of judging young poetry readers!

## 200 Club Results

December Quarterly Draw:	1 <sup>st</sup> Mr Colin Harris	
December Monthly Draw:	1 <sup>st</sup> Mrs Irene Miller;	2 <sup>nd</sup> Mr Brian Keenan
January Monthly Draw:	1 <sup>st</sup> Mr Colin Blair;	2 <sup>nd</sup> Mrs Irene Henry
February Monthly Draw:	1 <sup>st</sup> Mr David Baird;	2 <sup>nd</sup> Mrs Corinne Buivenga
March Quarterly Draw:	1 <sup>st</sup> Mr Willie Gibson	
March Monthly Draw:	1 <sup>st</sup> Mr James Boyd;	2 <sup>nd</sup> Mr George Smith



## RBWF Annual Conference



The Robert Burns World Federation's Annual Conference and AGM will be held in the Menzies Hotel, Irvine, on 12<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> September 2014. Members should already have received their application forms. Accommodation bookings are made directly to the hotel (01294 274272) but conference applications should be made through the Federation Office (see page 1 for details). The cost is £200 per person which includes dinner, bed and breakfast for two nights, a civic reception, seminars and much more.

The Irvine Burns Club, the Irvine Lasses Burns Club and Eglinton Burns Club will be helping to host the event and their club

premises, Wellwood, will be staging an exhibition of Burns publications and artifacts over the whole weekend. As reported in the January Newsletter, North Ayrshire Council is organising a fantastic array of Burns-related events to coincide with the Conference. Further details will be posted on the Federation website in due course.

## Award for Anne

At its Annual Celebration on 24th January, Irvine Burns Club presented Anne Gaw with Honorary Membership in recognition of her work for the Burns movement. Anne is a Founder Member of Irvine Lasses Burns Club, and a Past President of the Ayrshire Association of Burns Clubs and of the World Federation. She held various posts within the RBWF but she said that she then returned to the thing dear to her heart and became "Schools Convener" spending ten years in that post. When Anne stood down as Convener, she was presented with a Certificate of Life Membership from the RBWF as well as a Certificate of Appreciation from the Schools' Committee. [The schools competitions are the Federation's flagship project and we are indebted to Tunnocks for their sponsorship. 2014 Festivals: 26<sup>th</sup> Apr (Secondary) and 10<sup>th</sup> May (Primary) in Prestwick Academy and 31<sup>st</sup> May (Choral) in Armadale Academy. Ed]

