

# The Robert Burns World Federation Newsletter



# Issue 13 January 2015

Happy New Year. What a momentous year for Scotland we have just witnessed in 2014. Surely one of the highlights was the closing ceremony of the Commonwealth Games when nations of all creeds and colours came together, linked hands and belted out Robert Burns' international anthem Auld Lang Syne. We had a glimpse of Burns' desire to see a time when we'll 'Brothers be for a' that.' With the present troubles in the world this sometimes seems a distant possibility but it is a goal worth striving for and many of the works of Burns promote ideas of liberty and respect for our fellow human beings. The Robert Burns World Federation exists to encourage the study of his life and works by present and future generations so that his thoughts and ideas can be better realised. Above all it is worth noting that the RBWF is a charity, an umbrella organisation of thousands of volunteers, trying its best to treasure and promote the memory of our National Bard. To achieve that aim it needs a central coordinating office with paid staff and funds to run its various activities. Your help in providing financial support through membership fees is much appreciated.

Editor

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## To William Simpson of Ochiltree

Ev'n winter bleak has charms to me,
When winds rave thro' the naked tree;
Or frosts on hills of Ochiltree
Are hoary gray;
Or blinding drifts wild-furious flee,
Dark'ning the day!

O Nature! A' thy shews an' forms
To feeling, pensive hearts hae charms!
Whether the summer kindly warms,
Wi' life an' light;
Or winter howls, in gusty storms,
The lang, dark night!

Robert Burns May 1785

## **Russian Visit**

On 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014 members of the Schools Committee visited the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum area with 3 Russian visitors. Anastasia Salukhova and Elizaveta Tyotkina, both pupils at School 61 in St Petersburg, were enjoying a trip to Scotland as part of their prize in winning this year's Schools Essay Competitions.

The other Russian visitor was Sergey Nekrasov (centre) who is Director of the Russian National Museum of Alexander Pushkin. Helen Morrison (second right) along with Tom & Elizabeth Clark of the St Petersburg Forum Charitable Trust chauffeured the Russians around.

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#### Russian Visit (cont'd)

Margaret (far right) and John Skilling acted as guides round the Auld Kirk, Gardens and Museum where the Pushkin exhibition of paintings was currently on view. Below each painting was fixed an appropriate short extract from a variety of Pushkin's poems translated into English. Mr. Nekrasov was particularly interested in the inter-active sections within the museum as he did not have anything similar in his museum in Russia. He enjoyed sitting for his silhouette to be prepared, copied and then e-mailed back to St Petersburg.

## The Tom Durrheim Memorial Prize for Scottish Poetry

For over three decades, the self-dubbed 'Gannochy Seven', a group of friends who met at St Andrews as undergraduates, have come together at their annual Burns Night Supper to address the haggis, toast the lassies and reply to the laddies. More recently, they've also toasted absent friends.

Tom Durrheim (MA 1979, pictured right), one of the original seven, had an infectious passion for English and, once graduated, he spent his whole career teaching English at Dundee High School. When he passed away in 2011, his lifelong friends established The Tom Durrheim Memorial Prize for Scottish Poetry in his honour to commemorate a life devoted to lasting friendships, family and literature, including his love of Robert Burns.

The 2014 Tom Durrheim Memorial Prize has been awarded to Garry MacKenzie, who has recently completed his PhD on landscapes in poetry. Garry shares Tom's passion for literature and teaching and hopes to have an academic career after graduation.

[Submitted by Mac Irvin Past USA Director of RBWF who graduated MLitt from St Andrews University in 2006]



#### Generous Donation from RBANA Conference



As reported in the September 2014 Newsletter, Past USA Director Mac Irvin (pictured left), organized a highly successful conference in the University of South Carolina in Columbia SC.

Robert Boyd, President of the Robert Burns Association of North America (RBANA) has announced that as a result of the efforts of Mac and his team, a very generous \$1200 has been donated to the Federation with RBANA also benefitting to the tune of \$1000.

## **Arbroath Burns Club - New Honorary President**

Arbroath Burns Club celebrated on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2014 when club president Dr. Rusty Smith conferred the distinguished position of Honorary President on Mr. William C. Braid.

This honour was given to Bill in recognition of his eminent, valuable and devoted services which he has rendered to the club over a period exceeding 50 years, during which time he has held the positions of President, committee member and valued club member. Bill was presented with a citation and a caricature and it was agreed by all present that it was well done to "Wullie the Glass."

Peter Black (Secretary



## Robert Burns Association of North America (RBANA) Conference 2015



This year's RBANA conference will be held in the dynamic city of Calgary, Alberta on May 29 – 31, 2015. The venue is the sumptuous Carriage House Inn located on MacLeod Trail SW.

The ROOM RATE is: Standard \$145/Superior \$155Cad per night + Taxes (Includes Buffet Breakfast). To reserve rooms call 1-800-661-9566

When calling request rate for Robert Burns Association North America but if applicable, also check what senior rates are offered. Alternatively you can reserve accommodation by email - reserv@carriagehouse.net

The group rates are available 3 days pre and post the event (26<sup>th</sup> May till 2<sup>nd</sup> June inclusive) and Rooms can be cancelled one day prior to scheduled arrival

The registration fee for the conference is \$195 (CAD) per person. Registration forms will be available soon on the RBANA Website at www.rbana.com

For further information please contact: Ian Denness: frian@shaw.ca or Tony Grace: tonyg.sheilaw@shaw.ca

#### Mauchline Parish Church Appeal

Mauchline in Ayrshire was home to Robert Burns and has had a church on the present site since the  $12^{th}$  Century, originally established by monks from Melrose Abbey.

The previous church was used by the Burns family, and the bard himself was a regular visitor, albeit sometimes on the Cutty Stool, (naughty step), when summoned to appear by the Kirk Session.

Many of his poems are believed to have been written whilst he was there, notably *The Holy Fair*, *To a Mouse*, and *Holy Willie's Prayer*.



The present Church was built on the original site in 1829. The adjacent Kirkyard contains the graves of many of Robert's family and associates including:

Rev. William (Daddy) Auld, Gavin Hamilton (Lawyer), William Fisher (Holy Willie), Robert's brother - John Burns, Andrew Noble - Session Clerk and Four of Burns' children: Jean, unnamed twins, and Elizabeth Riddell Burns.

After 185 years, the roof, and other aspects, of this iconic church are desperately in need of repair and refurbishment, estimated to cost upwards of 385 thousand pounds. While grants have been applied for, it is expected there will be a substantial shortfall. The Mauchline community are rallying round - school children are raising money, coffee mornings etc. are being held, but it will be a long hard struggle. It is felt that many Burns' lovers worldwide may wish to assist in this very important project, and should be given the opportunity to help financially. We don't want it to become a supermarket or worse!

If you wish to help, your donation would be gratefully received and can be sent to; Mauchline Parish Church (Charity No. SC007714) Restoration Fund Account Click on our web site www.mauchlineparish.org.uk/paypaldonations.htm

All monies received into the above Trust Account will be used for the repair and maintenance of church properties.

## Friends of Ellisland Celebrate St Andrews night



On Saturday the 22nd November 2014, the Friends of Ellisland celebrated St. Andrew's Night at Ellisland Farm. Grace was given by Dan Cook and after dinner, the Chairman Ronnie Cairns introduced the principal speaker Mike Duguid who proposed the toast to St.Andrew and Scotland which was well received by the company. There followed evening an of talented entertainment. Lee McQueen on accordion, a regular at Ellisland, the beautiful voice of Leona Evans singing Scots songs, Les Byers, curator at Ellisland recited and also sang a couple of songs with audience participation. An extra to the

programme was Peter Hughes from Carluke, who entertained with some hilarious stories and a song. Bill Welsh delivered a splendid vote of thanks and the evening was brought to an end with a hearty rendition of Auld Lang Syne. From left to right in the photo is Mike Duguid, Maureen Milton, Chairman Ronnie Cairns, Halina Cairns and Betty Haining.

#### The James McKie Collection

An exhibition featuring the life and work of James McKie, creator of the 'Kilmarnock Burnsiana', is being staged at the Dick Institute, Kilmarnock from 20<sup>th</sup> December 2014 to 18<sup>th</sup> April 2015

James McKie (1816 – 1891) was a bookseller, printer, publisher, a collector of Burns, and one of Kilmarnock's most prominent cultural figures of the Victorian era. As an 11-year old apprentice bookbinder to John Wilson's successor at the Cross, he established a firm link to Robert Burns and Kilmarnock's literary heritage.

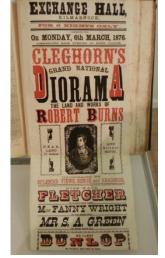
He became most famous as a publisher and collector of Burns. He published bibliographies, facsimiles and new editions of Burns from 1866 – 1881, for the British and North American markets. His work as a Burns

publisher and bibliographer is now attracting research interest, for the role he played in the evolution of Burns editions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

McKie's collection of Burns manuscripts, books, paintings, and general Burnsiana, grew to such stature that the Town purchased them to be displayed in the Burns Monument Museum in the 1880s. He had been instrumental in establishing the Kilmarnock Burns Monument in 1879.

While installing the exhibition the curators came across this glorious poster for a diorama of The Land and Works of Robert Burns, at Kilmarnock's Corn Exchange Hall, March 1876. This was another fantastic find in McKie's scrapbooks, and again highlights one of the main purposes of our exhibition – to rediscover this collection with a 21st century sensibility.

Further details of collection can be found on the website: <a href="http://www.ayrshirecollections.co.uk/the-james-mckie-collection/">http://www.ayrshirecollections.co.uk/the-james-mckie-collection/</a>



There will be a special event on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> January at the Dick Institute, celebrating this exhibition and our complementary exhibition of Calum Colvin and Rab Wilson's Burnsiana, 5.30 – 7.30. The event is free but we would appreciate an RSVP to determine numbers. Please email <a href="mailto:carleen.fitzgerald@east-ayrshire.gov.uk">carleen.fitzgerald@east-ayrshire.gov.uk</a>.

#### Thornhill & District Burns Club - St Andrews Dinner

On the 29th November 2014 Thornhill & District Burns Club held their annual St. Andrew's night dinner in the Thornhill Community Centre. The President, Ronnie Cairns introduced Ella Pennington who delivered the toast to St. Andrew and Scotland, also later in the evening entertained with an amusing monologue. Alana-Jane McGeouch sang accompanied on guitar by Lance. The company enjoyed two recitations by Geoff Martyniuk. Meg and Fudge Parkinson sang and played guitar, Les Byers sang and also recited. The vote of thanks was given by Peter Moran and the evening ended with a rousing rendition of Auld Lang Syne. In the photograph from



left to right is Doreen Moran, Ella Pennington, Ronnie Cairns, Halina Cairns and Pauline Martyniuk.

## Largs Cronies' President's Halloween Dinner 2014

On Thursday 23rd October 2014, Eileen Doris Bremner, daughter of the founder president of Largs Cronies Burns Club, Dan Doris, was the guest speaker at Largs Cronies' annual President's Halloween Dinner held at the Village Inn, Fairlie.

Eileen, a former producer with Grampian Television, told the audience that her father had passed on to her a love and appreciation of Robert Burns.

She focused on the entirely English poetry of Burns, having written a book on the subject. She pointed out that more than one hundred of Burns' poems were written in English because, even back in the 18th century, some people could not understand the Scottish and Ayrshire dialects. Eileen also illustrated how his letters, almost all written in perfect English, gave a valuable insight into the man that was Robert Burns.

Musical entertainment was provided by former professional singer and harpist, Maggie MacInnes, who enchanted the audience with her renditions of 'Ye Banks and Braes' and 'Ae Fond Kiss' in both English and Gaelic.

Cronies' President, Robert Honeyman, said that monies raised from the raffle at the dinner would be used to fund the club's very successful annual Burns' Schools' Competition in local primary schools.

Vice President, David Galt, thanked everyone who had contributed to such a successful and enjoyable evening.

On 22nd January 2015, Largs Cronies will be holding their 26th Annual Dinner at the Willowbank Hotel, Largs, with Robert Burns World Federation Past President, Jim Gibson, proposing the Immortal Memory.



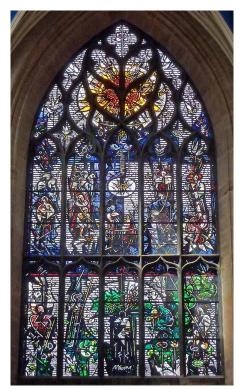
Top table at the Dinner

From left: Rev Bill Armstrong, Maggie MacInnes, Jean Jackson, Robert Honeyman (Club President), Eileen Doris Bremner, David Galt (Vice President), Brian Jackson (Secretary)

#### Service at St Giles Cathedral

On 30<sup>th</sup> November 2014 a substantial delegation of Federation members was led in procession by Senior Vice President Peter Hughes to take part in the Festival of Saint Andrew the Apostle, Patron of Scotland at St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh. The Knights of the Order of the Thistle have it in their Charter to worship in St Giles on St Andrews Day, and for the past 60 years or so have invited to their worship representatives of the armed forces and police, the universities, various professional bodies, Judges and advocates etc., The Lord Provost and City of Edinburgh Council, The Royal Academy, The Grand Lodge of Scotland, and several cultural bodies, including the Robert Burns World Federation are also invited.





This invitation originated from the enthusiastic support given by people such as the late Tom McIlwraith, RBWF Past President, regarding the installation of the large beautiful Burns stained glass window. The Great West Window, installed in 1985, is the work of the Icelandic artist Leifur Breidfjörd, one of his largest commissions. It celebrates major themes within the poetry of Robert Burns, in a semi-abstract style. The lowest section is mainly green, representing the natural world that Burns portrayed so vividly and so lovingly. The middle section contains many human figures as it celebrates human unity, regardless of race, colour or creed. The topmost tracery contains a glorious sunburst of love, blossoming "like a red, red rose."

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For more information regarding the window see the website: <a href="http://www.stgilescathedral.org.uk/saint-giles-history/st-giles-architecture/burns-window-st-giles/">http://www.stgilescathedral.org.uk/saint-giles-history/st-giles-architecture/burns-window-st-giles/</a>

## Jean Redpath - Singing Legend (1937 – 2014)

The Burns, and the Folk Music communities were saddened in August to learn of the death from cancer of legendary singer Jean Redpath at the age of 77. Jean was born in Edinburgh and raised in Levin, Fife by musical parents, her life-long fascination with Scottish music coming from her mother. She studied at the University of Edinburgh, where she was exposed to the archive of songs being built by poet and song writer Hamish Henderson, co-founder of the university's School of Scottish Studies. After Edinburgh, she moved to the United States in 1961, where she shared a flat with, and performed with legendary folk singers, like Bob Dylan.

The natural warm and power of her voice earned her recording contracts, firstly with Elektra. In 1976 Jean Redpath embarked on a project to record all the songs of Robert Burns. The planned 22 volume project sadly was abandoned after only seven, following the death of her collaborator, composer Serge Hovey.



Those who attended the 2003 RBANA Conference in Baltimore will recall Jean's memorable performance as the highlight of that weekend.

Among the honours awarded Jean Redpath over the years, she was the first Artist-in-Residence at Stirling University, Artist-in-Residence at Edinburgh University's Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies, received an Honorary Doctorate of Music from Glasgow University (which she received alongside G. Ross Roy in 2009) and an MBE in 1987

#### David Smith - New Year's Honours Recognition



David Smith from Cargenbridge, Dumfries, has been awarded the British Empire Medal (B.E.M) for services to the Heritage of Robert Burns.

A quiet, unassuming character, David is a Past President of the Robert Burns World Federation and continues to serve on various committees and support the organisation. David is also a Past President of The Southern Scottish Counties Burns Association and the Burns Howff Club. It is, of course, as Honorary Secretary of the Burns Howff Club that David is best known, having served in this capacity for 43 years.

A kenspeckle character in the Burns world and beyond, David's organisational skills are legendary with a reputation in particular for paying attention to detail. David has the ability to attract speakers and entertainers of national and international repute to the Howff Club thereby making it a very high profile Burns

club with a healthy membership.

Always generous in word and deed, David has mentored many Burnsians across the world, his quiet words of advice and counsel setting many a new secretary or president off in the right direction. Above all, David's warm personality, diplomatic skills and sharp sense of humour make him much sought after company at many events.

Whilst David is delighted and thrilled to receive the honour, with typical modesty he wonders what the fuss is all about. Robert Burns is only his hobby after all.

[Ian McIntyre, who submitted the article, represents us all I'm sure when he writes; "Congratulations on thoroughly well-deserved award, David Smith, B.E.M"] Ed

#### Beaton, William David (Bill)



Peacefully at the Ottawa General Hospital, a great Canadian Burnsian, Bill Beaton passed away on October 24, 2014, at the age of 94 years. He was born in Saskatchewan on June 19, 1920. Bill was pre-deceased by his wife Iris and is survived by his sons Lorne (Carolyn), Douglas (Louise), and granddaughter Sara. He leaves numerous loving nieces and nephews.

Bill served in the R.C.A.F from 1940 to 1975. Wartime service was with the 133F Squadron. Peacetime service was with the R.C.A.F. Defence Construction Engineering Department. Following release from military service, he worked for the Department of Public Works from 1976 to 1985. He was a life member of the Nepean Museum and the Ottawa Vintage Radio Club. He was also a keen and active member of the Robert Burns World Federation.

A few years ago Bill donated much of his extensive Burns collection for the benefit of the Federation and also to Southmuir Primary School in Kirriemuir, Fife, where many of his ancestors had been taught.

## An 'Evening with Burns' at Broughton House



The Friends of Broughton House in Kirkcudbright hosted another popular 'Evening with Burns' event on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2014. From the left on whistle and flute is Scott Garden, on guitar Luc McNally, fiddlers Charlie Stewart and Robbie McKenzie and on cello, Rufus Huggins. All the performers are currently first or second-year students at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and wowed the audience with musicianship.

The programme for the evening was arranged by Leona Evans who, despite suffering a

sore throat, sang a delightful medley of songs, including several of Burns' melodies. Leona was the Federation's Young Burnsian of the Year in 2011 and is in her second year of studies at the Conservatoire. Because of pressures of studies, the students had to make a quick dash down from Glasgow after class in late afternoon and return later in the evening. Luckily Leona's mum Fiona very kindly joined Leona in the chauffeuring duties.



#### Southern Scottish Counties Burns Association - Commemoration Service Invitation



President David Miller and members of the Scottish Southern Counties Burns Association (SSCBA) extend an invitation to join them for their commemorative service, marking the anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns. The service will be held at 1.30pm in St Michael's Church, Dumfries, on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> January.

Club President's or representatives are invited to be part of a 'ceremonial parade' at the commencement of the service. The service, conducted by the Rev Dr. Maurice Bond, minister of St Michael's, will feature contributions from local school children.

#### St Michael's Commemoration (cont'd)

Immediately after the service, Arthur Milton, President of Dumfries Burns Club, will preside at a wreath laying ceremony at Burns Mausoleum where leading members of SSCBA regional Burns Clubs along with local dignitaries will lay their tributes at the Bard's tomb. Following this ceremony, teas and refreshments will be served in St Michael's church hall.

We would be delighted if as many of your club members as possible would be able to join us for this special commemorative event.

In order that I can make appropriate seating arrangements at the church, I would be grateful if you could inform me before Wednesday 21st January 2015 if your President or a representative will be able to attend. John Caskie Secretary SSCBA j.caskie@virgin.net

## How Far Can You Throw a Haggis?



Every year the Alloway 1759 festival celebrates Scotland's bard in and around Burns Cottage and the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum (RBBM) in Alloway.

For detailed information about all the events see the website:

http://www.nts.org.uk/Events/Theme/Alloway-1759

The Alloway 1759 World Haggis Hurling Championship – kindly sponsored by Pollok Williamson the home of Haggis Ayr - will take place at the RBBM on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2015. Could you beat last year's record or even the World Record of 217 feet?

Scotland Sings is all about getting everyone singing – any style, anywhere. In schools, choirs, workshops, round kitchen tables, in pubs and clubs, in the hills and on the streets. Come along and join in the exciting new January harmony singing workshops: 'Renewing the Tradition,' a brand new choir repertoire of fresh contemporary arrangements seeded by some of Scotland's best-loved Burns and Gaelic songs.



Scotland Sings have commissioned songwriters Kim Edgar and Findlay Napier to take a Robert Burns song and rewrite it into a modern version. These songs *I Will Not Say Goodbye* and *Petals of a Red, Red Rose* will be taught at the workshop along with the winning song from Scotland Sings Gaelic song-writing competition. The workshop is open to choirs and individual singers alike. The cost for the day is £10.



Alloway Sessions on Sat 24<sup>th</sup> January in the RBBM café will be the first session of live music featuring Alistair McCulloch with the Gregg fiddle supported by Innovation, also on stage Borealis, the Scottish Ferals, Pat Kane and Roger Paterson.

On Sun 25<sup>th</sup> January, in the RBBM café, David Douglas, Ayrshire's own opera star will be accompanied by renowned harpist Ester Swift. Also, the McNeil Sisters – fiddle, guitar and songs, and Siobhan McCauley with whistle tunes and songs. In Burns Cottage

the Scottish Ferals, singer Pat Kane, soprano Colleen Nicole, and Alexandra Shrinivas, and Aimeé Toshney singers, violin and piano.

## Dumfries Big Burns Supper - 23rd to 31<sup>th</sup> January 2015



The 2015 festival will be bigger than ever, lasting a whole nine days and attracting tens of thousands of people from Scotland and across Europe. The event will be at the heart of the community Big Burns Supper plans, a "festival within a festival" to let communities in northwest Dumfries enjoy more of the fun during January's event.

Big Burns Supper 2015 is part of Scotland's Winter Festivals (a programme of events managed by EventScotland on behalf of the Scottish Government).

Eighteen acts, including the award-winning Skerryvore folk-rock band and the amazing

Canadian vocal group Countermeasure, will put on free pop-up shows in the area. There will also be performances of the Hamish the Haggis children's show – and much more will be announced in coming weeks.

Provost Ted Thompson launched the initiative, which will also involve an outreach programme to get more young people and adults from Dumfries and surrounding area taking part in the Burns' Night street carnival and the rest of BBS. As 2015 is the UNESCO Year of Light one of the main features of the carnival will be lanterns made and carried by people from all across the region. The outreach initiative will see 16 lantern making workshops take place across north-west Dumfries. A free minibus is also being organised to get people to and from the festival.

For all the details of this magnificent Winter Festival go to: www.bigburnssupper.com/

## Auld Lang Syne Sing-along

Smarts is a PR company working for the Scottish Government and they have forwarded an invitation for us to be part of a 'Sensational Burns Sing-along'



To celebrate the Bard, they're inviting the world to take part in a rendition of Auld Lang Syne. They've enlisted contemporary Scottish folk outfit Whisky Kiss to provide the verses and backing track, and need us to join in on the chorus!

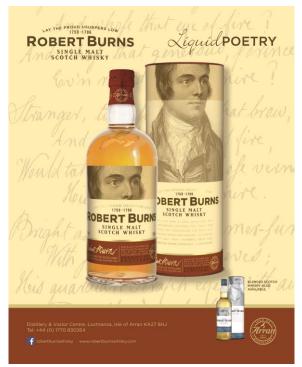
Simply film yourself singing it and send it in, and you could feature in the final cut of their official Burns Night 2015 video. They'd also love you to share it with your

followers and challenge them to take part too. The more the merrier!

You can find more info on how to take part, including the lyrics, music and ways to submit your entry at: <a href="http://bit.ly/16IO0uz">http://bit.ly/16IO0uz</a> Unfortunately, the deadline of 18<sup>th</sup> January will be probably be tight depending on when you receive the newsletter.

You can also find loads of other great resources for celebrating Burns Night, including recipes, games and a handy app, which gives you over 550 Burns poems and love songs at your fingertips. http://www.scotland.org/whats-on/burns-night/

## New Year Wishes from Isle of Arran Distillery



The Robert Burns World Federation's partner, the Isle of Arran Distillery, is 'back after the Christmas holidays and we are ready to go for the New Year!'

So writes Jaclyn McKie (below) in the latest company blog: "The Distillery team are making sure that everything is properly maintained and cleaned and all ready to start the brand new distilling year on 19th January, when the full team will start back. Next door in the Visitor Centre, Faye is in charge of the annual maintenance of our Centre, making sure that everything is ship shape for our doors opening on 25th January - just in time for everyone to have a dram with us to celebrate Burns Day!

We wish all our friends all over the world a wonderful, healthy and very Happy 2015. We are looking sharing some great moments with you all."



See the full range of whiskies and visit the online shop at: http://www.arranwhisky.com/

## Speaking at a Burns Supper?

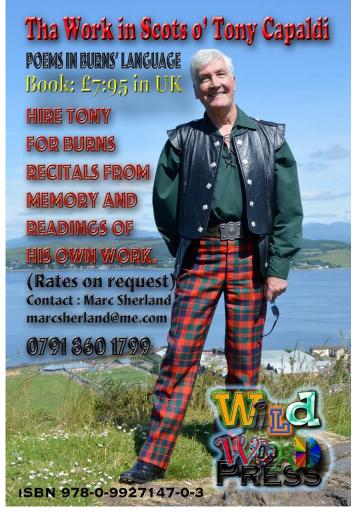
At this time of year there will be thousands of people, in reality mainly men, who will be preparing to deliver a toast to the Immortal Memory of Robert Burns at Burns Suppers around the world. Finding appropriate angles to use in the speech and ensuring the details are accurate can be a time-consuming, but very necessary activity. One useful source available on the internet is the series of articles in Frank Shaw's 'Burns Lives' website.





This now consists of 209 chapters, each one with a different take on the life and works of our Bard but also including topics relating to the wider Burns story. For example at Chapter 201 there is an excellent talk entitled Burns and North America by Leslie Strachan, RBWF American Director, (left) which demonstrates the poet's influence across the water. Concentrating more locally in Chapter 196 contains Peter Kormylo's insightful Immortal Memory of Robert Burns at the famous Globe Inn, home of the Burns Howff Club, of which Peter is a Past President. Perhaps appealing to a different audience would be Chapter 183 where Eileen Bremner discusses her own wee book entitled *The English Poetry of Robert Burns* which highlights the over 100 poems and songs written exclusively in the English language by Burns. All the articles can be found on the website <a href="https://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/frank/burns.htm">www.electricscotland.com/familytree/frank/burns.htm</a>

Another useful source which might help get you in the mood is the 716 works available to listen to on the BBC website <a href="www.bbc.co.uk/arts/robertburns/">www.bbc.co.uk/arts/robertburns/</a>. Hear the same poem delivered by different speakers, mostly well-known actors, and compare their styles or simply enjoy listening to the wide variety of topics which Burns tackled.



Tony Capaldi is a popular member of the Cumbernauld Burns Club, often asked to recite from memory many Burns poems, which he delivers with his own special brand of actor's panache. Indeed Tony is somehow related to the actor Peter Capaldi and, if truth be known, his real first name is Peter, though to save the other's embarrassment, he chooses to perform as Tony.

If ever there was a "people's man," it is Tony Capaldi, his verse shows that from first through to last. Poet, actor, historian, Capaldi writes about his passions: people, theatre, language, and religion. His writing, both playful and serious is inspired by and modelled on his hero, Robert Burns. This is Scottish writing, full of rich Scottish characters and vernacular, and travels from Springburn to the fields of Culloden.

Despite his Italian heritage, Tony is passionate about Scotland and he knows every inch. As a very young boy, Tony sustained severe injuries after falling from a tree (Yon Tree) which left him with physical disabilities. Not able to drive, he nonetheless donned his kilt and set off, hitchhiking and walking his way through glens and over bens, staying at youth hostels and befriending countless people along the way. He partially lost use of his right hand and taught himself to write with his left, producing hundreds of beautiful poems about the people and places of Scotland.

Tony is a wordsmith. His love of language and natural ability as a linguist compel him to play with words. His expressive language is full of puns, metaphor, spoonerism, and of course, rhyme. Recently published through Wild Word Press his book 'Tha Work in Scots o' Tony Capaldi' is proving to be a publishing success.

First and foremost, Tony Capaldi is an entertainer, available for hire to clubs and events where he will perform his own and Burns poetry with that unique and particular verve that is his trademark. Tony can be booked via his publisher Marc Sherland either through email <a href="marcsherland@me.com">marcsherland@me.com</a> or by phone 0791 8601799.

[Text supplied by Marc Sherland]

#### Editor's Note:

It was remiss of me not to acknowledge Alister Firth as the photographer who took the superb shot of the Inauguration Dinner at the Annual Conference which appeared in last month's newsletter. See other examples of his photographic skills at: <a href="https://www.flickr.com/photos/alisterfirth/">https://www.flickr.com/photos/alisterfirth/</a>

Just in case anyone received an unamended copy of the November Newsletter, I wish to confirm it was North Ayrshire Corporate Catering which provided the fantastic catering and other assistance at the 2014 conference.

## **Burns Chronicle Sponsor**



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